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Fashioning the Reclusive Persona: Zeng Jing's Informal Portraits of the Jiangnan Literati

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

by

Seokwon Choi

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September 2016

Fashioning the Reclusive Persona: Zeng Jing's Informal Portraits of the Jiangnan Literati

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by

Seokwon Choi

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ABSTRACT

Fashioning the Reclusive Persona: Zeng Jing's Informal Portraits of the Jiangnan Literati

by

Seokwon Choi

Zeng Jing (1564–1647) was a professional portraitist in late Ming China who specialized in informal portraits of contemporary literati in the Jiangnan region. Zeng's portrait oeuvre embodies the Jiangnan literati's eremitic aspirations, illuminating the ways in which the literati visually constructed their reclusive personae. Zeng depicted members of Jiangnan cultural elite as commoners or as mountain men, integrating the literati heritage of eremitism with a range of pictorial traditions of representing reclusive figures. The casual dress, relaxed postures, and informal settings in Zeng's portraits functioned as visual signifiers of the political disengagement and reclusive lifestyle that his sitters pursued. Zeng's focus on individualized physiognomy indicates the politically frustrated literati's strong sense of self-awareness. Zeng designed all his portraits to convey the Jiangnan literati's values of political insubordination, cultural self-contentment, and collective identity of reclusion.

Zeng Jing's portraits give visible form to the complex mindset of the reclusive literati and to the values and aspirations that characterized late Ming eremitism. Zeng's appropriation and reinterpretation of the conventional scholar-in-landscape composition concretizes the enduring notion of reclusion as communing with nature. Zeng's pictorial allusions to venerable recluses from earlier ages of Chinese history and his subtle use of

Buddhist and Daoist iconography show how archaism and syncretism permeated the literati's ethos of reclusion. Zeng's portraits, coupled with the portrait encomia written by the sitters and their companions, emerge as both pictorial and literary testimonies of the Jiangnan literati's self-fashioning. Through the collective acts of appreciating and inscribing portraits, the Jiangnan literati used Zeng's portraits as a means to create camaraderie within reclusion. During Zeng's most prolific years, many members of Chen Jiru and Dong Qichang's coterie in Huating shared in the ideal of reclusion by sitting for portraits by Zeng, while the literary giant Chen collaborated with Zeng by providing encomia to Zeng's portraits. As focal points for individual expression, social posturing, and aesthetic experience, Zeng's portraits forged the Jiangnan literati's eremitic cultural identity in reaction to the sociopolitical unrest of the late Ming.

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I. Portraying Literati Reclusion

Zeng Jing 曾鯨 (1564–1647), a native of Putian, Fujian province, was a professional portraitist of the late Ming dynasty whose activity was concentrated in Jiangnan 江南 cities such as Nanjing, Songjiang, Suzhou, and Hangzhou.¹ Zeng’s extant oeuvre, which comprises around twenty-five portraits, is of great importance for our understanding of the social and cultural identity of the late Ming elite, as his sitters were prominent intellectuals who functioned as arbiters of literati culture in Jiangnan. Zeng painted portraits of such eminent scholars, artists, poets, and physicians as Dong Qichang 董其昌 (1555–1636), Chen Jiru 陳繼儒 (1558–1639), Ge Yilong 葛一龍 (1567–1640), Shi Pei 施沛 (1585–

¹ Recent studies on Zeng include Zhou Jiyin 周积寅, *Zeng Jing de xiaoxianghua* 曾鯨的肖像畫 [Zeng Jing’s portrait painting] (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1981); Suh-fen Lu, “A Study on Tseng Ching’s Portraits” (MA thesis, University of Michigan, 1986); Nie Chongzheng 聶崇正, *Zeng Jing* 曾鯨 (Taipei: Jin xiu, 1996); Kondo Hidemi 近藤秀實, “Shozo gaka So Gei: seishin no shinjitsu” 肖像画家曾鯨: 精神の真実 [The portrait artist Zeng Jing: the search for the spirit], *Tama Bujutsu Daigaku kenkyu kiyo* 多摩美術大学研究紀要第 15 (2000): 143–70; *Bochen huapai* 波臣画派 [The Bochen school of painting] (Changchun: Jilin meishu chubanshe, 2003); Deng Li-hua, “Cong Zeng Jing xiaoxianghua kan wan Ming wenren geren xingxiang de jianli” 從曾鯨肖像畫看晚明文人個人形象的建立 [Establishment of the individual images of the late Ming literati in Zeng Jing’s portraits] (MA thesis, Guoli Taiwan shifan daxue meishu yanjiusuo, 2002); Ma Jige 馬季戈, *Zeng Jing yu “Bochen pai”* 曾鯨與“波臣派” [Zeng Jing and the Bochen school] (Jinan: Shandong meishu chubanshe, 2004). James Cahill discussed Zeng in a chapter on late Ming figure painting and portraiture. See James Cahill, *The Distant Mountains: Chinese Painting of the Late Ming Dynasty, 1570–1644* (New York: Weatherhill, 1982), 213–17. See also Richard Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self: Chinese Portraits 1600–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 40–48.

1661), Liu Jingting 柳敬亭 (1592–1674/75), Wang Shimin 王時敏 (1592–1680), and Gu Mengyou 顧夢遊 (1599–1660).²

Zeng Jing's sitters were contemporary literati figures who in many instances were acquainted with each other and whose activities were interrelated within the sociocultural milieu of late Ming Jiangnan.³ The social connections and comradeship among Zeng's sitters is evident in the inscriptions and colophons that were written by the sitters' friends and colleagues. Given the sitters' elite status and the friendship networks that bound them together, it is clear that Zeng did not choose his portraits arbitrarily; rather, the portraits seem to have served the purpose of fostering camaraderie and shared identity among members of the Jiangnan elite. Zeng's oeuvre must therefore be considered as a whole, constituting a sort of ideal community, rather than as a series of independent likenesses of individuals. His portraits appear both stylistically coherent and thematically purposive, suggesting the existence of a shared sense of identity among his sitters. Zeng invariably depicted his sitters as non-degree holders wearing informal attire, thereby presenting them as

² For a list of Zeng's portraits, see Appendix. See also Fang Xiaozhuang 方小壯, "Zeng Jing Ge Yilong xiang chuangzuo niandai kao" 曾鯨《葛一龍像》創作年代考 [Discussion of the date of Zeng Jing's *Portrait of Ge Yilong*], *Zhongguo shuhua* 中國書畫, no. 5 (2006): 42–43.

³ I will use the term 'literati' to refer to social and intellectual elites in premodern China. Here this term is to be understood in a wide sense, encompassing Chinese notions of *wenren* 文人 (men of letters), *shi* 士 (scholar), and *shidafu* 士大夫 (scholar-gentry). On the origin and usage of the term 'literati,' see Jerome Silbergeld, "On the Origins of Literati Painting in the Song Dynasty," in *A Companion to Chinese Art*, ed. Martin J. Powers and Katherine R. Tsiang (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), 479. For an overview of the late Ming literati culture, see Wai-kam Ho, "Late Ming Literati: Their Social and Cultural Ambience," in *The Chinese Scholar's Studio: Artistic Life in Late Ming Period, an Exhibition from the Shanghai Museum*, ed. Chu-tsing Li and James C. Y. Watt (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987), 23–36.

recluses or scholars in retirement, and this aspect of their identity will receive special emphasis in the present study.⁴ Given that Zeng's sitters were literati elites, a social category whose principal aim was the acquisition of status and success in officialdom, the choice to depict his sitters as recluses seems clearly to indicate a desire to represent political withdrawal.

Zeng Jing's position as a seminal figure in the history of Chinese portraiture is in large part due to the important role he played in the rising popularity of the so-called informal portraits in the late Ming period.⁵ Apart from the question of whether or not there was a premodern equivalent to the term 'informal portrait,' the informal qualities of certain portraits suggest the need to recognize the informal portrait as a category of image distinct from more formal types such as the ancestor or imperial portraits.⁶ Informal portraits

⁴ For a discussion of late Ming literati preferences for eremitism, see Watt, "The Literati Environment," in Li and Watt, *Chinese Scholar's Studio*, 1–13. On the eremitic tradition in early medieval China, see Alan J. Berkowitz, *Patterns of Disengagement: The Practice and Portrayal of Reclusion in Early Medieval China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000); Aat Vervoorn, *Men of Cliffs and Caves: The Development of the Chinese Eremic Tradition to the End of the Han Dynasty* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2000).

⁵ The reemergence of informal portraiture as a significant artistic genre in the seventeenth century is a central topic in Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self*. Though Vinograd gives no clear definition of informal portraiture, the features of the genre emerge in contrast he draws with the tradition of formal portraiture. See also Julia Frances Andrews, "The Significance of Style and Subject Matter in the Painting of Cui Zizhong" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1984), 2–19. For an overview of the development of early Chinese portraiture, see *ibid.*, 18–27. See also Wai-kam Ho, "Developments of Chinese Portrait Painting as Seen from the Face-Orientation of the Subjects," in *Portraiture: International Symposium on Art Historical Studies 6* (Kyoto: Society for International Exchange of Art Historical Studies, 1990), 131–36; Dietrich Seckel, "The Rise of Portraiture in Chinese Art," *Artibus Asiae* 53, no. 1/2 (1993): 7–26.

⁶ On the terminology relating to portrait painting, see Lothar Ledderose, "Subject Matter in Early Chinese Painting Criticism," *Oriental Art*, n.s., 19, no. 1 (Spring 1973): 73–76. See also Dora C. Y. Ching, "The Language of Portraiture in China," in Powers and Tsiang, *Companion to Chinese Art*, 146–154. Ching divides traditional Chinese portraits into five types: ancestor,

attempt to capture sitters in a casual, relaxed moment, as they engage in cultural and leisure activities. Other key determinants of informality are dress, pose, and setting.⁷ The present study contributes to our understanding of the history of informal portraiture through an analysis of Zeng's use and manipulation of these variables, as well as through a discussion of the possibility that a vocabulary for 'informal portraits' can be identified in the language that was commonly used to refer to Zeng's portraits, in such terms as *xiaoxiang* 小像, *xiaozhao* 小照, and *xiaoying* 小影, which employ the prefix *xiao* ("small" or "humble") with the generic terms for portrait, *xiang/zhao/ying*. Zeng's portraits, characterized by the sitter's casual dress, relaxed posture, and informal settings, are defining examples of

imperial, commemorative, didactic, and literati portraits. 'Literati portraits' in Ching's categorization scheme are a near-equivalent to what the present study terms 'informal (literati) portraits.' There is a considerable literature on the ancestor and imperial portraits. For an overview of Chinese ancestor portraits, see Jan Stuart and Evelyn S. Rawski, *Worshipping the Ancestors: Chinese Commemorative Portraits* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 2001). See also Mette Siggstedt, "Forms of the Fate: An Investigation of the Relationship between Formal Portraiture, Especially Ancestral Portraits, and Physiognomy (*xiangshu*) in China," in *Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Chinese Art History*, part 2 (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1992), 713–48; Joan Hornby, "Chinese Ancestral Portraits: Some Late Ming and Ming Style Ancestral Paintings in Scandinavian Museums," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 70 (2000): 173–271. On imperial portraits, see Wen C. Fong, "Imperial Portraiture in the Song, Yuan, and Ming Periods," *Ars Orientalis* 25 (1995): 47–60.

⁷ Cultural and leisurely pursuits, regardless of whether the literati served in public or lived in retirement, were an indispensable part of literati life. There are some paintings in which the literati wear formal court robes but pose in an informal setting such as a garden. While the formal/informal divide is somewhat blurred in such paintings, their figures are depicted in the stiff poses associated with formal portraiture. Such images usually appear in the group portrait type known as 'picture of an elegant gathering' (*yaji tu* 雅集圖). Given that the literati's cultural and leisure activities are more closely associated with retirement than officialdom, pictures that show officials in a landscape setting may be related to the long-established notion of "reclusion within the court" (*chaoyin* 朝隱). On this notion of *chaoyin*, see Berkowitz, *Pattern of Disengagement*, 140–45; Vervoorn, *Men of Cliffs and Caves*, 108–11.

informal portraiture. In light of their overt informality, Zeng's portraits present a marked contrast to conventional ancestor or imperial portraits, in which sitters wear formal or semiformal robes and typically assume a stiff frontal pose.

In addition to the quality of informality, another salient, unifying characteristic of Zeng Jing's portraits is that they were commissioned by or for living individuals who were almost exclusively members of the literati class. On the basis of the sitter's social status, therefore, Zeng's portraits can be categorized as literati portraits. The intended audiences of his portraits were contemporary literati, initially limited to the sitter himself and his circle of friends.⁸ Considering both the informal qualities of Zeng's portraits and their literati clientele, a more precise term for describing Zeng's work would be 'informal literati portraits.'⁹

This informal literati portraiture is almost by definition intended to capture the sitter's reclusive persona. As it relates to literati life, informality indicates the cultural identity of eremitism, a value opposite and opposed to that of political commitment. The eremitic theme is therefore a central factor in tracing the history of informal literati portraiture. In this regard, one of the prototypical examples of its kind is the tomb relief of the *Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove and Rong Qiqi* from the Six Dynasties period (220–589) (fig. 1.1).¹⁰

⁸ Informal portraiture "addressed small groups of friends and associates." See Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self*, 9.

⁹ Throughout this dissertation, unless otherwise noted, I will use the term 'informal portrait' to refer to 'informal literati portrait,' excluding informal portraits that depict members of other social strata, such as emperors, Buddhist monks, and women.

¹⁰ For a detailed study of the *Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove and Rong Qiqi*, see Audrey Spiro, *Contemplating the Ancients: Aesthetic and Social Issues in Early Chinese Portraiture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990). See also Ellen Johnston Laing, "Neo-Taoism

This relief mural, datable to the late-fourth or early-fifth century, depicts eight gentlemen sprawled out beneath trees, engaging in such leisure activities as drinking wine, playing musical instruments, and chanting poems.¹¹ The Seven Sages were revered as paragons of eremitic virtue, and their images served as models for later portraits of reclusive literati. It is notable that the late Ming witnessed a remarkable proliferation of this subject.¹² While it is difficult to pinpoint the source of Zeng Jing's artistic inspiration, he would have been aware of the Six Dynasties tradition of portraying literati recluses, including the images of the Seven Sages.

A tendency towards archaism (*fugu* 復古) is another important characteristic of Zeng Jing's portraits, and it is therefore essential to examine his work in relation to earlier history of informal literati portraiture. Zeng, known as a passionate art collector, would have possessed considerable art-historical knowledge, which enabled him to imbue his portraits with antique qualities, including the classical style of the Six Dynasties period.¹³ The fourth

and the "Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove" in Chinese Painting," *Artibus Asiae* 36, no. 1/2 (1974): 5–54. For a discussion of the *Seven Sages* in the context of the development of early Chinese portraiture, see Seckel, "Rise of Portraiture," 14–21.

¹¹ The *Seven Sages* mural displays low-relief portraits of seven intellectuals who lived in the third century, including Ruan Ji 阮籍 (210–63), Ji Kang 嵇康 (224–63), and Xiang Xiu 向秀 (ca. 227–72), together with the image of the legendary recluse Rong Qiqi 榮啟期 (active fifth century BCE).

¹² See Laing, "Neo-Taoism and the "Seven Sages"." Laing shows that the late Ming popularity of the Seven Sages subject is related to the fact that the political and economic instability of the seventeenth century provides many parallels with the instability of the Wei-Jin period (220–420).

¹³ According to the records of his friend Cao Xuequan, Zeng amassed a painting and calligraphy collection. See Kondo, "Shozo gaka So Gei," 155.

century, when the *Seven Sages* moulded brick images were made, was the time of the portrait master Gu Kaizhi 顧愷之 (ca. 344–ca. 406), to whom Zeng was compared; his friend Cao Xuequan 曹學佺 (1574–1646) writes that Zeng was “born with Hutou’s (Gu Kaizhi) inclination” 生成虎頭癖.¹⁴ It seems to be no coincidence that Zeng’s stylized, linear treatment of his sitters’ clothing evokes the fine-line style that can be traced back to Gu.¹⁵

The development of informal literati portraiture is intertwined with the literati’s awareness and embrace of the eremitic tradition. The antique flavor in Zeng Jing’s portraits is not just a matter of adopting earlier styles, but in many cases of identifying sitters with exemplary recluses from the past. Zeng’s portraits and accompanying inscriptions are saturated with visual and literary allusions to the famous recluses of antiquity. The emulation of historical recluses was an integral part of the literati’s practice of reclusion, and the quality of archaism in Zeng’s portraits, both thematic and stylistic, is one of the ways in which that emulation was practiced. As Alan Berkowitz pointed out, “the characteristic pattern of substantive reclusion in China is firmly established” during the Six Dynasties period.¹⁶ Many recluses from this period served as models for Zeng’s sitters including the

¹⁴ Cited in *ibid.*, 157.

¹⁵ For a discussion of the figure-painting styles in Gu’s time, see Richard M. Barnhart, “Survivals, Revivals, and the Classical Tradition of Chinese Figure Painting,” in *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Chinese Painting* (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1972), 143–218.

¹⁶ Berkowitz, *Patterns of Disengagement*, 8. The Wei-Jin period, approximately the third to fourth century, had particular significance to Zeng and his sitters. For example, Zeng’s close associate Chen Jiru took inspiration from reclusive figures of this period in developing his own ideal and practice of reclusion. See Jamie Greenbaum, *Chen Jiru (1558–1639): The Background*

Seven Sages and other free-spirits such as Tao Qian 陶潛 (Tao Yuanming 陶淵明; 365–427).

Tao Qian, who the poet-critic Zhong Rong 鍾嶸 (468–518) considered the “paragon recluse-poet of all time” (*gujin yinyi shiren zhi zong* 古今隱逸詩人之宗), was celebrated as an archetypal recluse in later centuries, in both literature and pictorial arts.¹⁷ Zeng Jing and his sitters carried on the long tradition of venerating and representing Tao as a paragon of reclusive ideals.¹⁸ Some of Zeng’s sitters had their portraits painted with the symbolic attributes of Tao, while frequent and substantial references to Tao are made in the portrait inscriptions.¹⁹ The Tang poet-artist Wang Wei 王維 (701–61) had taken Tao as a role

to Development and Subsequent Uses of Literary Personae (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 28–37. Laing points out that Zeng’s portraits include many visual references to the Wei-Jin period. See Laing, “Neo-Taoism and the “Seven Sages”,” 53–54.

¹⁷ Cited in Berkowitz, *Patterns of Disengagement*, 223. On Tao’s reclusion, see *ibid.*, 215–26. For a study of Tao’s image in the Chinese pictorial tradition, see Susan Nelson, “What I Do Today Is Right: Picturing Tao Yuanming’s Return,” *Journal of Sung-Yuan Studies* 28 (1998): 61–90; “Tao Yuanming’s Sashes: Or, The Gendering of Immortality,” *Ars Orientalis* 39 (1999): 1–27; “Revisiting the Eastern Fence: Tao Qian’s Chrysanthemums,” *Art Bulletin* 83, no. 3 (September 2001): 437–60. For a discussion of the tradition of illustrating Tao’s life, see Shi-ye Liu, “An Actor in Real Life: Chen Hongshou’s *Scenes from the Life of Tao Yuanming*” (Ph.D., diss., Yale University, 2003), 117–23.

¹⁸ On the history of the reception of Tao, see Wendy Swartz, *Reading Tao Yuanming: Shifting Paradigms of Historical Reception (427–1900)* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008). See also Kang-i Sun Chang, “The Unmasking of Tao Qian and the Indeterminacy of Interpretation,” in *Chinese Aesthetics: The Ordering of Literature, the Arts, and the Universe in the Six Dynasties*, ed. Zongqi Cai (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2004), 169–90.

¹⁹ For example, *Portrait of Jing Linzi* includes the chrysanthemum image, which is traditionally considered a proprietary attribute of Tao (fig. 6.2). Translucent gauze head covering and chrysanthemums were traditionally featured in portraits as exclusive attributes of Tao. See Nelson, “Revisiting the Eastern Fence.”

model for his reclusive life.²⁰ Wang himself may have painted portraits of reclusive figures of the past, and a portrait of the Han dynasty scholar Fu Sheng 伏胜 (second century BCE) was formerly attributed to him (fig. 1.2).²¹ Though it is uncertain whether Wang painted Tao's portrait, he may well have been familiar with one of the earliest known portraits of Tao painted by his contemporary Zheng Qian 鄭虔 (d. 764).²²

The Northern Song poet Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1101) famously aspired to emulate Tao Qian as a way of practicing reclusion.²³ Su's intense identification with Tao was adopted also by his fellow artists, resulting in an increased production of images depicting Tao. Su's friend Li Gonglin 李公麟 (1049–1106), for instance, made several paintings of Tao, including a multi-scene illustration of Tao's prose-poem *Returning Home* (*Gui qu lai xi ci*

²⁰ On Wang's veneration for Tao's reclusion, see Jingqing Yang, *The Chan Interpretations of Wang Wei's Poetry: A Critical Review* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2007), 74–80. On Tang literati's reception of Tao, see Swartz, *Reading Tao Yuanming*, 48–73, 160–85.

²¹ This portrait of Fu Sheng is in the Osaka Municipal Museum. See Suzuki Kei 鈴木敬, *Chugoku kaiga sogo zuroku* 中國繪畫總合圖錄 [Comprehensive illustrated catalogue of Chinese paintings], vol. 3 (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1982), JM3–085. In the late Ming, this portrait of Fu was in the collection of Sun Chengze 孫承澤 (1593–1675). See Qian Zhongshu, *Patchwork: Seven Essays on Art and Literature*, trans. Duncan M. Campbell (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 58–59.

²² Zheng's portrait of Tao is now lost but listed in *Xuanhe huapu* 宣和畫譜 (Catalogue of paintings from the Xuanhe era). See Yu Jianhua, ed., *Xuanhe huapu* (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1964), 5:108. On Zheng's portrait of Tao, see Elizabeth Brotherton, "Beyond the Written Word: Li Gonglin's Illustrations to Tao Yuanming's *Returning Home*," *Artibus Asiae* 59, no. 3/4 (2000): 228–29.

²³ For Su's admiration and emulation of Tao, see Ronald C. Egan, *Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shi* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 229–36. See also Zhiyi Yang, *Dialectics of Spontaneity: The Aesthetics and Ethics of Su Shi (1037–1101) in Poetry* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 119–63.

歸去來兮辭).²⁴ In addition to such narrative illustrations, monoscenic portraits of Tao were also in vogue during the Northern Song.²⁵ The fascination of Su's fellow literati with Tao images seems to have been connected to their interest in creating portraits of themselves or of their peers. Su was known to have painted his self-portrait and to have had his portrait painted several times.²⁶ Su's colophon to his portrait painted by Chen Huaili 陳懷立 (active eleventh century) begins with a quote from Gu Kaizhi, testifying to his knowledge of the history of portraiture.²⁷ Li Gonglin was asked to paint portraits of Su and himself for Su's calligraphy scroll *The Classic of the Yellow Court* (*Huangting jing* 黃庭經), and Li also painted portraits of contemporary literati such as Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021–86) and Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 (1045–1105).²⁸ Mi Fu 米芾 (1052–1107/8), who commented on

²⁴ For a detailed study of Li's illustration of Tao's *Returning Home*, see Elizabeth Brotherton, "Li Kung-lin and Long Handscroll Illustrations of Tao Ch'ien's 'Returning Home'" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1992).

²⁵ Certain later copies of Li's illustration of *Returning Home* also include a frontispiece portrait of Tao. For an example in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, see Wu Tung, *Tales from the Land of Dragons: 1000 Years of Chinese Painting* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1997), cat. no. 89.

²⁶ The late Ming painter Lan Ying 藍瑛 (1585–1664 or later) records seeing a woodblock print of Su's self-portrait of 1094. See Craig Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 96–97.

²⁷ For a translation of Su's colophon to Chen's portrait of Su, see Egan, *Word, Image, and Deed*, 282–85.

²⁸ See Robert E. Harrist, Jr., *Painting and Private Life in Eleventh-Century China: Mountain Villa by Li Gonglin* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 22–24.

a Tang-period illustration of Tao's *Returning Home*, made a self-portrait engraving (fig. 1.3).²⁹

The portrait oeuvre of the Yuan master Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫 (1254–1322) demonstrates that the informal portraits of historical figures and of contemporary literati were not distinct categories, but were interconnected. In a similar vein, Zhao's choice of subject matter and style shows that his portraits were strongly indebted to classical sources. Zhao painted a self-portrait as well as portraits of such reclusive intellectuals as Laozi 老子 (sixth century BCE), Xie Kun 謝鯤 (280–322), Tao Qian, and Su Shi.³⁰ Zhao's portrait of Tao, which is now lost, must also have been an image of the recluse persona.³¹ Zhao's portrait of Su, dated 1301, portrays him wearing a black-trimmed white robe and a black headgear, the so-called Dongpo (Su's sobriquet) hat (fig. 1.4).³² Zhao may have intended to

²⁹ Mi's comment on a Tang painting of Tao's *Returning Home* is recorded in *Huashi* 畫史 [History of painting], in *Huapin congshu* 畫品叢書 [Collectanea of works on painting], ed. Yu Anlan (Shanghai: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1982), 193. An engraving of Mi Fu's self-portrait is introduced in Peter C. Sturman, *Mi Fu: Style and the Art of Calligraphy in Northern Song China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 87–90.

³⁰ On Zhao's figure and portrait painting, see Shane McCausland, *Zhao Mengfu: Calligraphy and Painting for Khubilai's China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011), 155–75.

³¹ The Yuan scholar Yu Ji's 虞集 (1272–1348) colophon to this portrait survives. According to Yu, many portraits of Tao were passed down by the time Zhao painted Tao. For a translation of Yu's colophon, see McCausland, *Zhao Mengfu*, 156. In addition, Zhao wrote a poem on a picture of Tao's *Returning Home*, which is translated in Frederick W. Mote, "Confucian Eremitism in the Yüan Period," in *The Confucian Persuasion*, ed. Arthur F. Wright (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960), 236–37.

³² On Zhao's portrait of Su, now in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, see McCausland, *Zhao Mengfu*, 76–77, 155–59. This portrait is also introduced in Wen C. Fong and James C. Y.

depict Su's visit to the Red Cliff, as the portrait was made for a frontispiece to Zhao's calligraphy album of Su's prose-poem *Red Cliff Odes*.³³ By combining Su's portrait with his literary masterpiece, Zhao expressed his respect for Su's literary excellence as well as his eremitic virtue.³⁴ Zhao depicted Su walking with a bamboo staff, one of the emblematic signifiers of the recluse. Tao Qian was likewise traditionally depicted holding a staff, as seen in his portraits by Liang Kai 梁楷 (ca. 1140–ca. 1210) and by Du Jin 杜堇 (active 1465–1509) (figs. 1.5 and 1.6).³⁵ The iconic image of the recluse as a man with a staff also appears in Zhao's self-portrait of 1299 (fig. 1.7).³⁶ Zhao portrayed himself as a recluse of high antiquity by placing his image in the midst of a bamboo thicket painted in the archaic

Watt, eds, *Possessing the Past: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996), 280–82.

³³ Su's visit to the Red Cliff became a subject of narrative illustrations during the Song, as exemplified by the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art scroll, attributed to Qiao Zhongchang 喬仲常 (active early twelfth century). On this scroll, see Julia K. Murray, *Mirror of Morality: Chinese Narrative Illustration and Confucian Ideology* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 71–73.

³⁴ Similarly, *Portrait of Laozi*, attributed to Zhao, was made to head a transcription of the *Daodejing* 道德經. On this portrait, now in the Palace Museum, Beijing, see McCausland, *Zhao Mengfu*, 160–63.

³⁵ On Liang's portrait of Tao, *Scholars of the Eastern Fence*, now in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, see Nelson, "Revisiting the Eastern Fence," 437–42. For a discussion of Du's portrait of Tao, *Tao Yuanming Enjoying Chrysanthemums*, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, see Stephen Little, "Du Jin, Tao Cheng, and Shi Zhong: Three Scholar-Professional Painters of the Early Ming Dynasty" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1987), 64–69.

³⁶ Zhao's self-portrait, now in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, is introduced in McCausland, *Zhao Mengfu*, 284–88. On this self-portrait, see Mu Yiqin 穆益勤, "Zhao Mengfu zi xie xiangxiang" 趙孟頫《自寫小像》 [Zhao Mengfu's painting self-portrait], *Gugong Bowuyuan yuankan* 故宮博物院院刊, no. 1 (1984): 37–40, 58.

blue-and-green style. A similar archaistic color scheme was adopted for his *Mind Landscape of Xie Youyu*, which was made as a recreation of Gu Kaizhi's lost portrait of the Eastern Jin literatus Xie Kun (fig. 1.8).³⁷ Zhao's portrayal of this ancient recluse once again manifests Zhao's revival of the archaistic style.

Another Yuan artist involved in the fashioning of reclusive identity through portraiture was Ni Zan 倪贊 (1301–74).³⁸ Ni's portrait, painted about 1340 by an anonymous artist, shows the reclusive gentleman enjoying his leisure time activities in his scholarly studio (fig. 1.9).³⁹ The plain-robed Ni is shown holding a brush and a sheet of paper in his hands and sitting in front of a landscape screen, all of which indicates Ni's artistic talent. In the accompanying inscription, Ni's friend Zhang Yu 張雨 (1283–1350) likens Ni to eminent

³⁷ On *Mind Landscape*, now in the Princeton University Art Museum, see Shou-chien Shih, "The Mind Landscape of Hsieh Yu-yü by Chao Meng-fu," in *Images of the Ming: Selections from the Edward L. Elliott Family and John B. Elliott Collections of Chinese Calligraphy and Painting at the Art Museum, Princeton University*, ed. Wen C. Fong et al (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 238–54. See also McCausland, *Zhao Mengfu*, 201–17. This painting contains the inscriptions written by Dong Qichang and Chen Jiru, who sat for portraits by Zeng.

³⁸ Ni was deeply involved with making portraits of the Yuan literati. See David A. Sensabaugh, "Fashioning Identities in Yuan-dynasty Painting: Images of the Men of Culture," *Ars Orientalis* 37 (2009): 118–39.

³⁹ On this portrait of Ni, now in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, see Itakura Masaaki 板倉聖哲, "Zhang Yu ti 'Ni Zan xiang' yu Yuanmo Jiangnan wenren quan" 張雨題“倪贊像”與元末江南文人圈 [The portrait of Ni Zan inscribed by Zhang Yu and late Yuan literati circles in Jiangnan], in *Quyü yu wangluo: Jin qiannianlai Zhongguo meishu yanjiu, guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 區域與網絡：近千年來中國美術史研究，國際研討會論文集 [Regions and networks: Research on Chinese art history of the last thousand years, a collection of essays from an international symposium] (Taipei: Guoli Taiwan daxue yishushi yanjiusuo, 2001), 193–221. See also Fong and Watt, *Possessing the Past*, 312–14.

literati artists such as Wang Wei and Mi Fu.⁴⁰ Consistent with Zhang's allusions to the past, the antiquities placed next to Ni's image bespeak the sitter's archaistic taste. Later, the Ming figure painter Qiu Ying 仇英 (ca. 1494–1552) imitated this portrait of Ni, testifying to the popularity of Ni's image during subsequent periods (fig. 1.10).⁴¹ Indeed, Ni held a heroic stature among Ming literati, including Zeng Jing's patrons.⁴² Zeng himself would have been well aware of the portrait conventions associated with Ni and his circle.

Ni Zan collaborated with Wang Yi 王穉 (ca. 1333–ca. 1385) on the portrait of the Songjiang scholar Yang Qian 楊謙 (b. 1283) (fig. 1.11).⁴³ Following the conventions for representing recluses, Wang depicted Yang in plain robes holding a staff. Next to Yang's figure, Ni added a pine tree and rocks, two natural elements symbolizing resilience, thereby

⁴⁰ Zhang's inscription is translated in Fong and Watt, *Possessing the Past*, 312–13.

⁴¹ On Qiu's portrait of Ni, now in the Shanghai Museum, see Wu Hung, *The Double Screen: Medium and Representation in Chinese Painting* (London: Reaktion Books, 1996), 171–72.

⁴² Ni was one of the literati painters most admired by Dong Qichang's circle. See chap. 2 in James Cahill, *The Compelling Image: Nature and Style in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Painting* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982). See also Susan E. Nelson, "Late Ming Views of Yuan Painting," *Artibus Asiae* 44, no. 2/3 (1983): 200–12.

⁴³ On this portrait, now in the Palace Museum, Beijing, see Sensabaugh, "Fashioning Identities," 119–24. See also Chen Mong-Fan 陳夢帆, "Yuan Wang Yi Yang Zhuxi xiaoxiang xi lun" 元王穉〈楊竹西小像〉析論 [Analysis of the small portrait of Yang Zhuxi painted by Wang Yi of the Yuan], *Shuhua yishu xuekan* 書畫藝術學刊 14 (2013): 301–20. For a reproduction of the painting, see *Zhongguo huihua quanji* 中國繪畫全集 [Comprehensive collection of Chinese painting] (hereafter *ZGHHQJ*), vol. 9 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1999), 36–37 (plate), 8–9 (description). It is likely that Zeng knew this portrait of Yang, as it bears a seal of Xiang Yuanbian 項元汴 (1525–90), for whom Zeng painted a portrait. See Sensabaugh, "Fashioning Identities," 124.

presenting the sitter as a high-minded literati recluse.⁴⁴ Wang was a portrait specialist who wrote a treatise on portraiture titled *Xiexiang mijue* 寫像秘訣 (Secrets of portrait painting).⁴⁵ It was probably during the Yuan period that collaboration between portraitists and landscapists became common practice, which became the norm for Zeng Jing's production of portraits with a landscape.⁴⁶ As attested by accompanying colophons, Yang's fellow literati seem to have gathered to appreciate the portrait of Yang.⁴⁷ In much the same manner, Zeng's portraits bear inscriptions written by the sitter's contemporaries.

The history of informal literati portraiture outlined above suggests that the notion of 'lineage' was significant in the literati's practice of reclusion as well as in the portrayal of reclusion in art. Chinese portraiture is bound up with assertions of lineage, and different types of portrait reify these different kinds of lineage. Ancestor portraits were made to worship ancestors and to reinforce family lineage. Imperial portraits were also used in

⁴⁴ For a discussion of the pine, rock, and bamboo themes, see Li Lin-ts'an, "Pine and Rock, Wintry Tree, Old Tree and Bamboo and Rock: The Development of a Theme," trans. John Hay, *National Palace Museum Bulletin* 9, no. 6 (1970): 1–12.

⁴⁵ Wang's treatise on portraiture is translated in Herbert Franke, "Two Yüan Treaties on the Technique of Portrait Painting," *Oriental Art* 3, no. 1 (1950): 27–32. See also Pan Yun'gao 潘運告, ed., *Zhongguo lidai hualun xuan* 中國歷代畫論選 [Selected articles on painting of China past dynasties] (Changsha: Hunan meishu chubanshe, 2007), 363–68.

⁴⁶ Zhao Mengfu is recorded as having painted settings for the fourteenth-century portrait of Wu Quanjie 吳全節 (1269–1346), now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. See Stephen Little and Shawn Eichman, eds., *Taoism and the Arts of China* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2000), 221–23.

⁴⁷ The colophons to this portrait of Yang seem to have been written at one gathering in 1362. See Sensabaugh, "Fashioning Identities," 123–24.

ancestral rites.⁴⁸ Imperial courts commissioned sets of portraits depicting historical figures with the intent to manifest the legitimacy of political lineage. Some early examples include the *Thirteen Emperors* scroll, attributed to Yan Liben 閻立本 (d. 673), and *Portraits of Sages and Worthies* by Ma Lin 馬麟 (ca. 1180–after 1256) (figs. 1.12 and 1.13).⁴⁹ Images of Confucius (Kongzi 孔子), under imperial or literati patronage, were made for the purpose of claiming political or academic lineage within the Confucian system.⁵⁰

The importance of lineage in portraiture culminated in the production of woodblock-printed albums that contain extensive likenesses of past model figures, which became popular throughout the Ming.⁵¹ Zeng Jing's patron Zhang Dai 張岱 (1597–1680?) published the portrait album titled *You Ming yu Yue sanbuxiu mingxian tuzan* 有明於越三不朽名賢圖贊 (Portraits and encomia of the eminent worthies of the three

⁴⁸ See Fong, "Imperial Portraiture," 47–60; Patricia Ebrey, "Portrait Sculptures in Imperial Ancestral Rites in Song China," *T'oung Pao* 83 (1997): 42–92.

⁴⁹ The Tang-period scroll *Thirteen Emperors*, now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, bears portraits of emperors from Han to Sui. The political implication of this scroll is discussed in Ning Qiang, "Imperial Portraiture as a Symbol of Political Legitimacy: A New Study of the 'Portraits of Successive Emperors'," *Arts Orientalis* 35 (2008): 96–128. Emperor Lizong (r. 1224/25–64) commissioned Ma to paint a set of thirteen portraits of such sage-kings and worthies as Fu Xi, Yao, Shun, the Duke of Zhou, and Confucius. See Shih Shou-chien, "Nan Song de liangzhong gujian hua" 南宋的兩種規鑒畫 [Two kinds of didactic painting in the Southern Song dynasty], *Yishu xue* 藝術學, no. 1 (1987): 14–20. See also Wen C. Fong, *Beyond Representation: Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, 8th–14th Century* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992), 298.

⁵⁰ See Julia K. Murray, "The Hanzhou Portraits of Confucius and Seventy-two Disciples (Sheng xian tu): Art in the Service of Politics," *The Art Bulletin* 74, no. 1 (1992): 7–18; "Illustrations of the Life of Confucius," *Artibus Asiae* 57, nos. 1/2 (1997): 73–134; "Heirloom and Exemplar: Family and School Portraits of Confucius in the Song and Yuan Periods," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 41 (2011): 227–66.

⁵¹ See Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality*, 97.

eternals in the Yue region of the Ming).⁵² As its title suggests, Zhang's album exemplifies how portraits were used to construct a lineage of eminent local elites. Lineage was equally important in the realm of informal literati portraiture, in which the literati continued to seek spiritual communion with their reclusive predecessors as a way of justifying their decision to choose reclusion over public service. The literati would have seen informal portraiture as a means to assert their position within a desired recluse lineage. This explains why the literati had simultaneous interests in historical and contemporary figures and why informal literati portraits tend to display thematic and stylistic allusions to the past.

The literati's heightened awareness of eremitic lineages seems to be related to the remarkable flourishing of informal literati portraiture in the late Ming.⁵³ Some late Ming literati desired to express their reclusive personae by casting themselves as reincarnations of a classical prototype, and for this reason the archaistic tendency in informal literati portraiture became even more conspicuous. Particularly notable in this regard is Chen Hongshou 陳洪綬 (1599–1652), whose oeuvre is characterized by an intentional blending of past and present.⁵⁴ The Tao Qian image remained a major source of inspiration for Chen,

⁵² For Zhang's publication of portrait albums, see Duncan M. Campbell, "Mortal Ancestors, Immortal Images: Zhang Dai's Biographical Portraits," *PORTAL: Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies* 9, no. 3 (2012): 1–26.

⁵³ Reclusive heroes were popular subjects for late Ming figure painters, particularly those who were associated with members of the literati. For example, Cui Zizhong 崔子忠 (1597–1644) painted imaginary portraits of Li Bai, Ni Zan, and Su Shi. See Andrews, "Style and Subject Matter in the Painting of Cui Zizhong," 97–145.

⁵⁴ On Chen's portraits of eremitic figures, see Tamara H. Bentley, "Authenticity in a New Key: Chen Hongshou's Figurative Oeuvre, 'Authentic Emotion,' and the Late Ming Market" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2000), 102–57; *The Figurative Works of Chen Hongshou (1599–1652): Authentic Voices/Expanding Markets* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 149–76. On the

reminiscent of the Northern Song fashion for Tao within Su Shi's circle. Chen illustrated Tao's biography, revitalizing the Northern Song tradition established by Li Gonglin.⁵⁵ Chen, who was known to have painted several portraits of Su, would have appreciated Su's adoration of Tao.⁵⁶ Zeng Jing also painted a portrait of Su, titled "Su Wenzhong Picking Herbs" 蘇文忠公採芝圖, which is the only extant portrait of a historical figure by Zeng (fig. 1.14).⁵⁷ Chen's attraction to Tao was shared among his peers; one notable figure is Zhou Liangong 周亮工 (1612–72), who commissioned Chen to illustrate Tao's biography.⁵⁸ During the late Ming period, Tao and Su seem to have occupied preeminent positions in the recluse lineage. Inspired by images of such historical recluses, Chen painted portraits of his contemporaries in the guise of the venerable recluses of the past.⁵⁹ In his portrait of Nan Shenglu 南生魯 (active seventeenth century), for instance, Chen depicted

archaistic tendency in Chen's figure and portrait paintings, see Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self*, 30–36. See also Bentley, *Figurative Works of Chen Hongshou*, 1–9.

⁵⁵ For a detailed analysis of Chen's 1650 handscroll *Scenes from the Life of Tao Yuanming*, now in the Honolulu Academy of Arts, see Liu, "Actor in Real Life," 124–66.

⁵⁶ See Bentley, *Figurative Works of Chen Hongshou*, 191–92.

⁵⁷ For a study of Zeng's portrait of Su, now in a private collection in Japan, see Miyazaki Eisei 宮崎英誠 "Sogei hitsu So Shoku saishizu" 曾鯨筆蘇軾採芝圖 [*Su Shi Picking Herbs* painted by Zeng Jing], *Kokka* 國華, no. 963 (1973): 26–34.

⁵⁸ See Hongnam Kim, "Chou Liang-kung and his "Tu-hua-lu" (Lives of painters): Patron-critic and Painters in Seventeenth Century China," 3 vols. (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1986), 1:91–110.

⁵⁹ Bentley sees that picturing contemporary figures in the guise of earlier cultural heroes was one of the characteristic trends in late Ming portraiture. See *ibid.*, 149.

his friend Nan masquerading as Tao Qian and Bai Juyi 白居易 (772–846) (fig. 1.15).⁶⁰

Chen's way of blending historical recluses with his late Ming contemporaries represents the culmination of the literati's abiding desire to identify themselves with idealized reclusive heroes. Zeng must have been well aware of Chen's archaism, as their social circles overlapped considerably.

Of equal importance to the literati's desire to assert their positions in a venerable eremitic lineage was their concern to foster a sense of camaraderie among themselves. To this end, group portraits symbolizing the friendship and solidarity among the sitters constitute a major trend within informal literati portraiture. Evoking such gatherings of the past as that of the Seven Sages, a tradition of informal literati gathering paralleled the development of the group portrait type called "picture of an elegant gathering" (*yaji tu* 雅集圖).⁶¹ Revered models such as the Orchid Pavilion Gathering of the Eastern Jin and the Elegant Gathering in the Western Garden of the Northern Song were commemorated and emulated by later literati and provided popular themes for group portraits.⁶² Such literati gatherings took place in landscape settings, and accordingly, their pictorial representations belong to the figures-in-landscape type. Pictures of literati gatherings were fashionable

⁶⁰ For a study of this 1649 portrait, titled *Four Pleasures of Nan Shenglu*, see Chu-tsing Li, "A Thousand Peaks and Myriad Ravines: Chinese Paintings in the Charles A. Drenowatz Collection," *Artibus Asiae Supplementum* 30, 2 vols. (1974), 1:29–40 (description), 2:7–9 (plates).

⁶¹ See Ellen Johnston Laing, "Real or Ideal: The Problem of the 'Elegant Gathering in the Western Garden' in Chinese Historical and Art Historical Records," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 88 (1968): 432–35.

⁶² For a study of pictures of the 'Elegant Gathering in the Western Garden,' see *ibid.*, 419–35.

among late Ming literati, as for example in the paintings by Chen Hongshou.⁶³ Although there are no surviving examples of Zeng Jing's group portraits, the thematic consistency of his portraits conveys a sense of shared identity and fellowship among his sitters. In fact, friendship appears to have played an important role in communal appreciation of Zeng's portraits.⁶⁴ In most cases, the sitter's peers gathered together to appreciate Zeng's portraits and to write eulogies.

Although Zeng Jing absorbed and assimilated the artistic legacy of his predecessors discussed above, Zeng was a different kind of artist than they had been, in that he was a professional portraitist. As we have seen, informal literati portraits before the Ming period were typically produced by literati artists. Professional portraitists, on the other hand, painted formal commemorative portraits such as ancestor portraits, and they mostly remained anonymous. Zeng was one of the earliest professional painters who exclusively devoted himself to informal literati portraits. It is notable that Zeng did not omit to write short inscriptions on his portraits, providing his signature, date, and sometimes the place of

⁶³ See Ann Burkuss-Chasson, "Between Representations: The Historical and the Visionary in Chen Hongshou's 'Yaji'," *Art Bulletin* 84, no. 2 (2002): 315–33.

⁶⁴ The late Ming witnessed a great rise in the popularity of friendship as a theme for discussion among the literati. For a discussion of the significance of elite male friendships in late Ming culture, see Joseph McDermott, "Friendship and Its Friends in the Late Ming," in Zhongyang yanjiu yuan jindai shi yanjiu suo 中央研究院近代史研究所, ed., *Jinshi jiazhu yu zhengzhi bijiao lishi lunwen ji* 近世家祖與政治比較歷史論文集 [Family process and political process in modern Chinese history], 2 vols. (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiu yuan jindai yanjiu suo, 1992), 1:67–96; Martin Huang, "Male Friendship and *Jiangxue* (Philosophical Debates) in Sixteenth-Century China," in *Male Friendship in Ming China*, ed. Huang (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 146–78. For a study of the concepts and practices of friendship and hospitality in relation to the Sino-European encounter during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, see Dongfeng Xu, "The Concept of Friendship and the Culture of Hospitality: The Encounter between the Jesuits and Late Ming China" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2011).

production. The inclusion of the painter's signature indicates Zeng's rising stature as a professional portraitist, and more generally, a shift in the history of Chinese portraiture that assigned a new prominence to the professional artist. In addition, Zeng's specialization signals the maturity of informal literati portraiture as an independent sub-genre of portraiture.

Indeed, informal literati portraits reached an unprecedented level of popularity during the first half of the seventeenth century. In light of the considerable cultural stature of his sitters, Zeng Jing's portraits appear to have been powerful agents in popularizing the informal portrait in the literati culture of the late Ming. Zeng's influence was immense not only in initiating an epoch in which informal literati portraits flourished, spanning the late Ming and Qing periods, but also in establishing key stylistic norms of the genre. Zeng's portraits were praised by Ming and Qing critics primarily for their high level of verisimilitude, achieved by his shading technique in the depiction of facial features.⁶⁵ By virtue of his exceptional technique, Zeng's portraits exhibit a more naturalistic rendering of the face and achieve a higher degree of individualization than found in earlier portrait paintings. In sharp contrast to the minutely detailed depiction Zeng gave to the faces of his sitters, he would usually delineate the rest of the sitter's form with a few calligraphic lines. This portrait style, characterized by a combination of highly individualized physiognomies and minimally rendered clothes, became the dominant mode of informal literati portraits from the seventeenth century onward. Zeng's disciples and followers, forming what is

⁶⁵ The scholar and art critic Jiang Shaoshu 姜紹書 (active ca. 1630–ca. 1680), for example, uses phrases such as “a reflection in a mirror” 鏡中取影 and “extremely lifelike” 逼真 to praise the naturalistic quality of Zeng's portraits. See Jiang Shaoshou, *Wusheng shishi* 無聲詩史 [History of soundless poetry], in *Zhongguo shuhua quanshu* 中國書畫全書 [Collection of writings on Chinese calligraphy and painting] (hereafter *ZGSHQS*), vol. 4 (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 2000), 857.

known as the Bochen school, consolidated and perpetuated their master's style of informal literati portraiture.⁶⁶

Informal literati portraits were intended as visual records of reclusion, and their cultural prominence during the period of Zeng Jing's activity reflects the desire on the part of contemporary literati figures to see themselves as hermits and thereby to immerse themselves in a life of reclusion. The political frustration of the late Ming literati would have been one of the major forces prompting them to cultivate this ideal and to have themselves portrayed as carefree recluses in Zeng's portraits. The late Ming, the period roughly from the Wanli (r. 1572–1620) through the Chongzhen (r. 1627–44) reigns, was a time of political and social instability, marked by factional struggle, eunuch tyranny and corruption, natural disasters, peasant rebellion, and the rising Manchu threat.⁶⁷ The Ming dynasty, which had

⁶⁶ Bochen 波臣 is Zeng's courtesy name (*zi*). On the Bochen school, see Kondo, *Bochen huapai*; Ma, *Zeng Jing yu "Bochen pai,"* and "Zeng Jing yu "Bochen pai" de xingcheng" 曾鲸与“波臣派”的形成 [Zeng Jing and the formation of the Bochen school], *Gugong buwuyuan yuankan*, no. 4 (2003): 13–22. Zeng's disciples, such as Zhang Qi 張琦 (active mid-seventeenth century), were key figures in the transmission of Zeng's technique to Japan. For Zeng's influence on Obaku Zen portraits, see Elizabeth Sharf, "Obaku Zen Portrait Painting: A Revisionist Analysis" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1994), 44–102.

⁶⁷ For a general overview of the late Ming history from the Wanli through Chongzhen reigns, see Frederick W. Mote and Denis Twitchett, eds., *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 7: *The Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644*, part 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 518–640. On late Ming politics in relation to the literati society, see Benjamin A. Elman, "Imperial Politics and Confucian Societies in Late Imperial China: The Hanlin and Donglin Academies," *Modern China* 15, no. 4 (1989): 379–418. See also Ying Zhang, "Politics and Morality during the Ming-Qing Dynastic Transition (1570–1670)" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2010), 145–266. For comprehensive studies of the Ming-Qing transition, see Jonathan D. Spence and John E. Wills, Jr., eds., *From Ming to Ch'ing: Conquest, Region, and Continuity in Seventeenth-Century China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979); Lynn A. Struve, *The Southern Ming* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984); Frederic Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise: The Manchu Reconstruction of Imperial Order in Seventeenth-Century China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

lasted almost three hundred years, eventually collapsed in 1644. In this time of dynastic decline, the political aims of the literati were increasingly frustrated, and many chose to repudiate an official career altogether and define themselves as recluses. Zeng's sitters were literati and other intellectuals active in Jiangnan who called themselves or were called by others, men in reclusion, literally, "hidden men" (*yinshi* 隱士), "scholars-at-home" (*chushi* 處士), "commoners" (*buyi* 布衣), and "mountain men" (*shanren* 山人).⁶⁸ In actual life, most of Zeng's sitters were renowned as recluses, Ming loyalists, or political martyrs.

The dichotomous struggle between officialdom and reclusion, which had long permeated the literati mindset, would have provoked an impending identity crisis among the Jiangnan literati in the political chaos of the late Ming. The literati's inner conflict between participation in public service and reclusive retirement was paralleled in the sociopolitical tension between the imperial capital and the Jiangnan region. In contrast to the political decline of the central government in Beijing, Jiangnan became the counter-locus of economic, cultural, and social power.⁶⁹ It seems that the Jiangnan local elites, though politically marginalized, built up a kind of regional self-esteem through their choice of

⁶⁸ For a discussion of the concepts and terminology relating to reclusion in China, see Berkowitz, *Patterns of Disengagement*, 17–63.

⁶⁹ For some recent studies on late Ming Jiangnan society, see Richard von Glahn, "Municipal Reform and Urban Social Conflict in Late Ming Jiangnan," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 50, no. 2 (1991): 280–307. Paolo Santangelo, "Urban Society in Late Imperial Suzhou," trans. Adam Victor, in *Cities of Jiangnan in Late Imperial China*, ed. Linda Cooke Johnson (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 81–116. Si-yen Fei, *Negotiating Urban Space: Urbanization and Late Ming Nanjing* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009). Yoshinobu Shiba, "On the Emergence and Intensification of the Pattern of Rural-Urban Continuum in Late Imperial Jiangnan Society," in *The Economy of Lower Yangzi Delta in Late Imperial China: Connecting Money, Markets, and Institutions*, ed., Billy K. L. So (New York: Routledge, 2013), 149–207.

reclusion over officialdom. The overarching theme of reclusion in Zeng Jing's portraits testifies to the intimate link between the Jiangnan local identity and eremitism. In contrast with the tradition of official portraits, Zeng's informal portraits emerge as artifacts of a counter-cultural trend in Jiangnan. Considering Zeng's strong ties to Jiangnan, it is notable that he was known as an artist who painted the portraits of "the gentry from the San Wu region 三吳大夫家—the 'San Wu,' literally "three Wu," is largely equivalent to the Jiangnan region."⁷⁰

The late Ming literati, who settled in Jiangnan after having withdrawn from government service, would have Jiangnan the heartland of reclusive culture. Many reclusive literati in Jiangnan immersed themselves in artistic activities as an alternative to pursuing an official career in the capital, and the theme of reclusion became prominent in the late Ming Jiangnan art scene. The literati artists utilized a range of painting genres to create reclusive personae through visual tropes that express the politics and aesthetics of reclusion. Landscape was an important symbol of reclusive life and was the most favored genre of late Ming literati painting. Correspondingly, the notion of 'being in nature' is an important concept in Zeng Jing's portraits. Indeed, together with the *buyi*, "(wearer of) plain cotton robes," mentioned above, the term *shanren*, "mountain man," conveys the essence of Zeng's portraits. Approximately half of Zeng's extant paintings feature landscape backgrounds, which establish the sitters literally as mountain dwellers. Zeng's landscape portraits, in which the sitter is portrayed relaxing outdoors, were sometimes referred to as "painting of leisure

⁷⁰ See Fei Danxu's 費丹旭 (1801–50) inscription on the copy of Zeng Jing's self-portrait in the University of Michigan Museum of Art. For a translation of Fei's inscription, see Marshall Pei-sheng Wu, *The Orchid Pavilion Gathering*, 2 vols. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2000), 1:259.

activity” (*xingle tu* 行樂圖).⁷¹ Such portraits can thus be understood as having evolved from the existing genre of figure-in-landscape painting. Even without a landscape setting, Zeng’s portraits typically depict the sitters as if they were placed in nature by depicting them with a walking stick, sitting on a rock and so on.

The literary additions to Zeng Jing’s portraits help to convey the complexity of the sitters’ reclusive mindset and the social relations that bound together like-minded literati, which could not be fully expressed through visual images alone. Whereas superscriptions on ancestor portraits were used only sparingly, most of the inscriptions on Zeng’s portraits tend to be lengthy and were often accompanied by a number of subsequent colophons, which testifies to the importance of literary culture in the life of the literati and the intimate relationship between word and image in literati aesthetics. These inscriptions, usually written by the sitter’s peers and friends, typically describe in expressive and figurative language the sitter’s personality and the friendship that bound the sitter and inscriber. Zeng’s sitters and their companions shared a sense of camaraderie as recluses through the collective acts of appreciating and inscribing portraits.

The changed role and content of the inscriptions on Zeng Jing’s portraits point to an important shift in the function of the portrait from ritual object to one intended for individual expression, social posturing, and aesthetic appreciation. The movement of portrait painting away from the ritual context is one of the distinctive characteristics of Zeng’s portraits. Traditionally, Chinese portraits had mainly served as iconic reminders of one’s ancestors

⁷¹ For an overview of the *xingle tu* genre, see Hui-Chi Lo, “Political Advancement and Religious Transcendence: The Yongzheng Emperor’s (1678–1735) Development of Portraiture” (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 2009), 5–22.

and played an important role in ancestral rites. The reception of portraits was thus intertwined with heavily formalized ritual protocols. Zeng's portraits, by contrast, were not strongly associated with ancestral or memorial functions. While it is possible that Zeng's portraits were also used as ancestral images by later generations, they were originally created to be appreciated by his contemporaries, as their accompanying inscriptions make evident.

Particularly notable is Zeng Jing's association with the famous biographer of the period, Chen Jiru, whose inscriptions frequently appear on Zeng's portraits from the late 1610s to the early 1630s. Interestingly, Chen recognized the correlation between biographical writing and portrait painting, stating that "When one writes biographies, tomb epitaphs or accounts of moral conduct, it is as if one were painting a portrait" 作傳寫墓志, 行狀, 正如寫照, 雖一癩一痣, 皆為摹寫. 不然, 不類其人.⁷² During Zeng's most prolific years, it seems that Chen collaborated with Zeng by providing a literary counterpart to Zeng's visual portraits, and the members of Chen's coterie in Songjiang shared in the ideal of reclusion by sitting for portraits by Zeng.

In this dissertation I argue that Zeng Jing's informal literati portraits portray a collective identity of reclusion on behalf of the literati in late Ming Jiangnan. Zeng's unrivalled fame as a portraitist was a product of the politically marginalized elite's desire to fashion their identities as recluses in reaction to the sociopolitical instability of the late Ming. Zeng's portraits are indeed one of the most telling evidences of the Jiangnan literati's fascination with the cultural practices of reclusion (*yin* 隱). The plain cotton robes (*buyi*) in Zeng's

⁷² Hu Shaotang 胡紹棠, *Chen Meigong xiaopin* 陳眉公小品 [Vignettes by Chen Meigong] (Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 1996), 164. Translation from Greenbaum, *Chen Jiru*, 104.

portraits function as the primary signifier of the political disengagement and reclusive lifestyle of his sitters—the term *buyi* was used as a common metonym for the recluse. The casual atmosphere of Zeng’s portraits, created by informal clothing, relaxed postures, cultural paraphernalia, and the scholar’s studio or landscape as setting, was designed to represent his sitters’ eremitic way of life, rather than their official careers.

One of the major goals of the dissertation is to reveal the subtle nuances that Zeng Jing used in his portraits to construct the sitter’s identity as recluse. The Jiangnan literati’s tastes and activities relating to seclusion were varied, complex, and sophisticated and we therefore need to move beyond such epitomizing concepts of seclusion as ‘wearing plain robes’ (*buyi*) or ‘living in nature’ (*shanren*). The strong sense of individuality that emerges in Zeng’s portraits pertains not just to the sitters’ physiognomies, but also to the subtle distinctiveness of their reclusive personae. I will show that the attributes of the sitters, including posture, gesture, head covering and props, were carefully chosen to express more nuanced aspects of their reclusive lifestyle. The visual character of Zeng’s portraits, therefore, cannot be limited to formal analysis; they are also subject to semantic interpretation. For example, varied types of headgear indicate differences in taste for archaism, and the depiction of figures in specific postures, surrounded by carefully chosen and arranged cultural accoutrements, signified the sitters’ professions, cultural tastes, and religious inclinations.⁷³ I also examine Zeng’s extant

⁷³ The indication of different archaistic tastes through the choice of headgear is evident in Xing Shengmo’s 項聖謨 (1597–1658) inscription on the group portrait of six gentlemen, *Venerable Friends* in the Shanghai Museum (fig. 4.14). In his inscription, Xiang specifies six different types of hats worn by the sitters. On *Venerable Friends*, see Li Chu-tsing 李鑄晉, “Xiang Shengmo Shang you tu” 項聖謨《尚友圖》[Xiang Shengmo’s *Venerable Friends*], *Shanghai bowuguan jikan* 上海博物館集刊 4 (1987): 51–60. See also Ning Yao, “Commemorating the Deceased: Chinese Literati Memorial Painting—A Case Study of Wu Li’s

works with an emphasis on the relationship between the images and literary additions to the portrait. Viewed afresh within the iconographical context, Zeng's portraits will emerge as visual and literary testimonies of the reclusive personae fashioned by and for the Late-Ming cultural elite in Jiangnan.

Remembering the Past at Xingfu Chapel (1672)" (Ph.D. diss., Heidelberg University, 2012), 42–45.

II. A Portrait of Zeng Jing as a Portraitist

The fact that Zeng Jing painted a self-portrait is exceptional. In the history of Chinese art, professional portrait painters only rarely made themselves the subjects of their own works. Self-expression was not a main concern for professional portraitists; those who specialized in ancestral or imperial portraits routinely even failed to sign their works, thereby relinquishing their authorship. Some literati artists, by contrast, particularly those of the Song and Yuan dynasties, such as Mi Fu and Zhao Mengfu, made self-portraits as a way of fashioning their identities. Nevertheless, there are only a handful of extant self-portraits of literati-amateur artists, as their fort  was primarily landscape painting. In the pre-modern Chinese context, self-portraits, wherein painter and sitter are one, were made either when professional portraitists possessed an especially strong sense of identity or when a literati artist decided to master the art of portraiture, the former being far rarer than the latter.

The existence of Zeng Jing's self-portrait suggests that he had a stronger, more assertive sense of selfhood than was typical among professional painters, a sense of self comparable to that of a literati artist. Indeed, Zeng fashioned himself as a man of literati tastes and lifestyle. Zeng's intimate social relationships and cultural interactions with numerous eminent literati attest to his quasi-literati status. In addition, whereas most professional portraitists remained anonymous before Zeng's time, Zeng inscribed his strong self-awareness as a portraitist on his paintings by including his signature. Zeng's self-portrait emblemizes his enhanced stature as a portraitist in the cultural world of the late Ming, which in turn is reflected in the fact that his portraits enjoyed great prestige within the mainstream of literati art.

The Portraitist in Spectacles and “Mirror-like” Portraits

Zeng Jing’s original self-portrait is no longer in existence, but it was passed down through several generations and duplicated by painters of the Qing period. A second copy of Zeng’s self-portrait, made by the Qing painter Shi Qu 石渠 (active late eighteenth–early nineteenth century) in 1797, is now housed in the University of Michigan Museum of Art (fig. 2.1).¹ According to the inscription on the painting, Shi duplicated a tracing copy of the original made by Xin Jizhang 莘季張 (active ca. 1760–ca. 1780) in 1769.² In this self-portrait, the elderly Zeng, dressed in a cinnabar robe, sits at his desk and holds a pair of spectacles in his left hand and a brush in his right. The presence of these spectacles corresponds to the record indicating that Zeng’s eyesight had become weaker with age.³ On the desk in front of him are an ink stone, ink stick, and small dishes for preparing pigments, clearly demonstrating Zeng’s identity as a painter. As these objects indicate the sitter’s

¹ Shi Qu’s 1797 copy of Zeng Jing’s self-portrait is introduced in Wu, *Orchid Pavilion Gathering*, 1:258–61, 2:128–29.

² According to Xin’s inscription transcribed by Shi, Xin copied Zeng’s self-portrait at Mr. Shu’s studio near the Chunbo Bridge 春波橋, which may refer to the bridge in Shen Garden 沈園 in Shaoxing, Zhejiang province.

³ See Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610–96), “Ti Zhang Ziyou juan” 題張子遊卷 [Colophon on Zhang Ziyou scroll], *Huang Zongxi quanji* 黃宗羲全集 [Complete works of Huang Zongxi] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1985), 39–40. Spectacles, which had been introduced in China by western merchants by the end of the fourteenth century, were imported luxuries in Zeng’s time. See Kaiming Chiu, “The Introduction of Spectacles into China,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 1, no. 2 (1936): 186–93. Zeng’s possession of spectacles is suggested as an evidence of his exposure to European painting. See Zaixin Hong, “Taking Eyeglasses Seriously: A European Shadow in Zeng Jing’s Self-Portrait from Late Ming China,” a paper presented in a symposium at the Seattle Art Museum in 2005.

profession as a portraitist, the stylistic traits of this Michigan portrait also point to Zeng's signature style. Although this 1797 portrait is a second copy of the original, it still preserves Zeng's known mature style, characterized by delicate color-shading of the face and concise drawing of the robe.

The multiple reproductions of Zeng Jing's self-portrait by a later generation of Qing painters like Xin Jizhang and Shi Qu suggest the presence of a cultic veneration of Zeng in the Qing period.⁴ The lack of any evidence indicating that Zeng's descendants commissioned these reproductions suggests that they were not made for family-based ancestral rituals. Rather, it is likely that Xin and Shi reproduced Zeng's image of their own initiative. This would explain why multiple copies of Zeng's portrait were made by two different artists within a relatively short time—twenty-eight years, and the portraitists themselves wrote inscriptions on the painting. Zeng's fame, well established in the elite circles of the late Ming, surely extended to Qing artists and critics. Zeng's self-portrait, as an image of the great portrait master, could have been worshipped among portraitists who admired Zeng's extraordinary achievements in the genre.⁵ Supporting this hypothesis, Shi's copy of Zeng's self-portrait was later shown to the famous portrait painter Fei Danxu 費丹

⁴ In his lifetime Zeng trained many disciples, who were known as the Bochen school. Xin and Shi may have wanted to identify themselves as Zeng's followers. For the Bochen school, see Kondo, *Bochen huapai*, 81–96; Ma Jige, “Zeng Jing yu “Bochen pai” de xingcheng,” 13–22.

⁵ From the seventeenth century, Zeng was often named an exemplary portrait painter. For example, the famous Qing scholar-poet Zhu Yizun 朱彝尊 (1629–1709) encouraged contemporary portraitists to take Zeng as exemplar. See Zhang Geng 張庚 (1685–1760), *Guochao huazheng lu* 國朝畫徵錄 [Record of the characters of paintings in our dynasty], 2:14a.

旭 (1801–50), who specialized in portraying women. Fei added an inscription on this copy, providing a eulogy for Zeng and the brief history of this self-portrait:

Mr. [Zeng] Bochen (Zeng's sobriquet) was a great master of portraiture during the Tianqi (r. 1620–27) and Chongzhen (r. 1627–44) reigns of the Ming dynasty. By adding layers of color washes, he always produced very lifelike portraits. In painting garment folds, he emulated classical methods. As he sojourned in the Pingjiang (modern Suzhou) and Zheshui (modern Zhejiang) regions, he painted many portraits of the gentry from the San Wu region. This picture was based on a small self-portrait by Mr. Zeng Jing. It was trace-copied by Xin Jizhang. Old Shi Xigu (Shi Qu's sobriquet) again copied it...⁶

波臣曾先生，爲前明啟禎時，傳神妙手。暈色添毫，無不逼肖，衣紋位置有古法。嘗遊於平江瀾水間，三吳大夫家，影像出先生手者爲多。是圖，乃先生自寫小像，莘君季張有摹本，石翁西谷再臨之...

Fei Danxu's inscription encapsulates Zeng Jing's art of portraiture. Above all, Fei notes that Zeng applied many layers of color washes in order to create lifelike portraits, a technique that is equally noticeable in Shi's copy of Zeng's self-portrait. It was the exquisitely subtle shading and rich coloring that made Zeng's portraits widely famous for their veristic quality. Like Fei's account, most of the Qing commentaries on Zeng praise his mirror-like depictions of facial features, pointing to this unique wash-layering technique.

In Zeng Jing's portraits, a realistic depiction of the sitter's visage is accentuated by the contrast of the sketchy, calligraphic manner of their garments, as shown in the Michigan

⁶ Translation slightly modified from Wu, *Orchid Pavilion Gathering*, 1:259. Fei's inscription is transcribed in *ibid.*

copy of the self-portrait (fig. 2.1). Fei Danxu explains that Zeng's simple delineation of clothing with a few bold, flowing lines is derived from 'classical methods.' In the same vein, the Qing critic Wu Xiu 吳修 (1764–1827) notes that Zeng's portraits possess "the simple majesty of the Song dynasty painters" 宋人渾穆之意.⁷ As opposed to his archaic style in depicting garments, Zeng's technique of layered color washes in facial depictions must have been considered a novel, innovative method. The blending of realistic shading in the face and terse brushwork for clothing, which combined new and traditional styles respectively, was recognized as Zeng's distinctive personal style. His painting technique was soon emulated by subsequent Qing portraitists, and his style of portraiture became the dominant form of informal portraits from the seventeenth century onward.

Zeng Jing as Jiangnan or Fujian Portraitist

Zeng Jing's portrait sitters, as Fei Danxu identifies, were the gentry of San Wu 三吳, literally 'three Wu,' which refers to the three regions that constituted the ancient state of Wu: Kuaiji 會稽 (Danyang 丹陽), Wujun 吳郡, and Wuxing 吳興. In the Ming period, the term 'San Wu' or 'Wu' was used to indicate the cultural identity of the Jiangnan region, the lower reaches of the Yangtze River.⁸ Zeng's extant portraits depict the leading figures in the cultural world of the late Ming Jiangnan, including scholars, artists, collectors, and

⁷ Wu Xiu, *Qingxiguan lunhua jueju* 青霞館論畫絕句 [Quatrains of discussions on painting at the Qingxi hall] (Shanghai: Mu Geng zhai, 1876), 30a.

⁸ 'Wu' or 'San Wu' was a significant term for Ming literati artists from Jiangnan to express their regional identity of art and culture, as exemplified in the case of Wen Zhengming 文徵明 (1470–1559). See Craig Clunas, *Elegant Debts: The Social Art of Wen Zhengming* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 93–110.

physicians. The significance of Zeng's portraits is enhanced by celebrity status of those he depicted, such as Dong Qichang, Chen Jiru, and Wang Shimin, among other notables of the Jiangnan region.

Receiving commissions to paint portraits of respected Jiangnan celebrities, Zeng Jing had kept moving around the cities in Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces including Huating (modern Songjiang), Suzhou, Hangzhou, Ningbo, and Yuyao, while based in Nanjing. It is not surprising that Xin Jizhang, Shi Qu, and Fei Danxu, who were involved in making copies of Zeng's self-portrait, were all Jiangnan-based portrait painters.⁹ These Jiangnan portraitists of the Qing period might have copied and appreciated Zeng's self-portrait as a way of paying homage to their prominent predecessor. Eventually they would have wanted to establish the artistic lineage of a Jiangnan style of portraiture.

Zeng Jing not only built up his clientele in Jiangnan, he also embraced the painting techniques used in the Jiangnan tradition of portraiture. The Qing critic Zhang Geng 張庚 (1685–1760) recognized the Jiangnan style of portraiture and associated it with Zeng:

... There are two schools of portraiture. One school stresses ink outline. After the ink outline is completed, colors are applied in order to capture the appearance of old and young. Their spirits are already transmitted through ink outline. This is what Zeng Bochen of Min (Fujian) learned. The other school uses light ink to capture the rough outline of the five sensory organs [i.e. facial features], and then fully applies color washes with pigments. This is the method transmitted by Jiangnan painters, and Mr. Zeng is excellent at this method. I saw Bochen's small

⁹ These Qing portrait painters had close relationships of long standing. Fei's inscription indicates that Xin was a friend of his father, and they studied together under the renowned artist and art critic Shen Zongqian 沈宗騫 (ca. 1734–1817).

ink portrait of Xiang Zijing (Xiang Yuanbian), and its spiritual breath was the same as that of a colored portrait...

... 寫真有二派. 一重墨骨, 墨骨既成, 然后傳彩, 以取氣色之老少. 其精神早傳於墨骨之中矣. 此閩中曾波臣之學也. 一略用淡墨鈎出五官部位之大意, 全用粉彩渲染, 此江南畫家之傳法, 而曾氏善矣. 余曾見波臣所寫項子京水墨小照, 神氣與設色者同...¹⁰

Zhang Geng differentiates the Jiangnan style, featuring wash-coloring (*xuanran* 渲染), from the other school of portraiture, which emphasized ink outline (*mogu* 墨骨). Delineating facial features with light ink (*danmo* 淡墨) instead of dark ink, the Jiangnan portraitists could manage to create an effect of subtle tonal gradation with vague outlines, which is similarly prominent in Zeng's portraits, especially his mature works. To enhance the shading effect from his wash-layering technique, Zeng must have preferred a light ink outline to a dark ink outline. Consequently, the stylistic features of Zeng's portraits correspond to the Jiangnan style characterized by contour lines in light ink and rich color wash, even though he was known to equally master the other method that more emphasizes dark ink outlines. 'Jiangnan' is significant in understanding Zeng's portraits: he not only painted portraits of Jiangnan local elites: he also adopted the Jiangnan method of portrait painting, which helped form the basis of his style.

Zeng Jing's great popularity in late Ming Jiangnan is attested to by the owner of his self-portrait. A great-grandson of the famous collector and connoisseur Xiang Yuanbian 項元汴

¹⁰ Zhang Geng, *Guochao huazheng lu*, 2:14b.

(1525–90) owned the original Zeng self-portrait, from which Xin Jizhang then made a traced copy.¹¹ According to Zhang Geng’s passage above, Zeng once painted “a small ink portrait of Xiang Yuanbian” 項子京水墨小照, which is now lost.¹² If Zeng had painted Xiang’s portrait from life, this young portraitist in his twenties would have already been recognized by the most influential art collector of the sixteenth century. The great painting collection of Xiang probably was a critical source of creativity for Zeng, enabling him to revitalize earlier traditions of portraiture, such as the abovementioned classical methods that emphasized calligraphic brushwork.¹³

Zeng Jing maintained a long standing relationship with the Xiang family from Jiaying 嘉興, whose patronage would have nourished and helped shape his artistic development. When painting a portrait of Dong Qichang, Zeng collaborated with Xiang Yuanbian’s grandson Xiang Shengmo 項聖謨 (1597–1658), who later worked on several occasions with Zeng’s direct disciples.¹⁴ Zeng’s self-portrait might have entered the Xiang family collection

¹¹ This provenance of Zeng’s self-portrait supports the fact that this painting had not been used for codified ancestral rites.

¹² Zhang Geng, *Guochao huazheng lu*, 2:14b.

¹³ For some recent studies of Xiang Yuanbian’s art collection, see Yang Lili 楊麗麗, *Tianlai chuan han: Mingdai Jiaying Xiang Yuanbian jiazhu de jiancang yu yishu* 天籟傳翰: 明代嘉興項元汴家族的鑑藏與藝術 [(Hall of) Heavenly Sounds transmit brushwork: art collection and art of Xiang Yuanbian family in Jiaying during the Ming period] (Taipei: Shitou, 2012); Feng Zhiguo 封治國, *Yu gu tong yu: Xiang Yuanbian shuhua jiancang yanjiu* 與古同游: 項元汴書畫鑒藏研究 [Playing with antiques: study on Xiang Yuanbian’s connoisseurship of calligraphy and painting] (Hangzhou: Zhongguo meishu xueyuan chubanshe, 2013).

¹⁴ When painting portraits, Xiang worked with Zeng’s disciples, Xie Bin 謝彬 (1602–after 1680) and Zhang Qi 張琦 (active mid-seventeenth century). See Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self*, 36–40.

through Xiang Shengmo. The fact that Zeng's original self-portrait had been preserved by the prestigious Xiang family evinces Zeng's prominence in contemporaneous literati circles in Jiangnan, which is highly exceptional for a professional portraitist in early modern China.

Judging from his mature years as a professional portraitist who lived off of the remuneration from his portraits, and coupled with his lack of birth records, it is likely that Zeng Jing came from humble origins.¹⁵ From early in his career, Zeng built a fine reputation as a portraitist, and spent his life painting portraits of Jiangnan elites. As Fei Danxu perceives Zeng as a portraitist from the reigns of Tianqi and Chongzhen, Zeng's artistic heyday came in his later years after 1620. Despite social class differences, Zeng constantly interacted with his literati contemporaries from Jiangnan, as shown in his intimate relationship with the Xiang Yuanbian family. By virtue of Zeng's personal connections with the late Ming literati, his life, after gaining widespread recognition in Jiangnan, had been documented in several literary texts of the seventeenth century. The scholar and art critic Jiang Shaoshu 姜紹書 (active ca. 1630–ca. 1680) acknowledges his friend Zeng's exquisite artistry in his book of the history of painting titled *Wusheng shishi* 無聲詩史 (History of soundless poetry):

¹⁵ For Zeng's biography, Kondo, "Shozo gaka So Gei," 143–70. See also Lu, "Study on Tseng Ching's Portraits," 2–17. My biographical sketch of Zeng in this chapter is heavily indebted to Kondo's article.

Zeng Jing, whose sobriquet is Bochen, was a native of Putian. He relocated to Jinling (modern Nanjing).¹⁶ He had a noble and dignified appearance. The place where he settled had a galleried chamber and was located amid pure and clean scenery. The painter, with his legs stretched, painted portraits that looked like reflections of the sitters in a mirror, wondrously capturing their spirit and sentiments.¹⁷ Applying color deeply and richly, the dotted pupils of their eyes engendered life-motion. Although [they were] painted on paper or silk, the gaze [of his sitters], their frowns and smiles, are amazingly lifelike; even Zhou Fang's portrait of Zhao Lang does not surpass [Zeng's].¹⁸ People such as high dignitaries, luminaries in mountains, ladies of the boudoir, and otherworldly hermits were once portrayed [by Zeng]; regardless of being handsome or ugly, his portraits were always truthful. Therefore, upon looking at their portraits, the sitters wholeheartedly appreciate them, and they forget to distinguish self and subject. Whenever he painted a portrait, repeatedly painting and drying colors in dozens of layers, he did not stop until he achieved the height of his craft. It is no accident that his matchless skill fascinated the whole cultural world. He died at the age of eighty-three.¹⁹

曾鯨，字波臣，莆田人，流寓金陵。風神修整，儀觀偉然。所至蔔築以處，回廊曲室，位置瀟灑。盤礴寫照，如鏡中取影，妙得神情。其傳色淹潤，點睛生動，雖在

¹⁶ Jiang may have met Zeng when he served as a Minister of Works (*gongbu lang* 工部郎) in Nanjing. Jiang addresses Zeng as “youren” 友人 (friend). See Jiang Shaoshou, *Wusheng shishi*, 857.

¹⁷ The term *panbo* from “jieyi panbo” 解衣盤礴 (disrobed with one's legs stretched out) in the Tian Zifang 田子方 chapter of *Zhuangzi* 莊子. This term became an idiom for the carefree spirit of painters. See Jianping Gao, *The Expressive Act in Chinese Art: From Calligraphy to Painting* (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1996), 82.

¹⁸ Zhou Fang 周昉 (active eighth century) was a celebrated painter of figure and portrait paintings during the Tang dynasty.

¹⁹ Jiang Shaoshou, *Wusheng shishi*, 857.

楮素, 盼睞顰笑, 咄咄逼真. 雖周昉之貌趙郎, 不是過也. 若軒冕之英, 岩壑之俊, 閨房之秀, 方外之蹤, 一經傳寫, 妍媸惟肖. 然對面時, 精心體會, 人我都忘. 每圖一像, 烘染數十層, 必匠心而後止. 其獨步藝林, 傾動遐邇, 非偶然也. 年八十三終.

Jiang Shaoshu praises Zeng Jing's portraits for capturing the spirit and emotion (*shenqing* 神情) of the sitter and infusing life-motion (*shengdong* 生動) into the painting. While Jiang's appraisal is reminiscent of the traditional ideals of portraiture, it was Zeng's technique that he pointed out as unprecedented artistry. Jiang was aware that Zeng created "dozens of color wash layers" 烘染數十層 by painting over dried paint layers. This wash-layering technique enabled Zeng to achieve a new level of realism. With his extraordinary skill in producing lifelike portraits, Zeng from Putian could fascinate the elite circles of late Ming Jiangnan. According to Jiang's record, Zeng painted portraits for a variety of late Ming figures, ranging from officials and hermits to women. Judging from Zeng's extant works, however, his major patrons were the literary figures from Jiangnan, the geographical heart of the literati culture. The Jiangnan literati fully recognized Zeng's ingenuity and were eager to sit for his portraits.

Jiang Shaoshu employs the phrase "a reflection in a mirror" 鏡中取影 to praise the veristic quality of Zeng Jing's portraits. Jiang used the similar expression "a clean mirror reflecting a specular image" 明鏡涵影 to convey the astounding verisimilitude of an image of a *Madonna and Child* that had been brought to China by Matteo Ricci (1552–1610).²⁰ In

²⁰ See *ibid.*, 875. Jiang's use of the term "mirror" (*jing* 鏡) is suggested as evidence of adoption of Western technique in Zeng's portraits. See Cahill, *Compelling Image*, 116; *Distant Mountains*, 213. See also Harrie Vanderstappen, S.V.D., "Chinese Art and the Jesuits in

fact, given the unprecedented level of realism with which he depicted his sitters' faces, some authorities have suggested that Zeng was influenced by European painting techniques.²¹ The impact of European techniques on seventeenth-century Chinese painting is visible, and yet it remains speculative whether and to what extent Zeng was influenced by Western painting.²² The possibility that Zeng drew inspiration from European painting techniques can only be inferred from circumstantial evidence. Jesuit missionaries, most notably Ricci, were associated with the Jiangnan literati, including Zeng's friends and patrons.²³ Dong Qichang

Peiking," in *East Meets West: Jesuits in China, 1582–1773*, ed. Charles E. Ronan and Bonnie B. C. Oh (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1988), 108. However, it is noteworthy that the notion of 'being reflected in a mirror' had been used in other contexts in Chinese culture, not necessarily referring to realistic representation. See Lihong Liu, "Shadows in Chinese Art: An Intercultural Perspective," in *Qing Encounters: Artistic Exchanges between China and the West*, ed. Petra ten-Doesschate Chu and Ning Ding, with Lidy Jane Chu (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2015), 197–99.

²¹ Modern scholarly discussions of the possible influence of European painting on Zeng's portraits are summarized in Elizabeth Horton Sharf, "Obaku Zen Portrait Painting: A Revisionist Analysis" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1994), 78–93.

²² On the artistic interchange between Europe and China, see Michael Sullivan, *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 41–67. For European influence on late Ming painting, see Sullivan, "Some Possible Sources of European Influence on Late Ming and Early Ch'ing Painting," in *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Chinese Painting* (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1972), 595–633; "The Chinese Response to Western Art," *Art International* 24, nos. 3–4 (1980): 8–31. See also Hsiang Ta, "European Influences on Chinese Art in the Later Ming and Early Ch'ing Period," trans. Wang Teh-chao, *Renditions* 6 (1976): 152–78; Chap. 3 in Cahill, *Compelling Image*; D. E. Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500–1800* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), 65–72.

²³ See Albert Chan, "Late Ming Society and the Jesuit Missionaries," in Ronan and Oh, *East Meets West*, 153–72. On Matteo Ricci, see Jonathan Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (New York: Viking, 1984); R. Po-chia Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City: Matteo Ricci 1552–1610* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Michela Fontana, *Matteo Ricci: A Jesuit in the Ming Court* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011).

seems to have been exposed to European art, and Chen Jiru wrote a preface for Ricci's essay "On Friendship" (*Jiayou lun* 交友論).²⁴ Fujian and Nanjing, where Zeng was born and resided, were regions in which European trade and Jesuit activity were present.²⁵ Regardless of whether or not Zeng had a chance to see European figure paintings, Zeng's extant portraits do not show any detectable influence from European painting. As Marshall Wu points out, Zeng's shading technique features neither the characteristic treatment of light sources nor the chiaroscuro of European painting.²⁶ Additionally, it is worth noting that Ming and Qing critics saw Zeng as inheritor of the existing tradition of portrait painting. As discussed earlier, the Qing critic Zhang Geng identified the Fujian and Jiangnan traditions of portrait painting and praised Zeng's versatility in these two local traditions.²⁷

As most historical documents acknowledge, Zeng Jing was a person of Min 閩, born in Putian 莆田, Fujian province, on the southeast coast of China.²⁸ Little is known about Zeng's artistic upbringing in Putian. However, the record indicates that Fujian was in fact

²⁴ On Dong's exposure to European art and culture, see Richard Barnhart, "Dong Qichang and Western Learning: A Hypothesis in Honor of James Cahill," *Archives of Asian Art* 50 (1997/1998): 7–16. For a translation of Ricci's treatise on friendship, see Matteo Ricci, *On Friendship: One Hundred Maxims for a Chinese Prince*, trans. Timothy Billings (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

²⁵ On Jesuit activity in late imperial China, see Liam Matthew Brockey, *Journey to the East: The Jesuit Mission to China, 1579–1724* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

²⁶ Wu, *Orchid Pavilion Gathering*, 1:121.

²⁷ Zhang Geng, *Guochao huazheng lu*, 2:14b.

²⁸ Jiang Shaoshou, *Wusheng shishi*, 857. Elsewhere it is recorded that Zeng was born in Jinjiang 晉江, Fujian. See Xu Qin 徐沁 (1626–83), *Ming hua lu* 明畫錄 [Record of Ming painters], 1:13b. Fujian was originally called Min. Zeng's contemporary scholar He Qiaoyuan 何喬遠 (1558–1632) wrote *Minshu* 閩書 [Book of Min] in 1629.

fertile ground for portrait production.²⁹ Especially in light of the remarkable realism of Zeng's portraits, the native pictorial tradition of Fujian must have helped nourish the portraitist's artistic development. As to the Fujian tradition of figural representation, there is a notable account written by the Fujianese scholar and bibliophile Xie Zhaozhe 謝肇淛 (1567–1624). Zeng painted a portrait for Xie, revealing that they knew each other personally.³⁰ In his *Wuzazu* 五雜俎 (Five miscellanies), Xie emphasizes the Fujian local tradition of lifelike images:

Among Min (Fujian) people, there are still craftspeople who carve small portraits out of wood. When a patron requests his services, the craftsperson has a quick, cursory look and leaves, without any elaborate planning. In the course of a day the image is completed. The size depends on the patron's order; colors are applied to match the appearance, and even a single strand of hair is accurately depicted. When the image is placed next to the sitter, it looks like the living person. This can be called surpassing skill.³¹

²⁹ One source lists Zeng as a student of Wu Bin 吳彬 (ca. 1543–ca. 1626). See Katharine Burnett, "The Landscapes of Wu Bin (ca. 1543–ca. 1626) and a Seventeenth-century Discourse of Originality" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1995), 33. Zeng and Wu were both from Putian, Fujian.

³⁰ Zeng's portrait of Xie, now lost, is recorded in Hang Shijun 杭世駿 (1696–1773), *Rongcheng shihua* 榕城詩話 [Poetry talks of Rongcheng], in *Zhibuzuzhai congshu* 知不足齋叢書, *Baibu congshu jicheng* 百部叢書集成 [Integrated collection of the hundred ministries] (hereafter *BBCSJC*), vol. 29 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1965), 14b–15a.

³¹ Translation modified from Sewall Oertling, *Painting and Calligraphy in the Wu-tsa-tsu: Conservative Aesthetics in Seventeenth-Century China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1997), 137–38.

閩人尙有刻木爲小像者。召之至，草草審視，不移時卽去。殊不見其審度經營也。越一日而像成。大小惟命，色澤姿態，毫髮不爽。置之座右，宛然如生。此亦可謂絕技也已。

The ‘small portrait’ (*xiaoxiang* 小像) described here is a statue, not a painting.

Considering its veristic nature, however, the statue of the human figure is closely analogous with Zeng’s portrait painting. This analogy is especially true since these wooden statues were painted in a detailed and realistic manner. The term *xiaoxiang*, which can be translated as a ‘small portrait/image/figure,’ had been used interchangeably to refer to both figure sculpture and portrait painting, which are smaller than life-size. When referring to painting, the small portrait (*xiaoxiang*) is a genre in which Zeng specialized. Xie must have understood sculptural and pictorial representations of the human form in the same vein. He constructs the Fujian tradition of realistic images of the human figure, and connects this local precedent to Zeng’s lifelike portraits.³² In the preceding passage, Xie actually describes Zeng as the restorer of the glorious past of portraiture:

The ancient masters skilled at painting were certainly good at painting portraits. This is the reason why figure painting was held in such esteem at the time... In my hometown, Putian, there is Mr. Shi whose fame has spread across the country. His images seem so realistic that they look as if they could smile and talk, and thus people marvel at them. Nevertheless, [his images] are nothing but a vulgar person’s work... Recently, there is Zeng Jing, also a native of Putian, and his

³² See Jennifer Purtle, “Objects without Borders: Cultural Economy and the World of Artefacts,” in *Crossing Cultures: Conflict, Migration and Convergence*, ed. Jaynie Anderson (Carlton: Miegunyah Press, 2009), 127–32.

brushwork is not in the least vulgar. His portraits, as big as two feet or as small as a few inches, are all lifelike. His skill became well known throughout the country, and it is said that he has accumulated a thousand pieces of gold.³³

古人善畫者, 必能寫真. 蓋時尚畫人物故也... 吾聞莆田史氏, 以傳神名海內. 其形神笑語逼真, 令人奇駭, 但不過俗子之筆耳... 近來曾生鯨者, 亦莆人, 而下筆稍不俗. 其寫真大二尺許, 小至數寸, 無不酷肖. 挾技以遊四方. 累致千金云.

Xie Zhaozhe recalls the prominent stature of portraiture in ancient times, and introduces two portrait painters from his hometown Putian. The nationwide fame of these local portraitists alludes to the well-established tradition of portrait production in Putian. What Xie emphasizes is that the view on portraiture changed drastically between the two painters, Mr. Shi and Zeng Jing. After losing its old prestige, despite its fine workmanship, portraiture had been considered a vulgar and lowly genre up until the recent times of the late Ming, as exemplified in the case of Mr. Shi. Only after Zeng appeared could portraiture revive its lost splendor as a refined genre that accommodated the aesthetic tastes of the literati.

Ascending from a ‘vulgar’ (*su* 俗) to an ‘elegant’ (*ya* 雅) genre, Zeng Jing’s portraits appealed to literati elites of the late Ming Jiangnan, so much so that he even accumulated a goodly fortune from receiving numerous commissions for portraits.³⁴ Xie Zhaozhe’s assessment of Zeng’s works as not being vulgar reflects their changed aesthetic quality and the newfound popularity of portraiture among literati groups. The late Ming renaissance of

³³ Translation modified from Oertling, *Painting and Calligraphy in the Wu-tsa-tsu*, 137.

³⁴ A polarity between ‘*ya*’ and ‘*su*’ is discussed in Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2004), 82–83.

portraiture came to pervade the culture of Jiangnan artists and intellectuals and lasted for the next few centuries. Zeng, from Putian, was the one who rekindled the vogue for portraiture in late Ming Jiangnan.

A Literati-minded Portraitist and Would-be Daoist Immortal

While Fujian's local tradition of portraiture helped to nurture Zeng Jing's artistic talent as a portrait specialist, the intellectual climate of Fujian led him to establish his self-identity as a Daoist. Sixteenth-century Fujian witnessed the birth of influential thinkers like Lin Zhao'en 林兆恩 (1517–98) and Li Zhi 李贄 (1527–1602).³⁵ Zeng's hometown of Putian in particular was an epicenter of the new religious movement called "Three-in-One Teachings" (*Sanyi jiao* 三一教), which also attracted the young Zeng's attention.³⁶ In Putian, Zeng had Lin Zhao'en as his teacher and embraced the late Ming syncretism of Buddhism and Daoism with Confucianism.³⁷ The Ming scholar Xu Biao 徐標 (?–1644) records that Zeng was once a follower of Lin, the progenitor of the Three-in-One Teachings:

³⁵ For the biography of Lin Zhao'en, see Judith A. Berling, *The Syncretic Religion of Lin Zhao'en* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 62–89.

³⁶ For the ritual traditions of the Three-in-One, see Kenneth Dean, *Lord of the Three in One: The Spread of a Cult in Southeast China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 185–226.

³⁷ For Zeng's relationship with Lin, see Kondo, "Shozo gaka So Gei," 153–54. For an overview of the religious syncretism in the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties, see Timothy Brook, "Rethinking Syncretism: The Unity of the Three Teaching and Their Joint Worship in Late-Imperial China," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 21, no. 1 (1993): 13–44.

... I cannot help but miss Zeng Bochen (Zeng Jing) sorrowfully. Bochen was a mysterious character from birth. He had followed Mr. Three Teachings Lin around, and he seems to have particularly gotten something (from this encounter). So he continued to paint portraits—he was known as belonging to the divine class [of painting] throughout the country, and he seems to have been enlightened beyond expectations (by painting portraits). He could not decide whether to develop his (artistic) talent or to seek after the Way. Naturally, old Chunyang (Lü Dongbin) suddenly appeared and controlled him, prophesying that he will live among water and clouds retreating to Wuxi. Following Chunyang’s message, (Zeng) built a storied pavilion and lived there. With a spirit tablet of the old immortal (Lü Dongbin), he performed ancestral rites all his life. Human? Immortal? Are they two, are they one? Unimaginable is this lord’s virtue! I wish, together with like-minded gentlemen, to uplift his beauty.³⁸

... 余不能不慨慕于曾君波臣, 波臣生意而靈異. 從林三教先生遊, 若別有所得. 已而業傳真, 稱海內神品, 又若別有所悟. 伎也進乎道乎, 宜純陽翁之忽忽左右之也, 卜居水雲, 將為烏溪隱. 用純陽命, 構層樓其間以居. 仙翁斲尸, 祝之終身焉. 人耶仙耶, 二耶一耶, 不思議公德也, 願與同人共襄厥美.

Due to his early exposure to Lin Zhao’en’s syncretism, Zeng Jing should have been well versed in the philosophical, religious traditions of Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism. Certainly Zeng’s religious background led him to absorb the rich traditions of portrait production concerning these three religions. The cult of Confucius had long been involved in the production of Confucius’s images, which increased in popularity during the late Ming

³⁸ Xu Biao, “Zeng Bochen gou Lü Chunyang xian lou yuan yin ba” 曾波臣構呂純陽仙樓緣引跋 [Postscript on Zeng Bochen’s completion of the building of the immortal Lü Chunyang] in *Xiao zhu er yan* 小築邇言, vol. 24, cited in Kondo, “Shozo gaka So Gei,” 153.

period.³⁹ In addition to the general importance of the figural representations in Buddhist worship, Chan Buddhism promoted the portrait production of actual abbots and monks.⁴⁰ The artistic tradition of Chan Buddhism, a dominant Buddhist sect of the Three-in-One, undoubtedly influenced Zeng in his training as a portraitist.⁴¹ Zeng actively engaged in Chan Buddhism, as evidenced by the portrait he painted of the Chan patriarch.⁴² Painting was considered a significant vehicle to propagate Lin's Three-in-One Teachings, which might be correlated to the popularity of the so-called 'painting of three teachings' (*san jiao tu* 三教圖) depicting Buddha, Laozi, and Confucius in one scene.⁴³ Lin himself encouraged the distribution of pictorial images to expand congregation, and Lin's images were worshipped in the Three-in-One shrines even during his lifetime.⁴⁴ Considering the extensive use of

³⁹ For visual representations of Confucius, see Murray, "Hangzhou Portraits of Confucius," "Illustrations of the Life of Confucius," and "Heirloom and Exemplar."

⁴⁰ On portrait production in Chan Buddhism, see Wendi Adamek, "Imagining the Portrait of a Chan Master," in *Chan Buddhism in Ritual Context*, ed. Bernard Faure (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 36–73; T. Griffith Foulk and Robert H. Sharf, "On the Ritual Use of Chan Portraiture in Medieval China," in *ibid.*, 74–150.

⁴¹ Lin's ideas about Buddhism were limited to Chan Buddhism. See Dean, *Lord of the Three in One*, 110.

⁴² For Zeng Jing's portraits of Chan masters, see Elizabeth H. Sharf, "Obaku Zen Portrait Painting and Its Sino-Japanese Heritage," in *Images in Asian Religions: Texts and Contexts*, ed. Phyllis E. Granoff and Koichi Shinohara (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 290–345. Zeng's portrait of Chan abbot is recorded in Huang Zongxi, "Ti Zhang Ziyou juan," 39–40; Xu Qin, *Ming hua lu*, 1:13b.

⁴³ On paintings of the three teachings in late Ming, see Mary H. Fong, "The Iconography of the Popular Gods of Happiness, Emolument, and Longevity (Fu Lu Shou)," *Artibus Asiae* 44, no. 2/3 (1983): 190–96.

⁴⁴ See Dean, *Lord of the Three in One*, 125–136. For a late Ming example of *san jiao tu*, see Ding Yunpeng's 丁雲鵬 (1547–ca. 1628) painting, now in the National Palace Museum, Taipei (fig. 2.2). For another Ming example, see Marsha Weidner, ed., *Latter Days of the Law: Images*

figural images in these religious practices, Zeng's religious affiliation with Three-in-One seems to be one of the significant factors inspiring him to be a portrait painter.⁴⁵

Xu Biao's record indicates that Zeng Jing venerated Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓, one of the famed Eight Immortals of Daoism, who is said to have lived in the Tang dynasty.⁴⁶ In the Three-in-One rituals, Lü was one of the major cult figures as a master of inner alchemy, which played an important role in Lin's religious practice.⁴⁷ Imitating Lü's life, possibly influenced by his learning from Lin, Zeng lived a reclusive life as if he were a Daoist immortal. Xu records that Zeng held memorial services for Lü for life. Considering Zeng's skill in portraiture, it may be assumed that he painted a portrait of Lü for ritual purpose. The worship of Lü became popular from the thirteenth century onward and was often associated with images of him, as exemplified in the murals at the Chunyang Dian 純陽殿, the hall to Lü, at the Yongle Gong 永樂宮 in Shanxi.⁴⁸ As in this early image of Lü, painted in 1262,

of Chinese Buddhism, 850–1850 (Lawrence: Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, 1994), 397–400.

⁴⁵ In this regard, it is worth mentioning that the Yuan literati who showed a special interest to produce portraits were involved in this religious syncretism. See Sensabaugh, "Fashioning Identities," 129–32.

⁴⁶ For the cult of Lü Dongbin, see Paul R. Katz, *Images of the Immortal: The Cult of Lü Dongbin at the Palace of Eternal Joy* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 52–93.

⁴⁷ Inner alchemy played an important role in Lin's Three-in-One, see Dean, *Lord of the Three in One*, 137–48.

⁴⁸ For historical images of Lü, see Little and Eichman, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, 324–27; Richard Edwards, *The Heart of Ma Yuan: The Search for a Southern Song Aesthetic* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011), 144–59. For the mural in Yongle Gong, see *ibid.*, 67–68. See also Nancy S. Steinhardt, "Zhu Haogu Reconsidered: A New Date for the ROM Painting and the Southern Shanxi Buddhist-Daoist style," *Artibus Asiae* 48, nos. 1/2 (1987): 5–38; Katz, *Images of the Immortal*, 149–76.

he was usually depicted as a reclusive gentleman wearing a pale-colored robe, whose appearance and clothing are reminiscent of the way that Zeng painted his sitters. As Lü's ardent admirer, Zeng must have acknowledged historical representations of this Daoist immortal. Zeng's veneration of the eccentric, carefree Lü Dongbin corresponds to the nature of his social relationships with the Jiangnan literati, who pursued a reclusive way of life rather than success in an official position.

In his home province of Fujian, Zeng Jing interacted closely with a number of local scholars and painted their portraits. Zeng's relationship with the scholar-poet Cao Xuequan 曹學佺 (1574–1646) shows that he shared the refined tastes and lifestyle of the literati class.⁴⁹ Zeng's friendship with Cao is notable regarding the possible influence of European painting in Zeng's work. Cao was a friend of the Jesuit missionary Giulio Aleni (1582–1649), whose Chinese name was Ai Rulüe 艾儒略.⁵⁰ As they were from the same locality,

⁴⁹ For Cao's biography, see Chen Chao 陳超, *Cao Xuequn yanjiu* 曹学佺研究 [Study on Cao Xuequan] (Changchun: Jilin renmin chubanshe, 2007), 47–99. See also L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang, eds. *The Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368–1644*. 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 1299–1301; Chen Qingyuan 陳慶元, "Cao Xuequn nianbiao" 曹學佺年表 [Chronological biography of Cao Xuequan], *Fuzhou daxue xuebao* 福州大學學報, no. 5 (2012): 75–81.

⁵⁰ See Giulio Aleni, *Sanshan lunxue ji* 三山論學紀 [Record of the discussions about the teaching in Sanshan] in *Tianzhujiao dongchuan wenxian xubian* 天主教東傳文獻續編 [Documents of the transmission of Catholicism into the East, supplement edition], ed. Wu Xiangxiang, 3 vols. (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1966), 1:419–93. For Aleni's religious activities in Fujian, see Erik Zürcher, "The Jesuit Mission in Fujian in late Ming times: levels of response," in *Development and Decline of Fukien Province in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, ed. E. B. Vermeer (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 417–57. See also Adrian Dudink, "Giulio Aleni and Li Jiubiao," in *"Scholars from the West": Giulio Aleni S.J. (1582–1649) and the Dialogue between Christianity and China*, ed. Tiziana Lippiello and Roman Malek (Sankt Augustin: Fondazione Civiltà Bresciana, Breiscia and the Monumenta Serica Institute, 1997), 129–200. Aleni played a significant role in introducing the illustrated Bible, such as the *Evangelicae Historiae Imagines*,

Zeng had been a congenial companion to Cao for a number of years and painted his portrait more than once. Cao wrote, “Thirty years ago, he (Zeng Jing) made a portrait for me, but it did not quite look like me. Thirty years later, he drew my portrait; I had become an elderly man of great worries” 三十年前, 子為余貌, 而不甚肖照, 三十年後, 子肖余貌, 而余已老人之大患.⁵¹ Cao wrote a departure poem to Zeng, which starts with the line, “By his brush that is not vulgar, he paints none who are vulgar” 以君無俗筆, 貌世無俗人.⁵² Like Xie Zhaozhe, Cao emphasizes that Zeng’s works are far from being ‘vulgar.’ It is interesting to note that, like Zeng, both Cao and Xie were from Fujian. Their favorable views, based on the dichotomy between the vulgar (*su*) and elegant (*ya*), might be related to their knowledge of Zeng’s refined and cultivated taste.

Zeng Jing’s literary talent and taste would have provided a basis for appraisal of his works as not being vulgar. Zeng was well versed in both the visual arts and literature. In his preface to Zeng’s poem, Cao Xuequan writes:

Bochen was not only good at painting portraits, but also talented at painting landscapes. [He] was not only gifted at paintings, but also brilliant at poetry.

to China. See Paul Rheinbay, “Nadal’s Religious Iconography Reinterpreted by Aleni for China,” in *ibid.*, 323–34.

⁵¹ Cao Xuequan, “Zeng Bochen wei yu xie zhao” 曾波臣為余寫照 [Zeng Bochen painted a portrait for me], *Cao Dali ji* 曹大理集 [Collected writings of Cao Dali (Cao Xuequan)], cited in Kondo, “Shozo gaka So Gei,” 154.

⁵² Cao Xuequan, “Song Zeng Bochen” 送曾波臣 [Seeing off Zeng Bochen], cited in *ibid.*

波臣不但善写照, 而且工山水也. 不但工于画也, 而且工于詩也.⁵³

Here Zeng Jing is described as a versatile artist who was talented in portraiture and landscape painting, as well as poetry. Cao Xuequan describes Zeng as a man of literary elegance (*wenya* 文雅), who likes to recite poems and enjoy nature. Zeng actively participated in poetry meetings (*shihui* 詩會), which were set up by Jiangnan literati and gathered a number of local scholars.⁵⁴ Cao writes that Zeng was “born with Hutou’s (Gu Kaizhi) inclination, [his poetry] was exactly like that of Youcheng (Wang Wei)” 生成虎頭癖, 酷尚右丞詩.⁵⁵ As a portrait specialist, Zeng may be comparable to the pioneering master of figure painting Gu Kaizhi; however, it is uncommon that Cao extols Zeng’s literary talent as being commensurate with that of the canonical Tang poet Wang Wei 王維 (699–759). Having fine taste in poetry, Zeng could fully assimilate into the cultural milieu of the Jiangnan literati.

Zeng Jing, whose talent was compared to that of the ancient master Gu Kaizhi, was a well-informed connoisseur of art. Zeng’s meeting with Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610–96) in Nanjing in 1641 is a good example that evinces the portraitist’s great enthusiasm for classical art:

⁵³ Cao Xuequan, “Zeng Bochen shi xu” 曾波臣詩序 [Preface to Zeng Bochen’s poem], cited in *ibid.*, 155.

⁵⁴ For Zeng’s participation in Cao Xuequan’s poetry clubs, see Kondo, “Shozo gaka So Gei,” 154–57. For Zeng’s poetry and activities in other poetry clubs, see *ibid.*, 159–62.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 157.

... In the *wuyin* year (1638), Bochen (Zeng Jing) visited the Yao River and painted my father's (Huang Zunsu) portrait. In the *xinsi* year (1641), I arrived at Nanjing and stayed at Jiufeng temple near Bochen's residence. Every evening at sunset, Bochen passed by my residence and invited me to visit his studio. I was unable to drink wine, so he served chrysanthemum green tea along with refreshments, and he took out his collected calligraphy, paintings, and antique objects to appreciate. I have had no news of him since...

... 戊寅, 波臣來姚江, 寫先忠端公像. 辛巳, 余至南京, 寓鷺峯寺, 與波臣之居相近. 每至薄暮, 波臣過我寓中, 邀往書室. 余不能酒, 黃花綠茗, 雜以果餌, 出其所蓄書畫, 古奇器觀之. 自後不相聞問...⁵⁶

The meetings between Zeng Jing and Huang Zongxi were set up for communal appreciation of calligraphy, paintings, and antiques. Zeng's friend Cao Xuequan notes that Zeng collected numerous paintings and calligraphic works as the famous Song artist Mi Fu did.⁵⁷ Cao writes, "A small room has no empty space, but by his bedside are piles of paintings and calligraphy. He does not have Wang Ding's [incurable] penchant for painting incessantly—can it be that Mi Fu has arrived?!" 斗室無余地, 牀頭書畫堆, 自非中散癖, 那得米家來.⁵⁸ Given that Cao's description of Zeng's art collecting was written on the

⁵⁶ Huang Zongxi, "Ti Zhang Ziyou juan," 39–40.

⁵⁷ For Mi Fu's connoisseurship in calligraphy, see Sturman, *Mi Fu*, 68–86.

⁵⁸ Cao Xuequan, "Dongri tong Zeng Bochen, Lin Yiqing, Gong Keguang, Lin Maozha, ji Lin Zhengze zhai tou de mei zi" 冬日同曾波臣, 林異卿, 龔克広, 林懋札, 集林正則齋頭得梅字 [On winter day, (I am) in company with Zeng Bochen, Lin Yiqing, Gong Keguang, and Lin Maozha, gathered at Lin Zhengze's house, and obtained the word 'plum' in my head], *Cao Dali ji*, cited in Kondo, "Shozo gaka So Gei," 155. "Zhongsan" refers to the

occasion of a literary gathering, Zeng would have been appreciating paintings and calligraphy together with Cao's circle of friends. By forming his art collection and interacting with his literati friends, Zeng cultivated a refined taste in art. His intense interest in classical art probably stemmed from his early exposure to the huge art collection of Xiang Yuanbian. As a serious collector and connoisseur of art, Zeng could emulate the classical method, which Qing critics noticed as an important aspect of his portraits.

By traveling within Jiangnan and socializing with the local gentry, Zeng Jing was able to embrace the local literati culture and identity rooted in Jiangnan. The late Ming period witnessed the new cultural trends of traveling among the literati, which led to the popularity of travel writing. Zeng's friend Cao Xuequan was an avid traveler and his writings of 'famous sites' (*mingsheng* 名勝) became famous, such as *Da Ming yitong mingsheng ji* 大明一統名勝志 (Compendium of famous sites within the united realm of the great Ming). In his preface to Zeng's poem, Cao particularly highlights his trips with Zeng to the territory of the ancient states of Wu 吳 and Yue 越, which is largely equivalent to the Jiangnan region.⁵⁹ Cao's reminiscence of their trips is followed by his praise of Zeng's sociability. On their travels, Cao noticed that Zeng became close friends with various intellectuals from the Wu and Yue regions. As Fei Danxu identifies Zeng's sitters collectively as the gentry of 'three

Tang painter Wang Ding 王定 (active seventh century), who held the government post of *zhongsan dafu* 中散大夫 (Grand Master of Palace Leisure).

⁵⁹ See Cao Xuequan, "Zeng Bochen shi xu," *Cao Daliji*, cited in Kondo, "Shozo gaka So Gei," 155. Wu and Yue were two distinct states but were traditionally considered a single cultural sphere. The term *Wu-Yue* was used to refer to the southeastern coastal and lower Yangtze Valley areas. See Erica Fox Brindely, *Ancient China and the Yue: Perceptions and Identities on the Southern Frontier, c. 400 BCE–50 CE* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 21–44.

Wu,' the local identity associated with the Wu region must have been embedded in the Fujianese portraitist's mind. Zeng's extensive network of relationships that he built in Jiangnan heightened his awareness of identifying as a person of Wu or Jiangnan.

The Recluse-Portraitist's "Friendship with the Cotton Cloths"

Cao Xuequan writes in the preface to Zeng Jing's poem, "Bochen's friendships, in retrospect, were formed only with the ancients, poor gentlemen, recluses, and chivalrous heroes" 波臣之交, 顧獨致重于古人貧士方外俠客.⁶⁰ Cao subsequently defines Zeng's circle of friends as "friendship with (wearers of) cotton cloth" (*buyi jiao* 布衣交). The cotton robe (*buyi*), as opposed to official attire made of silk, traditionally refers to a commoner without an official title or a scholar who withdrew from government service. In Zeng's time, the Jiangnan area, antithetic to the imperial capital Beijing, was considered the cultural locus where scholars out of office resided and led reclusive lives. The Jiangnan or Wu identity that Zeng internalized is germane to the term *buyi*, which emblemizes a life in seclusion. Cao's lifelong friendship with Zeng must also have formed the basis of their shared sense of identity as recluses or politically marginalized scholars. Through their trips to Jiangnan, where the cultural activities of the literati flourished, Zeng and Cao perpetuated their identity as recluses.

Zeng Jing enjoyed the companionship of, and found great fame in, the literati circles in the broader Jiangnan region outside his hometown of Putian. It is possible that after settling in Nanjing, a cultural center to which the late Ming literati flocked, Zeng became even more

⁶⁰ See Kondo, "Shozo gaka So Gei," 155.

deeply involved with the most influential literati of the time. No records are known about when Zeng settled in Nanjing, but he would have followed his lifelong friend Cao Xuequan, who obtained a minor government position in Nanjing.⁶¹ In the first few decades of the seventeenth century, Cao's literary activities flourished in Nanjing, and so did Zeng's production of portraits.⁶² Zeng's major patrons were scholar-gentlemen who resided in Nanjing and other Jiangnan cities, refusing to enter officialdom in the imperial court of Beijing. A majority of Zeng's friends and patrons presented themselves as recluses and concentrated on art and cultural activities. By witnessing the factional strife at the court, the Manchu threat, and with the fall of the Ming only a few decades away, the reclusive ideal of the Jiangnan elites overlapped with strong loyalist sentiments. Zeng's network of social relations was comprised of recluses or loyalists of Jiangnan, who commissioned and patronized Zeng's portraits.

Zeng Jing's association with the Jiangnan literati led him to pursue an idealized, reclusive life. Zeng developed a majority of his friendships with the local elites who withdrew from public life, which explains why his sitters are depicted as non-degree holders

⁶¹ Another possibility is that the young Zeng would have visited Nanjing, the second major center of Three-in-One, following his master Lin Zhao'en. From the 1570s onward, Lin sent disciples or he himself traveled to Nanjing to expand the teachings of Three-in-One. For the spread of Three-in-One to other cities outside Putian, see Dean, *Lord of the Three in One*, 125–36.

⁶² Chen was very active in Nanjing, organizing the Jinling Poetry Society (*Jinling shishe* 金陵詩社). See Chen, *Cao Xuequan yanjiu*, 63–69. See also Hsu Chien-kun 許建崑, “Wanli nianjian Cao Xuequan zai Jinling shishe de huodong yu yiyi” 萬曆年間曹學佺在金陵詩社的活動與意義 [The role of Cao Xuequan in the Jinling Poetry Society during the Wanli era], *Donghai zhongwen xuebao* 東海中文學報, no. 25 (2013): 177–98.

wearing informal attire. Zeng's own poem clearly demonstrates his sense of self-identity as a recluse:

Every day [I] recall the Plum-blossom immortal from my pristine dream;
With staff and sandals, [he] sought the hidden, breaking the morning mist.
Strange rocks yet here—a lofty scholar's integrity;
Cold blossoms still elicit the recluse's adoration.⁶³
[I] catch a glimpse of verdure passing the grass around the spring pond;
And wonder if that fragrance is from some land-grown lotus.
I have an innermost thought, a hope for living in reclusion;
Hesitating, I missed my chance to enter deep into the mountains.⁶⁴

每從清夢憶梅仙，
杖履尋幽破曉煙。
奇石尙余高士節，
寒花猶得野人憐。
乍看青過春塘草，
却恠香生陸地蓮。
我有幽精懷隱去，
蹉跎還負入山年。

The 'Plum-blossom immortal' (Meixian 梅仙) who kept appearing in Zeng Jing's dream would have been the Northern Song poet Lin Bu 林逋 (967–1028) from Qiantang 錢塘

⁶³ The term *yeren* 野人, literally "man of the wilderness," was commonly used to refer to the scholar who withdraws from public service to live a life in reclusion.

⁶⁴ This poem is introduced in Kondo, "Shozo gaka So Gei," 159.

(modern Hangzhou). Lin was famous for living as a recluse raising plum trees in his garden on Lone Mountain (Gushan 孤山) in the West Lake of Hangzhou. In literature and painting, the plum was repeatedly used as a personification of this iconic recluse Lin, and the cult of Lin became pervasive in Ming elite culture.⁶⁵ Zeng admired Lin for his life as a recluse, as his poem is filled with metaphors of seclusion. Zeng pictures himself as a man of the wilderness (*yeren* 野人), who lives deep in the mountains, wearing straw sandals and grasping a staff. He manifests his deep longing for a reclusive life in the poem's closing line. Zeng had a strong inclination towards seclusion, which also corresponds to his Daoist beliefs, adoration of Lü Dongbin, and so-called "friendship with the cotton cloths" (*buyi jiao*).

Zeng Jing's relationship with the young scholar Huang Zongxi confirms that Zeng was associated with the Jiangnan literati who were antagonistic to the unreliable political power in the imperial court. According to Huang Zongxi's record, Zeng visited Huang's residence to draw a posthumous portrait of his father Huang Zunsu 黄尊素 (1584–1626), based on the earlier version painted by another Fujianese portraitist Lin Zhu 林柱 (active seventeenth century):⁶⁶

⁶⁵ During the Ming period, for instance, the image of Lin Bu became a popular motif for lacquer boxes. See Craig Clunas, "Human Figures in the Decoration of Ming Lacquer," *Oriental Art*, n.s., 32 (1986): 177–88. A fine example of a Ming representation of Lin Bu is Du Jin's 杜堇 (active ca. 1465–ca. 1509) painting, which depicts Lin as a recluse walking with a staff under plum trees. See Stephen Little, "Dimensions of a Portrait: Du Jin's *The Poet Lin Bu Walking in the Moonlight*," *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 75, no. 9 (1988): 331–51.

⁶⁶ Not much is known about Lin Zhu, but it is interesting that Huang addresses him as a person from Min (Fujian), suggesting that he commissioned Fujianese portraitists both times to produce his father's portraits.

When my late father Zhongduan (Huang Zunsu) served as a prefectural judge at Ningguo, Min (Fujian) painter Lin Zhu painted a small portrait of him. After a martyr's death, Zeng Jing visited Yuyao and drew his portrait based on Lin Zhu's original. These two painters are noted masters, and by putting their portraits in the portrait hall, the spirit [of my father] is not far off. In the *gengyin* year (1650) when my brother Huimu (Huang Zongyan) was implicated in Mr. Feng's case, Mr. Nie dropped by my place with soldiers and extorted the portraits. Two portraits vanished in cloud and smoke. I tried every means but failed to restore them. At last I made Li Hua in my town paint a portrait relying on his memory and barely got a similar one...⁶⁷

先忠端公李寧國時，閩人林柱畫一小像。殉節以後，曾鯨至姚，依林本幅寫一通。二君皆名筆，張之影堂，魂神不遠。歲庚寅，余弟晦木為馮氏牽染。聶丞操兵到門，抄掠以去，二幅化為雲煙。余百計訪求不獲，遂令邑人李和追摹，僅得仿佛。錢牧齋謂先公狀若天神者，不可得矣。太夫人累年每畫小像，皆出凡手。最後有慈谿魏霞生者，無所傳授，多為村落傳神，無有不肖。為太夫人晚年圖真，稱合作。余甚喜，欲令追畫先公，而霞生輒死...

As Huang Zongxi documents that his father died out of loyalty, what Zeng Jing painted was a likeness of a Ming martyr. Zeng would have been aware of the fact that Huang Zunsu engaged in the reformist Donglin 東林 movement and died in the persecution of Donglin

⁶⁷ Huang Zongxi, "Zeng Huang Ziqi xu" 贈黃子期序 [Preface given to Huang Ziqi], *Huang Zongxi quanji*, 665–66.

adherents who opposed the eunuch Wei Zhongxian 魏忠賢 (1568–1627).⁶⁸ Like his father, Huang Zongxi remained loyal to the Ming by becoming a member of the Jiangnan-based Restoration Society (*Fushe* 復社). Huang's efforts to preserve and restore the proper portrait of his father Huang Zunsu were related to the intense factionalism that plagued the late Ming court and troubled his family. Huang thought that portraiture embodied the sitter's political persona, as exemplified in the self-eulogy on his portrait, which reads, "First persecuted as an opposition party leader, next outlawed as a fugitive rebel, finally respected as a scholar, I have lived three ages. Am I a child of the age or am I a man of multiple incarnations?"⁶⁹ Considering the fact that portraits of Huang family members were desecrated by the political foe, Zeng must have understood the political connotation of portraiture, and the risk to paint the portrait of a martyr. If Zeng had not felt sympathetic to Huang's loyalist sentiment, he would not have accepted a commission to paint portraits for him. Zeng was selective in choosing his portrait sitters, and his portraits were mostly made within the network of personal relationships.

In the mid-1630s, Zeng Jing, in his seventies, was in close and frequent contact with the celebrated essayist and historian Zhang Dai 張岱 (1597–1680?) from Shanyin 山陰 (modern Shaoxing 紹興).⁷⁰ Recollecting his sojourn in Nanjing in 1638, Zhang writes, "I stayed at

⁶⁸ For Huang Zunsu's role in the Donglin movement, see John W. Dardess, *Blood and History in China: The Donglin Faction and Its Repression, 1620–1627* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002).

⁶⁹ Quoted from Lin Mousheng, *Men and Ideas: An Informal History of Chinese Political Thought* (New York: John Day Company, 1942), 188.

⁷⁰ For Zhang Dai's detailed biography, see Jonathan Spence, *Return to Dragon Mountain: Memories of a Late Ming Man* (New York: Viking, 2007).

the Taoye Ferry, only one or two persons, such as Min Wenshui and Zeng Bochen, visited me” 余寓桃葉渡，往來者閔汶水，曾波臣一二人而已。⁷¹ Zeng’s acquaintance with Zhang is intriguing in that this prolific Ming writer was well known for his biographical writing.⁷² Like Chen Jiru, Zhang understood the intrinsic parallels between biography and portraiture.⁷³ Zhang’s stress on physiognomy as a way of understanding human character led him to publish illustrated biographies, such as the famous *You Ming yu Yue sanbuxiu mingxian tuzan*. Demonstrating his keen interest in portraiture, Zhang writes, “In the open space near the left side of my grave, I’ll build a hut where the Buddha and my portrait are enshrined. Monks will burn incense here” 壙左有空地畝許，架一草庵，供佛，供陶庵像，迎僧住之奉香火。⁷⁴ Zhang’s interest in portraiture seems to be related to his religious enthusiasm for Buddhism, which reminds us of Zeng’s syncretic tendency.⁷⁵ Zeng could have been painted a portrait for Zhang or provided designs for Zhang’s biographical book, which demanded many portraits of the Jiangnan literati.

⁷¹ Zhang Dai, “Yao jian shu hua” 姚簡叔畫, *Tao’an mengyi* 陶庵夢憶 [Dream Reminiscences of Tao’an] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1982), 43.

⁷² For Zhang’s publication of illustrated biographies, see Campbell, “Mortal Ancestors, Immortal Images.”

⁷³ See *ibid.*, 7–8.

⁷⁴ Zhang Dai, “Langhuan fudi” 琅嬛福地 [Blessed Land of Langhuan], *Tao’an mengyi*, 79.

⁷⁵ Zhang was well versed in Buddhist rites, in which figure images play an important role. For Zhang’s life as a Buddhist, see Timothy Brook, *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 37–53.

Possibly by moving in Zhang Dai's circles, Zeng Jing got to know the famous figure painter Chen Hongshou, who was a lifelong friend of Zhang. They together attended a boat party at West Lake held by Wang Ruqian 汪汝謙 (1577–1656), a wealthy salt merchant from Xin'an 新安.⁷⁶ Zeng's relationship with Zhang, Chen, and Wang pertains to his so-called "friendship with the cotton cloths," as they were all renowned recluses who dedicated themselves to the cultural activities of art production and appreciation.⁷⁷

In October of the *jiaxun* year (1634), accompanying Chusheng, I (Zhang Dai) was at "Unmoored Garden" to see the maple trees. Arriving at Dingxiang Bridge, the guests unexpectedly came to eight people: Bochen (Zeng Jing) of Nanjing, Zhao Chunjing of Dongyang, Peng Tianxi of Jintan, Chen Zhanghou (Chen Hongshou) of Zhuji, Yang Yumin of Hangzhou, also Lu Jiu and Luo San, and the actress Chen Xuzhi. I stayed and drank. Zhanghou brought white silk and painted an ancient Buddha for Chunjing. Bochen painted Chunjing's portrait for him...⁷⁸

⁷⁶ For this boat party in 1634, see Bentley, *Figurative Works of Chen Hongshu*, 188–91. Zhang Dai's friend Wang also entertained Chen Jiru and Dong Qichang in his Unmoored Garden. It is also likely that Zeng could have been introduced to Zhang's circle by Chen or Dong.

⁷⁷ In the epitaph to Wang Ruqian, Qian Qianyi wrote, "Ranming (Wang Ruqian) is definitely a virtuous man in the world, a gentleman of long life in the country, an aged hermit retired from the age of peace, and a loyalist who survived the disaster" 然明盖世之吉人, 邦之寿考, 太平之遺老, 劫后之种民. Qian Qianyi, "Xin'an Wang Ranming hezang muzhiming" 新安汪然明合葬墓誌銘 [The epitaph to Wang Ranming of Xin'an, buried with his wife], *Muzhai you xue ji* 牧齋有學集 [The Mu zhai records of learning] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1996), 1155.

⁷⁸ Zhang Dai, "Buxi Yuan" 不繫園 [Unmoored garden], *Tao'an mengyi*, 30.

甲戌十月, 攜楚生住不繫園看紅葉. 至定香橋, 客不期而至者八人: 南京曾波臣, 東陽趙純卿, 金壇彭天錫, 諸暨陳章侯, 杭州楊與民, 陸九, 羅三, 女伶陳素芝. 余留飲, 章侯攜縑素為純卿畫古佛, 波臣為純卿寫照...

Zeng Jing's participation in this event shows that his social relationships encompassed a wide range of individuals other than literati elites. Including Zeng and Chen Hongshou, eight cultural figures from all over Jiangnan gathered for this party on Wang's flower boat Buxi Yuan 不繫園 (The unmoored garden), whose name was given by Chen Jiru.⁷⁹ Many of the attendees were actors, actresses, and musicians who engaged in theatrical entertainment. At the party, these accomplished artists played musical instruments, sang, danced, and performed scenes from *Jin Ping Mei* 金瓶梅 (The plum in the golden vase).⁸⁰ This 'dramatic' party reminds us of the fact that pleasure boats like Buxi Yuan were often used as venues for theatrical performances in late Ming Jiangnan.⁸¹

The seventy-year-old portraitist Zeng Jing remained active in socializing with the younger generation of cultural luminaries from diverse fields of art.⁸² Zhang Dai's record of

⁷⁹ For Wang's Unmoored Garden, see Peter A. Basmarjian, "'Where Lies Intention, So Lies the Garden': Wang Ruqian's Pleasure Boat 'Gardens' and Perspectives on Space in the Late Ming," (MA thesis, University of California, Davis, 2013); Joanna H. Smith, *The Art of Doing Good: Charity in Late Ming China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 109–13.

⁸⁰ Both Zhang Dai and Wang Ruqian were well-known for their patronage of drama. Zhang owned a number of private drama troupes.

⁸¹ See Grant Guangren Shen, *Elite Theatre in Ming China, 1638–1644* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 140–41. See also Sophie Volpp, *Worldly Stage: Theatricality in Seventeenth-Century China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011), 71–77.

⁸² Zeng's great affinity with the younger generation is reminiscent of Cao Xuequan's poetic line about Zeng, which reads, "Without knowing his old appearance, (he) sees and seeks

Wang Ruqian's party shows that Zeng's specialty in portraiture shined even within the presence of the leading figure painter Chen Hongshou. As a portrait specialist, Zeng painted a likeness for Zhao Chunjing on the spot, probably in exchange for hospitality. Chen concurrently painted a Buddhist image for the same recipient of Zeng's portrait, which demonstrates how deeply Buddhism pervaded the literati culture of the late Ming Jiangnan and how it was closely associated with making secular portraits of the literati.

According to Huang Zongxi's record, Zeng Jing's final work was a portrait of the Chan Buddhist abbot at Niushou Mountain 牛首山 in Nanjing, where his son Zeng Yi 曾沂 (active seventeenth century) later became a monk:

... In the *gengshen* year (1680), I met Zhang Ziyu (Zhang Yuan), who told me that his teacher (Zeng Jing) passed away in the *dinghai* (1647) year at the age of eighty-four. [I heard that] his eyesight had worsened in his later days. For the Buddhist monk at Mt. Niushou, he painted a portrait of the eighty-first abbot, and at last he died. I recall the meeting in the *xinsi* year (1641), since then forty years have passed. The old generation have all passed on, and the realms of art and literature, medicine, and arts of divination throughout the country are not like the ones in the old days. It is not just portrait painting that is this way. Zeng's disciples of nowadays are few and far between, so how precious is a painter like Ziyu!⁸³

... 庚申邂逅子游, 言其師卒于丁亥, 年八十四. 晚年目不能細視, 為牛首僧畫八十一代祖師像, 遂終焉. 因念辛巳去今四十年耳, 耆舊凋零, 海內之藝苑方

something new like a boy” 不知有老態, 少年觀若新. See Cao Xuequan, “Song Zeng Bochen,” cited in Kondo, “Shozo gaka So Gei,” 154.

⁸³ Huang Zongxi, “Ti Zhang Ziyou juan,” 39–40.

技, 一切不如昔日, 不特傳影為然也. 波臣弟子今亦寥寥, 如子遊者, 寧不可貴重哉.

Though it is not the abovementioned portrait, Zeng Jing's portrait of the Chan monk Miyun Yuanwu 密雲圓悟 (1566–1642), now in the Nezu Museum, suggests a strong link between Zeng and the Chan portraiture tradition (fig. 2.3).⁸⁴ It is possibly that Zeng may have been remained as a lay Buddhist. He resided near the Buddhist monastery, Jiufeng Si 鷲峯寺 (Vulture Peak Temple) in Nanjing, and he sometimes worked at Buddhist temples, even when painting portraits of the literati.⁸⁵ Buddhism had penetrated deep into the taste and culture of Zeng and his circle of friends, as Chen Hongshou painted a picture of Buddha at Wang Ruqian's boat party and as Zhang Dai wanted to enshrine his portrait alongside an image of Buddha.⁸⁶ Chen Jiru and Dong Qichang, who promoted the production of portraiture patronizing Zeng, also had strong inclinations toward Buddhism.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ This portrait of Miyun Yuanwu is introduced in Suzuki Kei 鈴木敬, *Chugoku kaigashi* 中國繪畫史 [History of Chinese painting], vol. 2 (Tokyo: Yoshigawa Kobunkan, 1995), 289 (plate), 366–67. Suzuki suggests the possibility that this portrait is a traced copy of Zeng's work. For the relation between Zeng and the Obaku portraiture tradition in Japan, see Sharf, "Obaku Zen Portrait Painting and Its Sino-Japanese Heritage," 290–345.

⁸⁵ For example, Zeng's signature on a 1624 portrait of Xu Yuanling 徐元亮 reads, "painted at Bantang temple" 寫於半塘寺.

⁸⁶ On the relationship between the literati and Chan Buddhism, see Jiang Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute: The Reinvention of Chan Buddhism in Seventeenth-Century China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 47–82.

⁸⁷ For Chen's Buddhist beliefs, see Greenbaum, *Chen Jiru*, 37–44.

There is no substantial record of Zeng's later years other than his surviving portraits. Huang Zongxi extols the unparalleled artistry of the departed portraitist in the passage below:

Recently the so-called masters of portrait painting are broadly Zeng Bochen's disciples, such as Jin Gusheng, Wang Hongqing, Zhang Yuke, Gu Yureng, Liao Junke, Chen Erdiao, Gu Zonghan, Xie Wenhou, and Zhang Ziyu. Others are lacking the master's methods, and regardless of capturing the likeness or not, in the end they are close to common artisans...⁸⁸

傳影之家, 今所稱名手者, 大略為曾波臣弟子, 如金穀生, 王弘卿, 張玉珂, 顧雲仍, 廖君可, 沈爾調, 顧宗漢, 謝文侯, 張子游皆是也. 非是則無師法, 卽有尙有不肖, 究與俗工不遠...

Huang Zongxi confirms Zeng Jing's leading role in the flourishing of portrait painting in the seventeenth century, enumerating his many disciples. Zeng trained numerous disciples, who were later grouped and called the Bochen School 波臣派.⁸⁹ Zeng's artistry was directly transmitted to succeeding generations of portraitists, and it became the authoritative style of informal portraiture. Without master Zeng's method, Huang wrote, his disciples would not have produced lifelike portraits and might have remained vulgar craftsmen. Zeng was viewed by one of his peers as an artist who saved portraiture from becoming a stagnated,

⁸⁸ Huang Zongxi, "Ti Zhang Ziyu juan," 39–40.

⁸⁹ For Qing accounts of Zeng's disciples, see Zhang Geng, *Guochao huazheng lu*, 2:14a; Xu Qin, *Ming hua lu*, 1:13b. For a study of the Bochen school, see Ma Jige, *Zeng Jing yu "Bochen pai"*; "Zeng Jing yu "Bochen pai" de xingcheng."

vulgar genre. Along with Huang, Xie Zhaozhe and Cao Xuequan, scholars who had personal connections to Zeng, built a critical consensus that Zeng's portraits were not vulgar. Their respect for Zeng's art derived not simply from his production of actual portraits, but also from Zeng's personal character and the nature of their relationship. Zeng's committed, long-term relationships with his literati contemporaries testify to the fact that he not only painted portraits of literary figures, but he also participated in the literati lifestyle as one of them.

III. Informal Portraiture of the Leisurely Literati

Zeng Jing's early training as a painter remains unknown, but there are many indications throughout Zeng's work of his efforts to inherit and reinterpret traditional visual elements from portraiture as well as landscape paintings. The influence of the "figure-in-landscape" types of painting is particularly evident, as many of Zeng's paintings position their sitters against a landscape. Zeng's oeuvre is broadly divisible into two main types depending on their backgrounds: portraits with a landscape setting and portraits without a background.¹ The latter composition depicts a single, isolated figure against an empty, neutral background, reminiscent of conventional ancestor portraits.² Zeng's portraits of the former type, on the other hand, suggest that he also inherited the compositional and stylistic features of scholar-in-landscape paintings.

The depiction of human figures in a landscape has deep roots in the Chinese pictorial tradition as a way of representing communion between human beings and nature. Building upon this tradition, around half of Zeng Jing's extant portraits place sitters in a landscape background. The primary function of the landscape in Zeng's portraits is to visually underscore the sitter's reclusion. The natural settings of Zeng's paintings, invariably coupled with the sitter's plain cotton robes (*buyi*), represent the mountain man (*shanren*) in his mountain retreat.

¹ Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self*, 43.

² For a discussion of visual conventions in Chinese ancestor portraits, see Stuart and Rawski, *Worshipping the Ancestors*, 5–73.

Zeng Jing's portraits with a landscape can be divided into two major types according to the relative size of the human figures in relation to their natural backgrounds. The first type, reminiscent of more conventional figure-in-landscape compositions, depict relatively small human figures amidst large landscapes that dominate the pictorial space. In Zeng's portraits of Wu Mengyang, Hu Erzao, and Hou Dongzeng, for instance, the sitters are dwarfed by the landscape (see figs. 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3). The second type places an emphasis on the human sitter rather than the landscape background by adopting a close-up view—examples of this type include portraits of Weng Dehong, Xu Yuanliang, Jing Linzi, and Gu Mengyou (see figs. 4.15, 6.1, 6.2, and 6.4).

Wu Mengyang as a Commoner-Mountain Man

Zeng Jing's earliest surviving work is a portrait of Wu Mengyang 吳夢暘 (1545–ca. 1615), now in the Palace Museum in Beijing, painted in 1607 when Zeng was forty-three years old (fig. 3.1).³ This portrait was documented under the title of “small portrait hanging scroll of Wu Beihe” 吳北河小像軸 in *Rangliguan guoyan lu* 穰梨館過眼錄 (Catalogue of paintings seen in the Rangli hall) by the Qing collector Lu Xinyuan 陸心源 (1834–94).⁴ On

³ For a reproduction of this portrait, see Yang Xin 楊新, ed., *Ming Qing xiaoxianghua* 明清肖像畫 [Portrait paintings of the Ming and Qing dynasties] (Hong Kong: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2008), 49–50.

⁴ Lu Xinyuan, “Wu Beihe xiaoxiang zhou,” *Rangliguan guoyan lu*, in *Zhongguo lidai shuhua yishu lunzhu congbian* 中國歷代書畫藝術論著叢編 (hereafter *ZLSYLC*), ed. Xu Juan 徐娟, vol. 38 (Beijing: Zhongguo dabaiké quanshu chubanshe, 1997), 311–12. The exterior label on this hanging scroll carries a poem by the Qing painter Fang Tinghu 方廷珩 (active early nineteenth century).

the upper right corner of the painting is an inscription written by Hong Kuan 洪寬 (active late sixteenth–early seventeenth century), indicating that Zeng collaborated with Hu Zongxin 胡宗信 (active early seventeenth century) on this portrait. Hu undoubtedly supplemented Zeng’s portrayal with the landscape background.

Wu Mengyang was a poet and playwright from Guian 歸安, Zhejiang province, and was known as one of the “Four Scholars” of Wuxing 吳興四子 together with his peers Zang Maoxun 臧懋循 (1550–1620), Mao Wei 茅維 (1575–?), and Wu Jiacheng 吳稼澄 (active late sixteenth century).⁵ When creating Wu Mengyang’s likeness, Zeng would have met his sitter in Jinling 金陵 (modern Nanjing), which explains his collaboration with the Nanjing-based painter Hu Zongxin. His brother Hu Zongren 胡宗仁 (ca. 1598–1618) was a renowned landscape painter active in Nanjing.⁶

If Zeng Jing and his sitter Wu Mengyang’s rendezvous took place in Nanjing in 1607, Zeng might have been introduced to Wu by one of his Fujianese friends, Cao Xuequan or Xie Zhaozhe.⁷ In the first decade of the seventeenth century, Zeng’s hometown friends, Cao

⁵ One of the earliest biographies of Wu Mengyang is by Qian Qianyi 錢謙益, “Wu shanren Mengyang” 吳山人夢陽, *Liechao shiji xiaozhuan* 列朝詩集小傳 [Brief biographies affiliated to a collection of poems from the different reigns (of the Ming dynasty)], *dingji xia* 丁集下 (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1961), 605. For the so-called “Four Scholars” of Wuxing, see Qian Qianyi, “Mao taixue Wei” 茅太學維, *ibid.*, 635.

⁶ For an annotated translation of Hu Zongren’s biography in *Du hua lu* 讀畫錄 [Record of reading paintings] written by Zhou Lianggong, see Kim, “Chou Liang-kung,” 2:67–71.

⁷ Zeng’s social networks before 1620 are discussed in Fang Xiaozhuang 方小壯, “Zeng Jing zaoqi de jiaoyou yu xingji kao yi” 曾鯨早期的交游與行跡考議 [Study of Zeng Jing’s friendships and accomplishments in his early years], *Gudian wenxian yanjiu* 古典文獻研究 8 (2005): 421–30; *Zeng Jing Yan Yonghui xiang changjuan kaoping* 曾鯨嚴用晦像長卷考評

and Xie lived in Nanjing, where their literary activities flourished.⁸ Cao in particular organized the Jinling Poetry Society (*Jinling shishe* 金陵詩社), and Wu was a prominent member of this Nanjing-based literary circle.⁹ Cao's poems written on the occasion of parting with Wu attest to their deep friendship.¹⁰ It is very likely that Zeng met Hu Zongxin, who added a landscape to his likeness of Wu, through Cao as well. After moving to Nanjing, Cao remained close to Hu and his brother Hu Zongren.¹¹ As Zeng enjoyed travelling with his best friend Cao to the Jiangnan area, he may have followed him into Nanjing as well, to the vicinity where he eventually settled down. The rise in popularity of Zeng's portraits in

[Discussion on the handscroll portrait of Yan Yonghui by Zeng Jing] (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2005), 36–48. From the late 1590s, Cao resided in Nanjing and played an active role in local literary culture. See Chen, *Cao Xuequan yanjiu*, 63–69. Wu Mengyang spent his later years in Nanjing. See Qian Qianyi, “Wu shanren Mengyang.” According to Fang's article, Wu was born in 1545 and died in 1615. See Fang, “Zeng Jing zaoqi de jiaoyou,” 422.

⁸ At the turn of the seventeenth century, Xie actively participated in local literary activities in Nanjing. See Chen Qingyuan 陳慶元, “Xie Zhaozhe nianbu” 謝肇淛年表 [Chronological biography of Xie Zhaozhe], *Minjiang xueyuan xuebao* 閩江學院學報 30, no. 1 (2009): 21–31. For Xie's intimate relationship with Cao Xuequan, see Chen, *Cao Xuequan yanjiu*, 279–84.

⁹ The Jinling Poetry Society is recorded in Qian Qianyi, “Jinling sheji zhu shiren” 金陵社集諸詩人 [Poets of Jinling poetry society], *Liechao shiji xiaozhuan, dingji shang* 丁集上, 462–63. For Cao's role in forming the Jinling Poetry Society, see Hsu, “Wanli nianjian Cao Xuequan,” 177–98; Chen *Cao Xuequan yanjiu*, 335–37; He Zongmei 何宗美, *Mingmo Qingchu wenren jieshe yanjiu xubian* 明末清初文人結社研究續編 [Supplementary to the study of the literati associations in late Ming and early Qing] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006), 157–66.

¹⁰ See, for example, Cao Xuequan, “Song Wu Yunzhao” 送吳允兆 [Seeing off Wu Yunzhao], *Lu he ji* 潞河集 [Collection from Luhe]; “Ji Wu Yunzhao” 寄吳允兆 [Sending to Wu Yunzhao], *Cao Dali ji*, in *Xu xiu Siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書 [Supplement to the complete books in the four treasuries] (hereafter *XXSK*) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995), 1367:757b–58a.

¹¹ See Fang, *Zeng Jing Yan Yonghui xiang*, 40.

seventeenth-century Jiangnan seems inextricably related to the fact that Fujianese scholars gained more prominence within the larger Jiangnan literary scene.¹²

Nanjing, located in the prosperous lower Yangtze River delta, must have served as the entry point for Fujianese Zeng Jing to make far more extensive personal connections with the elites in the broader Jiangnan region. By the time Zeng painted Wu Mengyang, the center of his social and artistic activities may have already shifted to Nanjing. As a follower of Three-in-One Teachings, it is possible that the young Zeng made occasional visits to Nanjing with his early master Lin Zhao'en.¹³ By becoming active in Nanjing, an epicenter of literati culture and elite sociability in the late Ming, Zeng was able to establish a new, broader clientele for his portraits.¹⁴ Wu was one of Zeng's newfound clients in Nanjing outside his hometown of Fujian province, and ever since, Zeng continuously painted portraits for literati who were active in Nanjing or other neighboring cities in Jiangnan. Nanjing, among other Jiangnan cities, remained vital to Zeng's career and network of social connections. Zeng later settled in Nanjing, as recorded by Huang Zongxi, who visited

¹² The prominence of Fujian literature in the late Ming is recorded in Zhang Tingyu 張廷玉 (1672–1755) et al., *Ming shi* 明史 [Official history of the Ming], *juan* 286 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 7357. Fujianese writers such as Cao Xuequan, Xie Zhaozhe, Deng Yuanyue 鄧原岳 (1555–1604), and Xu Bo (1570–1642) are mentioned in this record of *Ming shi*. For Cao and Xie's activities in Nanjing in connection with Xu, see Tai-loi Ma, "Xu Bo: Life of a Ming Book Collector," in *The Scholar's Mind: Essays in Honor of Frederick W. Mote*, ed. Perry Link (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2009), 95–114.

¹³ Nanjing was the second major city of Lin's religious movement, outside its place of origin, Putian. See Dean, *Lord of the Three in One*, 125–36.

¹⁴ Nanjing was the one of the most urbanized cities at the time, and late Ming literati from all over the empire flocked to this city to socialize with a wider circle of peers, see Fei, *Negotiating Urban Space*, 233–36. For the late Ming literati and artists who were active in Nanjing, see Kim, "Chou Liang-kung," 1:10–29.

Zeng's residence near Jiufeng Temple in 1641.¹⁵ Zhang Dai, Zeng's friend in his later years, referred to him as "Zeng Bochen of Nanjing" 南京曾波臣.¹⁶

Paradoxically, it was in the bustling Nanjing that Zeng Jing socialized almost exclusively with, and made portraits of, the period's practitioners of reclusion, like Wu Mengyang. The noted literary historian Qian Qianyi 錢謙益 (1582–1664) titled Wu's biography "Wu Mengyang the Mountain Man" 吳山人夢暘 and referred to him as "number one of the cotton cloth" 布衣之冠 in *Liechao shiji xiaozhuan* 列朝詩集小傳 (Brief biographies affiliated to a collection of poems from the different reigns).¹⁷ To define Wu's identity, Qian used the title terms, *buyi* and *shanren*, which represent a commoner or non-degree holder and a mountain hermit, respectively.¹⁸ Through Qian's acknowledgement of Wu as *buyi* and *shanren*, it is apparent that Wu was a celebrated recluse of the time.¹⁹ Wu

¹⁵ Zeng's settlement in Nanjing is recorded in early Qing documents including Jiang Shaoshou, *Wusheng shishi*, 857. See Huang Zongxi, "Ti Zhang Ziyou juan," 39–40.

¹⁶ Zhang Dai, "Bu xi yuan," 30.

¹⁷ See Qian Qianyi, "Wu chushi Zhao" 吳處士兆 [Wu Zhao the retired scholar] and "Wu shanren Mengyang," *Liechao shiji xiaozhuan*, *dingji xia*, 604–605.

¹⁸ In the Ming period, the *buyi* scholars often transformed into *shanren*. See Zhang Dejian 張德建, *Mingdai shanren wenxue yanjiu* 明代山人文學研究 [Study on literature of mountain men in the Ming period] (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 2005), 42–46. For literary publications of the late-Ming *shanren*, see Kai-wing Chow, *Publishing, Culture, and Power in Early Modern China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 104–9.

¹⁹ Wu's identity as *buyi* was acknowledged by several other contemporary writers. See Chen Meizhu 陳美朱, "Lun Ming Qing zhi ji 'buyi shiren diyi' zhi zheng" 論明清之際'布衣詩人第一'之爭 [Discussing 'the top *buyi* poet' in the Ming-Qing transition], *Gaoxiong shi daxue renwen yu yishu lei* 高雄師大學報人文與藝術類 17 (2004): 215–16. The "Four Scholars" of Wuxing, including Wu, were well known for their reclusive lifestyle. Qian wrote, "(Four Scholars) did not aspire to official careers, (and) prided themselves in experiencing the world"

can be identified as a ‘commoner-mountain man’ (*buyi shanren* 布衣山人), who remains a sheer hermit, as distinguished from an ‘official-mountain man’ (*guandai shanren* 冠帶山人), who retains his integrity as a recluse while maintaining a government position.²⁰ Wu would not have tolerated “reclusion at court” (*chaoyin* 朝隱) or “reclusion in the marketplace” (*shiyin* 市隱).²¹ In contrast with Zeng’s portrayal of Wu, these alternative concepts reconciling reclusion with officialdom were represented in Ming paintings by portraying sitters in official robes within a landscape setting.²² Zeng’s depiction of Wu as a

不得志於科舉，以經世自負。See Qian Qianyi, “Mao taixue Wei” 茅太學雄, *Liechao shiji xiaozhuan, dingji xia*, 635.

²⁰ Suzuki Tadashi and Kin Bunkyo classify *shanren* of the Ming into two categories, the so-called “commoner-mountain man” (*buyi shanren*) and the “official-mountain man” (*guandai shanren*). See Suzuki Tadashi 鈴木正, “Mindai sannin ko” 明代山人考 [A Study of Ming period ‘mountain man’], in *Shimizu Hakase Tsuito Kinen Mindaishi Ronso* 清水博士追悼紀念明代史論叢 (Tokyo: Daian, 1962), 365, 369; Kin Bunkyo 金文京, “Wan-Ming shanren zhi huodong jiqi lai yuan” 晚明山人之活動及其來源 [The activities and the origin of the late-Ming mountain man], *Zhongguo dianji yu wenhua* 中國典籍與文化, no. 1 (1997): 40.

²¹ The concept of *chaoyin* was formulated in the Han dynasty after the scholar-official and court jester Dongfang Shuo 東方朔 (154–93 BCE) proclaimed himself as a “recluse at court” (*chaoyin*) to combine an official’s life with a recluse’s life. For Dongfang Shuo and the early practice of *chaoyin* and *shiyin*, see Shuen-fu Lin, “A Good Place Need Not Be a Nowhere: The Garden and Utopian Thought in the Six Dynasties,” in Cai, *Chinese Aesthetics*, 145–47. See also Berkowitz, *Patterns of Disengagement*, 11, 54, 140–45; Vervoorn, *Men of Cliffs and Caves*, 203–27.

²² The most well-known painting of this type is *Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden* 杏園雅集圖, attributed the Ming court painter Xie Huan 謝環 (ca. 1370–ca. 1450) in the Zhejiang Provincial Museum (fig. 3.4). For a detailed study on this scroll, see Maxwell K. Hearn, “An Early Ming Example of Multiples: Two Versions of *Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden*,” in *Issues of Authenticity in Chinese Painting*, ed. Judith G. Smith and Wen C. Fong (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999), 221–56.

commoner-mountain recluse, away from the responsibilities of a public career, possibly reflects Wu's uncompromising stance on reclusion.

Embodying Wu Mengyang's identity as both *buyi* and *shanren*, Zeng Jing depicted his sitter Wu as a recluse wearing a commoner's robe and resting amidst the mountains (fig. 3.1). Surrounded by steep rocky slopes and tall canopied pine trees, Wu is visibly portrayed as a mountain hermit. He sits on a rock by a mountain stream wearing an unadorned white robe and red sandals. Holding a handscroll in both hands, Wu is posed ready to write a poem. He is attended by two servant boys, one of whom is approaching Wu with a bundle of scrolls while the other is holding his master's bamboo staff. Wu's hempen head cloth hanging loose over his shoulder, coupled with his staff, clearly indicates his identity as a recluse. This type of translucent gauze headgear had long been associated with the paragon recluse-poet Tao Qian and other free-spirits of the Six Dynasties period before eventually becoming an emblem of reclusion.²³ Wu's intention to fashion his identity as a lofty recluse is evinced by the visual signifiers common in Zeng's portraits, a cotton robe, bamboo staff, Tao Qian headdress, and a landscape setting. These elements, pointing to the reclusive lifestyle of the sitter, recur frequently in Zeng's portraits with some variations.

The terms *buyi* and *shanren* framed the concept of reclusion in early modern China, and they distill the essence of Zeng Jing's portrait oeuvre. Zeng's sitters, without any known exception, are depicted as non-degree holders wearing commoner's robes and as scholars in

²³ One fine example of a representation of Tao Qian featuring gauze headgear is a handscroll attributed to Li Gonglin in the Freer Gallery of Art. See Murray, *Mirror of Morality*, 69–71. For Tao's image in the Chinese pictorial tradition, see Nelson, "Tao Yuanming's Sashes"; "Revisiting the Eastern Fence." For the tradition of illustrating Tao's biography, see Liu, "An Actor in Real Life," 117–23.

reclusion. As in *Portrait of Wu Mengyang*, some of the sitters are placed in a landscape background in Zeng's paintings, portrayed literally as mountain hermits. The theme of reclusion characterizes Zeng's portrait paintings, and accordingly, Zeng portrayed his subjects in a relaxed and carefree manner, giving his paintings a casual, informal tone.

Zeng Jing's portraits, in which the sitters take on *buyi* and *shanren* identities, reflect the late Ming trend among the Jiangnan literati of pursuing a reclusive life away from the cares of officialdom. Zeng socialized mostly with Jiangnan intellectuals who shared the ideals of reclusion; indeed Zeng's longtime friend Cao Xuequan described Zeng's relationship with his companions as "friendship with the cotton cloth" (*buyi jiao* 布衣交).²⁴ Like his peers, Zeng internalized the reclusive identity and proclaimed himself as a Daoist recluse. Zeng seems to have painted portraits selectively for these closed circles of Jiangnan elites, who yearned to fashion themselves as *buyi* or *shanren*. Zeng's friends and his sitters, such as Cao Xuequan, his early patron Xiang Yuanbian, and long-term collaborator Chen Jiru, were Jiangnan scholars, artists, and other professionals who remained disengaged from national politics, renowned as *buyi* or *shanren*.²⁵

The extensive anthology of Ming poetry, *Liechao shiji*, written and published by Qian Qianyi in 1652, epitomizes the nature of Zeng Jing's circle of friends as leaders of the late Ming trend toward eremitism.²⁶ Many of the Jiangnan literati are represented in Qian's

²⁴ See Cao Xuequan, "Zeng Bochen shi xu," cited in Kondo, "Shozo gaka So Gei," 155.

²⁵ Xiang Yuanbian refers to himself as "molin shanren" 墨林山人 (mountain man in the ink forest). Chen Jiru was also often called "shanren." See Greenbaum, *Chen Jiru*, 171–80. For the *shanren* identity during the Ming period, see Zhang, *Mingdai shanren wenxue yanjiu*, 3–24.

²⁶ For a detailed study of Qian's *Liechao shiji*, see Lawrence C.H. Yim, *The Poet-historian Qian Qianyi* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 48–56.

book, including the abovementioned Wu Mengyang and several of the most pivotal figures in Zeng's social networks, such as Cao Xuequan, Xie Zhaozhe, Chen Jiru, and Dong Qichang, who also sat for portraits by Zeng. A range of Ming poets featured in *Liechao shiji* attest to Qian's support of Ming loyalism and his emphasis on the Jiangnan (Wu) tradition of poetry.²⁷ In the biographies Qian composed to accompany the poetry in *Liechao shiji*, Qian labeled a majority of Jiangnan scholar-poets as *shanren*, *buyi*, or *jushi/chushi* 居士/處士 (disengaged scholar), which provides a clear demonstration of the connection between Qian's advocacy of reclusion and the political disengagement of the Jiangnan literati. With its emphasis on political withdrawal and a reclusive lifestyle, Qian's characterization of late Ming literary history aptly describes the ethos of Zeng's social and artistic milieu.

Portraiture as 'Painting of Leisure Activity'

Highlighting Wu Mengyang's retreat into the mountains as *shanren*, images of nature predominate over the human figures in Zeng Jing's 1607 painting. Upon first glance, the portrait of Wu appears to be more of a landscape painting rather than a portrait painting. In fact, seventeenth-century viewers did not categorize this painting solely as a portrait, as evidenced by Hong Kuan's inscription on the painting:

²⁷ For Ming loyalist sentiment in Qian's literary works, see *ibid.*, 15–55. Qian opposed the arrogation of Ming imperial power by eunuchs and Manchus as he was closely associated with Donglin and Fushe members. See Hsüeh-Yi Lin, "In the Name of Honor: Qian Qianyi (1582–1664) and the Politics of Loyalty in Late Imperial China" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2010), 41–82. Qian's deliberate selection of Ming loyalists for *Liechao shiji* is parallel to his emphasis on the Wu tradition of poetry. See Jian Jinsong 簡錦松, "Lun Qian Qianyi *Liecho shiji xiaozhuan* zhi piping lichang" 論錢謙益《列朝詩集小傳》之批評立場 [Discussing the critical standpoint of Qian Qianyi's *Brief biographies affiliated to the poetry anthologies through the dynasties*], *Wenxue xin yue* 文學新論 2 (2004): 127–58.

In the summer of the *dingwei* year (1607) of the Wanli reign, Hu Kefu (Hu Zongxin) and Zeng Bochen (Zeng Jing) collaborated in making a ‘painting of leisure activity’ (*xingle tu* 行樂圖) for Wu Yunzhao (Wu Mengyang) at the Water Pavilion of the Clear Stream. They have requested someone utterly without talent to record the year and month. [Signed] Hong Kuan.

萬曆丁未夏, 胡可復, 曾波臣為吳允兆先生合作行樂圖於青溪水閣. 屬不佞代志歲月. 洪寬.

Hong Kuan’s short inscription reveals an important aspect of Zeng Jing’s portrait of Wu Mengyang regarding its possible origin and reception by contemporary viewers. The genre name that was adopted for this style of painting is ‘*xingle tu*’ 行樂圖, which can be translated as “painting of leisure activity” or “painting of pleasure seeking.”²⁸ The genre of *xingle tu* was an existing type of figure-in-landscape painting, in which sitters of imperial nobility or gentry are portrayed engaged in leisure activities within outdoor settings, usually landscaped gardens.²⁹ Zeng’s portrait of Wu illustrates some of the defining characteristics

²⁸ For an overview of the *xingle tu* genre in terms of its origin, types, and development, see Lo, “Political Advancement,” 5–22.

²⁹ For a study of *xingle tu* during the Ming and Qing periods, see Mao Wenfang 毛文芳, *Tu cheng xingle: Ming Qing wenren huaxiang tiyong xilun* 圖成行樂: 明清文人畫像題詠析論 [*Tu cheng xingle: a discussion of poetic inscriptions on portraits of Ming-Qing literati*] (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 2008), 3–40. In the Ming period, *xingle tu* had been established as a significant genre of imperial portraits. See Cheng-hua Wang, “Material Culture and Emperorship: The Shaping of Imperial Roles at the Court of Xuanzong (r. 1426–35)” (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1998), 214–72. Lo makes a division between *xingle tu* of the literati and emperors by categorizing the latter as *diwang xingle tu* 帝王行樂圖 (painting of the emperors’ leisure activity). See Lo, “Political Advancement,” 5–6.

of *xingle tu*: the sitter is chanting poems, wearing a commoner's casual robe, and being attended by servants.³⁰ Wu is depicted engaged in one of the typical leisure activities in a natural setting, surrounded by trees, rocks, streams, and mists. The prominence of the landscape in this image must have been another decisive factor in Hong's categorization of Zeng's painting as *xingle tu*.

As a genre that emphasizes an idyllic lifestyle in nature, 'painting of leisure activity' (*xingle tu*) is thematically tied to reclusion, and hence, from the early stage of the genre's development, it was considered to represent one's reclusive life, as opposed to a public career.³¹ *Xingle tu* would have been considered a suitable type of painting to denote the *shanren* identity of the protagonist, and accordingly, some of the Ming and Qing viewers, like Hong Kuan, regarded Zeng Jing's renderings of figures in reclusion as inheriting the tradition of *xingle tu*. *Portrait of Weng Dehong* 翁德洪 (d. 1646) in the Berkeley Art Museum shows an example in which the sitter's activity represented in Zeng's painting was recognized as "xingle" (leisure activity) (fig. 4.15).³² On this 1639 portrait of Weng, Jin Ye 金晔 (active seventeenth century) wrote an inscription that includes the lines: "Sketching the gentleman in *xingle*, [Zeng] accords with the gentleman's intention. Imaging the gentleman in *xingle*, he captures the gentleman's taste. Confucian scholar yet reclusive; Confucian yet untrammelled; Nobody knows the depths of [his] magnanimous spirit and soul" 寫君行樂會

³⁰ For a discussion of some of the key visual attributes of *xingle tu*. See Lo, "Political Advancement," 6–16.

³¹ Ibid.

³² This portrait is introduced in Bentley, *Figurative Works of Chen Hongshou*, 151–52.

君意, 像君行樂得君趣。 儒而隱, 儒而逸, 磊落襟期無人識。 Though Jin does not directly refer to Zeng's painting as *xingle tu*, he highlights the fact that Zeng painted the sitter's leisure activity (*xingle*), perceiving leisure activity in relation to reclusion.

According to Hong Kuan's inscription, Zeng Jing painted Wu Mengyang's portrait at the Water Pavilion of the Clear Stream (*Qingxi shui ge* 青溪水閣), a place which had been historically associated with the reclusive and leisurely lifestyle. The name of this place, *qingxi* 青溪, could indicate the old hermitage of the eminent Tang poet Wang Changling 王昌齡 (698–ca. 757), located in the vicinity of Nanjing.³³ Wu may have consciously chosen Wang's retreat as a background for his portrait to evoke a reclusive life from the distant past.³⁴ Interestingly, this historic spot in Nanjing was a favorite subject in paintings by Hu Zongxin, who collaborated with Zeng on Wu's portrait. Cao Xuequan probably introduced Zeng specifically to Hu by acknowledging Hu's expertise in painting this Nanjing landmark. In 1605, two years before Zeng painted Wu's portrait, Cao wrote a colophon to Hu's painting titled *Water Pavilion* (*Shui ge* 水閣), which reads, “this is the only place for leisure activity (*xingle*) in Jinling (Nanjing); it is unfortunate for officials that they cannot stay

³³ A poem “Staying overnight at Wang Changling's retreat” 宿王昌齡隱居 by the Tang poet Chang Jian 常建 (active eighth century) begins, “the clear stream (*qingxi*) is immeasurably deep, in a secluded place, there is only a lonely cloud” 清溪深不測, 隱處惟孤雲. The term *qingxi* as a proper noun had been associated with Wang's retreat in Nanjing.

³⁴ Wang's garden in Nanjing was used as a venue for literati gatherings, where their leisure activities took place, as evidenced in the painting titled *Scholars of the Liuli Hall*, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (fig. 3.5). In this thirteen-century copy of Zhou Wenju's 周文矩 (active ca. 943–75) original, Confucian scholar-officials and a Buddhist monk, were involved in cultural activities in Wang's garden. See Smith and Fong, *Issues of Authenticity*, 285. A repertoire of activities featured in *Scholars of the Liuli Hall* are analogous to those of a typical *xingle tu*.

here” 金陵惟此行樂地, 可惜為官不得住.³⁵ Cao recognized the Water Pavilion (of the Clear Stream), where Wu sat for his portrait, as a recluse’s hideout where leisure activities (*xingle*) take place. Hu’s prosaic depiction of the background hinders any attempt to associate it with a particular place; however, it still seems true that the sitter and viewers were mindful of a specific site.

Zeng Jing continued to use the figure-in-landscape composition, which can be categorized as a *xingle tu*. The 1627 portrait of Hu Erzao 胡爾慥 (1573–1647) and 1637 portrait of Hou Dongzeng 侯峒曾 (1591–1645) are fine examples of the *xingle* type (figs. 3.2 and 3.3). Both portraits prominently display landscape settings, thus portraying the sitter’s reclusive life in accordance with nature, in a fashion similar to Zeng’s portrait of Wu Mengyang. In these two portraits, the sitters are also placed in the lower right corner with their heads and bodies turning slightly to their right. More importantly, they include additional servant boy figures attending the sitter, reminiscent of the visual characteristics of *xingle tu*.³⁶

³⁵ Cao Xuequan, “Ti Hu Kefu shui ge” 題胡可復水閣 [Colophon on Hu Kefu’s *Water Pavilion*], *Cao Dali ji*, in *XXSK*, 1367:745b–46a. Cao’s old friend from Fujian, Lin Gudu 林古度 (1580–1666) also wrote a colophon to Hu’s painting, in which he refers to *qingxi shui* 青溪水 and *qingxi ge* 青溪閣. Lin Gudu, “Ti Hu Kefu Huai shang ju” 題胡可復淮上居 [Colophon on Hu Kefu’s *Residence by the Huai river*], *Lin Maozhi shi xuan* 林茂之詩選, in *Qingdai shiwenji huibian* 清代詩文集彙編 [Compendium of poems and prose of the Qing dynasty] (hereafter *QDSWJ*), vol. 1 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2009), 6. For the friendship between Cao and Lin, see Chen, *Cao Xuequan yanjiu*, 298–303.

³⁶ Lo, “Political Advancement,” 6–16. Zeng’s portraits without landscape background, on the other hand, depict solely the figure of the sitter. Richard Vinograd sees Zeng’s single figure portraits as recalling formal ancestral portraits. See Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self*, 43.

Portrait of Hu Erzao depicts Hu sitting on a rock in a pose almost identical to that of Wu Mengyang in Zeng Jing's 1607 portrait (cf. figs. 3.1 and 3.2).³⁷ Hu is seated, resting his back against a rock as comfortably as he can. His body is turned slightly to the right, positioning his face in a near frontal view. A number of Zeng's paintings show the sitter in a similar relaxed seated position, which is rarely found in the so-called official portraits with the subject wearing formal court robes. This leisurely pose harmonizes well with the natural surroundings, as well as with the sitter's identity as a recluse. The composition of a group of pine trees surrounding Hu and his attendant, a dominant motif in this painting, is strongly reminiscent of that of *Portrait of Wu Mengyang*. A stream flows through the narrow, winding rocky valley in the mountainous background, nourishing the young bamboos interspersed between the rocks in the foreground. The landscape palette of the painting is archaic, adopting the "blue-and-green" mode associated with the Tang dynasty. The rock where Hu sits, colored blue, heightens the sitter's presence. Positioned on an adjacent rock is a white porcelain jar containing incense sticks, adding to the tranquil mood.

Zeng Jing signed the painting, "In mid-summer of the *dingmao* year of the Tianqi reign (1627), Zeng Jing from Puyang painted" 天启丁卯仲夏莆陽曾鯨写, indicating that he

³⁷ On *Portrait of Hu Erzao*, see Xu Huan 徐歡, "Rujing quying miao de shenqing: Zeng Jing *Hu Erzao xiang shangxi*" 如鏡取影, 妙得神情: 曾鯨《胡爾慥像》賞析 [Like a reflection of in a mirror, wondrously capturing spirit and sentiments: appreciation of Zeng Jing's *Portrait of Hu Erzao*], *Nanfang wenwu* 南方文物, no. 1 (2008): 156–57. Hu's portrait was preserved in the Hu family and now in the Deqing Museum. See Deqing xian Xinshizhen renmin zhengfu 德清县新市镇人民政府, *Jiangnan guzhen Xinshi* 江南古鎮新市 [Jiangnan's old town, Xinshi] (Deqing: Deqing xian Xinshizhen renmin zhengfu, 2001), 99. This portrait is also introduced in Edmund Capon and Mae Anna Pang, eds., *Chinese Paintings of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, 14th–20th Centuries* (Melbourne: International Culural Corporation of Australia Limited, 1981), 88.

painted this portrait of Hu Erzao just a few months before the young Tianqi emperor died in September 1627. Hu, a scholar from a prestigious gentry family in Deqing 德清, Zhejiang, received the *jinshi* (advanced scholar) degree in 1604 and held various provincial positions in Fujian, Henan, and Jiangxi. To reward Hu and his family's loyal contributions to the tottering Ming imperial authority, the Chongzhen emperor bestowed stone tablets inscribed by the famous calligrapher Zhang Ruitu 張瑞圖 (1570–1641).³⁸ Hu later participated in the Ming restoration movement and martyred himself by starvation to protest the Manchu regime in 1647. Judging from Hu's patriotic and loyalist sentiment, we can infer his frustration over the political turmoil of the Tianqi reign afflicted by factional struggles and eunuch usurpation. The manifestation of Hu's reclusive lifestyle in Zeng's portrait can be seen as a reflection of the political deterioration and social degeneration of the Tianqi reign that already portended the fall of the dynasty.

The calligraphic title in clerical script on *Portrait of Hu Erzao* echoes the natural elements depicted in this painting: "The bright moon shines among the pines, the clear spring water runs over the rocks" 明月松間照, 清泉石上流. Zeng Jing's signature follows this title, indicating that it was inscribed by Zeng himself.³⁹ While this calligraphic title is ostensibly a mere description of natural scenery, it connotes a reclusive lifestyle. This title is

³⁸ Sixteen pieces of stone tablets are now preserved in the old residence of the Hu family in Deqing. See *Jiangnan guzhen Xinshi*, 30.

³⁹ It is rare for Zeng to write a calligraphic title on his own paintings; the only other example is his 1641 portrait of Su Shi (fig. 1.14). For this portrait of Su, see Miyazaki, "Sogei hitsu So Shoku saishizu."

a poetic couplet by the Tang poet Wang Wei, which is taken from his famous poem
“Autumn Evening at the Mountain Retreat” (*Shan ju qiu ming* 山居秋暝):⁴⁰

Empty mountains after a fresh rain;
the weather is like the late autumn.
The bright moon shines among the pines;
the clear spring water runs over the rocks.
Bamboo leaves rustle, washerwomen return;
lotuses quiver, fishing boats drift.
Spontaneously the spring’s fragrance fades;
the prince can stay at will.⁴¹

空山新雨後，
天氣晚來秋。
明月松間照，
清泉石上流。
竹喧歸浣女，
蓮動下漁舟。
隨意春芳歇，
王孫自可留。

⁴⁰ Zeng’s quotation of Wang’s poetic line reminds us of the way that Cao Xuequan praised Zeng’s poetry by comparing him to Wang. See Kondo, “Shozo gaka So Gei,” 157. This particular line seems to have been popular among late Ming artists. Zhang Feng, for instance, who collaborated with Zeng on *Portrait of Gu Mengyou*, inscribed it on one of his landscapes. See Jonathan Hay, “The Suspension of Dynastic Time,” in *Boundaries in China*, ed. John Hay (London: Reaktion Books, 1994), 177–79.

⁴¹ Translation by Yang, *Chan Interpretations*, 65.

The theme of reclusion in Wang Wei's poem corresponds to Zeng Jing's portrayal of Hu Erzao as a recluse dwelling in the mountains.⁴² The last couplet of Wang's poem, "Spontaneously the spring's fragrance fades, the prince can stay at will" 隨意春芳歇, 王孫自可留, alludes to an ancient poetic line from "Summoning the Recluse" (*Zhao yin shi* 招隱士) of the *Song of Chu* (*Chu ci* 楚辭): "O Prince, return! In the mountains, you cannot stay long" 王孫兮歸來, 山中兮不可以久留.⁴³ While the ancient *Chu ci* poet lures the exiled prince out of reclusion, Wang reversed the original meaning, encouraging the prince to remain a recluse in nature.⁴⁴ The sitter, Hu, had witnessed the nominal power of the Tianqi emperor for years, and may have deliberately chosen Wang's poem to express his advocacy of a life in reclusion.

The scholar-calligrapher Song Jue 宋珏 (1576–1632) added a poetic inscription after Zeng Jing's title.⁴⁵ Matching the underlying tone of discontent in Zeng's title, Song's poem deals with the themes of the literati's moral integrity, political frustration, and reclusive ideals:

I bow to his enlightened appearance, ancient like the pines.
 I listen to his virtuous sounds, clear like the babbling stream.
 [This is] where the Mountain God descends and the Heavenly Eyes are riveted;

⁴² For the theme of reclusion in Wang's poetry, see *ibid.*, 53–95.

⁴³ David Hawkes, trans., *Ch'u Tz'u: The Songs of the South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 120.

⁴⁴ Yang, *Chan Interpretations*, 64–65.

⁴⁵ Song Jue was a native of Putian as Zeng. See Xu Qin, *Ming hua lu*, 4:12a–b.

In every place “Sweet Pear,” everywhere the Huafeng (wishes).⁴⁶
I have sheltered under (royal) eaves, ten years of imperial audiences.
I never thought that I would have a chance to see a dragon-like man today.
I carry a whip and the bow and arrows in a quiver, and make a vow to keep
company with [him].

挹其道貌, 其古如松.
聆其德音, 其清如淙.
岳神所降, 天目所鐘.
處處甘棠, 在在華封.
我庇宇下, 十載朝宗.
不圖今日, 得御猶龍.
鞭撻囊鞬, 誓願相從.

The first two couplets eulogize Hu Erzao’s virtue, incorporating two main motifs of the landscape background—pine and water—into the poem. Song Jue goes on to express a nostalgic yearning for the ancient times of peace, prosperity, and good government by referencing the “Gantang” 甘棠 ode in the *Book of Poetry* (*Shijing* 詩經) and the story of the Huafeng 華封 people in *Zhuangzi* 莊子. Song pays tribute to Hu and his portrait by

⁴⁶ “Gantang,” literally “sweet pear tree,” refers to the poem in the *Book of Songs* (*Shijing* 詩經), which praises the benevolent governance of Duke of Shao 召公. “Huafeng” is an allusion to the three wishes of the people of Huafeng (Huafeng sanzhu 華封三祝) for Emperor Yao, which is a reference to a story in the Tiandi 天地 (Heaven and Earth) chapter of the *Zhuangzi*.

characterizing him as a dragon or the ancient Daoist sage Laozi 老子, who lived in the sixth century BCE.⁴⁷

Song Jue's poem is signed "A follower and student, Song Jue respectfully eulogizes" 部下諸生宋珏敬贊, confirming his close relationship with Hu Erzao. Considering the fact that Song was from Putian, Fujian, he may have introduced his hometown friend Zeng Jing to Hu. In fact, Hu himself had a close connection to Fujian, where he held several provincial posts, including surveillance commissioner (*ancha shi* 按察使). Unlike Zeng's other portraits with landscape settings, *Portrait of Hu Erzao* lacks the signature of a landscape painter. However, it is possible that Song, who himself was a talented painter, would have painted a landscape background for the scholar whom he admired.

In his 1637 portrait of Hou Dongzeng, Zeng Jing highlights the sitter's antiquarian taste by depicting Hou appreciating antiquities in a garden setting (fig. 3.3).⁴⁸ Hou is seated on a long wooden couch with a three-panel railing. On a rectangular table in the lower left corner of the painting are various types of ritual vessels. One of two servant boys flanking the table holds up a *hu* vessel. The scene of appreciating antiques proves that Zeng's portrait of Hou continued the pictorial convention of representing scholars' leisurely activities that take

⁴⁷ *You long* 猶龍 (dragon-like) is a term that Confucius is said to have used to describe Laozi: "Today I have seen Laozi, and he is like a dragon" 吾今日見老子, 其猶龍邪. See Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shiji* 史記, 63:2140.

⁴⁸ For this portrait, see *ZGHHQJ*, 15:33 (description), 216 (plate). For Hou's biographical information, see Jerry Dennerline, *The Chia-ting Loyalists: Confucian Leadership and Social Change in Seventeenth-Century China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 206–28. Hou's chronological biography is recorded in *Hou Zhongjie gong quanji* 侯忠節公全集, *juan* 1–3.

place in the garden. As exemplified in earlier paintings like *Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden* 杏園雅集圖 in the style of Xie Huan 謝環 (ca. 1370–ca. 1450) or *Enjoying Antiquities* 玩古圖 by Du Jin 杜堇 (active ca. 1465–ca. 1509), the elite fashion for examining antiques had been a recurring theme in traditional pictorial genres such as ‘painting of elegant gathering’ (*yaji tu*) or painting of leisure activity (figs. 3.4 and 3.6).⁴⁹

In contrast to untamed mountain scenery in the two earlier portraits of Wu Mengyang and of Hu Erzao, the portrait of Hou Dongzeng depicts an artfully constructed garden (cf. figs. 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3). Zhang Chong 張翀 (active seventeenth century) added a landscape setting to the portrait of Hou. The edge of the garden is paved with slab stones, forming a manmade boundary between the banana trees growing near the garden rocks and the blossoming lotuses in the water. Hou’s couch is placed in front of contorted *taihu* rocks and a leafy *wutong* (firmiana) tree. Hou’s garden, in which various cultural activities took place, appears to be a dual product of nature and artifice. The composition of *Portrait of Hou Dongzeng* is subtly different from both *Portrait of Wu Mengyang* and *Portrait of Hu Erzao* in that it provides a close-up depiction of the location where the sitter is placed. Consequently, the portrait of Hou lacks a distant view of mountain peaks, which can be seen in the portrait of Wu.

Hou Dongzeng’s acquaintance with the eminent Wen family in Suzhou may have partly facilitated Hou’s interest in antiques and gardens, which became the theme of his portrait by Zeng Jing. Zeng’s portrayal of Hou as a man of antiquarian tastes corresponds well with the

⁴⁹ On Du Jin’s *Enjoying Antiquities*, see Stephen Little, “Du Jin’s *Enjoying Antiquities*: A Problem in Connoisseurship” in Smith and Fong, *Issues of Authenticity*, 189–219. For *Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden*, see Hearn, “Early Ming Example,” 221–56.

fact that Wen Zhenheng 文震亨 (1585–1645), one of the leading connoisseurs of antiques, wrote a poem for Hou’s portrait.⁵⁰ About a decade before Hou’s portrait was painted, Wen published a book on cultural taste and the consumption of antiquities titled *Treatise on Superfluous Things* (*Zhangwu zhi* 長物志).⁵¹ Hou had known Wen Zhenheng’s family since the 1610s, as he frequently visited Suzhou in the company of his father Hou Zhenyang 侯震暘 (1569–1627), who studied and worked there.⁵² Hou seems to have been particularly close to Wen Zhenheng’s brother, Wen Zhenmeng 文震孟 (1574–1636).⁵³ Both Wens were garden enthusiasts like their great-grandfather Wen Zhengming, who made an album of paintings and poems celebrating the “Garden of the Unsuccessful Politician” (*Zhuozheng yuan* 拙政園). The Wen brothers must have stirred Hou’s passion for gardens, which is well displayed in Zeng’s portrait of Hou.

Hou Dongzeng’s frustration with the late Ming political situation would have given him a nostalgic longing for an ideal past. Zeng Jing’s portrait and Wen Zhenmeng’s eulogy equally highlight Hou’s preoccupation with the past: ancient vessels, paintings, and history books. Wen’s poetic eulogy to Hou describes him as a cloistered scholar who immersed himself in the study of art and history:

⁵⁰ Wen’s portrait encomia for Hou is in Zhou Guandong 周關東, ed., *Jiading kang Qing shiliao ji* 嘉定抗清史料集 [Collection of historical materials on resistance against the Qing in Jiading] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2010), 241.

⁵¹ See Clunas, *Superfluous Things*.

⁵² Dennerline, *Chia-ting Loyalists*, 188–89.

⁵³ Wen Zhenmeng recommended Hou for the position of a department head in the Ministry of War (*bingbu* 兵部). See *ibid.*, 210.

In the old capital, chariots and horses are as ubiquitous as flowing water,
 But one man sits alone (like) ice in a vase.⁵⁴
 Being cold and forlorn, there are no random guests.
 Constantly revolving [he] only sees paintings and history books.
 Approaching the stream, [he] concentrates in thought, emotions far and remote.
 [Over] his angular hat and wide-sleeved robe, a fresh breeze arises.
 [I] ask you why you do not seek the silk cords [of power].⁵⁵
 He answers, how could those compare with the ‘three imperishables?’
 With but a sliver of heart in a seven-foot frame;
 In dream-like illusion or not, the self still exists.⁵⁶

舊都車馬如流水，
 一人獨坐冰壺里。
 寒听蕭然無雜賓，
 回環惟見圖與史。
 臨流凝思俱遠情，
 角巾廣袖清風生。
 問君何不圖組綬，
 君謂何與三不朽。
 零心寸許七尺軀，

⁵⁴ “Binghu” 冰壺 may refer to the poetic line from “Furonglou song Xin Jian” 芙蓉樓送辛漸 [Send-off to Xin Jian at Hibiscus Tower] by the Tang poet Wang Changling: “A slice of icy heart in a jade vase” 一片冰心在玉壺。

⁵⁵ “Silk cord” (*zu shou* 組綬) is attached to an official seal or medal, emblemizing officialdom.

⁵⁶ Wen’s eulogy is transcribed in Zhou, *Jiading kang Qing shiliao ji*, 241; Kondo, *Bochen huapai*, 71.

幻非幻中吾自有。

The fourth couplet, written in question-and-answer form between Wen Zhenheng and Hou Dongzeng, expresses Hou's implicit criticism over late Ming politics. Hou thought that he was not able to adhere to Confucian ethics if he entered officialdom, and chose to live in reclusion as a response to the political disorder of the late Ming. "Sanbuxiu" 三不朽 (three imperishables) refers to the three attainments of Confucianism: establishing virtue, merit, and speech (*li de* 立德, *li gong* 立功, *li yan* 立言), which comes from the *Zuozhuan* 左轉 [Zuo commentary].⁵⁷ Interestingly, Zeng's friend Zhang Dai used this old term "sanbuxiu" when compiling the portrait album titled *You Ming yu Yue sanbuxiu mingxian tuzan*.⁵⁸ This term may have been favored and summoned by Zeng's sitters and patrons, in order to identify themselves as virtuous Confucian scholars.

Hou Dongzeng's leisurely moment captured in Zeng Jing's 1637 portrait is a contrast to his tragic end as a resolute Ming loyalist. Hou was born into an accomplished gentry family in Jiading in 1591, the son of the Ming official Hou Zhenyang 侯震暘 (1569–1627).⁵⁹ After attaining the *jinshi* degree in 1625, Hou held various government posts in the city of Nanjing

⁵⁷ See Li Xueqin 李學勤, ed., *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhengyi* 春秋左傳正義 [Correct meaning of the *Zuo Commentary to the Spring and Autumn Annals*] (Beijing: Beijing Daxue chubanshe, 1999), 1001–1004.

⁵⁸ For Zhang's *You Ming yu Yue sanbuxiu mingxian tuzan*, see Campbell, "Mortal Ancestors, Immortal Images."

⁵⁹ Hou Dongzeng's biographies in *Ming shi* and *Mingji nanlüe* 明季南略 [Outline record of the Southern Ming] are introduced in Zhou, *Jiading kang Qing shiliao ji*, 20 and 58, respectively.

and other cities in the Zhejiang area during the Tianqi and Chongzhen reigns. Hou fled to his hometown when Nanjing fell to the Manchus in 1645 and led the anti-Qing resistance movement in Jiading together with his close friend, Huang Chunyao 黃淳耀 (1605–45).⁶⁰ After Hou and his militia failed to defend Jiading from the Manchu army, he attempted to drown himself with his sons, and his head was eventually severed by the turncoat Ming general Li Chengdong 李成東 (d. 1649). The sad story of Hou's tragic end contrasts sharply with Zeng's portraits of some years earlier, in which Hou is portrayed as leisurely scholar.

Xiaoxiang as Informal Portrait

Given the characteristics of *xingle tu* in creating a reclusive mood in nature, the landscape tends to dominate the scene proportionally, as in the portrait of Wu Mengyang. And yet the human figure is an essential element to these paintings and is not rendered subordinate to its surroundings. This may be why the Qing critic Lu Xinyuan labeled the 1607 painting of Wu a 'small portrait' (*xiaoxiang*), whereas Hong Kuan identified it as a 'painting of leisure activity' (*xingle tu*).⁶¹ Two distinctive terms, *xingle tu* and *xiaoxiang* (or *xiaozhao* 小照), were used interchangeably when referring to Zeng's portrait of Wu. The sharing of these two terms attests to a blurring of the categorical distinction between *xingle tu* and *xiaoxiang*.⁶² For example, Chen Hongshou's painting that depicts He Tianzhang

⁶⁰ For Hou's role as leader of Jiading resistance, see Dennerline, *Chia-ting Loyalists*, 288–97; Spence and Wills, Jr., *From Ming to Ch'ing*, 115–17.

⁶¹ Lu Xinyuan, "Wu Beihe xiaoxiang zhou," 311–12.

⁶² See Mao, *Tu cheng xingle*, 5–6; Lo, "Political Advancement," 12–16. *Xingle tu* is discussed as one of the antecedents for informal portraits in Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self*, 9.

何天章 (active mid seventeenth century) in a landscape setting was recognized as both *xingle tu* and *xiang/zhao* 像/照 (portrait) (fig. 3.7).⁶³ Viewers may have categorized this type of painting as *xingle tu* when emphasizing the activities of the sitter, or as *xiaoxiang* when highlighting the image of the sitter.

Portraits with landscape backgrounds form a substantial part of Zeng Jing's oeuvre and span his entire career. Such paintings include Zeng's portraits of Dong Qichang, Xu Yuanliang, Hu Erzao, Jing Linzi, Hou Dongzeng, Weng Dehong, and Gu Mengyou. The portraits of Hu and of Hou in particular are very similar to the 1607 portrait of Wu in terms of their visual attributes, such as a dominant landscape over human images, and the insertion of servant figures in addition to the lead character (see figs. 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3). Despite their sufficient conditions for being *xingle tu*, Zeng's portraits featuring landscapes, in whatever style or composition he adopted, were rarely called *xingle tu*. Rather, they were primarily referred to as "xiaoxiang/xiaozhao," literally meaning 'small portraits,' like other types of portraits that lack any background.

Zeng Jing himself labeled his paintings as *xiaoxiang* 小像, or simply as *zhao* 照 in his signatures.⁶⁴ Viewers of the time categorized Zeng's portrait paintings mainly as

For the influence of the traditional *xingle tu* genre to informal portraits in the seventeenth century, see Kondo, *Bochen huapai*, 109–16.

⁶³ See Lo, "Political Advancement," 13–14. For Chen's portrait of He Tianzhang, see *ZGHHQJ*, 18:23 (description), 126–27 (plate); Mao, *Tu cheng xingle*, 225–53; Bentley, *Figurative Works of Chen Hongshou*, 1–3.

⁶⁴ Zeng refers to his 1644 portrait of Huang Daozhou 黄道周 (1585–1646), now in the Fujian Provincial Museum, as a "small portrait of Mr. Shizhai at the age of sixty" 石齋先生六十歲小像. See Kondo, *Bochen huapai*, 76. Zeng used "zhao" 照 (likeness) for the 1627 portrait of Hu Erzao 胡爾慥 and "yuzhao" 玉照, an honorific term for "zhao," for the

xiaoxiang/xiaozhao, meaning ‘informal portrait,’ which in turn was considered his forté. The leading connoisseur and collector of the seventeenth century, Zhou Lianggong, wrote: “For painting a small portrait (*xiaozhao*), [I] recommend Min (Fujian) person Zeng Bochen Jing” 寫小照者, 推閩人曾波臣鯨.⁶⁵ Instead of *xingle tu*, the common use of *xiaoxiang/xiaozhao* may be due to the fact that the focal point in Zeng’s paintings is the central human figure. Even in his paintings with the overwhelming presence of landscapes, like that of Wu Mengyang, the human visage is the most prominent element through its display of extraordinarily detailed brushwork, resulting in identifiable facial features. Zeng’s naturalistic depiction of the sitters’ faces may have curtailed the use of *xingle tu*, a genre name that undermines the strong sense of individuality characteristic of his portraits. Landscapes must have been treated as supplementary elements to the portraits by Zeng, as evidenced by the fact that landscapists’ inscriptions usually read, “added/supplemented landscape” (*bu jing* 補景).⁶⁶

Like his other portraits, Zeng Jing’s portraits with a landscape, feature recognizable likenesses through the naturalistic depiction of the sitter’s face. In traditional figure-in-landscape paintings less effort was made to portray the particularities of the figure’s visage. For example, while the faces of the figures in late Ming paintings by Zeng’s immediate

1630 portrait of Lou Jian 婁堅 (1567–1631). Zeng’s portrait of Lou, now in the Fujian Provincial Museum, is introduced in Nie, *Zeng Jing*, 22–23.

⁶⁵ Zhou Lianggong, *Shu ying* 書影 [Book shadows] (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1958), 18.

⁶⁶ For example, the inscription on *Portrait of Gu Mengyou* of 1642 reads, “Zeng Jing painted a portrait of Gu Mengyou, Zhang Feng added landscape, and Tian Lin wrote seal script” 曾鯨畫顧夢游像, 張飜補景, 田林書篆.

predecessors, such as Wu Bin 吳彬 (ca. 1543–ca. 1626), Ding Yunpeng 丁雲鵬 (1547–ca. 1628), and Cui Zizhong 崔子忠 (d. 1644), are distinguishable from each other, they would not be sufficiently individualized to identify the sitters in real life. The insertion of an identifiable individual into natural scenery makes Zeng’s portraits with landscape setting distinctive in the history of Chinese figure painting. The stylistic affinity and terminological interchangeability between *xiaoxiang* and *xingle tu* exemplify how the boundaries between portrait and landscape painting dissolve in Zeng’s paintings. This incorporation of serious landscape (*shanshui* 山水, *jing* 景) painting into portraiture (*xiang* 像, *zhen* 真) is unquestionably one of the most important achievements of Zeng’s work as a portraitist. For period viewers, this unprecedented combination of two distinct genres must have been striking.

An etymological-historical review of *xiaoxiang/xiaozhao* (small portrait) as a separate genre facilitates a deeper understanding of Zeng Jing’s portrait oeuvre.⁶⁷ As Xie Zhaozhe noted, Zeng inherited the Fujian tradition of *xiaoxiang*, and his portraits must have accordingly been categorized as *xiaoxiang* in the context of traditional portraiture.⁶⁸ Xie recorded that Zeng’s larger portraits measure about two feet in height, and his extant paintings are smaller than life size or other types of traditional portraits.⁶⁹ Zeng’s portraits are relatively small, which led to their being called “*xiaoxiang*.” Other than the standard

⁶⁷ When referring to portrait painting, *xiang* and *zhao* would have been interchangeable. Regarding Zeng’s painting, *xiaoxiang* appears to be a more widely used than *xiaozhao*. Hereafter I will use the term, *xiaoxiang*, to indicate ‘small portraits.’

⁶⁸ See Oertling, *Painting and Calligraphy in the Wu-tsa-tsu*, 137–38.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

definition of ‘small in size,’ however, the prefix *xiao* 小 seems to connote a double meaning, ‘modest,’ when combined with *xiang/zhao* (portrait).⁷⁰ Possibly being translated as a ‘informal portrait,’ *xiaoxiang* denotes an image of a humble, modest individual, who is indifferent to worldly success, or for the literati, success in officialdom. In defining the genre of *xiaoxiang*, the identity of the sitter is seemingly as important as the size of the portrait. Supporting the polysemic interpretation of ‘*xiao*’ mentioned above, paintings labeled as *xiaoxiang* appear to represent the protagonist as an unpretentious recluse wearing a commoner’s plain robe.

‘Small/humble portraits’ (*xiaoxiang*), as images of the scholar-recluse, must have been recognized as a distinguishing type of portraiture that is antithetic to official portraits or ancestral portraits. In this regard, the casual and spontaneous mood of *xiaoxiang* must be related to their being labeled as such. One of the earliest paintings categorized as *xiaoxiang* by the artist is the Yuan literati painter Zhao Mengfu’s *Small Self-portrait* (*Zi xie xiaoxiang* 自寫小像) of 1299 (fig. 1.7).⁷¹ Another fine example is a portrait of Yang Qian of 1363, which Ni Zan called “*Small Portrait of Yang Zhuxi*” (*Yang Zhuxi gaoshi xiaoxiang* 楊竹西高士小像) in his inscription (fig. 1.11).⁷² These paintings portray the sitters as scholar-

⁷⁰ See the entry on “*xiao* 小” in Morohashi Tetsuji 諸橋轍次, *Dai kanwa jiten* 大漢和辭典 [Great Chinese-Japanese dictionary] (Tokyo: Taishukan shoten, 1980), 4:46d–47a; Luo Zhufeng 羅竹風 et al., eds., *Hanyu da cidian* 漢語大詞典 [Comprehensive Chinese dictionary] (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 1987–1995), 2:1585–86.

⁷¹ Zhao’s self-portrait, now in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, is introduced in McCausland, *Zhao Mengfu*, 284–88.

⁷² For this portrait, now in the Palace Museum, Beijing, a collaborative work by Wang Yi and Ni Zan, see Sensabaugh, “Fashioning Identities,” 119–24. See also Chen, “Yuan Wang Yi Yang Zhuxi xiaoxiang xi lun,” 301–20.

recluses in nature, a commonality that seems to be an underlying reason for their being titled *xiaoxiang*. The term *xiaoxiang* must have been used to refer to the ‘informal’ portrait, in which the reclusive sitters, usually out-of-office scholars, are depicted in a relaxed posture and wearing casual attire.⁷³ A pronounced casual air of *xiaoxiang* contrasts markedly with a formal, rigid manner of the ancestor portraits or official portraits, which contrasted markedly in multiple ways, not least of which their relatively large size.

In the history of Chinese portraiture, the importance of *xiaoxiang* should be noted for the emergence of a distinctive sub-genre. Then Zeng Jing will appear as a seminal portraitist who both revitalized the tradition of *xiaoxiang* and set the trend that proliferated in the late Ming and Qing periods. As Xie Zhaozhe connects the tradition of *xiaoxiang* with Zeng’s portraits, it is likely that earlier *xiaoxiang* paintings served as important precedents. Both Zhao Mengfu’s self-portrait and Yang Qian’s portrait were in the collection of Xiang Yuanbian, suggesting the likelihood that Zeng saw these iconic images of past recluses.⁷⁴ Dong Qichang recorded that he viewed Zhao’s *xiaoxiang* together with Chen Jiru in 1608.⁷⁵ Chen and Dong, who became Zeng’s two key associates, must have shared their interests in *xiaoxiang* with Zeng.

⁷³ This casual nature of this style of painting would have caused a terminological confusion between *xiaoxiang* and *xingle tu*. The sitters in *xingle tu* are also considered to be dressed in casual attire such as *shenyi* 深衣 and *yefu* 野服, as opposed to official garments. See Lo, “Political Advancement,” 9–10.

⁷⁴ Zeng may have had access to Xiang Yuanbian’s collection, as he painted Xiang’s portrait.

⁷⁵ See Dong Qichang’s “Yuan Zhao Songxue xiaoxiang lizhou” 元趙松雪小像立軸 [Small portrait scroll of Zhao Songxue of Yuan dynasty] recorded in Lu Shihua 陸時化, *Wu Yue suo jian shuhua lu* 吳越所見書畫錄 [Record of calligraphy and painting seen in the Wu and Yue regions], in *ZGSHQS*, 8:1007–8.

A Small Portrait of Yang Zhuxi (Yang Qian) in particular could have served as an important source of inspiration for Zeng in terms of theme, style, and painting process (fig. 1.11).⁷⁶ This Yuan-period predecessor portrays the sitter Yang as a mountain recluse by placing him in a natural setting. The detailed depiction of the sitter's visage is markedly distinctive from the terse brushwork that makes up the remainder of the painting. Like Zeng's collaboration with Hu Zongxin, Yang's 1363 portrait was a collaborative work between the portraitist Wang Yi and the landscapist Ni Zan, resulting in the mixture of distinctive brushwork in the visage and landscape. These features of the fourteenth-century *xiaoxiang* are equally applicable to Zeng's portraits. Zeng himself must have been well informed about the tradition of *xiaoxiang*, and therefore inherited its characteristics and referred to his paintings as such.

The popularity of *xiaoxiang* as a separate genre of portraiture forms an intriguing parallel with the propagation of *xiaopin* 小品 (vignette) in the late Ming literary scene.⁷⁷ *Xiaopin*, literally "small version" or "lesser type," is in general brief and informal in structure, and personal, casual, and spontaneous in mood and tone. Such defining traits of *xiaopin* pertain to Zeng Jing's *xiaoxiang*, considering the informal nature of his portraits. Interestingly, Chen Jiru, whose inscriptions appear on Zeng's portraits more often than that of any other writer, played a leading role in the development of *xiaopin* in the late Ming.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self*, 45–46.

⁷⁷ For an overview of *xiaopin* in the late Ming, see Yang Ye's introduction in *Vignettes from the Late Ming: A Hsiao-p'in Anthology* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), xiii–xxx. See also Kang-i Sun Chang and Stephen Owen eds., *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature*, vol. 2, *From 1375* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 92–99.

⁷⁸ Greenbaum, *Chen Jiru*, 143–54.

Zeng's portraits tend to include a number of inscriptions and subsequent colophons written by the sitter's friends and peers, whose informal and casual tones are analogous to those of *xiaopin*. In these inscriptions and colophons, the personality of the sitter is described in expressive and figurative language, which differs from the formulaic superscriptions for ancestor portraits. Certainly, 'xiao,' as being informal, casual, and spontaneous, was significant in the literary and visual culture of the late Ming, equally in both Zeng's portraits and accompanying inscriptions.

IV. Portraying the Syncretic Thinking of the Jiangnan Literati

The reclusive personae of Zeng Jing's highly-cultivated sitters were far more nuanced and complex than a simple withdrawal from politics would suggest. One of the neglected but crucial aspects of the mentality of Zeng's sitters is their eclectic, syncretic view of religion and philosophy. The late Ming syncretic tendencies deeply affected Zeng and his politically frustrated sitters.¹ We saw that the young Zeng became a follower of Lin Zhao'en, the founder of the Three-in-One religious movement. There was therefore no conflict for Zeng between apotheosizing the Daoist immortal Lü Dongbin and painting portraits for Chan Buddhist monks. Likewise, most of Zeng's sitters embraced Buddhist and Daoist thought, which helped justify their escapist ideals.

It can be surmised that late Ming syncretism would have infused Buddhist and Daoist elements into the literati visual culture. By the late Ming, in fact, many religious monasteries had come to serve as repositories for artworks and as venues for the cultural activities of the literati.² Zeng Jing resided near Jiufeng Temple in Nanjing and often painted portraits at local Buddhist temples. The rich tradition of figural representation in Chan Buddhist and Daoist paintings would have been one of the major sources of inspiration for Zeng's portraits. Some of Zeng's works seem to have borrowed visual idioms from Buddhist and

¹ For a study on late Ming religious syncretism, see Berling, *Syncretic Religion of Lin Zhao'en*; "Religion and Popular Culture: The Management of Moral Capital in *The Romance of the Three Teachings*," in *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. David Johnson et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 188–218. See also Brook, "Rethinking Syncretism," 19–27; Kai-wing Chow, *The Rise of Confucian Ritualism in Late Imperial China: Ethics, Classics, and Lineage Discourse* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 15–43.

² Brook, *Praying for Power*, 107–13.

Daoist iconography in a very subtle manner to express the multifaceted identities of the Jiangnan literati, who may therefore be taken to epitomize the spirit of late Ming syncretism.

The Young Wang Shimin as a Lay Buddhist

In 1616, fifty-three-year-old Zeng Jing captured a youthful image of the future orthodox painting master Wang Shimin (fig. 4.1).³ This portrait, now in the collection of the Tianjin Art Museum, is capped by a superscription written by the scholar-official Gu Bingqian 顧秉謙 (1550–1629?): “Small Portrait of Shangbao Xunzhi (Wang’s courtesy name), at the age of twenty five” 遜之尚寶二十五歲小像.⁴ “Shangbao” 尚寶 refers to Wang’s official position, *shangbao sicheng* 尚寶司丞 (custodian of the Imperial Seal Office). Written in archaic seal script, Gu Bingqian’s superscription suitably evokes the young Wang Shimin’s position at the Seal Office. It is very rare for Zeng Jing’s portraits to have a superscription in large characters and to specify the government position of the sitter.⁵ Zeng’s signature in the

³ *Portrait of Wang Shimin* is illustrated in Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self*, fig. 20; Barnhart et al., *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), fig. 229. See also *ZGHHQJ*, 15:32–33 (description), 215 (plate). The portrait was recently exhibited at the Victoria and Albert Museum. See Zhang Hongxing, ed., *Masterpieces of Chinese Painting, 700–1900* (London: V&A Publishing, 2013), cat. no. 64.

⁴ An official biography of Gu Bingqian was included in *Ming shi*, *juan* 306, 7843–46. After attaining the *jinshi* degree in 1595, Gu served as minister of rites (*libu shangshu* 禮部尚書) in 1621 and later worked as grand academician secretary (*daxueshi* 大學士). In the 1620s, Gu cooperated with the notorious eunuch Wei Zhongxian’s suppression of the Donglin movement.

⁵ *Portrait of Gu Mengyou*, now in the Nanjing Museum, is the only other extant painting by Zeng with a seal-script superscription (fig. 6.4).

lower right corner reads, “Painted by Zeng Jing in the fifth (lunar) month of the *bingchen* year of the Wanli reign” 萬歷丙辰五月, 曾鯨寫.

Wang Shimin records that Zeng Jing painted two portraits for him, one of which would have been the existing 1616 painting:

Acquaintance with nationally famed portrait masters has been very rare in my lifetime. When I was young, I met Zeng Bochen twice. Around those times I obtained two portraits, neither of which greatly resemble me. After that, for a long time, there were none who painted my likeness. In mid-spring of the *jiayin* year (1674), Yang Zihe (Yang Jin 楊晉; 1644–1728) of Yushan returned from the Han River with Shigu (Wang Hui 王翬; 1632–1717).⁶ A small boat was moored, and the rainy window was tranquil and serene. [Yang] spent all day to complete a small portrait [of mine]. Viewers admired it in surprise, and marveled at its lifelike quality. I grab a mirror and look at myself; it is as if I am engaged in conversation (with myself). Ah! I laugh...⁷

海內寫照名家, 余生平交與甚鮮. 少壯時兩遇曾波臣, 先後得二幀, 俱不甚似. 此後, 遂久無貌余者. 甲寅春仲, 虞山子鶴楊兄, 同石谷歸自邗江. 扁舟過訪, 兩

⁶ Yang Jin, a native of Changshu, Jiangsu, was a painter skilled in landscape and bird-and-flower painting. Yang’s biography is recorded in *Qingshigao* 清史稿 [Manuscript of Qing History], *juan* 509. For a discussion of Yang’s portrait paintings, including his portrait of Wang Shimin, see Xiao Yanyi 蕭燕翼, “Yang Jin de xiaoxianghua” 楊晉的肖像畫 [Yang Jin’s portraits], in *Xiang ying shen quan: Ming Qing renwu xiaoxianghua xueshu yantaohui lunwen ji* 像應神全: 明清人物肖像畫學術研討會論文集 [Spirits alive: theses on figures and portraits from the Ming and Qing dynasties], ed. Chen Haoxing (Macao: Macao Museum of Art, 2011), 190–201.

⁷ Wang Shimin, “Yang Zihe wei yu xiezhao ti zeng” 楊子鶴為余寫照 [Yang Zihe gave the title for my portrait], *Wang Fengchang shuhua ti ba* 王奉常書畫題跋 [Inscriptions and colophons on Wang Fengchang’s calligraphy and painting], in *ZGSHQS*, 7:930.

窗清暇。為圖小影，竟日而成。見者無不駭嘆，詫為酷肖。余攬鏡自照，恍若相對共語，呀然一笑...

Wang Shimin criticized two earlier portraits painted by Zeng Jing for not exhibiting a particularly strong likeness. Wang's criticism of Zeng's portraits may have been a thoughtful gesture to be courteous to Yang Jin and Wang Hui, who were conscious of Wang's criticism when they painted his recent portrait.⁸ Yang painted the portrait of the eighty-three-year-old Wang Shimin while Wang Hui added a landscape.⁹ This anecdote reveals that Wang had a keen interest in obtaining a truthful portrait.

Wang Shimin was born into one of the most prominent gentry families in Taicang 太倉, Jiangsu Province. His grandfather, Wang Xijue 王錫爵 (1534–1614), worked as grand academician secretary (*daxue shi* 大學士) and prime minister (*zaixiang* 宰相), and his father, Wang Heng 王衡 (1561–1609), was a compiler (*bianxiu* 編修) in the Hanlin

⁸ See Wan Xinhua 萬新華, "Xiaoxiang·jiazhu·renting: cong Yu Zhiding "Baimiao Wang Yuanqi xiang" zhou tan qi," 肖像·家族·認同: 從禹之鼎〈白描王原祁像〉軸談起 [Portrait, family, identity: speaking of the scroll painting of the *Portrait of Wang Yuanqi in Line Drawing* by Yu Zhiding], *Zhongzheng daxue zhongwen xueshu niankan* 中正大學中文學術年刊 15 (2010), 230n52.

⁹ *Portrait of Wang Shimin* by Yang Jin and Wang Hui is now held in the Palace Museum, Beijing. The inscription on the painting reads, "Yang Jin, a student from Yushan painted a portrait; Wang Hui added landscape. In the eighth day of the second month of the *jiayin* year" 虞山後學楊晉寫照，王翬補圖，時甲寅二月八日。See Xiao, "Yang Jin de xiaoxianghua," 191. The overall iconographic elements and composition of Yang Jin and Wang Hui's portrait of Wang Shimin are very similar to those of Zeng's landscaped portraits, such as *Portrait of Weng Dehong* and *Portrait of Gu Mengyu*.

Academy 翰林院.¹⁰ Zeng Jing may have been introduced to this young man of noble birth through Chen Jiru or Dong Qichang, both of whom were very close to the Wang family. Chen was a tutor in Wang Xijue's household in 1583 and studied with Wang Heng at Mount Zhixing 支硎山.¹¹ Chen Jiru and Wang Heng became good friends, and they remained so even in disagreement over the issue of pursuing official careers.¹² Wang Shimin had been tutored by Dong Qichang beginning in 1605 and later became a leading figure of the so-called Orthodox School, inheriting his teacher's theory and practice of literati painting.¹³ Wang Xijue's 1614 portrait includes a sole extant inscription written by Chen (fig. 4.2).¹⁴ Given Chen's frequent collaborations with Zeng in producing portraits, his inscription on Wang Xijue's portrait raises the possibility that Chen also played an influential role in creating a portrait of Wang's grandson. It would have been Wang Shimin's hereditary

¹⁰ For Wang Shimin's family background and early years, see Chen Ci 陳辭, *Wang Shimin* 王時敏 [Wang Shimin], 2 vols. (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2009), 1:9–18. After his father's early death in 1609, Wang Shimin was raised by his grandfather Wang Xijue.

¹¹ For Chen's relationship with Wang Xijue and Wang Heng, see Greenbaum, *Chen Jiru*, 8–18.

¹² *Ibid.*, 13–14.

¹³ For Wang Shimin's relationship with Dong Qichang, see Wang Shiqing 汪世清, "Lüelun Wang Shimin yu Dong Qichang de guanxi" 略論王時敏與董其昌的關係 [A brief discussion on the relationship between Wang Shimin and Dong Qichang], in *Qingchu Siwang huapai yanjiu lunwenji* 清初四王畫派研究論文集 [Essays on studies of the four Wangs of the early Qing dynasty] (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 1993), 435–48. See also Li Chu-ting 李铸晋, "Wang Shimin yu Dong Qichang" 王時敏與董其昌 [Wang Shimin and Dong Qichang], in *ibid.*, 449–62.

¹⁴ *Portrait of Wang Xijue*, now in the Palace Museum, Beijing, is discussed in Wan, "Xiaoxiang:jiazu-renting," 219–31.

privilege that enabled him to commission his portrait from the leading portraitist of the time. Gu Bingqian, who was nearly a half century older than Wang Shimin, would have written the superscription by virtue of his connection with Wang's grandfather or father.

In 1614, Wang Shimin started his official career as a custodian of the Imperial Seal Office, the official post that is inscribed on his 1616 portrait.¹⁵ Afterwards, Wang held a number of government posts that led to service as the vice minister of the Court of Imperial Sacrifice (*taichangsi shaoqing* 太常寺少卿) in 1636. Despite the clear indication of Wang Shimin's official position in Gu Bingqian's superscription, Zeng Jing depicted Wang as an out-of-office scholar wearing an austere beige robe and black fluttering head cloth (*piaopiao jin* 飄飄巾).¹⁶ When Zeng painted his portrait in 1616, Wang must have retreated home to Taicang to mourn the premature death of his wife Li Shuoren 李碩人 (1593–1615).¹⁷ The tragic loss of his wife may have led to the restrained, solemn mood and religious overtone in Wang Shimin's portrait.

¹⁵ See Wang Baoren 王寶仁 (active nineteenth century), *Fengchang gong nianpu* 奉常公年譜 [Chronological biography of Fengchang gong (Wang Shimin)], in *Beijing tushuguan cang zhenben nianpu congkan* 北京圖書館藏珍本年譜叢刊 [Collected reprints of rare volumes of chronological biography holdings of the Beijing Library] (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 1999), 344–46. At the fall of the Ming dynasty, he retired from the bureaucracy and retreated to his hometown Taicang, spending most of his time painting, collecting, and patronizing arts.

¹⁶ See Huang Nengfu 黃能馥 and Chen Juanjuan 陳娟娟, *Zhongguo fushi shi* 中國服飾史 [History of Chinese costumes] (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2004), 459–61.

¹⁷ See Wang, *Fengchang gong nianpu*, 349–50.

What is interesting about the 1616 portrait are the additional attributes of Wang Shimin, which certainly point to his identity as a Buddhist layman.¹⁸ Wang is depicted seated in a cross-legged position on a round mat of woven rushes.¹⁹ The posture originates from the so-called lotus position in the Buddhist contemplative tradition, and is commonly used for images of the Buddha and other Buddhist deities. This position of meditation is a characteristic of Guanyin iconography, as exemplified in the *Five Forms of Guanyin* painted by Zeng Jing's immediate predecessor Ding Yunpeng (fig. 4.3).²⁰ A woven rush mat (*putuan* 蒲團 or *tuanpu* 團蒲), coupled with the lotus position, is symbolic of (Chan) Buddhist meditation and often included in images of Buddhist figures, including Ding's *Five Forms of Guanyin*. The Chan monk painter Kuncan's comments elsewhere confirm the association of the rush mat with Buddhism: "As the Lofty Virtuous One says, "you have to give and receive personally if you are to unlock the secret of the rush mat (*putuan*)"" 如古德云, 爾當親授受得, 彼破了蒲團訣時.²¹ Zeng's associates and patrons would also

¹⁸ Several scholars have already pointed out Buddhist elements in *Portrait of Wang Shimin*. See Eli Lancman, *Chinese Portraiture* (Rutland: Charles E. Tuttle, 1966), 144; Deng, "Cong Zeng Jing xiaoxianghua kan wan Ming wenren geren xingxiang de jianli," 22–23; Wan, "Xiaoxiang:jiazu-renting," 219–22.

¹⁹ Craig Clunas relates a rush mat in *Portrait of Wang Shimin* to a bamboo mat of Wang Gong 王恭 (d. 398) by referring to the anecdote in *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 [New account of tales of the world]. See Craig Clunas, "Artist and Subject in Ming Dynasty China," in *1999 Lectures and Memoirs*, ed. F. M. L. Thompson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 62–63.

²⁰ On Ding's *Five Forms of Guanyin*, see Weidner, *Latter Days of the Law*, 360–62. This painting bears Dong Qichang's inscription, which is translated in *ibid*.

²¹ This is from Kuncan's inscription on his landscape painting titled *Flowing Stream at the Heavenly Citadel* in the Xubaizhai collection, Hong Kong. Translation from James Cahill, "K'un-ts'an and His Inscriptions," in *Words and Images: Chinese Poetry, Calligraphy, and*

have recognized the rush mat as an object for religious meditation. For example, Li Rihua did meditation on a rush mat after reading the Daoist text of inner alchemy *Huangting jing* 黃庭經 (Scripture of the Yellow Court), and Chen Jiru recorded that a rush mat makes one meditative.²² A rush mat was considered an effective tool for the literati to represent the meditative state of their reclusion. Thus, by the late Ming this mat frequently appeared in images depicting scholars in retreat.²³

In his right hand Wang Shimin holds a flywhisk whose brush rests on his left hand before drooping down.²⁴ A flywhisk (*fuzi* 拂子 or *fuchen* 拂塵) was traditionally considered an attribute of Buddhist or Daoist deities.²⁵ Sometimes substituted by a fan, it was established as one of the iconographical motifs of Vimalakīrti and was often featured in portraits of Chan Buddhist masters. Similar to the *Portrait of Wang Shimin*, for example, Zhao Yong's 趙雍 (1289–ca. 1360) portrait of the Chan master Songyuan Chongyue 松源崇岳 (1132–1201), in the Tenneiji Temple, Japan, depicts the Chan monk seated in a

Painting, ed., Alfreda Murck and Wen C. Fong (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1991), 516.

²² See Li-tsui Flora Fu, *Framing Famous Mountains: Grand Tour and Mingshan Paintings in Sixteenth-Century China* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2009), 158–59. See Nanxiu Qian, *Spirit and Self in Medieval China: The Shih-Shuo Hsin-Yü and Its Legacy* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 270.

²³ For example, see Chen Jiru's *Thatched Hut by Tall Pines* in Peter Sturman and Susan Tai, eds., *The Artful Recluse: Painting, Poetry, and Politics in 17th-Century China* (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 2012), cat. no. 11.

²⁴ Wan Xinhua discusses that Wang Shimin's fly whisk is borrowed from Buddhist motif, see Wan, "Xiaoxiang·jiazu·renting," 222.

²⁵ See Robert E. Buswell and Donald S. Lopez, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 308.

cross-legged position on a round mat, holding a flywhisk.²⁶ Considering these Buddhist motifs, Wang Shimin's left hand, with his palm upwards, can be interpreted as a *mudrā*-like gesture.²⁷

In his adolescent years, Wang Shimin was already an ardent devotee of Buddhism. According to a record by Chan monk Huishan Jiexian 晦山戒顯 (1617–72), the eighty-year-old Wang had been reading the *Diamond Sūtra* (*Jingang jing* 金剛經) on a daily basis ever since he was seventeen.²⁸ Wang's Buddhist belief is also evident in this autobiographical account:

As for Buddhism, I have always been a believer; I am particularly interested in Chan Buddhism. Whenever I hear of an eminent monk traveling to my region, I never fail to don a humble dress and go to visit. Although I have received a great deal of instruction, I have not gained even the slightest insight or enlightenment: due to my poor endowment and strong delusions, every time a religious intention rose, it was always diverted by some worldly concern. In the past I never achieved even the slightest bit of self-examination.²⁹

²⁶ See figs. 24 and 25 in Helmut Brinker, "Ch'an Portraits in a Landscape," *Archives of Asian Art* 27 (1973/74), 21.

²⁷ See Lancman, *Chinese Portraiture*, 144. See also Zhang, *Masterpieces of Chinese Painting*, 274.

²⁸ Jiexian 戒顯 (1610–72), "Wang Fengchang yi leishi xiuji kedi chanlian" 王奉常以累世修積科第蟬連 [Wang Fengchang passed the civil examination and served consecutive terms owing to the good deeds of successive generations], *Xian guo sui lu* 現果隨錄 [Commonplace book of temporal retribution], vol. 3.

²⁹ Wang Shimin, "Zishu" 自述 [Autobiographical account], in *Mingren zizhaun wenchao* 明人自傳文鈔 [Transcription of the autobiographies of Ming people], ed. Du Lianzhe 杜聯喆 (Banqiao: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1977), 42–46. Translation from Pei-yi Wu, *The Confucian's*

至於竺乾之學，夙所皈心，禪宗一門，亦有志趨向。諸方尊宿之至吳者，必擔簞參訪。亦多蒙開示，而根鈍障深，道念數起，輒為世事所移。曾未有纖毫省察。

Wang Shimin's early fascination with Buddhism was strongly influenced by his family's religious heritage. His aunt Wang Daozhen 王燾真 (1557–80), better known by her religious name Tanyangzi 曇陽子, was a mystic priestess, who was portrayed in her biography as having visions of the Bodhisattva Guanyin 觀音 and the Daoist deity Queen Mother of the West (*Xiwang mu* 西王母).³⁰ She was one of the most famous Daoist gurus of the time whose teachings were typical of religious syncretism. The cult of Tanyangzi deeply penetrated into Jiangnan literati society through the literary giant Wang Shizhen 王世貞 (1526–90), who wrote her biography.³¹ Wang Shizhen's eminent colleagues, including Tanyangzi's father Wang Xijue, declared themselves as her disciples.³² The deification of

Progress: Autobiographical Writings in Traditional China (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 259–60. Wang's "Zishu" is translated in *ibid.*, 253–62.

³⁰ See Wang Shizhen, "Tanyang dashi zhuan 曇陽大師傳" [Biography of great master Tanyang], *Yangzhou shanren xu gao* 弇州山人續稿 [Sequel to the manuscript by the mountain man of Yanzhou], *juan* 78, in *Mingren wenji congkan* 明人文集叢刊 [Series of Ming literary collections] (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1970), 22:3844. On Tanyangzi, see Ann Waltner, "Life and Letters: Reflections on Tanyangzi," in *Beyond Exemplar Tales: Women's Biography in Chinese History*, ed. Joan Judge and Hu Ying (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 212–29.

³¹ On the relationship between Wang Shizhen and Tanyangzi, see Ann Waltner, "Visionary and Bureaucrat in the Late Ming: T'an-yang-tzu and Wang Shih-chen," *Late Imperial China* 8, no. 1 (1987): 105–33.

³² See Ann Waltner, "Learning from a Woman: Ming Literati Responses to Tanyangzi," *International Journal of Social Education* 6, no. 1 (1991): 42–59.

Tanyangzi within literati circles entailed the production and circulation of her image.³³

Portrait of Tanyangzi of 1580 painted by You Qiu 尤求 (active second half sixteenth century), a son-in-law of the famous figure painter Qiu Ying 仇英 (ca. 1494–1552), depicts her wearing a Daoist black hat and holding a sword and flywhisk (fig. 4.4).³⁴ A sword evokes a common image of the immortal Lü Dongbin. The presence of a flywhisk in portraits of both Tanyangzi and her nephew, Wang Shimin, suggests the inherited religious beliefs of the Wang family.

The surviving portrait of Wang Xijue, Wang Shimin's grandfather, reveals the syncretic mixing of Daoist and Buddhist symbols (fig. 4.2).³⁵ Painted in 1614, *Portrait of Wang Xijue*, now in the collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing, depicts Wang Xijue as a retired gentleman sitting in a bamboo grove.³⁶ Bamboo is a common motif in Daoist art, the most

³³ The image of Tanyangzi is found in the woodblock-printed book, *Xinjuan xianyuan jishi* 新鐫仙媛紀事 [Newly carved chronicles of female immortals] in *Zhongguo minjian xinyang ziliao huibian* 中國民間信仰資料彙編 [Collection of materials of Chinese folk belief], ed. Wang Qiugui 王秋桂 and Li Fengmao 李豐茂 (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1989), 1:507.

³⁴ For a portrait of Tanyangzi of 1580, see Little and Eichman, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, 286–87. See also Waltner, “Life and Letters,” 217–18. Considering the close relationship between Wang Shizhen and You Qiu, this portrait was likely commissioned by Tanyangzi's biographer Wang Shizhen. See Daria Berg, *Women Writers and the Literary World in Early Modern China, 1580–1700* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 42.

³⁵ See Wan, “Xiaoxiang·jiazhu·renting,” 219–31. For the reproduction of *Portrait of Wang Xijue*, see Yang, *Ming Qing xiaoxianghua*, 54–55.

³⁶ Wang's image is drawn from Qiu Ying's earlier painting *Garden for Self-Enjoyment* (*Dule yuan tu* 獨樂園圖), which depicts the Northern Song statesman and historian Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–1086) in seclusion (fig. 4.5). See Wan, “Xiaoxiang·jiazhu·renting,” 225. This painting by Qiu, now in the Cleveland Museum of Art, depicts Sima in his garden in Luoyang. This handscroll contains Sima's seven poems and Su Shi's poem written by Wen Zhengming in 1558. According to the 1644 inscription by Xiang Yukui 項禹揆 (d. 1659),

important example being images of the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove, as well as in Buddhist art, where it appears in scenes depicting Water-Moon Guanyin. Lotus flowers and leaves occupying the lower left corner create the mood of Buddhist spirituality. As in *Portrait of Ge Yilong*, Wang Xijue's semi-reclining pose can be interpreted as being influenced by that of Vimalakīrti.³⁷ His left hand holds a flywhisk, like his daughter Tanyangzi and grandson Wang Shimin in their portraits.

The shared religious, cultural identity of the Wang family members had been preserved in their portraits throughout time.³⁸ On the bottom left corner of *Portrait of Wang Shimin* is the seal *Saohua an* 掃花庵 (Sweeping Blossoms Studio), which belongs to Wang Shimin's grandson Wang Yuanqi 王原祁 (1642–1715), suggesting that this portrait had been handed down to his lineal descendants. Wang Yuanqi may have wanted to be portrayed in a similar manner to Zeng Jing's portrayal of his grandfather. In *Portrait of Wang Yuanqi* painted by Yu Zhiding 禹之鼎 (1647–1716) in 1707, now in the Nanjing Museum, he is depicted sitting cross-legged on a round woven mat, like his grandfather Wang Shimin (fig. 4.6).³⁹

grandson of the eminent collector Xiang Yuanbian, Qiu's painting is executed in the style of Li Gonglin.

³⁷ The *Vimalakīrti Sutra* was revered as one of the most important scriptures in Tanyangzi's teachings.

³⁸ For a study on the family tradition and identity represented in portraits of the Wang family members, see Wan, "Xiaoxiang·jiazu·renting," 211–45.

³⁹ On *Portrait of Wang Yuanqi* in relation to *Portrait of Wang Shimin*, see *ibid.*, 219–31.

The Semi-Reclining Poet Ge Yilong and Vimalakīrti

Zeng Jing depicted the Suzhou-native poet Ge Yilong 葛一龍 (1567–1640; sobriquet Zhenfu 震甫) wearing a white cotton robe, black square cap (*fangjin* 方巾), and crimson shoes (*zhulu* 朱履), clearly presenting him as an out-of-office scholar (fig. 4.7).⁴⁰ *Portrait of Ge Yilong* presents a minimalist image of the Jiangnan scholar-poet, lacking any painted backdrops, a composition characterizing the larger part of Zeng’s oeuvre. The middle-aged, bearded man is depicted in a semi-reclining position. He leans on a pile of books to keep his torso upright while stretching his legs out on the ground. Ge Yilong’s head slightly turns to his right, avoiding direct confrontation with the viewer. His eyes stare into the distance, and his lips are half hidden by his beard; his face does not display any clear emotion. His expressionless face is to a certain extent incongruous with his restful pose. Zeng always renders his sitter’s visage with a neutral expression. One may want to read the sitter’s calm, composed, aloof personality as devoid of emotion; however, it is possible Zeng might have just been following the representational conventions of portrait painting, in which the faces of the subjects are typically depicted expressionless.

Ge Yilong presumably wished to be portrayed as an erudite literary scholar and bibliophile, as Zeng Jing placed a set of the eight volumes next to his subject. The inclusion

⁴⁰ *Portrait of Ge Yilong* is illustrated in Yang, *Ming Qing xiaoxianghua*, 51–53 and in Barnhart, *Three Thousand Years*, 247. There is no signature of Zeng on *Portrait of Ge Yilong*, but there are two seals of Zeng at the lower left corner of Ge’s image: “Zeng Jing zhi yin” 曾鯨之印 and “Bochen fu” 波臣父. For the square gauze caps (*fangjin*) of the Ming literati, see Gao Chunming 高春明, *Zhongguo fushi mingwu kao* 中國服飾名物考 [Discussion of Chinese costumes and things] (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 2001), 251–73; Huang and Chen, *Zhongguo fushi shi*, 459–67. For a study of *Portrait of Ge Yilong* focusing on the dating of the painting, see Fang, “Zeng Jing Ge Yilong xiang,” 39–43.

of books in this painting well corresponds to a description of Ge Yilong from the portrait encomia written by the scholar, poet, and calligrapher Lou Jian 婁堅 (1567–1631): “Thus people know that [Ge] is one who amuses himself by reading” 知其為讀書自喜人也。⁴¹

Images of books commonly appear in pictures of a scholar’s studio or garden as a conventional emblem of literary attainments. The way of arranging this stock motif demonstrates Zeng’s compositional skills: he used a stack of books as a posing tool, eliciting a semi-reclining posture from his sitter. Contrasting with the white robe, the brown bookbinder, black cap, and red shoes accentuate the three angular points of this image, giving an impression of stability.

Ge Yilong’s body remains hidden beneath a long, voluminous draped robe, yet his semi-reclining pose adeptly embodies the complete relaxation of the reclusive poet. His pose is analogous to the posture of “wotu” 臥圖 (reclining image) illustrated in the late Ming encyclopedia *Sancai tuhui* 三才圖會 (Pictorial encyclopedia of the three realms), edited by Wang Qi 王圻 (1565–1614) and published in 1609 (fig. 4.8).⁴² Whether Zeng Jing referred to this influential contemporary encyclopedia or not, what is certain is that the reclining posture had long been a common visual motif representing reclusive souls. Ge Yilong’s friend Chen Jiru’s use of the term “woyin” 臥隱 (reclining recluse) indicates that late-Ming scholars associated a reclining posture with reclusion:

⁴¹ Lou Jian, “Ge Shifu xiangzan you yin” 葛實甫像贊有引 [Portrait encomia for Ge Shifu], *Xue gu xu yan* 學古緒言 [Studies of antiquities, introduction] (SKQS ed.), 23:4a–b. Lou not only sat for a portrait by Zeng in 1630, but also wrote another inscription on Zeng’s portrait of Xu Yuanliang (fig. 6.1). For Zeng’s portrait of Lou, see Nie, *Zeng Jing*, 22–23.

⁴² See Wang Qi, ed., *Sancai tuhui* (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1970), 4:1650.

[I] burn incense and recline on cushions. Human affairs have all dissolved, but the realm of dreams has yet to arrive. In these times I can be called the ‘reclining recluse,’ and feel that escaping to live in the mountains is too much bother.⁴³

焚香倚枕, 人事都盡, 夢境未來. 僕于此時, 可名臥隱, 便覺鑿坯, 住山爲煩.

According to Chen Jiru’s description, a reclining posture, coupled with burning incense, enabled him to become a recluse without living in the mountains. The term *woyin* 臥隱 (reclining recluse) is interestingly reminiscent of Zong Bing’s 宗炳 (375–443) concept *woyou* 臥遊, which refers to an imaginative journey that one may undertake while reclining in front of landscape paintings. Chen probably meant that one could be a recluse by imagining of the experience while reclining. Regardless of whether the painting’s blank background is taken as signifying nature, or some abstract realm of the self, Ge Yilong’s reclining pose unambiguously points to the sitter’s reclusive life.

The earliest precedent for Ge Yilong’s insouciant pose is the Jin dynasty (265–420) image of the recluse, seen in the famous relief murals of *Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove and Rong Qiqi*.⁴⁴ The reclining pose of the Western Jin recluse-poet Wang Rong 王戎 (234–305) in the murals is analogous to Ge Yilong’s pose in Zeng Jing’s portrait (figs.

⁴³ Chen Jiru, *Yanqi youshi* 巖棲幽事 [Secret matters of the majestic perch], 23a. Translation modified from Greenbaum, *Chen Jiru*, 167.

⁴⁴ For a detailed study of the *Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove and Rong Qiqi*, see Spiro, *Contemplating the Ancients*. See also Laing, “Neo-Taoism and the “Seven Sages.”

1.1 and 4.9). Zeng may have been influenced by similar images of recluses from the past when he adopted the reclining posture.

The historical image of the Buddhist sage Vimalakīrti (Ch: Weimojie 維摩詰) in his iconic semi-reclining pose gives a clue to the possible origin of Ge Yilong's position in Zeng Jing's portrait.⁴⁵ During the Jin dynasty, the *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra* was translated into Chinese (*Weimojie jing* 維摩詰經) and soon after became popular especially among the elite in the Jiangnan region.⁴⁶ Its popularity entailed the production of Vimalakīrti images.⁴⁷ He was commonly paired with the Bodhisattva Manjusri (Ch: Wenshou 文殊) engaged in a theological debate, the so-called *qingtan* 清談 (pure conversation). According to *Lidai minghua ji* 歷代名畫記 (Record of famous paintings in successive dynasties) written by the Tang-dynasty theorist Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠 (ca. 815–?), the Eastern Jin painter Gu

⁴⁵ For a study on the pictorial representation of Vimalakīrti in the East Asian context, see Chen Yunru 陳韻如, “Weimojie xingxiang zai dongya huihua zhong de liuzhuan” 維摩詰形象在東亞繪畫中的流轉 [The circulation of Vimalakīrti's image in East Asian painting], in *Dongya wenhua yixiang zhi xingsu* 東亞文化意象之形塑 [The molding of cultural images in East Asia], ed. Shi Shouqian 石守謙 and Liao Zhaoheng 廖肇亨 (Taipei: Yunchen wenhua shiye gufen youxian gongxi, 2011), 365–413.

⁴⁶ See Richard B. Mather, “Vimalakīrti and Gentry Buddhism,” *History of Religions* 8, no. 1 (1968): 60–73. See also Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 131–32.

⁴⁷ For a study on the representations of Vimalakīrti in Chinese painting, see Chen Liu, “Flowers Bloom and Fall: Representation of *The Vimalakīrti Sūtra* in Traditional Chinese Painting,” (Ph.D. diss., Arizona State University, 2011). For the images of Vimalakīrti from the pre-Tang period, see Emma C. Bunker, “Early Chinese Representations of Vimalakīrti,” *Artibus Asiae* 30, no. 1 (1968): 28–52.

Kaizhi is recorded as having been among the first to create an image of Vimalakīrti.⁴⁸ The archetypal portrayal of Vimalakīrti illustrates him semi-reclining and leaning forward against an armrest, as exemplified in the mural from Dunhuang Cave 103 of the Tang dynasty (fig. 4.10). Following the Tang model for representing Vimalakīrti, the Song and Yuan painters typically portrayed him in the same pose.⁴⁹ Among other examples, *Portrait of Vimalakīrti* in the Kyoto National Museum, datable to the thirteenth century, shows a figure's posture almost identical to that of Ge Yilong (fig. 4.11).⁵⁰

Vimalakīrti, a lay disciple of the Buddha, attracted the special interests of Confucian scholars who were much taken by Vimalakīrti's notion that a cultivated lay practitioner can acquire divine status without entering the priesthood. The *Vimalakīrti Sutra's* portrayal of Vimalakīrti as a retired gentleman (*jushi* 居士) and his engagement in pure conversation with Manjusri appealed to the literati, particularly those who had a desire for seclusion in communion with their companions.⁵¹ Vimalakīrti would have been viewed as embodying

⁴⁸ Zhang Yanyuan, *Lidai minghua ji* (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1963), 113. See also Alexander C. Soper, *Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China* (Ascona: Artibus Asiae, 1959), 35–36. For Gu Kaizhi's representation of Vimalakīrti and its influence, see Chen, "Weimojie xingxiang," 369–87.

⁴⁹ For the representations of Vimalakīrti in early Chinese Buddhist art, see Ning Qiang, *Art, Religion, and Politics in Medieval China: The Dunhuang Cave of the Zhai Family* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 52–55. For the possible influence of the Vimalakīrti illustration in Dunhuang Cave 103 on the Song-dynasty paintings of Vimalakīrti, see Lilla Russell-Smith, *Uygur Patronage in Dunhuang: Regional Art Centres on the Northern Silk Road in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 96–99. For history of replication of the Vimalakīrti image, see Judy C. Ho, "The Perpetuation of an Ancient Model," *Archives of Asian Art* 41 (1988): 32–46.

⁵⁰ See Liu, "Flowers Bloom and Fall," 141–43; Chen, "Weimojie xingxiang," 400–402.

⁵¹ The early popularity of Vimalakīrti among the literati was largely associated with the vogue for seclusion. See Berkowitz, *Patterns of Disengagement*, 144. For the importance of

the integration of Buddhist enlightenment and reclusion. Vimalakīrti's doctrine of non-duality (*bu'er* 不二) provided intellectual justification for the literati to retain their spiritual integrity in the secular world.⁵² Through Vimalakīrti, the literati's yearning for reclusion was linked with their interest in religious syncretism.

The frequent appearance of the semi-reclining pose in images of reclusive scholars appears to be related to the literati's long-standing reverence for Vimalakīrti. According to the artist's inscription on *Vimalakīrti and the Doctrine of Non-duality* (*Weimo bu'er tu* 維摩不二圖) painted by Wang Zhenpeng 王振鵬 (active 1275–1330), the celebrated scholar-poets Du Fu and Su Shi had interests in representations of Vimalakīrti.⁵³ As exemplified in the well-known portrait of Ni Zan, the iconic semi-reclining pose of Vimalakīrti was used to portray a retired scholar at his studio (see figs. 1.9 and 1.10).⁵⁴ The

“pure conversation” (*qingtan*) in literati thought in the Six Dynasties period, see Richard Mather, “The Fine Art of Conversation: The Yen-yü P'ien of the Shih-shuo Hsin-yü,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 91, no. 2 (1971): 222–75.

⁵² Berkowitz, *Patterns of Disengagement*, 144.

⁵³ For Wang Zhenpeng's scroll, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, see Weidner, *Latter Days of the Law*, 349–54. Du Fu and Su Shi's interests in paintings of Vimalakīrti may have been related to their embracement of Buddhism. For Su Shi's interest in Buddhism, see Egan, *Word, Image, and Deed*, 134–68.

⁵⁴ See Liu, “Flowers Bloom and Fall,” 407–408; Maxwell K. Hearn, “The Artist as Hero,” in Fong and Watt, *Possessing the Past*, 312–13. For a discussion of Ni Zan's portrait in relation to Mi Fu's self-image, see Sturman, *Mi Fu*, 87–90. For further discussion of *Portrait of Ni Zan*, now in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, focusing on a screen image within the painting, see Wu, *Double Screen*, 168–87.

semi-reclining pose was also chosen for depicting a reclusive scholar in nature, as seen in *Painting of Yi'an* 毅庵圖 by Tang Yin (fig. 4.12).⁵⁵

Dong Qichang's special interest in Vimalakīrti's image suggests that its popularity among literary elites continued into the late Ming. Dong expressed appreciation for the scroll *Vimalakīrti Preaching Buddhist Doctrine*, now in the Palace Museum, Beijing, and his accompanying colophon attributes the painting to Li Gonglin (fig. 4.13).⁵⁶ Furthermore, Dong seems to have wanted to identify himself with Vimalakīrti. The figure of Dong in the group portrait titled *Venerable Friends* (*Shang you tu* 尚友圖), painted by Zeng Jing's disciple Zhang Qi 張琦 (active mid-seventeenth century), shows an identical hand gesture to that of the Vimalakīrti image that he saw and wrote about (cf. fig. 4.13 and 4.14).⁵⁷ In addition to Dong's Vimalakīrti-like hand gesture, this group portrait notably includes the

⁵⁵ This painting depicts the patron Zhu Bingzhong 朱秉忠, a friend of Tang Yin, enjoying a reclusive life in his hermitage. See Shan Guoqiang 單國強, "Tang Yin *Yi'an tu* juan" 唐寅<毅庵圖>卷 [The handscroll *Painting of Yi'an* by Tang Yin], *Zijin Cheng* 紫禁城 (May 1989): 42–45. See also Anne De Coursey Clapp, *The Painting of T'ang Yin* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 85–88; Xu Zhonglin 許忠陵, ed., *Wumen huihua* 吳門繪畫 [The Wumen paintings of the Ming dynasty] (Hong Kong: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2007), 86–87.

⁵⁶ On this scroll, see Liu, "Flowers Bloom and Fall," 112–21. In 1616, Dong saw the painting of Vimalakīrti for the second time. See Zhang Chou 張丑 (1577–1643), *Qinghe shuhua fang* 清河書畫舫 [Calligraphy and painting boat on the Qinghe river], in *ZGSHQS*, 4:296.

⁵⁷ On *Venerable Friends* in the Shanghai Museum, see Li, "Xiang Shengmo Shang you tu"; Yao, "Commemorating the Deceased," 42–45; Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self*, 40. Dong was a practitioner of Chan Buddhism, and his theory of the Southern and Northern schools was based on the concept of lineage in Chan tradition. He also had a special interest in the Buddhist figure images, as he wrote a number of portrait encomia of the Buddha and other Buddhist deities. See, for example, Dong Qichang, *Rongtai ji* 容臺集 [Collected writings from Roomy Terrace], 4 vols. (Taipei: Guoli zhongguo yanjiu yanjiu bian yin, 1968), 2:993–95.

Buddhist monk Qiutan 秋潭 (1558–1630) together with Dong Qichang’s literati friends.

Dong’s interest in Vimalakīrti reminds us of the fact that Wang Wei, who was greatly revered as the founder of the Southern school by Dong, chose his courtesy name Mojie from Weimojie 維摩詰 (Vimalakīrti) and lived a reclusive life in accordance with the doctrines of Chan Buddhism.⁵⁸

Numerous historical circumstances suggest the possibility that Zeng Jing and his literati peers were exposed to images of Vimalakīrti. Vimalakīrti had long been a favorite subject by the greatest masters of portrait and figure subjects, such as Gu Kaizhi, Li Gonglin, and Tang Yin.⁵⁹ Zeng, as a refined connoisseur and leading portraitist of the age, must have been aware of Gu Kaizhi’s artistic legacy as well as that of other ancient masters of figural representation, including their illustrations of Vimalakīrti.⁶⁰ In addition, Zeng’s active participation in Lin Zhao’en’s religious syncretism in his hometown of Putian suggests his understanding of this Buddhist-based icon. Zeng must have been familiar with the local Putian tradition of Buddhist figure painting, epitomized by the works of his fellow artist Wu Bin 吳彬 (ca. 1543–ca. 1626). Zeng’s established association with Buddhist institutions

⁵⁸ Wang’s reclusion is closely associated with Buddhism. See Yang, *Chan Interpretations*, 86–94.

⁵⁹ See Chen, “Weimojie xingxiang,” 365–413. For an illustration of Vimalakīrti by Li Gonglin, see An-yi Pan, *Painting Faith: Li Gonglin and Northern Song Buddhist Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 18–19. For Tang Yin’s syncretic beliefs, see Anne de Coursey Clapp, *The Painting of T’ang Yin* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 17–24.

⁶⁰ Cao Xuequan wrote that Zeng was born with Gu Kaizhi’s artistic inclinations, and that he collected numerous paintings from the past. See Kondo, “Shozo gaka So Gei,” 157.

would certainly support our assumption that Zeng was extremely familiar with Vimalakīrti imagery as well as other aspects of the Buddhist tradition.

Given the popularity of Vimalakīrti and its representations among Zeng Jing’s coterie of the Jiangnan elite, it is very likely that Ge Yilong chose to adopt a semi-reclining pose for his portrait, well aware of the traditional Vimalakīrti images and their symbolic significance. Ge Yilong was well versed in Buddhist thought and practice. Many of his poems were written on the occasion of sojourning to Buddhist temples.⁶¹ In conjunction with Dong Qichang and other Jiangnan literati, Ge Yilong financially supported the production of stone-carved Buddhist scriptures.⁶²

The inscription on *Portrait of Ge Yilong* written by Zhou Zhigang 周之綱 (active early seventeenth century) is partly torn off, and yet legible phrases, such as “[his] appearance is distinctive and handsome” 風標鮮美, show that Zhou’s inscription is a eulogy for the sitter.⁶³ Zhou Zhigang describes, “(Ge Yilong’s) Daoist bones are solemn and stern” 道骨嚴冷, hinting at his possible Daoist inclination. The term *daogu* 道骨 seems to be derived from

⁶¹ See Ge Yilong, *Ge Zhenfu shiji* 葛震甫詩集, in *Siku jinhuishu congkan* 四庫禁燬書叢刊 [Collection of banned or destroyed books from the Four Treasuries] (hereafter *SKJH*), vol. 123 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2000). One of the collection titles of *Ge Zhenfu shiji* is *Fuke zhai ji* 佛客齋集 [Collected works from the studio of Buddhist guest], reflecting Ge’s Buddhist inclination.

⁶² See Yang Yiwu, *Yun ju si* 雲居寺 [Yunju temple] (Beijing: Huawen chubanshe, 2003), 223.

⁶³ Zhou’s inscription reads, “□□(震甫)有韻, 不在詩文, 詩文□□, □遠塵氛. 震甫有貌, □□風標, 風標鮮美, 神□□□. 土苴乎利, 名自□□□而孤清, □癖情於山水, □□而川泚. 道骨嚴冷, 風範□□. 山棲則禪去雙□揮灑□□淋漓. 圖畫小像, 生氣逼□, □標題名姓, 瞻望即知為震□(甫).”

the Daoist phrase, *xianfeng daogu* 仙風道骨 (immortal spirit and Daoist body), which alludes to an immortal and divine presence. The subsequent phrase, “residing in the mountains, namely, retreating to Chan Buddhist meditation” 山棲則禪去, indicates Ge Yilong’s embrace of Chan Buddhism as well as his reclusion in nature. Indeed, Zhou’s inscription portrays Ge Yilong as a Buddhist and Daoist recluse.⁶⁴ Zhou’s inscription convincingly demonstrates that Ming syncretism was embedded in Ge’s mentality, which in turn corresponds to the Buddhist origin of his semi-reclining posture.

Portrait of Ge Yilong contains four inscriptions written by Mi Wanzhong 米萬鍾 (1570–1628), Wang Siren 王思任 (1575–1646), Fan Jingwen 范景文 (1587–1644), and the abovementioned Zhou Zhigang. On a separate piece of paper on the scroll are eulogistic colophons written by Yu Yan 俞彥 (active early seventeenth century) and Song Xian 宋獻 (active early seventeenth century).⁶⁵ The distinguished poet, essayist, and loyalist scholar Wang Siren’s inscription suggests Ge’s diverse personae: “A poet, a literary man, a drinker, and also the so-called travelling chivalrous hero” 詩人也, 文人也, 酒人也, 而又所稱游俠人也. The following sentence reads, “When I was at Chang’an, I met him three times and was stunned [by his manner]. [I] understood [his quality] as a person, but was not able to follow him” 吾于長安中三接其面, 爽然自失, 知其人而不能師其人也. Wang seems to eulogize Ge’s versatile talents that he himself could not emulate. Like Wang, the inscribers

⁶⁴ Buddhism and Daoism had long been deeply involved in the eremitic practices of the literati. See Mote, “Confucian Eremitism,” 203–6

⁶⁵ Song’s colophon was written in the *wuyin* year, 1638. In their signatures, both Yu and Song refer themselves as “yudi” 友弟 (brotherly friend).

on Zeng Jing's portraits, being the sitter's friends and acquaintances, often write about their personal recollection of the sitter.⁶⁶

Ge Zhenfu shiji 葛震甫詩集 (Collected poems of Ge Yilong) includes a poem titled “Passing by Zeng Bochen's residence at Huai, and asking for a small portrait” 過曾波臣淮上居因乞小影:

In the rain he departed;
Today, again, in rain he comes by.
Already, I feel that those times are distant;
In turn sympathize that hills and valleys are many.
When it comes to placing me—this will do;
I ask you, what is your inclination?
“If not like this, then on river waters;
following your inclination, clasping the misty coir jacket.”⁶⁷

雨中曾別去，
今復雨中過。
已覺歲時遠，
轉憐丘壑多。
置予堪在此，
問爾欲如何？
不然湖水上，
隨意攬煙蓑。

⁶⁶ Together with Ge, Wang participated in the fundraising effort for the production of the stone-carved Buddhist tablets at Yunju temple. See Yang, *Yun ju si*, 91–92, 223.

⁶⁷ Ge Yilong, *Ge Zhenfu shiji*, 510.

By using the proverbial term *qiuhe* 丘壑, Ge Yilong seems to allude to the story about Gu Kaizhi portraying Xie Kun as a mountain recluse living in hills and valleys.⁶⁸ Since rain is frequent in these environs, Ge wittily suggests that Zeng Jing can portray him as a fisherman recluse wearing the misty coir jacket (*yansuo* 煙蓑). In addition, this poem suggests that Ge and Zeng, only three years apart in age, shared more than just a sitter-portraitist relationship. The place name in the poem's title, *Huai* 淮, where Ge met Zeng, seems to refer to the Qinhuai 秦淮 River across Nanjing.⁶⁹ According to Zhou Lianggong's biography of Ge in *Du hua lu* (Record of reading paintings), Ge retreated to Nanjing after his brief government career and stayed there for a long time.⁷⁰ Ge was a good friend of Cao Xuequan, who is believed to have accompanied Zeng when he became active in Nanjing.⁷¹ The social interaction between Ge and Zeng in Nanjing is attested by one of Ge's poems that records that they went boating near Chishipian ji 赤石片磯 (Red Stone Jetty).⁷²

⁶⁸ Gu's portrait of Xie was copied by the Yuan artist Zhao Mengfu. On Zhao's portrait of Xie, titled *Youyu qiuhe* 幼輿丘壑 (literally, "Youyu in hills and valleys"), now in the Princeton University Art Museum, see Shih, "Mind Landscape of Hsieh Yu-yü," 238–54; McCausland, *Zhao Mengfu*, 201–17.

⁶⁹ See Lü Wujin et al., *Nanjing diming yuan* 南京地名源 [Origin of place names in Nanjing] (Nanjing: Jiangsu kexue jishu chubanshe, 1991), 189–92.

⁷⁰ For English translation of Zhou's biography of Ge, see Kim, "Chou Liang-kung," 2:21–22. Qian Qianyi and Zhou Lianggong wrote Ge's biography. See Qian Qianyi, *Liechao shiji xiaozhuan, dingji xia*, 610–11; Zhou Lianggong, *Du hua lu*, 1:4b–5a.

⁷¹ Zhou Lianggong, *Du hua lu*, 1:5a. Ge eulogizes Cao's reclusion. See Ge Yilong, *Ge Zhenfu shiji*, 626.

⁷² Ge Yilong, "Fanzhou chishi ji tong Cheng Ruwen, Huang Mingli, Zeng Bochen, Hong Zhongwei, Guo Shengpu, Zheng Yuchen, Huang Yunxiu, Huang Feiqing, Liu Shifan, Ni Lumou, yun yong kai zi, shi sanyue nian liuri" 泛舟赤石矶同程孺文, 黄明立, 曾波臣, 洪仲韦, 郭圣仆, 郑虞臣, 黄允修, 黄飞卿, 刘师藩, 倪卢牟韵用开字, 时三月廿六日 [Boating at Red

Though undated, some scholars have speculated that *Portrait of Ge Yilong* was painted in 1614.⁷³ This presumed date is based on the assumption that Ge Yilong's poetry collection, *Ge Zhenfu shiji*, was arranged in chronological order, and his above-mentioned poem was about the very portrait painting handed down to us.⁷⁴ If Zeng Jing painted Ge Yilong's portrait more than once, however, this assumption is untenable. In any case, however, it is certain that Ge's extant portrait predates 1628, as this was the year that Mi Wanzhong, who wrote an inscription on the painting, died. By the time Zeng painted *Portrait of Ge Yilong*, he must have already been well acquainted with the major literary figures of late-Ming Jiangnan, including Zhong Xing 鐘惺 (1574–1624), Tan Yuanchun 譚元春 (1586–1637), and Chen Jiru, who edited Ge's poetry collection, *Ge Zhenfu shiji*.⁷⁵ Among them, Ge Yilong's intimate relationship with Chen is noteworthy in terms of Zeng's collaborative partnership with Chen, as Chen wrote a number of inscriptions on Zeng's portraits from the

Stone Jetty with Chen Ruwen, Huang Mingli, Zeng Bochen, Hong Zhongwei, Guo Shengpu, Zheng Yuchen, Huang Yunxiu, Huang Feiqing, Liu Shifan, and Ni Lumou; a rhyme character was *kai*, and it was March 26], *Ge Zhenfu shiji*, 538. The Red Stone Jetty (Chishipian ji 赤石片磯 or Chishi ji 赤石矶) was considered one of the "Forty-Eight Views of Nanjing." See Chin-Sung Chang, "Mountains and Rivers, Pure and Splendid: Wang Hui (1632–1717) and the Making of Landscape Panoramas in early Qing China" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2004), 197–212.

⁷³ See Fang, "Zeng Jing Ge Yilong xiang." In light of their similar brushwork for the clothing Kondo Hidemi suggests the possibility that *Portrait of Ge Yilong* was made around the same time as *Portrait of Gu Mengyou* of 1642. See Kondo, *Bochen huapai*, 76–77. Ma Jige maintains that Ge's portrait and *Portrait of Wang Shimin* of 1616 were painted in the same period, on the basis of their similar arrangement of sitter's props. See Ma, *Zeng Jing yu "Bochen pai,"* 23.

⁷⁴ Fang, "Zeng Jing Ge Yilong xiang," 40–41.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

1610s and 1620s, including those of Shi Pei, Yan Yonghui, Xu Yuanliang, Ni Yuanlu, and Fan Jingwen.⁷⁶ Both Ge's and Chen's inscriptions are found on Zeng's 1623 portrait of Yan Yonghui 嚴用晦 (1593–1658).⁷⁷ The overlapping social circles of Jiangnan intellectuals formed the major clientele of Zeng's portraits.

Portrait of Ge Yilong is painted and mounted as a handscroll, a format that encourages the kind of intimate viewing that was typical of literati-style painting. Among Zeng Jing's oeuvre are several horizontal portraits mounted as handscrolls.⁷⁸ Like a majority of handscroll paintings, there is a title frontispiece to the scroll of *Portrait of Ge Yilong*, which in this instance reads, "Exquisite, excellent testament" (*miao kan yizhu* 妙堪遺囑). This frontispiece, signed "Zhisou" 芝叟, may have been written by the scholar Liu Datong 劉大同 (1865–1952).

Interestingly, *Portrait of Ge Yilong* is mounted together with a portrait of Zhang Minbiao 張民表 (1570–1642), a poet, scholar, and bibliophile active in Kaifeng.⁷⁹ This portrait of Zhang, done by Huang Shiyuan 黃仕元 (active seventeenth century), depicts the

⁷⁶ In *Ge Zhenfu shiji*, there are several poems about Ge's meetings with Chen Jiru. See, for example, Ge Yilong, "Zai guo Meigong shan ju" 再過眉公山居 [Again passing by Meigong's mountain retreat], *Ge Zhenfu shiji*, 499.

⁷⁷ For the reproductions and transcriptions of Ge's and Chen's inscriptions on *Portrait of Yan Yonghui*, see Fang, *Zeng Jing Yan Yonghui xiang*, 92–93, 100–101.

⁷⁸ In Zeng's portraits, the selection criterion between handscroll and hanging scroll is unknown.

⁷⁹ For a reproduction of the portrait of Zhang Minbiao, see Yang, *Ming Qing xiaoxianghua*, 51–53.

sitter as a plain-robed scholar.⁸⁰ On Huang's portrait of Zhang are four inscriptions written by Yang Shengwu 楊繩武 (1569–1641), Xiao Shiwei 蕭士瑋 (1585–1651), Tang Taiyu 唐泰預 (active first half seventeenth century), and the sitter Zhang Minbiao himself. This portrait of Zhang is followed by several colophons including those written by Li Xiangen 李仙根 (1621–1690) and Wang Shizhen 王士禎 (1634–1711). According to the biography of Ge Yilong written by Zhou Lianggong, Zhang was a close friend of Ge and participated in editing his collected poems.⁸¹ Mounted on the same scroll, Ge's and Zhang's portraits displayed together must have been seen by viewers as a token of their special bond. In the painting, Zhang's head turns to his left, as if he and his friend Ge are looking one another. The combination of the portraits of Zhang and Ge in this scroll suggests that portraits were not only appreciated and circulated within an intimate circle of friends, but also utilized to physically embody friendship.

The Black-Robed Weng Dehong Holding a Ruyi Scepter

It was not until recently that the sitter of Zeng Jing's 1639 portrait in the Berkeley Art Museum was identified as Weng Dehong 翁德洪 (d. 1646) (fig. 4.15).⁸² Jin Ye's 金燁

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ See Kim, "Chou Liang-kung," 2:21–22. Zhang patronized Zhou by hiring him as a family tutor. See *ibid.*, 1:32–41.

⁸² I am very grateful to Julia White, Senior Curator of Asian Art at the University of California Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, for sharing her firsthand knowledge of this painting. Before entering the Berkeley Art Museum's collection, this portrait painting was owned by James Cahill. It was published in James Cahill, *The Restless Landscape: Chinese Painting of the Late Ming Period* (Berkeley: University Art Museum, 1971), 148 (cat. no. 80); *Compelling Image*, 116–21. See also Kei, *Chugoku kaiga sogo zuroku*, 1:332. In these books,

(seventeenth century) accompanying inscription, added in 1641, refers to the sitter as Xianruo 纖若, which turns out to be Weng's courtesy name.⁸³ Weng, a poet-calligrapher from Xiaoshan 蕭山, was renowned for his resistance to Li Zicheng's 李自成 (1606–45) rebels and to the Manchus, as recorded in different editions of the Xiaoshan county gazetteer: “Weng Dehong, whose courtesy name was Xianruo, was a tribute student (*suigong sheng*). In the *renwu* year of the Chongzhen reign (1642), [Weng] abandoned his studies and served in the military. When Chuangzei (Li Zicheng) captured the capital, Dehong had already returned home. During the *ziyou* and *bingxu* years (1645/46), [he] also participated in the defense of Zhejiang and afterwards joined the military efforts at Jianhua. Following Zhu Dadian (d. 1646), he fought against the northern invaders and died in battle” 翁德洪字纖若, 歲貢生. 崇禎壬午棄書從軍, 闖賊陷京師, 德洪已早歸. 乙酉丙戌, 防江之役, 亦與其事, 既而赴金華戎幕, 從朱大典抗北兵戰死.⁸⁴ Given the fact that Weng was

the sitter was not identified. This portrait painting is introduced as *Portrait of a Retired Gentleman* 居士像 in Kondo, *Bochen huapai*, 73–74. The same painting is introduced as *Portrait of Weng Dehong* in Bentley, *Figurative Works of Chen Hongshou*, 150–51.

⁸³ Jin Ye's inscription is transcribed in Kondo, *Bochen huapai*, 73.

⁸⁴ This quotation is taken from Zhang Zhonghai 張宗海 et al., eds., *Xiaoshan xianzhi gao* 蕭山縣志稿 [Draft gazetteer of Xiaoshan county] (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1980), 14:13b. See also Huang Yu 黃鈺, ed., *Qianlong Xiaoshan xianzhi* 乾隆蕭山縣志 [Qianlong Gazetteer of Xiaoshan county], in *Ming Qing Xiaoshan xianzhi* 明清蕭山縣志 [Gazetteer of Xiaoshan county of the Ming and Qing dynasties] (Shanghai: Shanghai yuandong chubanshe, 2012), 871. The record in this Qianlong version gazetteer reads, “翁德洪字纖若, 崇禎壬午以歲貢從軍. 甲申闖賊陷京師, 德洪戰死. 子虎臣助戰, 亦死之.” Weng Dehong, according to this record, died in battle in 1644; however, the above-quoted Republican edition corrects this information based on Cai Zhongguang's 蔡仲光 (1609–85) record. An eulogy written by Mao Qiling 毛竒齡 (1623–1716) also emphasizes Weng's allegiance to the Ming. See Huang, *Qianlong Xiaoshan xianzhi*, 871.

identified as a tribute student in this posthumous record, it seems that he never held a high-ranking post at the court, instead devoting his life to art and literature.

A passage from the *Posthumous Manuscripts of Weng Xianruo* 翁纖若遺編, cited in the Qianlong edition of *Gazetteer of Xiaoshan County* 乾隆蕭山县志, provides clues about Weng Dehong's literary and artistic vision, not failing to mention his martyrdom during the Ming-Qing dynastic transition:

Xianruo (Weng Dehong) eagerly sought the customs of the two Jins (Western and Eastern Jin), wrote calligraphy after the methods of the Two Wangs (Wang Xizhi 王羲之 and his son Wang Xianzhi 王獻之), wrote prose following the styles of *Shiji* 史記 and *Hanshu* 漢書, and his poems also possessed the splendor of the Six Dynasties Period. All of his family members were martyred. Indeed, Xianruo was truly imperishable! I respectfully read his posthumous writings and wipe my tears.⁸⁵

纖若風物力追兩晉, 作書繼二王, 文嗣史, 漢, 詩亦六季之英也。乃闔門死義。嗚呼, 纖若不朽矣! 伏讀遺文, 為之掩涕。

Weng Dehong's archaist taste is described in detail here: he favored Jin calligraphy, Han prose, and Six Dynasties poetry. Weng's Jin-style headgear depicted in Zeng Jing's portrait painting accords with the above description of his advocacy of Jin customs—this hat appears

⁸⁵ Huang, *Qianlong Xiaoshan xianzhi*, 1021. For Weng's inheritance of the calligraphic style of the two Wangs, see also Li Fang 李放 (born 1883 or 84), ed., *Huang Qing shu shi* 皇清書史 [History of calligraphy of the Imperial Qing], fulu 附錄 (appendix), in *Qingdai zhuanji congkan* 清代傳記叢刊, vol. 84 (Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1985), 596.

nearly identical to that of Dong Qichang in Zeng's 1620 portrait of him, the same hat that was referred to as "the Jin-dynasty hat" (*Jin jin* 晋巾) in Xiang Shengmo's inscription on the 1652 group portrait titled *Venerable Friends* (figs. 4.14, 4.15, and 5.1).⁸⁶ Like Weng, most of Zeng's sitters maintained an archaist stance on literature and art, and sometimes this was manifest in Zeng's paintings. For example, *Portrait of Hu Erzao* displays the blue-green color scheme of an archaic landscape, while *Portrait of Hou Dongzeng* depicts the sitter admiring a collection of Shang and Zhou bronze vessels (see figs. 3.2 and 3.3).

The most conspicuous motifs in *Portrait of Weng Dehong* are the sitter's black robe and a *ruyi* 如意 scepter in his left hand, elements which make Weng's image distinctive among Zeng Jing's portraits. While a black-robed figure is rare to see in images of scholars, the motif is often shown in images of religious figures, such as Buddhist monks or Daoist masters. The black robes were traditionally associated with Buddhist monks, who were often referred to as the "black-robed ones" (*zìyī* 缁衣).⁸⁷ According to the *Ming shi*, the black robes were worn by teaching priests.⁸⁸ Monk Qiutan's black robe in the abovementioned *Venerable Friends* shows a good example of Buddhist monastic robes worn by late Ming monks, which look very similar to Weng's robe in Zeng's painting.

⁸⁶ Dong Qichang wears the same hat in his solo portrait by Zeng Jing and *Venerable Friends* by Zeng's disciple Zhang Qi. For a reproduction of *Venerable Friends*, now in Shanghai Museum, see Li and Watt, *Chinese Scholar's Studio*, 144. Xiang Shengmo's inscription on *Venerable Friends* is transcribed and translated in Yao, "Commemorating the Deceased," 43–44.

⁸⁷ John Kieschnick, *The Impact of Buddhism on Chinese Material Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 89–90.

⁸⁸ See *Ming shi*, *juan* 67, 1656. There are slight differences in detail between the black robe described in the *Ming shi* and Weng's robe in the painting.

In addition to his black robes, Weng Dehong's *ruyi* scepter carries a complex and subtle religious connotation. The *ruyi* scepter, despite its controversial origins and diverse functions, had been generally considered in Chinese culture to be a Buddhist monk's tool, symbolizing authority in religious teaching.⁸⁹ During the Six Dynasties Period, the *ruyi* scepter became an iconographical attribute of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī.⁹⁰ By the late Ming, the *ruyi* scepter was popularized among literati and used in both the religious and secular realms. At the same time, its nature as a religious emblem was still preserved in seventeenth-century literary and visual representations of Buddhist figures.⁹¹ Zeng's friend Zhang Dai associated the *ruyi* with a Buddhist abbot in his *Tao'an mengyi*.⁹² A seventeenth-century group portrait of two monks and one lay Buddhist scholar titled *Seeking the Dao* (*Wen dao* 問道) exemplifies the use of the *ruyi* scepter in Buddhist practice (fig. 4.16).⁹³ *Seeking the Dao*, painted by Chen Hongshou and his disciples, portrays the monk Jude 具德 (1600–67) as

⁸⁹ It is still debatable whether the *ruyi* scepter was imported from India with Buddhism or was evolved from an indigenous device predating Buddhism's entrance into China. For the origins, types, and functions of the *ruyi* scepter in Chinese culture, see Kieschnick, *Impact of Buddhism*, 138–52; J. Leroy Davidson, "The Origin and Early Use of the Ju-i," *Artibus Asiae* 13, no. 4 (1950): 239–49.

⁹⁰ Kieschnick, *Impact of Buddhism*, 147–48. In Li Gonglin's portrayal of the White Lotus Society (*Bailianshe* 白蓮社), for example, the *ruyi* scepter was used as an important attribute of Mañjuśrī. See Pan, *Painting Faith*, 213–24.

⁹¹ On the basis of Wen Zhenming's records in his *Treatise on Superfluous Things* (*Zhangwu zhi*), Kieschnick points out that the *ruyi* scepter became an aesthetic object and a collectible item for Ming literati. See Kieschnick, *Impact of Buddhism*, 151–52.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 146.

⁹³ For a reproduction of this group portrait, see Yang, *Ming Qing xiaoxianghua*, 73–75.

Vimalakīrti. Next to him, holding a *ruyi* scepter, sits a lay literatus who seems to be depicted in the guise of Mañjuśrī in his debate with Vimalakīrti.⁹⁴

The *ruyi* scepter had long been used as an attribute of Daoist recluses, as shown in the image of Wang Rong in *Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove and Rong Qiqi* (fig. 4.9).⁹⁵ In particular, a variant of the *ruyi* scepter, such as the one that appears in Weng Dehong's hand, had been closely associated with Daoism due to the resemblance of its shape to the sacred *lingzhi* 靈芝 fungus, emblematic of longevity and immortality.⁹⁶ In Daoist visual culture, the *lingzhi*-shaped scepter was one of the identifying attributes of the Celestial Worthy of Numinous Treasure (Lingbao tianzun 靈寶天尊), and by the Ming period it had become a stock motif of other Daoist deities and immortals.⁹⁷

Given its use both as a Buddhist and Daoist motif, the *ruyi* scepter can be interpreted as an object embodying a late Ming tendency towards religious syncretism. It seems that the *ruyi* scepter came into vogue in late Ming Jiangnan, as it often appears in portraits of the Jiangnan literati, which may not be irrelevant to the diffusion of syncretic ideas among these literati.⁹⁸ Similar to *Portrait of Weng Dehong*, late Ming portraits of scholars featuring the

⁹⁴ See Bentley, *Figurative Works of Chen Hongshou*, 153.

⁹⁵ See Spiro, *Contemplating the Ancients*, 55, 102.

⁹⁶ On the *zhi* mushroom in Daoist culture, see Shih-shan Susan Huang, *Picturing the True Form: Daoist Visual Culture in Traditional China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 180–86.

⁹⁷ For a seventeenth-century example of the image of the Celestial Worthy of Numinous Treasure, see Little and Eichman, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, 229–31.

⁹⁸ For late Ming examples of images in which scholars hold the *ruyi* scepter, see cat. nos. 16, 23, 24, 34, 36 in Yang, *Ming Qing xiaoxianghua*.

ruyi scepter mostly depict the subject as a recluse in nature, which may allude to the fact that Buddhist or Daoist virtues were an integral part of the reclusive existence of the Jiangnan elite.⁹⁹

Weng Dehong's solemn gaze and compressed lips in Zeng Jing's painting denote the sitter's firm and resolute character, which corresponds with Weng's loyalist attitude. While the expression on his face is tense and serious, Weng sits in a casual, relaxed pose with his right knee up and his left leg folded before the body. His right hand rests comfortably on his raised right knee. Weng's sitting position is to some extent reminiscent of the casual "royal ease" posture (Skt.: *rajalalitasana*) characteristic of Water-Moon Guanyin (Shuiyue Guanyin 水月觀音) iconography.¹⁰⁰ The inclusion of black robes and the *ruyi* scepter suggests that in fashioning Weng's image, Zeng also intended to emulate Guanyin's iconic posture to emphasize Weng's utter relaxation, insouciance, and composure, establishing by implication his resemblance to a Buddhist deity. Regarding the possible influence of Buddhist images on the casual postures of Zeng's sitters, another type of relaxed pose, which we have already seen in his portraits of Wu Mengyang, Hu Erzao, and Hou Dongzeng, deserves attention (see figs. 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3). These 1607, 1627, and 1637 paintings similarly portray the sitter reclining on a rock or couch, and this relaxed sitting position had been widely used in representations of Water-Moon Guanyin and other Buddhist deities.

⁹⁹ Chen Jiru, for example, embraced Buddhism and Daoism as a ground for reclusion. See Greenbaum, *Chen Jiru*, 37–43.

¹⁰⁰ On Guanyin's sitting position, see Petra Rösch, *Chinese Wood Sculptures of the 11th to 13th Centuries: Images of Water-moon Guanyin in Northern Chinese Temples and Western Collections* (Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2007), 27–32.

Weng Dehong's relaxed pose harmonizes well with the painting's natural setting of mountains and streams. *Portrait of Weng Dehong*, like Zeng Jing's other portraits featuring a landscape background, is a collaborative effort between Zeng and a landscape specialist. The painting therefore includes two signatures: "In the seventh month, autumn of the *jimao* year (1639), Zeng Jing painted at the Pingzhi Pavilion" 己卯穉七月曾鯨寫于平絳閣 and "The Daoist of true madness, Cao Xizhi, painted the scenery" 真痴道人曹熙志寫景.¹⁰¹ The fact that Cao used an informal appellation—"Daoist of true madness"—suggests that the landscape painter Cao was close to Weng. A pavilion named Pingzhi Ge 平絳閣, which was possibly an annex to a monastery, was a venue for this painting. Cahill sees Cao's landscape setting as conventional, done in the style of Song Xu 宋旭 (b. 1525).¹⁰² Cao Xizhi's landscape painting is reminiscent of the style of the Wu School masters of the mid-Ming period, adopting a terse brush and a bright color palette. The foliage dots on the rocks are conventionalized, and the so-called "hemp-fiber" (*pima* 麻皮) brushstrokes are used to texture the rock surfaces.

For *Portrait of Weng Dehong*, Zeng Jing adopted a figure-in-landscape composition and large-size vertical format; however, its figure-landscape relation is different from that of his other landscaped portraits in the same format and of similar size, such as his portraits of Wu Mengyang, Hu Erzao, and Hou Dongzeng (cf. figs. 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, and 4.15). While the portraits of Wu, Hu, and Hou present a relatively small figure in a landscape dominating the

¹⁰¹ Kondo Hidemi read "zhi" 絳 as "fei" 緋. See Kondo, *Bochen huapai*, 73. Zeng's signature is followed by two square seals: "Zeng Jing zhi yin" 曾鯨之印 and "Bochen" 波臣.

¹⁰² Cahill, *Restless Landscape*, 148; *Compelling Image*, 120–21.

pictorial field, the figure of Weng Dehong occupies almost one-third of the entire painted area. In addition, *Portrait of Weng Dehong* looks markedly different from the three abovementioned works in that Zeng placed Weng's image prominently in the center of the painting while in the other paintings he positioned the sitters in the lower right corner. Regardless of their compositional differences, these landscaped portraits must have been regarded as depicting the same *xingle* (leisure activity):

Most people, in painting portraits, sketch their forms;
 Only Mr. Zeng, sketching appearances, copies their spirit.
 Form, spirit—these are naturally of different weight:
 A kind of natural spontaneity leaves the dust of the world far behind.
 Sketching the gentleman in *xingle*, [Zeng] accords with the gentleman's intention.
 Imaging the gentleman in *xingle*, he captures the gentleman's taste.
 Confucian scholar yet reclusive; Confucian yet untrammelled;
 Nobody knows the depths of [his] magnanimous spirit and soul.
 Today for the gentleman I write an inscription;
 His image will be seen through all eternity.
 In the autume of the *xinji* year (1641), [I] write a eulogy for the doyen of verse
 (*cizhang*) Xianruo. [Signed] Brotherly friend, Jin Ye.

衆人寫貌寫其形，
 曾君寫貌獨摹神。
 形也神也自不等，
 一種瀟灑迥出塵。
 寫君行樂會君意，
 像君行樂得君趣。
 儒而隱，儒而逸，
 磊落襟期無人識。

余今為君題一跋，
萬古千秋見顏色。
辛巳秋為織若詞丈贊。友弟金燁。

According to this inscription, written by Weng Dehong's friend Jin Ye in 1641, what Zeng Jing portrayed is Weng's 'leisure activity,' and the portraitist thereby conveyed the sitter's idea (*yi* 意) and taste (*qu* 趣) through his portrait painting. As Zeng's *Portrait of Wu Mengyang* was labeled as *xingle tu*, Weng's relaxing moment in nature was also recognized as *xingle*. Weng's *xingle* was closely connected with his scholarly attainment and reclusive experiences alike, and therefore Jin identified Weng both as a (Confucian) scholar (*ru* 儒) and as a recluse (*yin* 隱).

Evocations of the classical discourse on portraiture, admiration for Zeng Jing's skill, and eulogy to Weng Dehong's integrity are nicely interwoven in Jin Ye's poetic inscription. Reiterating the dichotomy between "likeness" (*xing* 形) and "spirit" (*shen* 神), and the supremacy of the latter over the former, Jin praises Zeng's portrait-painting skill in capturing the unwordly spirit of the sitter Weng. Despite the plethora of inscriptions on Zeng's paintings, it is very rare that an inscriber directly refers to Zeng. Jin's use of the Buddhist term *chuchen* 出塵, literally "to leave the dust (of the secular world)," should be understood in relation to Weng's religious black robe and scepter.¹⁰³ Considering its figurative meaning, this term *chuchen* may allude to Weng's entering the monkhood.

¹⁰³ See Ciyi et al., eds., *Foguang Da Cidian* 佛光大辭典 [Buddha-Light encyclopedia of Buddhism], 8 vols. (Gaoxiong: Foguang chubanshe, 1988–89), 2:1562.

V. Zeng Jing and the Huating Elites

Beginning in the late 1610s, Zeng Jing became intimately associated with two of the leading arbiters of cultural and artistic taste in late Ming Jiangnan, Dong Qichang and Chen Jiru. By 1616, when Zeng painted a portrait for Wang Shimin, he would have been well known to Dong and Chen, both of whom served as a tutor in the Wang family. Zeng painted a portrait of Dong in collaboration with Xiang Shengmo in 1620 and possibly around the same time painted a portrait of Dong's lifelong friend Chen. Zeng's close association with Dong and Chen suggests that Zeng had become active in their hometown and main area of activity, Huating (modern Songjiang, Shanghai), mixing in their social and cultural circles. Dong and Chen's recognition of Zeng's artistic prowess would have bolstered his reputation and increased demand for his portraits, encouraging other Jiangnan elites to sit for Zeng. The literary celebrity Chen, whose inscriptions frequently appear on Zeng's paintings of the 1620s, played a particularly important role in promoting Zeng's work as a portraitist. The 1620s appears to have been the most productive period of Zeng's career. By virtue of his association with Dong and Chen, Zeng enjoyed immense prestige as a portrait painter among friends of the celebrated pair, as well as the broader community of Jiangnan intellectuals.

Dong Qichang's Portrait among Xiang Shengmo's Pines

Zeng Jing's painting of Dong Qichang's portrait must have been a critical moment in his artistic career. As the foremost practitioner and theorist of the literati tradition in late imperial China, Dong reestablished the legitimacy of the arts by privileging literati or

scholar-amateur over professional painters.¹ Dong's validation of Zeng's artistic skill in portraiture is remarkable since figure and portrait painting were not part of Dong's own artistic practice—landscape and nature themes were the primary focus of Dong's art and art theory. Thirty nine portrait encomia (*xiangzan* 像贊), written by Dong and included in his *Rongtai ji* 容臺集 (Collected writings from Roomy Terrace; published in 1630), suggests that he may have held an appreciation for portraits.² Dong Qichang composed encomia for a variety of subjects, ranging from mythical and historical Buddhist figures, such as Buddha, Bodhidharma, and the Sixteen Arhats, to his contemporaries, including Confucian scholars, Chan Buddhist monks, and Daoist masters. The wide range of subjects in Dong's encomia, encompassing both religious and secular figures, suggests that syncretic tendencies, as discussed in the previous chapter, played a significant role in the development of late Ming portraiture.

The portrait of Dong Qichang, a collaborative work between Zeng Jing and Xiang Shengmo, comes down to us attached to Dong's famous album of landscape paintings titled *Eight Views of Autumn Moods* (*Qiuxing bajing* 秋興八景) in the Shanghai Museum (fig. 5.1).³ Dong's signatures indicate that the landscapes in this album were painted in the

¹ For an overview of Dong's art theory, see Wai-kam Ho and Dawn Ho Delbanco, "Tung Ch'i-ch'ang's Transcendence of History and Art," in *The Century of Tung Ch'i-ch'ang, 1555–1636*, ed. Wai-kam Ho and Judith G. Smith, 2 vols. (Kansas City: Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 1992), 1:3–41.

² See Dong Qichang, *Rongtai ji*, 2:993–1024.

³ For this album, see *ZGHHQJ*, 16:7–8 (description), 66–73 (plates). See also Li Jinyan 李錦炎, "Dong Qichang *Qiuxing bajing tuce*" 董其昌《秋興八景圖冊》 [Dong Qichang's *Eight Views of Autumn Moods*], *Shanghai bowuguan jikan* (1982): 266–74.

gengshen 庚申 year (1620).⁴ Zeng's portrait, which is undated, may have been painted around the same time or possibly was added later. Prefacing the collection of Dong's landscapes with Zeng's frontispiece portrait of the artist, this album presents both Dong's outer appearance and inner self. This colorful album of eight landscape paintings embodies and exemplifies Dong Qichang's determined advocacy of the literati aesthetic of the Song and Yuan masters. The inscriptions by Dong on the first and seventh leaves clarify that he imitated the styles of Zhao Mengfu and Mi Fu.⁵ To capture the flavor of high autumn in eight small landscapes, Dong travelled along the banks of the Yangtze River by boat, including Guabu 瓜步 River (in modern Nanjing), Wumen 吳門 (Suzhou), and Jingkou 京口 (Zhenjiang 鎮江).⁶ It is possible that Dong met Zeng and commissioned the frontispiece portrait from him during this journey.

Given his wide range of personal connections, Dong Qichang is likely to have known Zeng Jing for many years before *Eight Views of Autumn Moods* was made in 1620.⁷ By the time Zeng painted Wang Shimin's portrait in 1616, he should have been acquainted with Dong, who also stayed in intimate contact with the Wang family of Taicang, as he tutored

⁴ For English translations of the inscriptions in this album, see Ho and Smith, *Century of Tung Ch'i-ch'ang*, 2:48–50.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ See *ibid.* Dong enjoyed boating excursions, which often involved art making. See Celia Carrington Riley, "Tung Ch'i-ch'ang's Life (1555–1636): The Interplay of Politics and Art" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1995), 249–52. Chen often accompanied Dong on boating excursions. See Greenbaum, *Chen Jiru*, 9–10, 188.

⁷ For Dong's network of relationships, see Wang Shiqing, "Tung Ch'i-ch'ang's Circle," in Ho and Smith, *Century of Tung Ch'i-ch'ang*, 2:459–84.

Wang Shimin. Considering the earlier shared connections of Zeng and Dong to Xiang Yuanbian, Zeng could have known Dong through the Xiang family even before he met Wang. From the 1570s onward, Dong had been on intimate terms with the art collector and connoisseur Xiang Yuanbian, for whom Zeng painted a portrait.⁸ Like his grandfather, Xiang Shengmo maintained a special relationship with Dong and later collaborated with Zeng in drawing Dong's portrait. Furthermore, Dong would have been well-informed about artistic trends in Zeng's home province of Fujian, where he visited and worked as a result of his close connections with two Fujianese scholar-officials, Tian Yijun 田一俊 (1540–91) and Ye Xianggao 葉向高 (1559–1627).⁹

In the frontispiece portrait, Zeng Jing portrayed Dong Qichang as a recluse standing in a mountain landscape among pines and rocks, looking like an inhabitant of one of the album's eight landscapes (fig. 5.1).¹⁰ Dong wears the plain blue robe of non-degree holder, a black cap of the ancient dynasty, and the red shoes of a Daoist. The reclusive persona of the portrait contrasts with Dong's lingering aspirations for a political career in real life. Dong held a series of government posts after he passed the *jinshi* (advanced scholar) examination in 1589, and was in and out office during the reigns of the Tianqi (r. 1620–27) and Chongzhen (r. 1627–44) emperors. Dong's alter ego as high official is conveyed in one of

⁸ An undated portrait of Xiang by Zeng, now lost, was recorded in Zhang Geng, *Guochao huazheng lu*, 2:14b. For Dong's relationships with Xiang and his descendants, see Riley, "Tung Ch'i-ch'ang's Life (1555–1636)," 124–30; "Tung Ch'i-ch'ang's Life," in Ho and Smith, *Century of Tung Ch'i-ch'ang*, 2:392–97. See also Wang Shiqing, "Tung Ch'i-ch'ang's circle" (in Chinese), in *ibid.*, 469–72.

⁹ See Riley, "Tung Ch'i-ch'ang's Life (1555–1636)," 140–41, 153–55, 173–74, 214–18.

¹⁰ Zeng's portrait of Dong in the Shanghai Museum is introduced in *ZGHHQJ*, 16:33–34 (description), 217 (plate).

his extant portraits, in which he was depicted wearing official court robes and holding a scepter.¹¹

When *Eight Views of Autumn Moods* was painted in 1620, Dong Qichang had been in retirement in his hometown of Huating for about fifteen years and was focused on artistic pursuits.¹² Interestingly, the *Eight Views* album was completed soon after the death of the Wanli emperor (r. 1572–1620), who had contributed to the tortuous nature of Dong’s political career. Dong started his official career under the reign of this emperor, but was relegated to the provinces in 1599 because of his views on royal succession, which clashed with those of the emperor.¹³ Dong, who had to constantly choose between public service and reclusion, may have felt mixed emotions by hearing the news of the emperor’s death. Dong may have wanted to have a personal monument that could consummate his retired life and artistic achievements of the time. This album combining his likeness and his landscape paintings would have achieved such an ideal handsomely.

In the painting, Dong Qichang stands on a slope just beyond the cover of three tall pine trees. As in his other portraits set in landscape, Zeng Jing was assisted by a collaborator who painted the natural surroundings. For this portrait, Xiang Shengmo, who would become one of the most renowned literati artists of the seventeenth century, worked with Zeng and signed the painting, “The woodcutter of Guxu, Xiang Shengmo, added a [landscape]

¹¹ This portrait of Dong in a private collection in Taiwan is illustrated in Cahill, *Compelling Image*, 38.

¹² On Dong’s retirement period, see Riley, “Tung Ch’i-ch’ang’s Life (1555–1636),” 203–52.

¹³ See *ibid.*, 197–202.

painting” 古胥樵項聖謨補圖。¹⁴ Zeng’s signature on this painting reads, “Zhe’an Zeng Jing portrayed the likeness” 蔗庵曾鯨寫照, applying his rarely used sobriquet, Zhe’an 蔗庵—Zeng mostly signed his paintings with his courtesy name, Bochen.

Xiang Shengmo was noted particularly for his paintings of pine trees, and he used this signature motif as a dominant element in Dong Qichang’s frontispiece portrait. It might have been Xiang’s suggestion to depict Dong standing among pines, which could serve to symbolize Dong’s steadfastness in political adversity. As Dong took a painting trip along the Yangtze River for this 1620 album containing Zeng’s portrait, Dong could have met Xiang at his *Song zhai* 松齋 (Studio of pines) in Jiaxing, which was famous for its surrounding pine groves. We learn from the inscription Xiang included on his 1629 landscape painting *An Untrammelled Immortal and Soughing Pines* (*Song tao san xian* 松濤散仙) that he had many kinds of old pine trees in his garden.¹⁵ In a 1652 portrait of the same title, now in the Jilin Provincial Museum, Xiang is shown surrounded by pine forests (fig. 5.2).¹⁶ He used “*Song tao san xian*” as his alternative literary name.

¹⁴ This portrait bears three seals of Pang Yuanji 龐元濟 (1865–1949): “*Xuzhi mi wan*” 虛齋秘玩, “*Youyuxianshi baocang*” 有余閑室寶藏, “*Laichen xinshang*” 萊臣心賞, and one seal of Wu Hufan 吳湖帆 (1894–1968): “*Wu Hufan shi zhencang*” 吳湖帆氏珍藏.

¹⁵ For this painting, held in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, see Eun-wha Park, “The World of Idealized Reclusion: Landscape Painting of Hsiang Sheng-Mo (1597–1658),” 2 vols. (Ph.D. diss., The University of Michigan, 1992), 1:21–22. The title of the painting is also translated as “A carefree immortal among waves of pines.”

¹⁶ See Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self*, 36–40. See also Yang Xin 楊新, *Xiang Shengmo jing pin ji* 項聖謨精品集 [Core collection of Xiang Shengmo] (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1999), 147 (plate), 249 (description).

The friendship between Dong Qichang and Xiang Shengmo must have facilitated Xiang's participation in painting a portrait of Dong.¹⁷ To Jiangnan literati like Dong and Xiang, the production of a portrait would have been a means to express shared friendship, a deeply personal kind of meaning that is wonderfully embodied in *Venerable Friends* (see fig. 4.14). This famous group portrait of six gentlemen includes the figures of Dong and Xiang. In 1652, eight years after the fall of the Ming, Xiang worked together with Zeng Jing's disciple Zhang Qi on this group portrait and wrote an inscription entitled “*Shang you*” 尚友. To perpetuate the friendship through visual representation, Xiang conjured an imaginary gathering by summoning his deceased senior peers—only Xiang himself and Lu Dezhi 魯得之 (1585–after 1660) were alive when the painting was made. Xiang's inscription on the painting celebrates their everlasting friendship.¹⁸

Xiang Shengmo, who must have known and possibly owned Zeng Jing's portrait of his grandfather Xiang Yuanbian, continued to patronize and collaborate with Zeng and his disciples.¹⁹ In a manner similar to the collaborative production of Dong Qichang's solo portrait, Xiang also contributed the landscape background for the likenesses painted by

¹⁷ For Xiang's relationship with Dong, see Liu Yunfeng 劉運峰, “Xiang Shengmo jiaoyou kao” 項聖謨交游考 [Study on Xiang Shengmo's social relations], *Rong bao zhai* 榮寶齋 (2006/2), 40–43. See also Ho and Smith, *Century of Tung Ch'i-ch'ang*, 2:469–72. In discussing *Portrait of Wu Mengyang* earlier, we began to see how Zeng's collaborator, who added a landscape to his likeness, was recruited through personal connections.

¹⁸ For the transcription and translation of Xiang's inscription on *Venerable Friends*, see Yao, “Commemorating the Deceased,” 43–44.

¹⁹ Zeng's portrait of Xiang Yuanbian is recorded in Zhang Geng, *Guochao huazheng lu*, 2:14b. For Xiang Shengmo's portrait production and collaborations with Zeng Jing's disciples, see Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self*, 36–40.

Zhang Qi in *Venerable Friends*.²⁰ In the same year he worked together with Zhang on *Venerable Friends*, Xiang received help from another Zeng disciple, Xie Bin 謝彬 (ca. 1602–after 1680), in producing the abovementioned portrait of himself: *An Untrammelled Immortal and Soughing Pines* (fig. 5.2).²¹ It is possible that Zeng worked as the designated portrait painter for Xiang and his circle of friends, including Dong Qichang and Chen Jiru, among others.

It is possible that Zeng Jing's portrait of Dong Qichang in the 1620 album, *Eight Views of Autumn Moods*, was a model for his disciple Zhang Qi's depiction of Dong in *Venerable Friends* of 1652, as Dong's portrayal in the two paintings show a marked resemblance despite the considerable temporal gap between them (cf. figs. 4.14 and 5.1).²² Both portraits of Dong depict him wearing the same type of hat, which Xiang Shengmo described as "the Jin-dynasty hat" (*Jin jin* 晉巾) in his inscription on *Venerable Friends*. Indeed, Xiang comments on the different headgear of each figure in this group portrait: Chen Jiru wears the blue angular hat (*lan jiao jin* 藍角巾), Li Rihua the Tang-dynasty hat (*Tang jin* 唐巾), Lu

²⁰ On Xiang's close relationship with Zeng's disciple Zhang Qi, see Chen Yan 陳艷, "Qingdai Xiang Shengmo jiaoyou xiang kao: shihua hui you (shang)" 清代項聖謨交游詳考: 詩畫會友(上) [Detailed discussion on Xiang Shengmo's network of relationships in the Qing period], *Rong bao zhai* 榮寶齋 (2013/6), 252.

²¹ This 1652 portrait of Xiang has the same title as his aforementioned landscape painting of 1628/29. See Ma, *Zeng Jing yu "Bochen pai,"* 40–41. One year later, Xiang collaborated again with Xie on a portrait of Zhu Maoshi 朱茂時 (active second half seventeenth century), now in the Palace Museum, Beijing. See *ibid.*, 42–43.

²² When Zhang Qi painted *Venerable Friends*, it had been sixteen years since Dong passed away. For a discussion of Zeng's portrait of Dong as a model for later portraits, see Tao Yuzhi 陶喻之 "Mingmo mingren xiaoxianghua fu tan" 明末名人肖像畫膚談 [Treatise on portraits of late Ming celebrities], in Chen, *Xiang ying shen quan*, 71–73.

Dezhi the Tao Yuanming hat (*Yuanming jin* 淵明巾), and Xiang himself the high angular hat (*gao jiao jin* 高角巾).²³ Headgear was an important indicator of revivalist tastes in the Ming period.²⁴ Dong's archaic Jin hat would have indicated his distinctive taste and perhaps a strong nostalgic longing for a cultural efflorescence of the Jin dynasty (265–420) that produced the esteemed painter Gu Kaizhi, calligrapher Wang Xizhi, and poet Tao Qian.²⁵ Dong's dress in Zeng and Xiang's painting nicely matches the archaic tone that Dong employed in his album's landscape paintings.

The 'frontispiece' format of Zeng Jing's portrait of Dong Qichang has historical significance, as it appears that there was a growing trend among Ming literati to commission their portraits for use as frontispieces to their collected writings or artworks.²⁶ As a visual representation of authorial identity, frontispiece portraits attached to books or painting albums reflect the literati's desire to project their self-images along with their scholarly or artistic achievements.²⁷ It is also notable that the rise in popularity of the frontispiece portrait during the Ming period paralleled a significant increase in production of small-size portraits

²³ See Yao, "Commemorating the Deceased," 43–44.

²⁴ See Wu Renshu 巫仁恕, *Pin wei she hua: wan Ming de xiaofei shehui yu shidafu* 品味奢華：晚明的消費社會與士大夫 [Luxurious tastes: Late Ming consumer society and the gentry] (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan, 2007), 129–32.

²⁵ Among literati artists, there seems to have been a trend toward commissioning or making self-images with the intention to evoke a specific antique model. Mi Fu, for example, portrayed himself as a man of Jin. See Sturman, *Mi Fu*, 89–90.

²⁶ See Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality*, 97–98.

²⁷ One of the many examples of the frontispiece portrait from the seventeenth century is a portrait of Wang Gen 王艮 (1483–1541) attached to his collected writings. See *ibid.*

as well as painted or printed albums of collected portraits. From about the fifteenth century onwards there occurred a substantial increase in the publication of collected portraits, one of the earliest examples being *Lidai guren xiang zan* 歷代古人像贊 (Portraits and eulogies of the ancient people through ages), which was published in 1498.²⁸ Given that Zeng's friend Zhang Dai edited and published a book titled *Portraits and Encomia of the Eminent Worthies of the Three Eternals in the Yue Region of the Ming* (*You Ming yu Yue sanbuxiu mingxian tuzan*), Zeng should have been well informed of the broader trend of producing portrait images coupled with book publication.²⁹

Chen Jiru's Celebrated Reclusiveness

As a passage from Qian Qianyi's biography of Chen Jiru illustrates, Chen enjoyed celebrity status in late Ming Jiangnan:

Nearby wine shops and tea houses all hung [Chen Jiru's] portrait. Meigong's [Chen Jiru] fame spread widely, even throughout the remote countryside, small towns, dessert markets, and condiment shops.³⁰

近而酒樓茶館, 悉懸其畫像。甚至窮鄉小邑, 鬻糶救市鹽豉者, 胥被以眉公之名。

²⁸ For a facsimile of the first edition of this album, see Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸, ed., *Zhongguo gudai banhua congkan* 中國古代版畫叢刊 [Collections of woodblock prints from the Chinese past], vol. 1 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1988).

²⁹ Zhang Dai's album is discussed in Campbell, "Mortal Ancestors, Immortal Images," 1–26.

³⁰ Qian Qianyi, *Liechao shiji xiaozhuan*, 637. For the visual representations of Chen from the seventeenth century, see Greenbaum, *Chen Jiru*, 180–83.

Qian Qianyi's record attests to the widespread distribution and public interest in Chen Jiru's image, possibly during his lifetime or in the years following his death, and this public display indicates the wide recognition of Chen as a celebrity in the Jiangnan area.³¹ The placement of Chen's portraits in commercial spaces further attests to the secularized usage of and increased demand for portraits. Informal portraits like Zeng Jing's painting would have been more suitable to display in public spaces than were the traditional ancestor or commemorative portraits used in sacrificial rites. Considering Zeng's unparalleled fame as a portraitist of the time, his portrait of Chen may have served as a model for reproductions and other subsequent pictures of him.

Although Chen Jiru is not known to have engaged in figure painting, there is no question that as a connoisseur he was familiar with the subject's history. Chen's remarks on Gu Kaizhi's *Admonitions* scroll (*Nü shi zhen* 女史箴) demonstrate a fine connoisseurial eye for figure painting: "The *Admonitions of the Court Instructress* that I saw at Wumen (Suzhou) had been earlier known to be Gu Kaizhi's [genuine work]; in fact, it is [a later copy] of the early Song. This *Admonitions* scroll bears the calligraphy of Emperor Gaozong [of the Song] (r. 1127–62); it is not the writing of [Wang] Xianzhi (344–88)" 女史箴余見於吳門，向來謂是顧愷之，其實宋初筆。箴乃高宗書，非獻之也。³² This comment is followed by the more specific discussion of the coloration of clothing and props in early figure painting: "The

³¹ See Mao, *Tu cheng xingle*, 64–65. For Chen's celebrity status in his day, see Greenbaum, *Chen Jiru*, xxxii–xxxiv.

³² Chen Jiru, "Meigong lun hua renwu" 眉工論畫人物 [Meigong's discussion of figure painting], in *Zhongguo gudai hualun lei bian* 中國古代畫論類編 [Classified anthology of Chinese writings on painting], ed. Yu Jianhua 俞劍華, 2 vols. (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 2000), 1:497.

ancient masters of figure painting, to make a dress in which the upper and lower parts of a garment joined together, alternately used four colors of yellow, white, blue, and purple. I have never seen someone who used green color; maybe (because) green is close to the color of ladies' clothing. For a *qin* zither bag, only two colors, either purple or yellow, are applied. No other colors are used” 古人畫人物, 上衣下裳, 互用黃白粉青紫四色, 未嘗用綠色者, 蓋綠近婦人服色也. 琴囊或紫或黃二色而已, 不用他色. These quotations testify to Chen's subtle understanding of the history of figure painting.³³

Zeng Jing, whose talent was sometimes compared to that of Gu Kaizhi, once painted a portrait of Chen Jiru.³⁴ The date and circumstances of Zeng's first encounter with Chen remain unknown; however, considering Chen's long-standing relationship with the Wang family of Taicang, Zeng was likely acquainted with Chen by the time he painted a portrait for Wang Shimin in 1616. Chen had been on intimate terms with both Wang's father and grandfather, Wang Heng and Wang Xijue.³⁵ Although its whereabouts today are unknown, Zeng's informal portrait of Chen in the hanging-scroll format is recorded in the nineteenth-century catalogue *Rangliguan guoyan xulu*: “Zeng Bochen Chen Meigong xiaoxiang zhou” 曾波臣陳眉公小像軸 (Hanging-scroll small portrait of Chen Meigong by Zeng Bochen).³⁶

³³ For a study of Chen's art criticism, see Ren Daobin, “Ch'en Chi-ju as Critic and Connoisseur,” in *Proceedings of the Tung Ch'i-ch'ang International Symposium*, ed. Wai-ching Ho (Kansas City: Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 1991), 9.1–25.

³⁴ Cao Xuequan, “Zeng Bochen shi xu,” cited in Kondo, “Shozo gaka So Gei,” 155.

³⁵ Greenbaum, *Chen Jiru*, 13–15.

³⁶ Lu Xinyuan, *Rangliguan guoyan xulu* 穰梨館過眼續錄 [Supplementary to catalogue of paintings seen in the Rangli hall], in *ZLSYLC*, 39:470.

According to the *Shenzhou daguan* 神州大觀 (Panorama of the divine land) published in 1912, Zeng's portrait of Chen was a colored picture on silk and in the collection of Weng Fanggang 翁方綱 (1733–1818).³⁷ There remains only a black-and-white photographic reproduction of Chen's portrait, ascribed to Zeng (fig. 5.3).³⁸

Following one of Zeng Jing's typical compositional schemes, the figure of Chen Jiru in the reproduced image appears surrounded by a few meaningful props against an indeterminate background. Zeng's signature remains legible in the lower left corner: "Zeng Jing painted [a portrait] for Mr. Meigong (Chen Jiru's sobriquet)" 曾鯨為眉公先生寫。 Chen's facial features—the drooping eyes, sharp nose, deep philtrum, and the shape of the beard and moustache—resemble those of his own figure in *Venerable Friends*, which lends credence to the authenticity of this image as a reproduction of Zeng's original portrait of Chen. Zhang Qi could have consulted his master Zeng's work in the depiction of the late Chen's face.

Chen Jiru was well known for cultivating the image of the lofty recluse, and it was thus natural that Zeng Jing depicted him as such.³⁹ By portraying Chen accompanied by a red-crowned Manchurian crane, Zeng's *Portrait of Chen Jiru* captures Chen's reclusive soul.

³⁷ The earliest known reproduction is in Deng Qiumei 鄧秋枚, ed., *Shenzhou daguan* 神州大觀 [Panorama of the divine land] (Shanghai: Shenzhou guoguangshe, 1912). According to this record, the portrait was in the collection of *Su Mi zhai* 蘇米齋 (Weng Fanggang's sobriquet).

³⁸ This portrait of Chen, whose provenance remains unknown, is introduced together with a reproduction of the image in Lancman, *Chinese Portraiture*, 142–45. It is also featured in Mette Siggstedt, "Chinese Root Furniture," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, no. 63 (1991), 170, fig. 17.

³⁹ For Chen's persona as a recluse, see Greenbaum, *Chen Jiru*, 28–37.

The inclusion of a crane, coupled with the painting's winter setting, serves to emphasize Chen's noble and lofty character in a turbulent age. For centuries the crane had been used as a symbol of immortality and moral integrity, and it had been associated with the Daoist immortal or hermit. Possibly Chen sought to identify himself with the ancient recluses, such as Ji Kang 嵇康 (224–63), one of the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove, and his son Ji Shao 嵇紹 (252–304), figures whose distinctiveness writers expressed by comparing them to “a wild crane among a flock of chickens” 野鶴之在雞群.⁴⁰ The crane, which was known to migrate to Jiangnan for the winter, is standing on one leg next to a charcoal brazier. Chen Jiru, dressed in a thick robe, is depicted sitting against a fur-wrapped wooden backrest. He puts his feet on the rim of the burning brazier, suggesting that the painting was made on a cold winter day. A wine jar with a cracked-ice pattern (*binglie* 冰裂), on the other side of the crane, evokes the image of an icy *hu* vessel. Chen Jiru is portrayed as a resilient recluse enduring the hardship of a cold winter. The indication of the winter season in the painting may symbolize a politically turbulent time, which deprived Chen of the desire for a public career. He was famous for burning his scholar's robes in his late twenties as a symbolic declaration of his rejection of officialdom.⁴¹

⁴⁰ See the “Rongzhi” 容止 [Appearance and manner] chapter in Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403–44), *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 [A new account of tales of the world], 2 vols. (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1982), 1:327.

⁴¹ For Chen's burning his robes, see Greenbaum, *Chen Jiru*, 18–26. In the seventeenth century, the burning of one's Confucian garb (*rufu* 儒服) was a common gesture symbolizing one's withdrawal from officialdom. See Ch'en Kuo-tung 陳國棟, “Kumiao yu fen rufu: Mingmo Qingchu shengyuan ceng de shehuixing dongzuo” 哭廟與焚儒服: 明末清初生員層的社會性動作 [Lamenting in the Confucian temple and burning one's scholar's robes: social action of the *shengyuan* class in the late Ming and early Qing], *Xin shi xue* 新史學 3, no. 1 (1992): 69–94. This article was translated into English by James

Chen Jiru's self-eulogy for one of his portraits, recorded in his *Baishiqiao zhen gao* 白石樵真稿 (True manuscript of the White-stone woodcutter), portrays himself as a scholar-recluse who disdains worldly success:

I read the ancients' books and understand their words.

[Being] light and indifferent, guileless and unscheming, [I] abandoned fame and fortune.

[I] confine [myself] to a courtyard, [wearing] a plain-cloth jacket and eating unpolished rice.⁴²

To become a sage's subject is like this and nothing more.⁴³

讀古人書, 識古人字.

淡然無營, 屣脫名利.

不出戶庭, 短褐茹糲.

為聖人氓, 如此而已.

Though it is uncertain whether this self-eulogy was written for the abovementioned portrait by Zeng Jing, Chen Jiru's literary description of his character and lifestyle as a recluse corresponds to Zeng's portrayal. Chen's encomium begins with a reference to his study of classics, and accordingly allusions to ancient literature abound. The phrase *buchu*

Greenbaum. See "Temple Lamentation and Robe-Burning: Gestures of Social Protest in Seventeenth-Century China," *East Asian History*, nos. 15/16 (June–December 1998): 33–52.

⁴² "Plain-cloth jacket" (*duanhe* 短褐) was a type of clothing worn by commoners.

⁴³ Chen Jiru, "Zi ti xiaoxiang 自題小像" [Self-eulogy of my small portrait], *Baishiqiao zhen gao* 白石樵真稿 [True manuscript of the White-stone woodcutter], in *SKJH, Ji bu*, vol. 66, *juan* 15 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2000), 250.

huting 不出戶庭 comes from the *Yijing* 易經 (Book of changes): “confine [oneself] to a courtyard, [there will be] no errors” 不出戶庭, 無咎.⁴⁴ *Wei shengren mang* 為聖人氓 is borrowed from *Mengzi* 孟子 (Mencius): “Hearing that you, Duke, are carrying out the government of the ancient sages, [I think that you] are also a sage. [I] want to become the subject of a sage” 聞君行聖人之政, 是亦聖人也, 願為聖人氓.⁴⁵ This portrait-eulogy shows that Chen secluded himself at home, longing for an ideal governance of the sage-king. Chen’s nostalgic, self-contained, and idealistic tone of the eulogy alludes to his pessimistic view of late Ming politics, which in turn corresponds to Zeng’s portrayal of Chen as a hermit surviving the harsh winter.

Physician Shi Pei’s Hands and Handwritings by Dong Qichang and Chen Jiru

In a festive mood for the Double Ninth Festival (*Chongjiu jie* 重九節; the ninth day of the ninth month of the lunar calendar) of 1619, Zeng Jing painted a portrait for Shi Pei 施沛 (1585–1661), a native of Huating better known by his courtesy name of Peiran 沛然 (fig. 5.4).⁴⁶ Upon completion of the portrait, the five gentlemen gathered together to write inscriptions on the painting. The inscribers on *Portrait of Shi Pei* were some of the most

⁴⁴ Li Dingzuo 李鼎祚 (Tang dynasty), ed., *Zhouyi jijie* 周易集解 [Collected annotations to the *Book of Changes*] (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1968), 292.

⁴⁵ Jiao Xun 焦循 (1763–1820), ed., *Mengzi zhengyi* 孟子正義 [Correct meaning of the *Book of Mencius*] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 1:367.

⁴⁶ *Portrait of Shi Pei*, now in the Shanghai Museum, is introduced mostly as *Portrait of Peiran* in earlier publications, including Nie, *Zeng Jing*, 14–15; Ma, *Zeng Jing yu* “*Bochen pai*,” 23–24.

well-known scholars, writers, and poets of the time, such as Dong Qichang, Chen Jiru, Lu Yingyang 陸應陽 (1542–1627), Gu Qiyuan 顧起元 (1565–1628), and Chen Yuansu 陳元素 (active early seventeenth century). Like these gentlemen, Shi Pei was talented in literature—Zeng Jing referred to him as “cizhang” 詞丈 (doyen of literature) in his signature: “On the ninth day of the ninth (lunar) month in the *yiwei* year [1619] of the Wanli reign, Zeng Jing sketched for Peiran, a doyen of literature” 萬曆己未歲重九日, 曾鯨為沛然詞丈寫.⁴⁷ Shi Pei was of literati background, being a son of the famous bibliophile Shi Dajing 施大經 (ca. 1560–1610), who was known as one of the “four great scholars of Songjiang prefecture.”⁴⁸ Deviating from his intellectual milieu, however, Shi Pei became a medical doctor, and he was portrayed as such in Zeng Jing’s portrait.

Shi Pei, dressed in a plain beige robe, is seated comfortably on a woven palm-fiber daybed trimmed with semi-circle patterns. Scattered on either side of him are two sets of books and four handscrolls. This sitting position on a daybed can be seen in earlier portrayals of reclusive scholars. Zeng’s portrait takes after paintings with lounging figures like the fourteenth-century *Portrait of Ni Zan*, in which the famous Yuan scholar-painter, Ni Zan, sits on his daybed, being surrounded by the accoutrements of culture (fig. 1.9).⁴⁹ The

⁴⁷ Zeng’s signature is followed by two of his seals, “Zeng Jing zhi yin” 曾鯨之印 and “Bochen fu” 波臣父.

⁴⁸ For Shi Daijing’s official and academic career, see Timothy Brook, “Xu Guangqi in His Context: The World of the Shanghai Gentry,” in *Statecraft and Intellectual Renewal in Late Ming China: The Cross-Cultural Synthesis of Xu Guangqi (1562–1633)*, ed. Catherine Jami et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 87–89.

⁴⁹ See Sturman, *Mi Fu*, 87–91; Wu, *Double Screen*, 168–75. This Yuan-dynasty portrait of Ni Zan, now in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan, was later copied by the Ming figure painter Qiu Ying (see fig. 10).

inclusion of assorted props further suggests an analogy between portraits of Shi and Ni. As in *Portrait of Ni Zan*, Zeng utilized cultural objects such as books, scrolls, and antiques to exhibit the sitter Shi's taste, interests, and character. In this regard, Zeng's portrait of Shi, like its Yuan-dynasty predecessor, inherited the conventions associated with pictures of a scholar's studio or garden, in which images of cultural objects are often featured to display the cultural tastes of the protagonist and his associates.

The variety of unusual utensils around the figure of Shi Pei represents his expertise in medicine. In front of Shi, a large ceramic bowl has been placed on top of the low narrow table, which seems to contain liquid medicinal ingredients. On the right side behind Shi's daybed, an incense stand with four bulging legs holds three small jars, including one for burning incense. A bizarre-looking incense stick in one of the jars may have medicinal purposes. The intricate arrangement of props and furniture around the sitter makes Shi's portrait exceptional in Zeng Jing's oeuvre. Zeng's portraits in general minimized the use of attributes. Possibly he tried not to distract viewers from their appreciation of the likeness, maintaining a minimalist look in his paintings. In *Portrait of Shi Pei*, despite the affluence and artificiality of the cultural objects, Zeng maintained the quintessential aesthetic quality of his painting—simplicity and naturalness—through his orderly composition and avoidance of extraneous details of the objects. To neatly arrange the miscellaneous objects, Zeng placed three different kinds of furniture around his sitter—a daybed (*ta* 榻; also translated as “platform”), a low table (*kangzhuo* 炕桌), and an incense stand (*xiangji* 香几).⁵⁰

⁵⁰ On these three types of furniture, the daybed, low table, and incense stand, see Sarah Handler, *Austere Luminosity of Chinese Classical Furniture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 105–21, 161–79, and 295–302, respectively.

Aside from the faces, hands are the most exposed parts of the body in Zeng Jing's paintings. Zeng paid special attention to the sitter's hands, which he used to allude to the sitter's character and personality in some of his paintings. Indeed, the expressive hand gestures are the one element that makes Zeng's portraits distinctive from other types of commemorative portraiture, in which the sitter's hands are mostly hidden under clothing or displayed in a stiff, inflexible position. Wang Shimin, for example, makes a *mudrā*-like hand gesture, which expresses his advocacy of Buddhism.

Shi Pei's right hand gesture is one of the painting's more unusual features. The placement of his right hand underneath the upper part of his robe, as if to take his own pulse, appears to allude to his professional identity as a physician and his specialty in medicine. Two illustrations in the contemporary Ming encyclopedia *Sancai tuhui* show a man checking his pulse by placing his right hand on his left chest, in a gesture similar to that which Shi performs in Zeng's painting (fig. 5.5).⁵¹ In his left hand, Shi holds a book, which may well allude to his prolific output as a medical writer: he wrote a number of books on medicine, including *Zu ji* 祖劑 (Prescription origin), *Zang fu zhi zhang tu shu* 藏府指掌圖書 (An illustrated guide to the *zangfu* organs), and *Mai wei* 脈微 (Subtleties of the pulse), the last of which attests to his special expertise on pulse diagnosis and supports my interpretation that the portrait's hand position is related to pulse-taking.⁵²

⁵¹ See Wang Qi, *Sancai tuhui*, 4:1482–83.

⁵² See Li Ding 李鼎 et al., *Zang fu jing xue zhi zhang tu Shi si jing he can ping zhu* 藏府經穴指掌圖十四經合參評注 (Shanghai: Shanghai kexue jishu chubanshe, 2007). See also Li Jianmin 李建民, "Zang fu zhi zhang tu shu de zangxiang guan ji guankan shijian" 《藏府指掌圖書》的「藏象」觀及觀看的實踐 [The inward eyes: illustrations of viscera in seventeenth-century China], *Jiuzhou xuelin* 九州學林 (2011): 45–81.

Shi Pei's medical profession is further highlighted through the inscriptions on the painting. Dong Qichang's inscription, for example, compares Shi to two celebrated medical specialists in history, Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456–536) and Pang Anshi 龐安時 (1042–99).⁵³ Dong wrote: “[Shi] does not need to break [his arm] three times, yet his eyes can see through to the other side of the wall” 不必三折而眼可見垣一方. The term “san zhe” 三折 signifies an agonizing effort to become an exceptional medical doctor, alluding to a passage in the *Zuozhuan* 左傳.⁵⁴ In the same sentence, Dong references a mythical episode about the famed ancient physician Ban Que 扁鵲 (active ca. 500 BCE) by borrowing a passage from Sima Qian's *Shiji*.⁵⁵ Ban Que developed an extraordinary ability to see into human bodies after receiving a secret formula of the legendary physician Chang Sangjun's 長桑君.⁵⁶ Through the inclusion of such literary and historical allusions, Dong eulogizes Shi for his marvelous medical skills and ends his inscription by asking, “Is he [Shi Pei] a scholar or an immortal?” 儒耶仙耶.

⁵³ Dong Qichang's inscription reads, “陶弘景龐安常注百草泛三航, 惟沛然之韻頑青雲器白墮鄉肱, 不必三折而眼可見垣一方, 儒耶仙耶! 吾安得而罄其藏.” This inscription is also recorded in Dong Qichang, *Rong tai ji*, 2:1016. On Pang Anshi, see Asaf Goldschmidt, *The Evolution of Chinese Medicine: Song Dynasty, 960–1200* (London: Routledge, 2008), 155–57.

⁵⁴ “(After having) broken [his] arms three times, [he] becomes a good doctor” 三折肱知爲良醫. See *Zuo zhuan: Ding Gong*, the thirteenth year.

⁵⁵ See Sima Qian, *Shiji*, *juan* 105, “Bian Que Cangong liezhuan” 扁鵲蒼公列傳 [Biographies of Bian Que and Cangong], 45, 2794. The phrase “眼可見垣一方” comes from a sentence in *Shiji*: “扁鵲以其言飲藥三十日, 視見垣一方人, 以此視病, 盡見五藏癥結.”

⁵⁶ The following inscription written by Shi's friend Gu Qiyuan makes mention of Chang Sangjun to eulogize Shi's specialty in medicine.

Chen Jiru's inscription on the painting praises Shi Pei's personality, literary talent, and medical skills:

[He possesses] a heart-mind that accords with the high-flying goose, and the corporal bones of a solitary crane. As for filial piety and brotherly deference, there is nothing to be ashamed of. His writing ability can produce ten thousands of books; his diagnostic skills can make more than thousands in gold. By tapping his fingers, [he can] resuscitate the nearly dead; by lifting his feet, [he can] dispel a blood clot...

心類冥鴻，骨如孤鶴。至孝至友，不愧不忤。筆能破萬卷之書，候能踰千金之誘。彈指能起死回生，舉足能解粘釋縛...

Portrait of Shi Pei is the earliest known portrait by Zeng Jing that contains inscriptions by both Dong Qichang and Chen Jiru. Among Zeng's extant works, there are two later paintings for which Chen and Dong together wrote inscriptions: portraits of Ni Yuanlu and Fan Jingwen.⁵⁷ In addition to these, Chen wrote inscriptions on a good number of Zeng's works dating to the 1620s. Considering the inclusion of their inscriptions, *Portrait of Shi Pei* attests to the fact that Chen and Dong, two key cultural arbiters of late-Ming Jiangnan, became deeply involved in Zeng's portrait production.

⁵⁷ *Portrait of Ni Yuanlu* of 1632 and *Portrait of Fan Jingwen* are housed in the Zhejiang Provincial Museum and the Hebei Provincial Museum, respectively. See Kondo, *Bochen huapai*, 78–79, 80. There is Zeng's another portrait of Ni Yuanlu in the Shanghai Museum.

Portraits of Zhang Suichen and Li Zhaoheng

Regarding the profession of the sitter, Zeng Jing's 1622 portrait of Zhang Suichen 張遂辰 (1589–1668) is analogous to his portrait of Shi Pei painted three years earlier—Zhang, like Shi, was a physician and medical theorist (fig. 5.6).⁵⁸ Zhang was noted for rewriting and annotating the medical classic *Shanghan lun* 傷寒論 (Treatise on Cold Damage Disorder) by the Han physician Zhang Zhongjing 張仲景 (ca. 150–ca. 219).⁵⁹ As good physicians were expected to be, Zhang Suichen was well versed in the classics and poetry. According to the biography of Zhang written by the Qing scholar Li E 厲鶚 (1692–1752), Dong Qichang and Chen Jiru acknowledged and praised Zhang's literary talents.⁶⁰ It is possible that Zeng was introduced to Zhang through Dong and Chen, as he also met Shi Pei through them. As Zhang was referred to as *yinjun* 隱君 (reclusive gentleman) by Li E, Zhang practiced medicine while living in seclusion in Qiantang (Hangzhou).

Reflecting Zhang Suichen's reclusive mindset, Zeng Jing portrayed him as a hermit-type scholar, wearing a plain robe, black fluttering head cloth, and red shoes, the most commonly depicted attire in Zeng's portraits. The composition presenting a standing figure against a

⁵⁸ *Portrait of Zhang Suichen*, now in the Zhejiang Provincial Museum, is introduced as *Portrait of Zhang Qingzi* in Nie, *Zeng Jing*, 8–9; Ma, *Zeng Jing yu* “*Bochen pai*,” 27; Kondo, *Bochen huapai*, 65–67. “Qingzi” 卿子 is Zhang's courtesy name. For the biography of Zhang Suichen, see Deng Zhicheng 鄧之誠, ed., *Qingshi jishi chubian* 清詩紀事初編 [Records of events in Qing poetry, first compilation] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), 246.

⁵⁹ See *Zhang Qingzi Shanghan lun* 張卿子傷寒論 [Zhang Qingzi's *Shanghan lun*] (Hong Kong: Hongye shuju, 1980).

⁶⁰ Li E, “Zhang yinjun Qingzi” 張隱君卿子 [Reclusive gentleman Zhang Qingzi], *Dongcheng zaji* 東城雜記 [Miscellaneous record of the Eastern City (Hangzhou)] (SKQS ed.), *juan shang*, 22a–23b. Li also added a colophon to the portrait of Zhang by Zeng.

blank background recalls an antique style of the Tang-and Song-dyansty portraits, such as the *Thirteen Emperors* scroll (*Lidai diwang tu* 歷代帝王圖) and a set of five portraits known as *The Five Old Men of Suiyang* (*Suiyang wulao tu* 睢陽五老圖) (see figs. 1.12 and 5.7).⁶¹ Therefore, Zeng’s use of this composition may have been one reason why the Qing critic Wu Xiu praises that Zeng’s portraits for retaining “the simple majesty of the Song dynasty painters” 宋人渾穆之意.⁶² A similar compositional scheme had been adopted in Zeng’s 1620s portraits of Zhao Shi’e and Li Zhaoheng, and also in his 1641 portrait of Su Shi (see figs. 1.14, 5.8, and 6.6).

The long fingernails on Zhang Suichen’s left hand in this portrait indicate his non-laboring status, that is to say, his scholar-class identity. By the late Ming, medicine had become an alternative profession for the literati, and there were scholars who identified themselves as Confucian physician (*ruyi* 儒醫)—Zhang Suichen being one of them.⁶³ The quote by the renowned Song dynasty scholar-official Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 (989–1052)

⁶¹ For a recent study of the *Thirteen Emperors* scroll in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, see Ning Qiang, “Imperial Portraiture as Symbol of Political Legitimacy: A New Study of the ‘Portraits of Successive Emperors’,” *Ars Orientalis* 35 (2008): 96–128. Two portraits from *Suiyang wulao tu* are at the Freer Gallery, two are at the Yale University Art Gallery, and one is at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. On this set of five portraits, see Li Linan 李霖燦, “The Five Old Men of Sui-yang,” *National Palace Museum Bulletin* 8, no. 5 (1973): 1–21.

⁶² Wu Xiu, *Qingxiguan lunhua jueju*, 30a.

⁶³ On Confucian doctors (*ruyi*) in late Ming Jiangnan, see Yüan-ling Chao, *Medicine and Society in Late Imperial China: A Study of Physicians in Suzhou, 1600–1850* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 25–52. See also Wang Wen-Ching 王文景, “Mingdai de ruyi” 明代的儒醫 [Confucian physicians of the Ming dynasty], *Tong shi jiaoyu niankan* 通識教育年刊 4 (2002): 35–57. This concept of *ruyi* was established during the Song period. See Goldschmidt, *Evolution of Chinese Medicine*, 56–60.

indicates that a medical profession was considered comparable to a government post: “If one could not become a good minister, one could expect to be a good doctor” 不為良相，願為良醫。⁶⁴ Fan’s famous phrase was quoted in the colophon on Zhang’s portrait written by the Qing poet and critic Shen Deqian 沈德潛 (1673–1769). The veneration of eminent physicians entailed the production of their images in the late Ming, as exemplified by *Illustrations and Eulogies for Healers and Transcendents* (*Yi xian tuzan* 醫僊圖讚) published in 1599, which features thirty two illustrations of historical physicians including Zhang Ji and Hua Tuo 華佗 (d. 208).⁶⁵ The production of Zhang’s portrait by the leading portraitist of the time reflects the ascendancy of physicians in the intellectual world of late Ming Jiangnan.

Portrait of Zhang Suichen has no inscriptions on the painting besides the artist’s signature: “Sketched by Zeng Jing in mid-autumn of the *renxu* year of the Tianqi reign [1622]” 天啓壬戌中秋，曾鯨寫。 While lacking any commentary written by the sitter’s contemporaries, nine colophons written by Qing poets, artists, and scholars in the 1740–50s surround the borders of the scroll, including Shen Deqian, Li E, Zhou Jing 周京 (1677–1749), Liang Qixin 梁啟心 (1695–1758), Ding Jing 丁敬 (1695–1765), Hang Shijun 杭世駿 (1695–1773), Liang Shizheng 梁詩正 (1697–1763), Peng Qifeng 彭啟豐 (1701–84), and

⁶⁴ Wu Zeng 吳曾 (active mid-twelfth century), *Nenggai zhai manlu* 能改齋漫錄 [Miscellaneous notes from the Nenggai studio], 13:4a–b.

⁶⁵ This illustrated book is introduced in Miranda Brown, *The Art of Medicine in Early China: The Ancient and Medieval Origins of a Modern Archive* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 4, fig. 1.

Liu Jiefu 柳洁夫 (eighteenth century).⁶⁶ These inscribers, along with Wu Zhenyu 吳振械 (1792–1870), a later owner of the painting, were all active in the Hangzhou and Suzhou areas.⁶⁷ This suggests that both Zhang and his portrait were respected and appreciated particularly by local scholars of Zhang’s main area of activity.

Zeng Jing’s portrait of Li Zhaoheng 李肇亨 (1592–1664), now in the Shanghai Museum, bears the sitter’s self-eulogy written in 1636, nine years after the painting’s production (fig. 5.8).⁶⁸ The artist’s signature at the lower left reads, “On the spring day of the *dingmao* year of the Tianqi reign (1627), painted by Zeng Jing” 天启丁卯春日, 曾鯨寫. The Qing catalogue *Rangliguan guoyan lu* records all three inscriptions on this 1627 portrait—Li’s self-eulogy, Zeng’s signature, and the inscription written by Tao Yuan 陶源 (active eighteenth century to early nineteenth century) in 1803.⁶⁹ By 1891 when *Rangliguan guoyan lu* was published, Li’s self-eulogy had been already damaged due to exfoliation, thus containing illegible parts: “□□□藐躬恫然無機者其胸耶半生□□可表見者其身世之所遭耶天何貴乎□□我其有愧.” However, Li’s comment, added to his self-eulogy nine years later, remains almost intact: “In the *dingmao* year of the Tianqi reign (1627), Zeng Bochen

⁶⁶ These inscribers are recorded in Wu Qingdi 吳慶坻 (1848–1924), *Jiao lang cuo lu* 蕉廊脞錄 [Trifling records from the Plantain Passageway], 4:15b–16a. In this book, Wu documented Zeng’s portrait of Ni Yuanlu as “Ni Yuanlu xiaoxiang” 倪元璐小像 (Small portrait of Ni Yuanlu) together with the accompanying inscriptions written by Dong Qichang and Chen Jiru (fig. 5.7).

⁶⁷ According to Wu Qingdi, this portrait of Zhang was in the collection of his grandfather Wu Zhenyu. See *ibid.*

⁶⁸ This portrait of Li is introduced in Li and Watt, *Chinese Scholar’s Studio*, 144–45.

⁶⁹ Lu Xinyuan, *Rangliguan guoyan lu*, 310–11.

painted this portrait; I was thirty-six years old. A decade has passed, (now) early spring of the *bingzi* year of the Chongzhen reign (1636), I unroll and view [the scroll], and then I sorrowfully write. [Signed] Zuiou” (天)后丁卯曾波臣寫此像, 峇我年卅有六. 又十年為 (崇)禎丙子初春, 展視慨歎書. 醉鷗. Li's comment shows that he owned the portrait, on occasion taking it out to appreciate and be moved to poignant sentiments.

Li Zhaoheng, a native of Jiaxing 嘉興, was the only son of the eminent poet, calligrapher and art collector Li Rihua 李日華 (1565–1635). Like his father, Li Zhaoheng was a talented calligrapher and painter; when he was still in his twenties, his painting skills were already praised by Chen Jiru.⁷⁰ Li Rihua was close to such Zeng Jing patrons as Dong Qichang, Chen Jiru, Xiang Yuanbian, and Xiang Shengmo, and he may have played a vital role in connecting his son to the portraitist Zeng. A strong bond among these scholar-artists is expressed through portraiture, as exemplified by *Venerable Friends*, which features Li Rihua together with Dong, Chen, and Xiang Shengmo (fig. 4.14). Additionally, Chen Jiru wrote a colophon to a handscroll portrait of Li Rihua done by Chen Guan, in which Li was portrayed as a mountain recluse wearing a plain robe, holding a fly whisk, and standing in the midst of landscape (fig. 5.9).⁷¹ Li Rihua's social connections with the Jiaxing/Huating literati and his special interest in portrait painting seem to have passed down to his son Li Zhaoheng.

⁷⁰ According to Li Rihua's diary, Chen wrote an inscription on Li Zhaoheng's painting in 1613. See Li Rihua, *Weishuixuan riji* 味水軒日記 [Diary from the Water Tasting Studio] (Shanghai: Shanghai yuandong chubanshe, 1996), 198.

⁷¹ This portrait of Li Rihua by Chen Guan, now in the collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing, is reproduced in Yang, *Ming Qing xiaoxianghua*, 66–69.

Unlike Zeng Jing's two portraits of Hu Erzao and Jing Linzi of the same year, his 1627 portrait of Li Zhaoheng is devoid of any landscape background. Li stands upright against a blank background, turning his head slightly to the right and staring off into space with an emotionless expression. Li's plain robe lined with blue trim and red shoes stand out in this unembellished setting. Li's black hat with two wing-like flaps looks similar to the hat worn by his father Li Rihua in *Venerable Friends*, which was identified as a Tang-dynasty hat style according to Xiang Shengmo's accompanying inscription.⁷² Li Zhaoheng's archaic Tang hat would have been adopted in order to express his archaic taste. Chen Jiru compared Li's painting style to that of Li Sixun 李思訓 (651–716) of the Tang dynasty, and Li participated in making the abovementioned painting album, paying homage to the Tang literati painter Wang Wei.⁷³

In the painting, Li Zhaoheng's left arm is lowered while his bent right arm is raised, with his hand at the level of his chest. Li's right hand displays a unique hand gesture, raising the index and the little finger, while the thumb presses against the two remaining fingers. Zeng's detailed representation of Li's hand suggests that Li would have intended to convey specific meaning through his hand gesture. Earlier it was discussed that Wang Shimin's *mudrā*-like and Shi Pei's pulse-taking gestures in Zeng's portraits may have been indicative of Wang's Buddhist inclination and Shi's medical profession. It does not seem coincidental that Li's hand gesture resembles the *karana mudrā* that can be found in images of Buddha and

⁷² For Xiang's inscription on *Venerable Friends*, see Yao, "Commemorating the Deceased," 43–44.

⁷³ See Li Rihua, *Weishuixuan riji*, 198.

Bodhisattvas. Like his father Li Rihua, Li the son was close with the Buddhist monk Qiutan, and later entered the Buddhist monastic order after the fall of the Ming.

Li Zhaoheng's self-eulogy on this portrait was the only inscription until 1803, when Tao Yuan made an addition after viewing the portrait at the house of Wu Qian 吳騫 (1733–1813). Tao wrote, “Mr. Mianchuang (Wu Qian's sobriquet) built the Baijing Pavilion, and his collected model calligraphy and famous paintings are especially rich. On an autumn day of the *guihai* year (1803), [I] visited him at Xiaotongxi (modern Xincang, Zhejiang). He took out this portrait to show to me and I appreciated it for quite a while, respectfully acknowledging the year and month. [Signed] Tao Yuan of Yangxian (modern Yixing, Jiangsu)” 免床先生築拜經樓, 收藏法書名畫尤富, 癸亥秋日訪先生於小桐溪, 出示此幀, 爰玩久之, 敬識歲月. 陽羨陶源. Tao's inscription lacks any reference to the sitter, implying that he appreciated the portrait more as an aesthetic object than as a ritual effigy.

Portraiture of Chen Jiru and Dong Qichang's Coterie

During Zeng Jing's most prolific period, from the 1610s to the 1630s, Chen Jiru was heavily involved in Zeng's portrait production as an inscriber. In this role, Chen was keenly aware of the affinity between portraiture and biography:

When one writes biographies, tomb epitaphs, or accounts of moral conduct, it is as if one were painting a portrait. A scar here, a mole there, all must be put down – otherwise one will not catch the true person.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Hu Shaotang, *Chen Meigong xiaopin*, 164. Translation from Greenbaum, *Chen Jiru*, 104. For Chen's biographical writings, see Greenbaum, *Chen Jiru*, 101–36.

作傳寫墓志, 行狀, 正如寫照. 雖一癩一痣, 皆為摹寫. 不然, 不類其人.

Chen Jiru's emphasis on a meticulously detailed description in biographical writings is in perfect accord with the unprecedented veristic quality of Zeng Jing's portraits. Chen's collaboration with Zeng was indeed a successful marriage between the two most prominent figures in biography and portraiture. Chen inscribed Zeng's paintings more frequently than any other. His inscriptions appear on the portraits of Shi Pei (1619), Pan Qintai (1621), Yan Yonghui (1623), Xu Yuanliang (1624), Ni Yuanlu (1632), and Fan Jingwen (undated). Dong Qichang also inscribed multiple works by Zeng, but Chen seems to have been more deeply involved in Zeng's portrait production than Dong, whose inscriptions are always accompanied by those of Chen. These recurring inscriptions by Chen suggest several possibilities: that Chen enticed his friends to sit for their portraits; that he worked as a collaborator with Zeng, providing the literary counterpart to the visual portrait; or that the sitters sought out Chen to request his imprimatur after first arranging to have the portrait executed by Zeng.

Chen Jiru, Dong Qichang, and their coterie used portraiture not only as a means of fashioning their self-images, but likewise for sharing a sense of camaraderie with their friends. The 1652 group portrait, *Venerable Friends*, showcases a manifestation of friendship through pictorial representation among Chen and Dong's circle (see fig. 4.14). This group portrait, a collaboration between Xiang Shengmo and Zeng Jing's direct disciple, Zhang Qi, includes the figures of Dong Qichang, Chen Jiru, Li Rihua, Lu Dezhi, Buddhist

monk Qiutan, and Xiang Shengmo himself.⁷⁵ Xiang's four-line verse included in his inscription eulogizes the sitters' everlasting friendship and art:

The five old masters were all well versed at painting and calligraphy.
[They] visited each other and engaged in noble debate, [remaining] so-called
[friends] forgetting the age differences.
Their mutual expectations and promises will last a thousand years.
The essence of painting and Chan [spirit] of poetry had already been transmitted
together.

五老皆深翰墨緣，
往還尚論稱忘年。
相期相許垂千古，
畫脈詩禪已並傳。

Xiang Shengmo's intention to paint *Venerable Friends* was clearly to pay homage to the friendship of the five senior colleagues. Xiang had a great affection for this particular group of intellectuals and artists, and this led him to collaborate in several versions of portrait painting of the overlapping members. According to the Qing scholar Yao Jiheng's 姚際恆 (b. 1647) records in his *Haogutang shuhua ji* 好古堂書畫記 (Records of paintings and calligraphy at the Loving Antiquity Hall), Xiang collaborated with an unknown portraitist on a group portrait titled *Four Gentlemen Viewing Painting* (*Sixian guanhua* 四賢觀畫).⁷⁶ The

⁷⁵ See Li, "Xiang Shengmo Shang you tu," 51–60.

⁷⁶ Yao Jiheng, *Haogutang shuhua ji*, in *ZGSHQS*, 8:725. See also Li, "Xiang Shengmo Shang you tu," 52.

four gentlemen depicted were Dong Qichang, Chen Jiru, Monk Qiutan, and Xiang Shengmo, all of whom appear together in *Venerable Friends*. Yao's description of this *Four Gentlemen* painting suggests that its composition and the sitters' poses were very similar to those of *Venerable Friends*.⁷⁷ *Four Gentlemen Viewing Painting* might have served as a prototype for *Venerable Friends*.⁷⁸ Xiang certainly had a special interest in making group portraits as a way of monumentalizing the friendship of Chen and Dong's peers.

Chen Jiru and Dong Qichang seem to have perceived portraiture as a seminal medium for promoting friendship, as they were depicted together in portraits several times.⁷⁹ The compositional design Xiang Shengmo chose for *Venerable Friends* highlights Chen and Dong's intimate companionship and their pivotal role in the group of six intellectual and artistic colleagues.⁸⁰ These two influential literati are depicted seated next to each other in the upper center, forming the focal point of *Venerable Friends*. They hold a blank scroll together, which makes them distinctive from the other four figures.

Chen Jiru and Dong Qichang were again paired together in a group portrait for which Dong wrote the title frontispiece: *Qinglin gaohui tu* 青林高會圖 (Painting of exalted

⁷⁷ See Yao, *ibid.*

⁷⁸ Li Chu-tsing suggests the possibility that *Four Gentlemen Viewing Painting* may have been painted around 1635. See Li, "Xiang Shengmo Shang you tu," 52.

⁷⁹ For Chen's portraits including those accompanying Dong, see Greenbaum, *Chen Jiru*, 180–83.

⁸⁰ On Dong's close and constant companionship with Chen, see *ibid.*, 8–11.

gathering in the green woods), now held in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (fig. 5.10).⁸¹

This painting by Huang Cunwu (黃存吾 or 黃尊吾) includes the seven main gentlemen:

Dong Qichang, Chen Jiru, Wang Zhideng 王穉登 (1535–1612), Zhang Fengyi 張風翼

(1550–1636), Zhao Yiguang 趙宦光 (1559–1625), Yan Tianqi 嚴天池 (1547–1625), and the

Buddhist monk Zhuhong 祿宏 (Yunqi Zhuhong 蓮池祿宏; 1535–1615).⁸² In this group

portrait, Chen and Dong stand together under trees at the beginning of the handscroll. Both

Venerable Friends and *Exalted Gathering in the Green Woods* present Chen and Dong as

key figures of two different literary circles, alluding to their special interest in using

portraiture as a way of expressing group identity.

One intriguing aspect of the two aforementioned group portraits—*Exalted Gathering in the Green Woods* and *Venerable Friends*—is the presence of Chan Buddhist monks.

Zhuhong exists in *Exalted Gathering* while Qiutan is represented in *Venerable Friends*.⁸³ In

addition to Dong Qichang's Vimalakīrti-like hand gesture and Xiang Shengmo's mention of

“Chan of poetry” 詩禪 in *Venerable Friends*, the inclusion of Chan monks in these group

portraits suggest that Chan Buddhism was closely associated with the secular literati culture

among Chen and Dong's coterie, particularly in regard to portrait production. Dong's

inscription on the Yuan scholar-artist Zhao Mengfu's portrait of the Chan priest monk

⁸¹ This painting is introduced in Robert D. Jacobsen, *Appreciating China: Gifts from Ruth and Bruce Dayton* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 2002), 246–47. See also Greenbaum, *Chen Jiru*, 182.

⁸² See Jacobsen, *Appreciating China*, 246.

⁸³ Dong transcribed the *Diamond Sutra* for Zhuhong. Dong Qichang, *Rongtai bie ji*, 3:15b, in *Rongtai ji*, 479. On Zhuhong, see Chün-fang Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-Hung and the Late Ming Synthesis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981).

Zhongfeng Mingben 中峰明本 (1263– 1323) suggests that Dong recognized the use of portraiture as facilitating social exchange between the literati and Chan monks.⁸⁴ In *Exalted Gathering and Venerable Friends*, Chen and Dong would have wanted to manifest their companionship with Chan monks as well as other scholars. Chen and Dong’s interest in figural representation can be explained in part through Ming syncretism.⁸⁵ Their involvement with Chan Buddhism may help uncover a compelling reason for why these two literati artists became interested in portrait paintings, particularly those portraying sitters as mountain recluses. The long tradition of Chan portraiture in which Chan priests are depicted in a landscape setting appears to have made a profound impact on the formation of Zeng Jing’s casual, informal style as seen in his portrayals of the sitters as aloof, carefree recluses.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ For a discussion of portraits of Zhongfeng Mingben, see Uta Lauer, “Changing Media: The Transmission of Images in Yuan Painting,” *Ars Orientalis* 37 (2007): 107–16.

⁸⁵ Dong’s interest in syncretism is well exemplified by the fact that Dong formulated his foremost theory of Northern and Southern Schools of literati painting, borrowing directly from two diverging branches of Chan Buddhism. Chen described Dong as the syncretic embodiment of three religions: “he (Dong Qichang) was not a Chan monk, but he attained spiritual freedom through Chan Buddhism; he was not a Daoist, but he achieved the unaffected spontaneity of Daoism; he was not a Confucian teacher, but he embodied the Confucian virtues of perfect balance, uprightness, loyalty, and compassion.” Translations from Ho and Smith, *Century of Tung Ch’i-ch’ang*, 1:16. For Chen’s advocacy of religious syncretism, see Greenbaum, *Chen Jiru*, 37–44.

⁸⁶ On Chan portraiture with a natural setting, see Brinker, “Ch’an Portraits in a Landscape,” 8–29.

VI. The Self-Fashioning of the Jiangnan Identity as Natural, Literary, and Historical Recluses

Zeng Jing was a mobile painter whose production of portraits involved traveling to many parts of Jiangnan. Instead of working in a studio, Zeng visited his sitters to paint their portraits, resulting in the different production locations among his portraits. Zeng is known to have enjoyed traveling throughout Jiangnan, and he would have been commissioned by his sitters to visit and paint on location.¹ Whereas early portrait painting rarely identified a production site, Zeng often referenced specific locations in his signatures, even to the point of including building names. For instance, Zeng's signatures specify the Bantang Temple 半塘寺, Hexue Hall 和雪堂, and the Lopsided Hut in the Qinhuai 秦淮畸舍 as places that served as temporary studios for the portraits of Xu Yuanliang in 1624, Zhao Geng in 1624, and Liu Jingting in 1640, respectively. Judging from the locations in which Zeng produced his work, and those in which his sitters resided, one finds that the portraits of Zeng's mature years depict gentry-class men of Suzhou, Hangzhou, Nanjing and other lower Yangtze cities.

In the 1620s and 30s, while Zeng Jing was associated closely with Dong Qichang and Chen Jiru's coterie in Huating, he expanded his social network to include the literati who were active in other major cities in Jiangnan. The extension of Zeng's activity to the southern Jiangsu and northern Zhejiang regions seems to have been related to Chen's social

¹ Zeng's friend Cao Xuequan records that he traveled several times with Zeng to the Jiangnan area. See Cao Xuequan, "Zeng Bochen shi xu," cited in Kondo, "Shozo gaka So Gei," 155.

connections with the literati there. The inclusion of Chen's inscriptions on Zeng's portraits of Pan Qintai (1621), Yan Yonghui (1623), Xu Yuanliang (1624), and Ni Yuanlu (1632) suggests the possibility that Chen acted as an intermediary between Zeng and the Suzhou and Hangzhou literati.

The excerpt from Fei Danxu's inscription on Zeng Jing's self-portrait provides further evidence of the geographical range of Zeng's activity. It reads, "As he (Zeng Jing) sojourned in the Pingjiang (modern Suzhou) and Zheshui (modern Zhejiang) regions, he painted many portraits of the gentry from the San Wu (three Wu) region" 嘗遊於平江淞水間。

三吳大夫家, 影像出先生手者為多。² 'San Wu' or simply 'Wu' is a historic name that refers to the commanderies of the ancient kingdom of Wu and largely corresponds to Jiangnan.³ Fei's inscription indicates that Zeng's portraits were recognized as portrayals of the local Wu literati.⁴ In Ming literati culture, the concept of the Wu region's local identity held a

² Translation from Wu, *Orchid Pavilion Gathering*, 1:259.

³ The term San Wu denotes the area of the lower Yangtze river delta, encompassing Wujun (modern Suzhou), Wuxing, and Guiji (or Danyang). The San Wu region had played a significant role in the shape of early Chinese history. For a study of the cultural, political, and economic prominence of this region during the Six Dynasties period, see Huang Shumei 黃淑梅, *Liuchao Taihu liuyu de fazhan* 六朝太湖流域的發展 [The development of the Lake Tai basin during the Six Dynasties period] (Taipei: Guoli Taiwan shifan daxue lishi yanjiusuo, 1979).

⁴ In fact, the Wu local identity appears to have been significant in the culture of portrait production, as there are Qing portrait albums whose titles include geographic terms such as Wu and Yue. See, for example, *Wujun mingxian tuzhuan zan* 吳郡名賢圖傳贊 [Illustrated biographies with commemorative poems of celebrated worthies from Wu prefecture] and *You Ming yu Yue sanbuxiu mingxian tuzan* 有明於越三不朽名賢圖贊 [Portraits and encomia of the eminent worthies of the three eternal in the Yue region of the Ming] compiled by Gu Yuan 顧沅 (1799–1851) and Zhang Dai, respectively. 'Yue' refers to the ancient kingdom situated to the south of Wu. Despite the separation of the polities of Wu and Yue, the term 'Wu-Yue' was traditionally used to refer to one geographical and cultural sphere.

place of special significance, which Wen Zhengming, who played a key role in the formation of the so-called Wu School of literati painting, was instrumental in forming.⁵ As Zeng's friends and patrons were leading advocates of the Wu tradition of literati art, they would have internalized the Wu identity like their literati predecessors.⁶ It is notable that the theme of the reclusive landscape was traditionally central to the literati painting that developed in the Wu region. In the late Ming, the Wu local identity became even more prominently associated with the literati ideal of reclusion.⁷ Zeng's portraits seem to construct a collective local identity for the Jiangnan (Wu) literati based on shared ideals of political disengagement and self-imposed reclusion.

Recluses in the Jiangnan Landscapes

Zeng Jing's portraits demonstrate that the reclusive lifestyle was the single most important factor in forging the Jiangnan literati's shared identity. Placing sitters in a

⁵ The construction of local identity was an integral part of literati culture. For a study of local identity formation in the Ming period, see Peter K. Bol, "The 'Localist Turn' and 'Local Identity' in Late Imperial China," *Late Imperial China* 24, no. 2 (2003): 1–50. For Wen's Wu identity, see Clunas, *Elegant Debts*, 93–110. On the term Wu and the Wu school of painting, see Shan Guoqing, "'Wumen huapai' ming shi bian," "吳門畫派"名實辨 [Distinction of name and reality of the Wu school of painting], *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan*, no. 3 (1990): 69–73.

⁶ Dong Qichang was a leading advocate of the Wu tradition, see James Cahill, "Tung Ch'i-ch'ang's 'Southern and Northern Schools' in the History and Theory of Painting: A Reconsideration," in *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought*, ed. Peter Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1987), 429–43.

⁷ For one exemplary case, that of Ye Shaoyuan 葉紹袁 (1589–1648), see Xiaoquan Raphael Zhang, "Writing Personalized Local History during the Late Ming and the Ming-Qing Transition: The Case of a Ming Loyalist," in *Chinese History in Geographical Perspective*, ed. Yongtao Du and Jeff Kyong-McClain (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013), 87–102.

landscape was one effective means to visually represent their reclusion, and around half of Zeng's portraits employ the figure-in-landscape composition. Regardless of whether or not Zeng's portraits include a landscape background, the idea of 'being in nature' appears to be the important characteristic of his portraiture. Some of Zeng's portraits that lack full-fledged landscape backgrounds nevertheless evoke natural scenery by including natural elements alongside the sitter's image.⁸ The diverse repertoire of relaxed poses and expressive gestures of Zeng's sitters effectively highlights the leisurely demeanor and carefree spirit of the disengaged, reclusive intellectual.

The collaborative nature of Zeng Jing's portrait production is well represented by his portraits with a landscape setting. When creating these types of portraits, instead of having one exclusive collaborator, Zeng worked with a range of landscape painters. Oftentimes, it appears that Zeng utilized painters who were recruited on the spot. As is the case with *Portrait of Wu Mengyang*, Zeng's collaborators were likely to have been appointed through the sitters' personal connections. Wu Mengyang was close to Zeng's friend Cao Xuequan, who seems to have introduced his friend Hu Zongxin to add a landscape to Wu's portrait. Nanjing was a rendezvous spot for Wu, Hu, and Zeng. By the same token, it is worth noticing that Xiang Shengmo participated as a landscape painter at least twice in the portraits of his friend Dong Qichang—Zeng's 1620 portrait and Zeng's disciple Zhang Qi's *Venerable Friends* of 1652.⁹ Considering the local identities of sitters and collaborators,

⁸ For instance, his 1640 portrait of Liu Jingting alludes to landscape by depicting Liu sitting on a rock (fig. 6.10).

⁹ For *Venerable Friends*, see Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self*, 47–48; Li and Watt, *Chinese Scholar's Studio*, 144.

Zeng's *Portrait of Wu Mengyang* and *Portrait of Dong Qichang* appear to be products of collaborative endeavors among the Nanjing and Huating-Jiaxing elite circles, respectively.

Zeng Jing's 1624 handscroll portrait of Xu Yuanliang 徐元亮 (active first half seventeenth century), now in the Guangdong Provincial Museum, depicts the sitter surrounded by nature, a recluse who has chosen to reside in the mountains (fig. 6.1).¹⁰ In accordance with the natural setting, Xu's informal attire indicates his reclusive existence. Xu is dressed in an unadorned white robe (*buyi*), black fluttering head cloth (*piaopiao jin* 飘飘巾), and red shoes (*zhulu* 朱履).¹¹ A number of Zeng's portraits, including those of Zhang Suichen and Liu Jingting, depict the sitter wearing the same type of robe, headgear, and shoes seen in *Portrait of Xu Yuanliang* (cf. figs. 5.6, 6.1, and 6.8). The air of informality established by this attire is further enhanced by Xu's casual, relaxed pose, with his left knee propped up, his right leg folded, and his hands resting gently on both knees.

In the painting, Xu Yuanliang sits comfortably on a sloping hill overlooking the river. The landscape setting appears at once wild yet tamed. The presence on the riverbank of a *taihu*, a limestone rock popular in Ming gardens, evokes a nature that is both wild and artificial. Zeng Jing's *Portrait of Hou Dongzeng* also includes a *taihu* rock, but in what is clearly a garden rather than a wilderness scene (fig. 3.3). Completing Zeng's portrait, the landscape painter has depicted a gnarled pine growing toward the river and two small groves of bamboo on the slope of the hill. The arrangement of these plants may have been a

¹⁰ This portrait of Xu is introduced as *Portrait of Xu Mingbo* 徐明伯像 (Mingbo being his courtesy name) in Nie, *Zeng Jing*, 18–19; Ma, *Zeng Jing yu "Bochen pai,"* 30–31; Kondo, *Bochen huapai*, 69.

¹¹ On a black fluttering head cloth (*piaopiao jin*), see Huang and Chen, *Zhongguo fushi shi*, 459–61.

deliberate part of the landscape painter's design to symbolize the steadfastness and perseverance of the reclusive scholar.¹²

Four colophons written by celebrated late-Ming poets and writers, including Chen Jiru, Lou Jian, and Wu Weiye 吳偉業 (1609–72), follow the picture of Xu Yuanliang. While not much is known about Xu, he appears to have been a scholar who was associated with the most influential literary figures of the Songjiang-Jiading area. Chen's colophon includes these lines: "Dignified and self-composed, not chiseled, not carved. [Xu Yuanling's] learning is as rich as the five cartloads (of books). [His] writing shakes the Five Sacred Peaks. Some people think him a recluse; some people think him a scholar and poet" 落落穆穆, 不彫不琢. 學富五車, 筆搖五岳. 或以爲隱人, 或以爲文人詩人. The phrase "xue fu wuju" 學富五車 is an allusion to Zhuangzi's comment on the ancient philosopher Hui Shi 惠施 (b. 380 BCE), who is said to have read five cartloads of books.¹³ Chen seems to have borrowed the phrase "bi yao wuyue" 筆搖五岳 from Li Bai's famous poem "Jiang shang yin" 江上吟 (Chanting on the river).¹⁴ Chen's praise of Xu's learning and erudition is visually reflected in the pile of books depicted next to Xu.

In his signature, Zeng Jing specified the location where he painted *Portrait of Xu Yuanliang*: "In mid-autumn of the *jiazi* year of the Tianqi reign (1624), [I] painted at

¹² For a discussion of the pine, rock, and bamboo themes in Chinese art, see Li, "Pine and Rock."

¹³ This idiomatic expression, appears in the Tianxia chapter of *Zhuangzi*, refers to one's great erudition.

¹⁴ See *Quan Tang shi*, *juan* 166, 1715–16. The Five Sacred Peaks (*wuyue*) include Mount Tai 泰, Mount Heng 恒, Mount Song 嵩, Mount Heng 衡, and Mount Hua 華.

Bantang Temple” 天啟甲子中秋, 寫於半塘寺. The Bantang Temple, also known as Shousheng Chan Temple 壽聖禪寺, was a Chan Buddhist temple located near Tiger Hill 虎丘 in Suzhou.¹⁵ This Chan temple was a famous monastery of Suzhou that later became a destination on Emperor Kangxi’s 康熙 (r. 1661–1722) southern inspection tour and was represented in Wang Hui’s 王翬 (1632–1717) *The Kangxi Emperor’s Southern Inspection Tour* (*Kangxi nanxun tu* 康熙南巡圖).¹⁶ This location is consistent with the appearance in the painting of a *taihu* rock mined from Lake Tai, which, like the temple, is located near Suzhou. On his portrait of Xu, Zeng collaborated with a locally hired painter, Shen Shigeng 沈士鯁 (active first half seventeenth century). Shen’s signature on this portrait clarifies his place of origin: “Shen Shigeng of Wujun (Suzhou) painted the background” 吳郡沈士鯁布景.

Zeng Jing’s *Portrait of Jing Linzi* in the National Museum of China, Beijing, painted in 1627, displays a composition very similar to that of the 1624 portrait of Xu Yuanliang, despite the fact that the landscapes were painted by different painters at different times (fig. 6.2).¹⁷ One conspicuous difference between the *Portrait of Jing Linzi* and the *Portrait of Xu Yuanliang* is the inclusion in Jing’s portrait of an additional figure, a young servant boy,

¹⁵ See Qian Qianyi, *Lie chao shi ji, yi ji*, 7:49b.

¹⁶ See Maxwell K. Hearn, ed., *Landscapes Clear and Radiant: The Art of Wang Hui (1632–1717)* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008), 53–56, 211–13.

¹⁷ *Portrait of Jing Linzi* is introduced in Ma, *Zeng Jing yu “Bochen pai,”* 34–35; Nie, *Zeng Jing*, 20–21. This portrait lacks Zeng’s signature but has his two seals: “Zeng Jing zhi yin” 曾鯨之印 and “Bochen shi” 波臣氏.

who is washing an inkstone in the flowing water.¹⁸ For his portrait of Jing Linzi 菁林子 (active first half seventeenth century), Zeng collaborated with the Fujian literati painter Chen Fan 陳範 (active first half seventeenth century). Chen's signature on the painting reads, "In the summer of the *dingmao* year, Chen Fan from Jin'an (in Fujian)" 丁卯夏寫, 晉安陳範. The handscroll portraits of Jing Linzi and Xu Yuanliang both show the sitters alongside a truncated massing of pine trees and rocks on the right of the image, with a stream of flowing water along the left side. The compositional similarities of these two portraits suggest that Zeng's collaborators may have been asked to follow certain guidelines in painting landscape settings. This may explain why the three portraits of Wu Mengyang, Hu Erzao, and Hou Dongzeng also share a similar compositional scheme, despite the different collaborators, dates, and locations (see figs. 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3).

In the painting, Jing Linzi is shown sitting on a rock near a copse of pine trees. On the stone desk behind the sitter rests a pile of books, and a red twig in a blue bottle. The magic *lingzhi* mushroom, a traditional symbol of immortality, adds a Daoist cast to the sitter's reclusive life in nature. The yellow chrysanthemum in full bloom on the riverbank is a clear sign that Jing wanted to be identified with the recluse-poet Tao Qian, whose love of this autumn flower is well known. The chrysanthemum was traditionally considered a

¹⁸ The inclusion of a servant figure indicates the influence of the *xingle tu* tradition. On the visual attributes of *xingle tu*, see Lo, "Political Advancement," 6–16. Similar scenes also appear in contemporary Ming figure paintings depicting the reclusive sages. For a seventeenth-century example, see *Seven Sages in Bamboo Groves* painted by Li Shida 李士達 (1550–after 1623) in 1616. For this painting, see Shanghai Museum and Liaoning Provincial Museum, *Shi mao feng qing: Zhongguo gudai renwuhua jingpin ji* 世貌風情: 中國古代人物畫精品集 [Highlights of ancient Chinese figure paintings from the Liaoning Provincial Museum and the Shanghai Museum], 3 vols. (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2008), 1:186–93; 3:35–36.

proprietary attribute of Tao Qian iconography and widely used in figure paintings to portray the subject in the guise of Tao.¹⁹ Pines and *lingzhi* fungus, despite their ubiquitous presence in images of scholars or Daoist immortals, were at the same time strongly associated with Tao Qian, especially when paired with the chrysanthemum.²⁰ The chrysanthemum-pine pairing in particular evokes a line from Tao's prose-poem *Returning Home* (*Gui qu lai xi ci* 歸去來兮辭): "pines and chrysanthemums are still there" 松菊猶存.²¹ One iconic scene of the pictorial illustration of Tao's *Returning Home* portrays Tao standing under pine trees.²² Lu Zhi's 陸治 (1496–1576) portrayal of Tao Qian is a fine example of the numerous Ming paintings that depict him together with pines and chrysanthemums (fig. 6.3).²³ These symbolic plants must have been purposely chosen to portray the sitter as a Tao-like recluse and seeker of immortality.

The exquisite combination of portrait and landscape painting in *Portrait of Gu Mengyou*, now in the Nanjing Museum, is the fruit of a collaborative effort between Zeng Jing and

¹⁹ For a study of the chrysanthemum image as an iconic motif of Tao Qian, see Nelson, "Revisiting the Eastern Fence," 451–58.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 441–47.

²¹ On the symbolism of pines and chrysanthemums in Tao Qian's poems, see James Robert Hightower, "The *Fu* of Tao Ch'ien," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 17 (1954): 225–28.

²² See Brotherton, "Li Kung-lin and Long Handscroll Illustrations."

²³ Pines and chrysanthemums are used as the two prominent attributes of Tao Qian in the 1523 painting known as *Eminent Magistrate of Pengze* 彭澤高蹤, now in the National Palace Museum, Taipei. For a reproduction and description of this painting, see Guoli gugong bowuyuan bianji weiyuanhui 國立故宮博物院編輯委員會, ed., *Ming Lu Zhi zuopin zhanlan tulu* 明陸治作品展覽圖錄 [Exhibition catalogue of selected works by Lu Zhi of the Ming] (Taipei: Guoli gugong bowuyuan, 1992), 7, 67. It is introduced as *Traces of Tao Qian* in Nelson, "Revisiting the Eastern Fence," 454–55.

Zhang Feng 張翹 (d. 1662; courtesy name Dafeng 大風) (fig. 6.4).²⁴ The Ming loyalist poet Gu Mengyou 顧夢游 (1599–1660) poses in Zhang’s landscape of boulders and a rocky cliff. Zhang applied pale washes to the painting surface, and then added quick, spontaneous, and expressive brushstrokes in a range of grey hues.²⁵ As such, the landscape background of this portrait showcases Zhang’s typical landscape style. By adopting a close-up view, Zhang provided a simple, straightforward image of rocky terrain. The rocks constitute the most conspicuous element in Zhang’s background. Visually, the significance of Zhang’s rocks in *Portrait of Gu Mengyou* even seems to equal that of the sitter. By juxtaposing the human figure with rocks, Zeng and Zhang may have wanted to portray Gu as a mountain hermit

²⁴ *Portrait of Gu Mengyou* is introduced in Kondo, *Bochen huapai*, 75–76; Ma, *Zeng Jing yu “Bochen pai,”* 25; Nie, *Zeng Jing*, 28–29. See also Zhou Jiyin 周积寅, “Zeng Jing jiqi “Gu Yuzhi xiang” zhou” 曾鯨及其《顧與治像》軸 [Zeng Jing and his hanging-scroll portrait of Gu Yuzhi], *Dongnan wenhua* 東南文化, no. 2 (1988): 28–29. For a color reproduction of this portrait, see Zhou Jin, *Ming Qing xiaoxiang* 明清肖像 [Portraits of the Ming and Qing dynasties] (Wuhan: Hubei meishu chubanshe, 2011), 26–27.

²⁵ On Zhang Feng, see Rao Zongyi 饒宗頤, “Zhang Dafeng jiqi jiashi” 張大風及其家世 [Zhang Dafeng and his family background], *Xianggang zhongwen daxue zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo xuebao* 香港中文大學中國文化研究所學報 8, no. 1 (1976): 51–69. See also Hay, “Suspension of Dynastic Time,” 174–82. Zhou Lianggong wrote Zhang’s biography. See Zhou Lianggong, *Du hua lu*, 3:5a–7a. See also Kim, “Chou Liang-kung,” 2:116–22. Zhang Feng’s forté was landscape painting, and yet his portraits of Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮 (181–234) and of Tao Qian attest to his interest in figure painting. Zhang’s *Tao Yuanming Sniffing Chrysanthemums* is introduced in Nelson, “Revisiting the Eastern Fence,” 445–46; *ZGHHQJ*, 20:9 (description), 27 (plate). On Zhang’s portraits of reclusive figures, see Sun Diqiang 孫帝強, “Mingmo Qingchu Jinling huajia Zhang Feng renwuhua fengge fenxi ji qi hua zhong yinyi sixiang yu yimin yishi zhi tanze” 明末清初金陵畫家張風人物畫風格分析及其畫中隱逸思想與遺民意識之探蹟 [An analysis of the characteristics of the late-Ming and early-Qing Jinling painter Zhang Feng’s figure paintings and in-depth study of reclusive thought and leftover-subject consciousness in his paintings], *Yi yi fen zi* 藝藝份子 19 (2012): 27–59. Zhang’s portrait of

who embodied the traditional virtues associated with stones or rocks: sturdiness, patience, stability, and perpetuity.²⁶

The special quality of *Portrait of Gu Mengyou* consists in its harmonious integration of the rock formations and the figure of Gu Mengyou. He sits casually amidst the rocks, upon one of which rests his left arm. Zeng Jing outlined Gu's robes with thin uniform lines, applying a monochromatic light wash in the inner area of the robes. Zeng's simple delineation of the robes allows Gu's body to blend visually in with the neighboring rocks, themselves delineated with calligraphic lines. The figure of Gu seems to rise up out of the stone masses that surround him becoming a part of the painting's rocky landscape. *Portrait of Gu Mengyou* depicts rocks as natural cliffs and boulders, as opposed to rocks in composed landscapes such as gardens, which often appear in Ming paintings. Due to the prominent feature of natural rocks, the portrait of Gu is reminiscent of portraits of Buddhist figures, which depict enlightened beings in a rocky cave or grotto.²⁷ Zeng's portrait of Gu shows a compositional affinity with the images of lohans (arhats), Bodhidharma, or other Buddhist deities painted by his contemporary Ding Yunpeng and Wu Bin. The dominant

²⁶ For a discussion of the significance of stones in literati visual culture, see John Hay, *Kernels of Energy, Bones of Earth: The Rock in Chinese Art* (New York: China House Gallery, China Institute in America, 1985); Edward Schafer, *Tu Wan's Stone Catalogue of Cloudy Forest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961); Stephen Little, *Spirit Stones of China: The Ian and Susan Wilson Collection of Chinese Stones, Paintings, and Related Scholars' Objects* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 1999). "Shiyin" 石隱 (stone hermit), the sobriquet of Mi Wanzhong, who wrote an inscription for Zeng's portrait of Ge Yilong, is one fine example indicating an association between rocks and eremitism.

²⁷ On the use of cave or grotto in Buddhist images, see Hay, *Kernels of Energy, Bones of Earth*, 63–64.

presence of rocks in nature draws attention to Gu's reclusive state of mind, comparable to that of religious hermits.

Posing in the rugged mountain landscape, Gu Mengyou wears a plain robe, a fluttering hat, and red shoes, displaying the typical fashion of Zeng Jing's reclusive sitters. The figure of Gu, placed in the center foreground, gains visual prominence through its proximity to the viewer. The conspicuous gold embroidery on Gu's hat serves to direct the viewer's attention to the focal point of the painting, which is the sitter's face.²⁸ Zeng used layers of color washes to build the structure of the face and added multiple fine lines to define the facial features. The subtle shading applied in the lower eyelid, nose, cheeks, and lips creates a highly naturalistic effect. Gu's moustache and beard are portrayed with delicate precision. The meticulous brushwork of Gu's face contrasts with Zhang Feng's bold brushwork of the landscape, and yet their contrasting styles counterbalance one another, resulting in a harmonious whole.

In the upper right corner of *Portrait of Gu Mengyou* is Tian Lin's 田林 (active first half seventeenth century) calligraphic title: "Small portrait of Master Gu Yuzhi" 顧與治先生小像. Tian's calligraphy, written in seal script, evokes an archaic atmosphere that contributes to the portrait's monumentality.²⁹ The signature that follows reads, "Zeng Jing painted,

²⁸ The same type of a fluttering hat with gold embroidery appears in the portrait of Xu Wei 徐渭 (1521–93) from the well-known portrait album of twelve leaves in the Nanjing Museum. For reproductions of this portrait album, see Nanjing bowuyuan 南京博物院, *Mingren xiaoxianghua* 明人肖像畫 [Portraits of the Ming people] (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2008).

²⁹ Other examples of Zeng's portraits featuring a calligraphic title on the painting include the portraits of Wang Shimin, Hu Erzao, and Su Shi. As shown in these portraits and the portrait of Gu Mengyou, the seal and clerical scripts were preferred for the title inscription.

Zhang Feng added a landscape, and Tian Lin wrote seal script” 曾鯨畫, 張颯補景, 田林篆. This inscription appears to have been also written by Tian, since it is followed by Tian’s two seals: “*Tian Lin zhi yin*” 田林之印 and “*Zhishan*” 志山 (Tian’s courtesy name). Tian’s one-line signature indicates in a simple manner the collaboration between Zeng, Zhang, and Tian himself, alluding to the fact that no hierarchy was established among portraitist, landscapist, and calligrapher. On a separate slip of paper affixed to the mounting is an inscription written by the influential playwright Li Yu 李漁 (1610 or 1611–80).³⁰ Li’s inscription provides a biographical sketch of Gu Mengyou, and its content considerably overlaps with that of “Biography of Gu Yuzhi” 顧與治傳 written by the scholar-poet Shi Runzhang 施閏章 (1619–83).³¹

According to Li Yu’s inscription, *Portrait of Gu Mengyou* was painted in 1642, when the Ming dynasty was on the verge of collapse. In this year, Manchu forces crossed the Great Wall and Li Zicheng’s rebel army besieged the city of Kaifeng 開封. The dynastic crises that Gu Mengyou experienced during this time make his portrait appear to be more a

³⁰ Nie and Kondo make mention of Li Yu’s inscription attached to the mounting. See Nie, *Zeng Jing*, 28; Kondo, *Bochen huapai*, 76. Li wrote a good number of portrait encomia (*xiangzan*). See Li Yu, *Liweng yijia yan quanji* 笠翁一家言全集 [Complete collection of the sayings of the Liweng family], in *QDSWJ*, 30:351–59. For an overview of Li’s life and works, see Patrick Hanan, *The Invention of Li Yu* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988). Li venerated Dong Qichang and Chen Jiru, and his play, *Yizhong yuan* 意中緣 (Ideal love-matches), centers on these two close associates of Zeng Jing.

³¹ See Shi Runzhang, “Gu Yuzhi zhuan” 顧與治傳 [Biography of Gu Yuzhi], *Xueyutang wenji* 學餘堂文集 [Collected works of Xueyutang], 17:1a–3a, in *Siku quanshu zhenben sanji* 四庫全書珍本三集, vol. 355, ed. Wang Yunwu (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yishuguan, 1972). For biographical information on Shi Runzhang, see Arthur Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of Ch’ing Period*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1943), 2:651.

dramatic image of a Ming loyalist than a portrayal of an apolitical recluse. In this regard, it is noteworthy that the portrait of Gu was most likely painted in Nanjing (Jinling). Zeng Jing, as in his other works, collaborated with local artists—Zhang Feng and Tian Lin were from Nanjing’s southern suburb, Shangyuan 上元. Nanjing, where Zeng spent his later years, served scholars and artists as a refuge from the political turmoil and civil unrest of the late-Ming years, becoming a center of their cultural and artistic activities.³² Li Yu’s inscription mentions Gu’s associations with the leading literati active in Nanjing, such as Huang Daozhou, Zhou Liangong, Ge Yilong, and Mao Xiang 冒襄 (1611–93). Zhang Feng must have depicted the local scenery of Nanjing in *Portrait of Gu Mengyou* as he did in many of his landscapes.³³ The rocks surrounding Gu’s image seems to symbolize Gu’s immovable loyalty to the Ming, and the cliff forming the backdrop of the painting evokes Nanjing’s impregnability as the last stronghold of the dynasty.

As exemplified by Zeng Jing’s portraits discussed above, the landscape backdrop was an effective vehicle to emphasize visually the *shanren* (mountain man) identity of the Jiangnan elite, and yet it was an optional element.³⁴ Their compositional variations notwithstanding, Ming and Qing commentators did not subcategorize Zeng’s portraits. It would seem that the

³² On the art scene of seventeenth-century Nanjing, see Chu-tsing Li, “The Nanjing School of Painting,” in *Passion for the Mountains: Seventeenth Century Landscape Paintings from the Nanjing Museum*, ed. Willow Weilan Hai Chang (New York: China Institute Gallery, 2003), 41–45.

³³ The mountain scenery around Nanjing appears to have been an important source of inspiration for Zhang’s landscapes, see Hay, “Suspension of Dynastic Time,” 174–82.

³⁴ This partly explains why the landscape backgrounds appear only sporadically throughout Zeng’s career, and why Zeng collaborated with different landscape painters who were appointed locally.

addition of the landscape remained ultimately subordinate to the human figure in the eyes of these viewers. Portraits without a background constitute a large and significant part of Zeng's oeuvre.³⁵ These types depict a single, isolated figure against an empty, neutral background, as shown in the portraits of Wang Shimin and Ge Yilong (see figs. 4.1 and 4.7). Even without the landscape, the casual clothing and relaxed posture encourage the viewer to visualize the sitter's reclusive lifestyle in nature.

Zeng Jing did not fill in the empty spaces with architectural or interior details to replace landscape settings, suggesting that interior space was not considered an equivalent counterpart to the natural outdoor settings in Zeng's portraits. Some of Zeng's portraits, such as those of Shi Pei and Zhao Geng, depict the sitter in a chair or daybed against an empty background; however, even in these portraits, the sitter would have been placed in an outdoor setting (see figs. 5.4 and 6.7). As in Zeng's portrait of Hou Dongzeng, a chair and a daybed featured in the abovementioned portraits were commonly used as outdoor garden furniture (fig. 3.3). Even though these furnishings suggest that the sitter was set in a domestic context, this interior space must have been a hermitage-type building located in nature.

Images and Encomia of Disengaged Men

Zeng Jing's portraits emerge as both pictorial and literary testimonies of the self-fashioning of the Jiangnan cultural elite. The process of identity formation was in part effected by the encomia, or written inscriptions, that Zeng's portraits bear, many of which

³⁵ Zeng's oeuvre can be broadly divisible into two types: sitter in landscape and sitter in a blank background. See Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self*, 43.

were written by close contemporaries of the sitters. This is a clear indication of an important shift in the function of the portrait from a ritual object to an object for aesthetic appreciation. Even though it is possible that Zeng's portraits were used as ancestral images by later generations, they were originally meant to be appreciated by the sitter's peers and friends. Zeng's portraits, as in *Portrait of Pan Qintai*, provided an opportunity for the sitter's companions to congregate in front of the painting.³⁶ Some of these viewers became far more than just passive appreciators, as they contributed eulogistic inscriptions to the paintings. One could not have inscribed an encomium on the portrait without sympathizing with the sitter. In fact, Zeng's sitters, collaborators, inscribers, and patrons appear to have been tied together by personal relationships.

Most of Zeng Jing's portraits carry a number of lengthy inscriptions, often accompanied by subsequent colophons added to the bordering areas surrounding the image or on separate slips of paper. In Zeng's portrait featuring a blank background, the sitter's friends typically filled the empty spaces with encomia. Three of the portraits also contain the sitter's self-eulogy (*zizan* 自讚).³⁷ The 'portrait encomium' (*xiangzan* 像讚) added to Zeng's portraits serves to convey nuanced and complex aspects of the sitter's reclusive mind that can hardly

³⁶ For example, Zhang Dai's record indicates that Zeng Jing painted a portrait at the boat party. See Zhang Dai, "Bu xi yuan," 30.

³⁷ Zeng's portraits of Zhao Geng, Zhao Shi'e, and Li Zhaoheng contain the sitter's self-eulogy. The self-eulogy became a popular genre in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. See Wu Pei-yi, "Varieties of the Chinese Self," in *Designs of Selfhood*, ed. Vytautas Kavolis (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1984), 117; Hajime Nakatani, "Body, Sentiment, and Voice in Ming Self-Encomia (*Zizan*)," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR)* 32 (2010), 73.

be expressed pictorially.³⁸ These textual, literary additions to Zeng's paintings testify to the fact that his portraits were circulated and appreciated by the sitter's network of friends, who shared the ideal of reclusion.

Zeng Jing's 1621 portrait of Pan Qintai 潘琴台 (active early seventeenth century) exhibits no setting, but the walking staff in Pan's right hand leads the viewer to visualize Pan strolling through natural surroundings (fig. 6.5).³⁹ The Suzhou scholar-poet Pan is shown wearing a white cotton robe and grasping a bamboo staff. The plain-robed scholar with a walking staff had been established for centuries as one of the iconic images of recluses living in nature. The portrait of Yang Qian of 1363 is one among other possible predecessors (fig. 1.11).⁴⁰ In this portrait by Wang Yi and Ni Zan, Yang Qian stands next to

³⁸ Wu Pei-yi points out "the vogue of the *tzu-tsan* may have resulted partly from the writer's dissatisfaction with the painter." See Wu, "Varieties of the Chinese Self," 124–25.

³⁹ This portrait of Pan in University of Michigan Museum of Art is introduced in Wu, *Orchid Pavilion Gathering*, 1:114–23; Sturman and Tai, *Artful Recluse*, 116–17, 280. There are two versions of Zeng's portrait of Pan, one in the University of Michigan Museum of Art and the other in the Shanghai Museum. Because a tracing-copy method (*mo* 摹) was adopted, these two paintings are almost identical. The Shanghai version appears to be a later copy of the Michigan version. See Wu, *Orchid Pavilion Gathering*, 1:122–23. Both paintings contain Zeng's signature: "On a winter day in the *xinyou* year of the Tianqi reign [1621], Zeng Jing sketched for Mr. Qintai" 天啟辛酉冬日, 曾鯨爲琴台先生寫. In addition to the artist's signature, all the inscriptions were copied from one painting to another, suggesting that the portrait and its inscriptions were considered equally important components of Zeng's portraits.

⁴⁰ We earlier discussed *A Small Portrait of Yang Zhuxi (Yang Qian)* as an important source of inspiration for Zeng's portraits, in terms of theme, style, and painting process. For a discussion on *Portrait of Yang Zhuxi* as a possible source for *Portrait of Pan Qintai*, see Seokwon Choi, "Man with a Staff: Zeng Jing and Image-making in Late-Ming Painting," *Oriental Art* 44, no. 2 (2013): 113–18. For a detailed discussion on this portrait of Yang Qian, see Sensabaugh, "Fashioning Identities," 119–24; Chen, "Yuan Wang Yi Yang Zhuxi xiaoxiang," 301–20.

a pine tree and cluster of rocks, holding a bamboo staff in his right hand. Zeng must have known of Yang's portrait, since it was in the collection of Xiang Yuanbian, for whom Zeng painted a portrait. In addition, the image of Pan is analogous to Zhao Mengfu's portrait of the poet Su Shi, which depicts him holding a bamboo staff (cf. fig. 1.4).⁴¹ Tao Qian, who famously retired from office to become a gentleman farmer, was commonly portrayed holding a wooden staff, often walking in the pastoral landscape. Sima Guang's 司馬光 (1019–86) poetic line describing his life in retirement precisely matches Zeng's portrayal of Pan: "My hand holds a bamboo staff, wearing commoner's robes" 手持筇竹著深衣.⁴² Zeng would have drawn inspiration from these conventional images of earlier reclusive scholars featuring a bamboo staff.

While little is known about Pan Qintai's life, one can imagine his reclusive lifestyle by virtue of Zeng Jing's portrait and the accompanying inscriptions written by Pan's friends. Surrounding Pan's figure are the inscriptions of seven renowned scholar-artists: Chen Jiru, Li Liufang 李流芳 (1575–1629), Lin Yunfeng 林雲鳳 (sixteenth–seventeenth century), Chen Guan 陳祿 (1563–ca. 1639), Cao Xi 曹羲 (sixteenth–seventeenth century), Lu Guangming 陸廣明 (sixteenth–seventeenth century), and Feng Weiqi 馮維圻 (sixteenth–

⁴¹ Similar to Pan in Zeng's portrait, in Zhao's portrait Su wears plain robes, standing upright against empty space. On Zhao's portrait of Su in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, see Wang Yaoting 王耀庭, "Tan Zhao Mengfu hua Su Shi xiang" 談趙孟頫畫蘇軾像 [On the portrait of Su Shi painted by Zhao Mengfu], *Gugong wenwu yuekan* 故宮文物月刊 85 (1990): 30–35.

⁴² Sima Guang, "Du bu zhi Luo bin" 獨步至洛濱 [Walking alone, as I reached the bank of the Luo River], *Quan Songshi* 全宋詩 [Complete *shi* poetry of the Song], 508:6180.

seventeenth century).⁴³ These scholars' inscriptions, written in the literary form of *xiangzan* (portrait encomium), extol Pan's elegant taste, artistic achievement, and rustic life. Chen Jiru identifies the place of his inscription as the Accompanying Bamboo Hermitage (*Ban zhu ju* 伴竹居). In his inscription, Chen Guan refers to Pan Qiantai as "the master of the Accompanying Bamboo Hermitage" (伴竹居主人). Presumably, Pan's friends gathered to write inscriptions at Pan's private retreat, commemorating the completion of the portrait. Judging from Li Liufang's inscription, Pan's Accompanying Bamboo Hermitage seems to have been located in Hangzhou near West Lake:

Clothed in white cotton robe he holds a bamboo staff;
 Arriving at West Lake he makes a home.
 Gate closed, he arranges rocks by his garden ponds;
 An attentive host, he serves plenty of tea and melon.
 His white collar I at first take for snow;
 His face, wine-flushed, is like changing mists at sunset.
 Attaining leisure is certainly not so easily come by;
 The affairs of the city are like [tangled] hemp.

白衲有筇杖，
 西湖到處家。
 閉門營水石，
 好客費瓜茶。
 素領初疑雪，

⁴³ For transcriptions and translations of the inscriptions on the painting, see Wu, *Orchid Pavilion Gathering*, 1:115–17. All of the following quotations from the inscriptions on Pan's portrait are modified slightly from Wu's translations. The modified translations are published in Sturman and Tai, *Artful Recluse*, 280.

酡顏欲變霞。
得閑渾不易，
城裡事如麻。

Li Liufang's description of Pan Qintai in the opening phrase accords with Zeng Jing's portrayal of Pan. The description of the setting that follows, therefore, must refer to Pan's Accompanying Bamboo Hermitage, where Pan hosted his friends who had gathered to write portrait encomia. Chen Jiru's inscription also describes Pan's clothing and residence: "he wears white cotton robes and dwells in a yellow thatched hut" 白衲衣, 黃茆屋. The name of Pan's retreat, Accompanying Bamboo Hermitage, reflects his special fondness for bamboo. According to Lin Yunfeng's inscription, however, there was no bamboo around Pan's hermitage: "his Bamboo Retreat has no bamboo, only a cluster of old huts" 竹居無竹, 數椽老屋. Bamboo appears to have a symbolic significance to Pan's personality, and among the painting's inscriptions are several phrases that illuminate Pan's love of the plant. Chen Jiru wrote that Pan has "the companionship of the slender bamboo" (*ban xiu zhu* 伴修竹). Lin describes, "how profoundly he has gained enjoyment from the bamboo and his *qin* zither" 其得趣于竹與琴者, 深矣. Lin then compares Pan's lofty virtues with those of Wang Huizhi 王徽之 (ca. 338–86) and Tao Qian: "he does not need to model himself after traces of Wang Ziyou [Wang Huizhi]—his heart is already similar to that of Tao Yuanliang [Tao Qian]" 蓋不必跡王子猷之蹟, 而能心陶元亮之心. Wang, the fifth son of the great calligrapher Wang Xizhi, was famous for being fond of bamboo.⁴⁴ Coupled with these literary descriptions, a

⁴⁴ For Wang Huizhi's love of bamboo, see Richard B. Mather, trans., *Shih-shuo Hsin-yü: A New Account of Tales of the World*, 2nd ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2002), 430.

bamboo staff in Zeng's portrait visually symbolizes Pan's spiritual bond with bamboo. Like Lin Yunfeng, Feng Weiqi also made mention of bamboo together with *qin* zither:

Not carrying his *qin*, not accompanying bamboo, his robe still reflects the plant's jade green. I understand the longings of this gentleman's heart: if not gazing at bamboo, then it is listening to his *qin*. If I were to come to the gentleman's home and listen to the music from his *qin* and regard his bamboo, [being uncouth,] the elegant and rare bamboo from the Yundang Valley would be wasted on me, like a vagabond drooling over meat at a butcher's shop. Come, let us retire from public life. The tea pot at your house has long been boiling.⁴⁵

不攜琴, 不伴竹, 一袍猶映琅玕綠。我知先生一往心, 若非看竹定聽琴。假使我來君家聽琴與看竹, 只好屠門大嚼簞簞谷。歸去來, 先生壁間久已涕茶鐺。

Bamboo and *qin* zither are presented as two major items characterizing Pan Quintai's reclusive persona. With regard to bamboo, Feng Weiqi's inscription above contains an important historical allusion. The place name, "Yundang Valley" 簞簞谷, alludes to Wen Tong's 文同 (1018–79) bamboo painting, evoking Su Shi's famous "Record of Wen Yuke's Painting the Bent Bamboos of Yundang" 文與可畫簞簞谷偃竹記.⁴⁶ While Zeng Jing's

For Wang's biography, see David R. Knechtges and Taiping Chang, eds., *Ancient and Early Medieval Chinese Literature: A Reference Guide*, 4 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 2:1175–76.

⁴⁵ Translation taken with slight modifications from Wu, *Orchid Pavilion Gathering*, 1:117.

⁴⁶ See Su Shi, "Wen Yuke hua Yundang gu yan zhu ji" 文與可畫簞簞谷偃竹記 [Record of Wen Yuke's painting the bent bamboos of Yundang], *Jingjin Dongpo wenji shilüe* 經進東坡文集事略 [Arranged and presented prose collection of Dongpo with brief commentary], 49:1a–b. For translation, see Susan Bush, *The Chinese Literati on Painting: Su Shih (1037–1101) to Tung Ch'i-ch'ang (1555–1636)* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press,

portrait of Pan is far from a bamboo painting, one who reads Feng's inscribed eulogy would be prompted to think of Wen and Su's famous pairing. A bamboo staff in the portrait combined with Feng's inscription leads the viewer-reader to identify Pan Qintai with Wen Tong, of whom it was said he held the image of perfected bamboo in his mind in order to paint bamboo.⁴⁷ Finishing his inscription, Feng quoted the phrase from Tao Qian's poem: "gui qu lai" 歸去來. Bamboo, therefore, was presented clearly as a companion to the scholar in retirement.

In the winter of 1624, Zeng Jing painted portraits of Zhao Shi'e 趙士諤 (1561–1630) and Zhao Geng 趙賡 (b. 1584) (figs. 6.6 and 6.7).⁴⁸ The sitters of these portraits are identified as Zhao Shi'e and Zhao Geng by virtue of their self-eulogies inscribed above their images. Zhao Shi'e signed his self-eulogy with his courtesy name "Jianqing" 蹇卿, and Zhao Geng stamped two seals on his eulogy: "Zhao Geng" 趙賡 and "Qinzhong" 欽中.

2012), 37; Michael A. Fuller, *The Road to East Slope: The Development of Su Shi's Poetic Voice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 88–89.

⁴⁷ In his "Wen Yuke hua Yundang gu yan zhu ji," Su Shi wrote, "thus, in painting bamboo one must first have the perfected bamboo in mind" 故畫竹, 必先得成竹於胸中. See Su Shi Translation from Bush, *Chinese Literati on Painting*, 37.

⁴⁸ *Portrait of Zhao Shi'e* in the Shanghai Museum and *Portrait of Zhao Geng* in the Guangdong Provincial Museum are introduced in Ma, *Zeng Jing yu "Bochen pai,"* 28–29; Kondo, *Bochen huapai*, 67–69. Zhao Shi'e's portrait is also introduced in René-Yvon Lefebvre d'Argencé, *Treasures from the Shanghai Museum: 6,000 Years of Chinese Art* (Shanghai and San Francisco: Shanghai Museum and Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 1983), 169–70. For *Portrait of Zhao Geng*, see also Nie, *Zeng Jing*, 10–11. Zeng's signatures on the portraits of Zhao Shi'e and Zhao Geng read respectively, "On a winter day in the *jiazi* year of the Tianqi reign, Zeng Jing painted" 天啟甲子冬日, 曾鯨寫 and "On a winter day in the *jiazi* year of the Tianqi reign, [I] painted at the Hexue Hall, Zeng Jing" 天啟甲子冬日, 寫於和雪堂, 曾鯨.

Zhao Shi'e was a scholar-official from Wujiang 吳江, Suzhou, who obtained his *jinshi* degree in 1601.⁴⁹ During the Wanli reign period, Zhao held several minor government posts, such as magistrate (*zhixian* 知縣) in Kuaiji, secretary (*zhushi* 主事) in the Ministry of War, and right assistant censor-in-chief (*you qian duyushi* 右僉都御史).⁵⁰ There is almost no biographical information available for Zhao Geng; however, it is possible that he was a member of the same Zhao clan of Wujiang as Zhao Shi'e. Zeng's signature on the portrait of Zhao Geng indicates the place of production as Hexue Hall 和雪堂. According to the records in Huang Yuji's 黃虞稷 (1629–91) *Qianqingtang shumu* 千頃堂書目 (Book catalogue of the Qianqing Hall), the Hexue Hall was a building associated with another Wujiang native, Zhao Han 趙瀚 (seventeenth century).⁵¹ If the Hexue Hall belonged to the Zhao clan of Wujiang, then it is equally possible that Zhao Geng came from the same Zhao clan. Given the fact that the portraits of the two Zhaos were painted in the winter of the same year, it is possible that the Hexue Hall served as a temporary studio for both portraits of Zhao Shi'e and Zhao Geng.⁵²

⁴⁹ Zhao Shi'e's biography is recorded in (*Qianlong*) *Wujiang xianzhi* (乾隆)吳江縣志 [Gazetteer of Wujiang county (Qianlong edition)] (1747), 28:14a–15a. Together with his two poems, Zhao Shi'e's official career is recorded in Zhu Yizun 朱彝尊 (1629–1709), ed., *Ming shi zong* 明詩綜 [Compendium of Ming poetry] (SKQS ed.), 64:16b–17a.

⁵⁰ See *Wujiang xianzhi*, 28:14a–15a.

⁵¹ The book titled *Zhao Han Hexue tang cao* 趙瀚和雪堂草 [Draft of the Hexue Hall by Zhao Han] was catalogued in Huang Yuji, *Qianqingtang shumu* (SKQS ed.), 28:20a. According to Huang's annotation, Zhao Han was a native of Wujiang.

⁵² The Hexue Hall was located in Wujiang, Suzhou. In the fall of the same year, Zeng painted a portrait of Xu Yuangliang at Bantang Temple in Suzhou.

In addition to the same production date and possible family relationship between the two sitters, the portraits of Zhao Shi'e and Zhao Geng share another important characteristic: they contain the sitter's self-written inscription. There are only three portraits among Zeng Jing's extant oeuvre that bear the sitter's self-eulogies: portraits of Zhao Shi'e, Zhao Geng, and Li Zhaoheng. Within these, the self-eulogies of Zhao Shi'e and Zhao Geng are the only inscriptions that were inscribed upon the completion of the portraits in 1624. On a separate slip of paper affixed to the mounting of *Portrait of Zhao Geng* is a colophon written by the sitter's great-great-grandson Zhao Qi 趙基 in 1787. While Zhao Geng's portrait seems to have been handed down in the family for several generations, it was also shown to people outside the family circle. Ma Quanqi 馬權奇 (active first half seventeenth century) and Zhou Rongqi 周榮起 (1600–86) added inscriptions to the portraits of Zhao Shi'e and Zhao Geng in 1640 and 1642, respectively. According to their signatures, Ma was “menren” 門人 (disciple) of Zhao Shi'e, and Zhou was *tongjia zi* 通家子 (son from a close family) of Zhao Geng.

Zeng Jing portrayed Zhao Shi'e as a retired scholar wearing a black square cap and a plain cotton robe lined with a blue trim. Zhao's self-eulogy on the portrait reaffirms his aspiration to fashion the 'recluse' identity through portraiture:

Who is it that has painted this portrait of mine?
With a bit of imagination, it almost resembles a hermit!
Face and eyes fortunately are of my old self;
Beard and eyebrows would nearly conform to people of today.
This clear heart by nature savors lightness and silence.
My lazy nature is rather suited toward familiarity with reclusion.

One valley and one hill: that is what I can appreciate!
 Picturing forms—why must they be for the Qilin Hall?
 There are many [portraits] depicting my appearance, and yet this is the one
 resembling me. This scroll of painting is extremely lifelike. I write a few words
 [on the painting] and store it. My age is sixty-four years old.
 On the winter solstice of the *jiazi* year of the Tianqi reign (1624), acknowledged
 by Jianqing.

誰將尺素寫余真，
 想像差堪擬逸民。
 面目幸能自故我，
 鬚眉寧肯傍時人。
 澹心本自甘恬漠，
 懶性偏宜狎隱淪。
 一壑一丘聊自賞，
 圖形何必是麒麟。
 貌余者多矣，然雖其似者。此幅畫謂逼真，漫題數語藏之。時年六十有四。
 天啓甲子仲冬日蹇卿識。

In his comments attached to the poem, Zhao Shi'e expressed his satisfaction with Zeng Jing's portrait by calling it "bizhen" 逼真 (extremely lifelike), which Zhao suggests is no more than being portrayed as *yimin* 逸民 (disengaged person).⁵³ The clear heart (*danxin* 澹心) and lazy nature (*lanxing* 懶性) are presented as positive qualities for living in reclusion

⁵³ Xie Zhaozhe and Jiang Shaoshu used "bizhen" when describing Zeng's portraiture. See Oertling, *Painting and Calligraphy in the Wu-tsa-tsu*, 137; Jiang Shaoshu, *Wusheng shishi*, 857.

(*yinlun* 隱淪). The phrase *yi huo yi qiu* 一壑一丘 (one valley and one hill) in the last couplet connotes a reclusive life in nature, alluding to a passage in *Qian Hanshu* 前漢書 (History of the former Han dynasty): “If one fishes in a valley, the myriad things of the world cannot break one’s spirit; if one lead a quite life on a hill, the all things under heaven cannot alter one’s pleasure 漁釣於一壑, 則萬物不奸其志. 棲遲於一丘, 則天下不易其樂.”⁵⁴ In addition, it is very likely that Zhao used this idiomatic expression to identify himself with Xie Kun, the recluse of the Eastern Jin who famously said that he excelled at living on a hill and fishing in a valley “一丘一壑, 自謂過之.”⁵⁵ Zhao must have had Xie’s legendary portrait by Gu Kaizhi in mind, which was later recreated by Zhao Mengfu.⁵⁶ The title of Zhao’s portrait of Xie is *Youyu qiuhuo* 幼輿丘壑, a rephrasing of Xie’s expression. Even though Zeng’s portrait is devoid of any background, it seems apparent that through Zeng’s portrait, Zhao pictured himself as a recluse living in nature. Qilin in the last line is short for the Qilin Hall 麒麟閣, a hall of Han times that had commemorative portraits of meritorious government officials. The opposition between being of a person of “one hill, one valley” and being an honoree whose portrait was displayed in a court or public building was a traditional

⁵⁴ See *Qian Hanshu* 前漢書 (SKQS ed.), 100A:8a.

⁵⁵ See Liu Yiqing, *Shishuo xinyu, shang*, 279. The term “*yi qiu yi he*” had been a common metaphor for the literati’s aspiration to seclusion since the Northern Song. See Valérie Malenfer Ortiz, *Dreaming the Southern Song Landscape: The Power of Illusion in Chinese Painting* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 132.

⁵⁶ See Zhang Yanyuan, *Lidai minghuaqi*, 113. On Zhao’s portrait of Xie, now in the Princeton University Art Museum, see Shih, “Mind Landscape of Hsieh Yu-yü,” 238–54; McCausland, *Zhao Mengfu*, 201–17.

one in literature. By referring to the Qilin Hall, Zhao would have intended to emphasize the reclusion theme of his portrait by Zeng.

Summoning the Historical Recluse: Zhao Geng and Liu Jingting as Zhuge Liang

The inscriptions on Zeng Jing's portraits are full of historical and literary allusions to the past. The inscribers often compared the eremitic virtues of the sitters with those of historical recluses. Recluses from the Six Dynasties such as Seven Sages, Xie Kun, and Tao Qian were the most popular models. The inscriptions typically include a series of references to classical poems and other literati texts. This classicizing trend in encomia reflects the Jiangnan literati's nostalgic romanticizing of their reclusion. The literati's consciousness of the eremitic and literary tradition was indeed important to the formation of their reclusive identity.

Zeng's portraits are characterized by an archaic quality that is the direct result of his sitters' desire to fashion reclusive personae through self-identification with past reclusive heroes. One clear agent of Zeng's archaism is the varied types of headgear that Zeng's sitters wear, which also convey differences in the sitters' archaistic taste. Dong Qichang, for instance, is depicted with a Jin-dynast hat, while Wang Shimin wears a black fluttering head cloth (*piaopiao jin*) (cf. figs. 4.1 and 5.1). Zeng deployed other symbolic attributes to create analogies between the sitter and the venerable recluses of the past. Sometimes Zeng's visual references to historical recluses are quite subtle, and detectable only owing to the contents of the inscriptions. Hand gestures and postures were carefully chosen to demonstrate the distinctiveness of the sitter's taste, personality, and reclusive ideal; Zeng's portraits of Zhao Geng and Liu Jingting are notable examples of this.

Zhao Geng manifests the ethos of reclusion in his self-eulogy on Zeng Jing's 1624 portrait (fig. 6.7):

Don't tell me that my face is still young;
I've been living in it for forty years.
Knitting my eyebrows together, shameful of how the world goes.
I embrace my knees, letting things go as they may.
Ease and simplicity are obtainable in time;
'Forgetting words' and vulgarity completely done away with.
Before me are desk and bed;
Seated or reclining are a matter of fate.
Master Zeng Bochen from Min (Fujian) painted a portrait for me, and therefore I
compose this poem to present my will. Turning forty-one years old, I write [this].

莫道顏猶少，
居諸四十年。
攢眉羞世態，
抱膝任天然。
安素隨時得，
忘言與俗全。
眼前有几榻，
坐臥可爲緣。
閩中曾波臣先生為余寫像，因賦此以見志，時年四十有一載寓識。

In the second couplet of the poem, Zhao Geng expresses criticism of the social conditions of the time. Zhao describes himself as embracing knees (*baoxi* 抱膝) and waiting for better times. He would have used the term *baoxi* to allude to the legendary military

strategist Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮 (181–234). Zhuge was famous for holding his knees and singing a song while living in reclusion, and “Song of Old Men” (*Liangfu yin* 梁父吟) that Zhuge sang was also called “Song of Holding Knees” (*Baoxi yin* 抱膝吟) because of his well-known pose. The term *baoxi* also appears in Yuan Gongshou’s 袁恭壽 (active seventeenth century) inscription on Zeng Jing’s 1640 portrait of Liu Jingting (fig. 6.8). Zhuge seems to have been admired as one of the heroic recluses among Zeng’s patrons and associates. In Zeng’s portrait, Zhao Geng is seated with his hands resting on his knees, perhaps intended to emulate Zhuge’s iconic image. As exemplified by Zhang Feng’s portraits of Zhuge, it is likely that a knee-holding position had been accepted as Zhuge’s iconic pose by Zeng’s contemporaries (fig. 6.9).⁵⁷

The last couplet of Zhao Geng’s self-eulogy describes the objects—table and bed (*ji ta* 几榻)—and the sitter’s posture—sitting and lying (*zuowo* 坐臥)—shown in the painting. Zhao’s sitting posture on a daybed, which similarly appears in Zeng Jing’s 1619 portrait of Shi Pei, is reminiscent of the traditional iconography of Vimalakīrti. Considering how religious syncretism pervaded the minds of Zeng and his coterie, it is probable that a sitting position on a daybed was adopted as an emulation of the image of Vimalakīrti. Zhao could have borrowed the term *zuowo* (sitting and lying) from *xing zhu zuo wo* 行住坐臥 (walking,

⁵⁷ On Zhang’s portrait of Zhuge Liang, see Sun, “Mingmo Qingchu Jinling huajia Zhang Feng renwuhua,” 37–41; *Gugong shuhua tulu* 故宮書畫圖錄 [Illustrated catalog of painting and calligraphy in the National Palace Museum], vol. 9 (Taipei: Guoli gugong bowuyuan, 1992), 255–256.

standing, sitting, and lying), which refers to the four postures of enlightened beings (*si weiyi* 四威儀; Skrt. *iryapatha*).⁵⁸

Zeng Jing's portrait of the celebrated oral storyteller Liu Jingting 柳敬亭 (1592–1674/75) depicts the sitter against a blank background (fig. 6.8).⁵⁹ Surrounding the sitter's image, seventeen poetic encomia were inscribed by Liu's peers and junior colleagues.⁶⁰ The date and place of production were documented in Zeng's signature: "On the Double Ninth day in the *gengchen* year of the Chongzhen reign [1640], the Old Man of the Sugarcane Garden painted at the Lopsided Hut in Qinhuai. [Signed] Zeng Jing" 崇禎庚辰重九, 蔗園老人寫于秦淮崎舍. 曾鯨.⁶¹ The title of Ge Yilong's poem points to Zeng's residence in

⁵⁸ On *iryapatha* (four deportments/postures), see Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Donald S. Lopez Jr., *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 374–75.

⁵⁹ For a detailed study of *Portrait of Liu Jingting*, see Rüdiger Breuer, "Like an Image in a Mirror—Or: A Portrait of the Ming-Qing Storyteller Liu Jingting," *Studia Orientalia Slovaca* 10, no. 2 (2010): 291–325; Kuchi Tomoko 口井知子, "So Gei hitsu Ryu Keitei zo wo megutte" 曾鯨筆《柳敬亭像》を巡って [A Study of the Liu Jingting by Zeng Jing], *Minzoku geijutsu* 民俗藝術 28 (2012): 207–16. My discussion of this portrait is heavily indebted to Breuer's and Kuchi's articles. This portrait of Liu in the Shitou Shuwu 石頭書屋 collection in Taipei is reproduced and described, and its inscriptions are transcribed in the Shitou collection catalogue. See Cai Yixuan 蔡宜璇, ed., *Yuemu: Zhongguo wanqi shuhua* 悅目: 中國晚期書畫 [Enchanting images: Late Chinese painting and calligraphy from the Shih-t'ou Shu-wu collection] (Taipei: Shitou chuban youxian gongsi, 2001), 1:65–67 (description); 2:169–70 (plate). This portrait is also briefly mentioned in Kondo, *Bochen huapai*, 73.

⁶⁰ Breuer translated the painting's seventeen inscriptions. See Breuer, "Like an Image in a Mirror," 305–20.

⁶¹ See *ibid.*, 298. "Zhe yuan laoren" 蔗園老人 (Old Man of the Sugarcane Garden) is reminiscent of Zeng's another sobriquet, "Zhe'an" 蔗庵 (Sugarcane hut), which was used in his 1620 portrait of Dong Qichang. Zeng's use of these sobriquets may have been related to the fact that his hometown, Fujian, was the major sugarcane-producing region.

Qinhuai: “Passing by Zeng Bochen’s residence at Huai (Qinhuai), and asking for a small portrait” 過曾波臣淮上居因乞小影。⁶² The Lopsided Hut (*ji she* 畸舍) may have been the name of Zeng’s residence or one of the neighboring residences in Qinhuai.

In the painting, the forty-nine-year-old Liu Jingting sits on a pile of rocks with his left leg straight and right leg crossed over the left knee. Liu holds his right knee, upon which both hands are folded. Similar figures sitting on rocks appear in Zeng’s portraits of Wu Mengyang, Hu Erzao, Jing Linzi, and Gu Mengyou, all of which are set in landscape (see figs. 3.1, 3.2, 6.2, and 6.4). The rocks in *Portrait of Liu Jingting* suggest that the empty background should be read as a natural outdoor space. Zeng seems to have painted the rocks by himself, since there is no indication of a collaborator. In rendering the rocks, Zeng first applied light ink wash, showing subtle tonal gradations on the surfaces of the rocks, and then added short strokes with slightly darker ink to indicate moss. Such textural details contrast with the simple line drawing of Liu’s robes, making the rocks visually conspicuous.

The rocks, coupled with Liu Jingting’s sitting position, were recognized as a vital component in *Portrait of Liu Jingting* by several of the painting’s inscribers. A line from Liu Ruozai’s 劉若宰 (1595–1640?) inscription reads, “On a piece of rock, [he] sits with legs crossed, self-composed and at leisure” 片石跌坐, 優游自宜. Liu Wei’s 劉燿 (active mid-seventeenth century) inscription includes the line: “[He] sits on a rock in silence, laughing uproariously at heaven and earth” 坐石不言, 笑傲覆載. Zhu Tongshang 朱統鏞 (active mid-seventeenth century) related Liu Jingting’s sitting position to a cosmological concept called *taixu* 太虛 (Great Void): “[He] sits on a rock, clasping his knee; [he] clearly

⁶² Ge Yilong, *Ge Zhenfu shiji*, 510.

understands the court of the Great Void” 踞石撫膝，洞然於太虛之庭。⁶³ These inscriptions suggest that Liu Jingting’s ‘sitting posture’ and the ‘rocks’ were indicative of attaining leisureliness, remaining aloof, and even understanding the universal force of nature.

There was a visual convention of depicting Chan Buddhist monks sitting on a rock in nature, and it is likely that this image of Liu Jingting was intended to bring to mind this association.⁶⁴ Furthermore, the mound of rocks beneath Liu appears to be comparable with a stone pedestal found in Buddhist images. Zeng Jing would have intended to portray Liu as a dignified, spiritual being. In his inscription, Yuan Gongshou 袁恭壽 (active seventeenth century) makes mention of a “Chan mind” (*Chan xin* 禪心) in addition to a “poetic sentiment” (*shiyi* 詩意):

[He] sits and reclines on a rock, as if listening to the sound of a stream.
Nanyang is not yet old, holding his knee and humming a bit [of tune].⁶⁵
[With] a tea bowl and a pine flywhisk, [there is] a poetic sentiment and a Chan
mind.
His appearance is simple yet cultured; his spirit is still and profound.

⁶³ The concept of *taixu* was properly formulated by the Song-dynasty philosopher Zhang Zai 張載 (1020–77). See Robin R. Wang and Ding Weixiang, “Zhang Zai’s Theory of Vital Energy,” in *Dao Companion to Neo-Confucian Philosophy*, ed. John Markham (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010), 39–57.

⁶⁴ On Chan portraits with a landscape setting, see Brinker, “Ch’an Portraits in a Landscape,” 8–29.

⁶⁵ This line is an allusion to Zhuge Liang, who lived in seclusion in Nanyang. See Breuer, “Like an Image in a Mirror,” 311.

[Signed] Younger club brother from Gong'an in the Chu region, Yuan Gongshou.⁶⁶

坐臥石上, 如聽泉音.
南陽未老, 抱膝何吟.
茗甌松塵, 詩意禪心.
貌樸而文, 氣靜以深.
楚公安社弟, 袁恭壽.

Yuan Gongshou, like other inscribers mentioned above, described Liu Jinting's sitting position on a rock. A tea bowl and a flywhisk made of pine, which were omitted from Zeng Jing's painting, would have been placed near the sitter in reality. Given the reference to a Chan (meditative) mind, in the third couplet, the flywhisk (*zhu* 塵; or *chen* 塵) seems to allude to Liu's Buddhist inclination, as this utensil was used in the religious 'pure conversation' (*qingtan*).⁶⁷ As discussed in discussed in a previous chapter, Zeng depicted Wang Shimin holding a flywhisk most likely in order to evoke his Buddhist belief.

A more significant clue to Liu Jinting's persona is Yuan Gongshou's description of Liu's act of 'holding his knees' (*baoxi* 抱膝)—expressed as 'touching knees' (*fixi* 撫膝) in Zhu Tongshang's inscription noted earlier. Gan Yuanding 甘元鼎 (active mid seventeenth century) inscribed the portrait, "[He] sits on a rock, touching his knees; his appearance is gentle" 坐石撫膝, 其容穆然." These inscribers described Liu's hand position as well as his

⁶⁶ Translation modified slightly from *ibid.*, 310.

⁶⁷ See *ibid.*, 310n56.

sitting position on the rocks in Zeng Jing's portrait. Zeng's depiction of Liu's knee-holding pose together with corresponding literary descriptions indicates this position's symbolic significance.

Liu Jingting's knee-holding posture demonstrates that he wanted to be portrayed as Zhuge Liang. 'Nanyang' 南陽 and 'baoxi' 抱膝 in the second couplet allude to Zhuge's reclusive years. Before serving for the Shu 蜀 regime under Liu Bei 劉備 (161–223), Zhuge had lived a reclusive life as a farmer in his hometown of Nanyang.⁶⁸ According to Zhuge's biography in *Sanguo zhi* 三國誌 (Records of the Three Kingdoms), he hummed a tune called "Song of Old Men" (*Liangfu yin* 梁父吟) while working on his farm.⁶⁹ The record in *Wei lue* 魏略 (Brief history of Wei) by Yu Huan 魚豢 (third century) includes the detail that Zhuge held his knees while singing: "Every morning and evening, peaceful and relaxed; [Zhuge Liang] always sang out loud, holding his knees 每晨夕從容, 常抱膝長嘯; indeed the song he sang was also known as "Song of Holding One's Knees" (*Baoxi yin* 抱膝吟).⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Zhuge Liang's thatched hut, which Liu Bei visited three times to solicit his help, was in Nanyang.

⁶⁹ See "Zhuge Liang zhuan" 諸葛亮傳 [Biography of Zhuge Liang] in Chen Shou 陳壽 (233–97), *Sanguo zhi* 三國誌 [Records of the Three Kingdoms] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 35:911–37.

⁷⁰ This record in *Wei lue* was cited in Pei Songzhi's 裴松之 (372–451) commentary to Chen Shou's *Sanguo zhi*. See Pei Songzhi, *Sanguo zhi jijie* 三國志集解 [Annotations to the Records of the Three Kingdoms] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju yinyin, 1982).

Liu Jingting's profession as a *pinghua* 評話 (plain narrative) storyteller makes his appearance in the guise of Zhuge Liang even more convincing.⁷¹ Liu must have performed the story about Zhuge Liang many times, since the stories from *Sanguo zhi* were popular in the *pinghua* genre.⁷² Regarding Liu's choice of the great military strategist as his alter ego, it is notable that Liu served as a military officer before he became a storyteller, and was close to the Ming loyalist general Zuo Liangyu 左良玉 (1599–1645).⁷³ According to a poem written by Chen Weisong 陳維崧 (1625–82), there was a painting that depicted Liu and Zuo in the military camp: "Song on the Painting of Zuo Ningnan (Zuo Liangyu) and Liu Jingting Discussing Military Affairs in the Army" 左寧南與柳敬亭軍中說劍圖歌.⁷⁴ Another fact to note is that scholars who worked for the Ministry of War (*bing bu* 兵部), such as Fan Jingwen 范景文 and Bi Maliang 畢懋良, were among those who inscribed encomia on *Portrait of Liu Jingting*. Zeng's portrayal of Liu in the guise of Zhuge Liang appears to be a

⁷¹ For Liu Jingting's life and art, see Liu Ning 劉寧, *Liu Jingting yanjiu* 柳敬亭研究 [Study on Liu Jingting] (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2013); Chen Ruheng 陳汝衡, *Shuoshu yiren Liu Jingting* 說書藝人柳敬亭 [The Storytelling Artist Liu Jingting] (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1979); Hong Shiliang 洪式良, *Liu Jingting pingzhuan* 柳敬亭評傳 [Critical Biography of Liu Jingting] (Shanghai: Shanghai gudian wenxue chubanshe, 1956).

⁷² See Vibeke Børdahl, *The Oral Tradition of Yangzhou Storytelling* (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1996), 32–34.

⁷³ This painting is now lost. See Breuer, "Like an Image in a Mirror," 293n6.

⁷⁴ The fact that some of the inscribers on *Portrait of Liu* refer to Liu as Wenruo 文若, a sobriquet of Xun Yu 荀彧 (162–212), suggests his special veneration for the military strategists of the Three Kingdoms period. See *ibid.*, 322.

reflection of Liu's and his fellow literati's ardent wish for a breakthrough in military capability that would turn back the Manchu threat.

VII. Concluding Remarks

The literati's abiding interest in eremitism played a significant role in the history of Chinese art. Images of recluses were continuously made and incorporated into paintings in various ways. As a way of coping with their political frustrations, many literati sought refuge in artistic activities, which led reclusion to become a recurrent theme in literature and the pictorial arts. The dominance of landscape in literati art, for example, was both an expression and fulfillment of the literati's longing for a reclusive life in nature. The literati's aspiration for reclusion also gave rise to a strong and distinct sense of self-awareness, which they constructed and maintained through the art of portraiture. Filling the void of an abandoned government career through the fashioning of recluse identity required a more direct way of staging visual identity than non-figural representation could provide. The informal type of portraiture was thus developed as a way to concretize the eremitic cultural identity of the specific individual.

Traditionally, there were two major categories of informal literati portraiture: imaginary portraits of historical recluses and portraits of contemporary literati. These two subject types of the genre developed in a parallel fashion, as the emulation of exemplary recluses was integral to the literati's practice of reclusion. Depictions of recluses such as the Seven Sages, Tao Qian, and Su Shi were popular, and their images served as continuing sources of inspiration for portraits of later literati. Thematic and stylistic allusions to the past enabled the literati to assert their position in a venerable recluse lineage, and they thus became among the distinctive characteristics of informal literati portraiture. Classicizing trends in informal portraiture became even more conspicuous during the late Ming, reflecting the literati's

heightened awareness of the eremitic tradition. Informal literati portraits enjoyed unprecedented popularity in this period.

Zeng Jing's portrait oeuvre can be seen as the culmination of a long tradition of informal literati portraiture. Zeng's work typically integrated the literati heritage of eremitism with a range of pictorial traditions. Following traditional modes of representing reclusive figures, Zeng portrayed his sitters as commoners or as mountain men. The commoner's robes are the primary signifier of his sitters' political withdrawal and subsequent reclusion. To convey the complex mindset of the reclusive literati, Zeng deployed a layering of visual references to historical recluses. When emphasis on the sitter's rural life was called for, Zeng sought the help of a specialist in landscape painting to provide a landscape background. Zeng utilized conventional scholar-in-landscape composition types, such as painting of leisure activity, frequently borrowing visual idioms from Buddhist and Daoist iconography. He also developed a unique wash-layering technique that assimilated characteristics belonging to local portrait traditions. These stylistic choices show how the late Ming literati's interest in communion with nature, religious syncretism, and individuality gave nuance to their reclusive identities. The thematic sophistication and stylistic maturity of Zeng's portraits suggest that informal literati portraiture evolved into an independent sub-genre of portraiture.

Zeng Jing occupies a unique niche in the history of Chinese portraiture in that he specialized almost exclusively in informal portraits of contemporary literati figures. The representation of reclusive figures required a deep awareness on the artist's part of the literati eremitic tradition, and it was largely for this reason that informal portraits were painted mainly by literati artists, who did not make portraiture their specialty. Zeng's

specialization in informal portraiture and the fame he garnered as a specialist in the genre indicate that the late Ming literati desired a touch of the professional painter's technique in their informal portraits. Indeed, Zeng's portraits are characterized by an unprecedentedly high level of verisimilitude in the depiction of facial features. Zeng's activity constitutes the point at which informal literati portraiture had become firmly established as a specialized genre requiring its own professional expertise.

Zeng Jing's portraits embody the spirit of late Ming eremitism, illuminating the ways in which the Jiangnan literati visually constructed their reclusive personae. Zeng's portrayal of his sitters as recluses or scholars in retirement represents the Jiangnan literati's political insubordination, their collective identity of seclusion, and cultural self-contentment in reaction to the social unrest and political disruption of the late Ming. While maintaining stylistic and thematic consistency throughout his oeuvre, Zeng gave a strong sense of individuality to his sitters by focusing on their distinct physiognomies. The highly individualized facial features were an expression of the Jiangnan literati's desire to imprint their individuality on their seclusion. The casual, austere, natural atmosphere of Zeng's portraits reflects the sensibility of the Jiangnan literati and gives visual form to the naturalness and spontaneity to which the reclusive literati aspired. Zeng took part in the literati enterprise of eremitism in the late Ming Jiangnan by creating images of the reclusive literati that were at once realistic and idealized. Correspondingly, Zeng worked as a professional portraitist, yet he assumed a quasi-literati status, which facilitated an intimate relationship between the artist and his literati sitters. Zeng was associated with the leading literati group of late Ming Jiangnan, shared their literati values, and fashioned his own persona as a recluse with refined literati tastes.

Zeng Jing's portraits demonstrate that the Jiangnan literati's reclusive identities were highly varied, complex, and nuanced. To express each sitter's personality and distinctive taste in eremitism, Zeng carefully chose their postures, props, and setting. For example, Shi Pei's pulse-checking hand gesture alludes to his medical profession, while Pan Quintai's bamboo staff visually symbolizes Pan's spiritual bond with bamboo and his veneration of bamboo-loving predecessors such as Wen Tong. The knee-holding posture of Zhao Geng and Liu Jingting was a subtle visual sign of their wishful identification with the legendary strategist Zhuge Liang. Zeng's portraits also make visible the shared aspects of late Ming eremitism. For instance, Wang Shimin's flywhisk, Ge Yilong's semi-reclining pose, and Weng Dehong's *ruyi* scepter and black robes point to the Buddhist inclination of all three figures. These visual motifs in Zeng's portraits testify to the fact that late Ming syncretism deeply affected the literati's practice of reclusion.

Friends and peers of the sitters contributed calligraphic inscriptions to Zeng Jing's portraits, which recount the sitter's personality, the friendship that bound the sitter and inscriber, and the ideal of reclusion that they shared. Zeng's portraits partake of the literati characteristic practice of combining text and image and emerge as both pictorial and literary testimonies of the Jiangnan literati's self-fashioning. The portrait encomia helped viewers understand the sitter's complex inner self more completely than would have been possible by pictorial means alone. Especially notable in this regard is Chen Jiru, whose inscriptions frequently appear on Zeng's portraits. The famous biographer Chen collaborated with Zeng by providing a literary counterpart to Zeng's portraits. Chen was aware of the affinity between portraiture and biography, and the late Ming period witnessed a burgeoning of autobiographical writings. Such intriguing juxtapositions of literary and pictorial arts call for

further comparative studies that will deepen our understanding of the Jiangnan literati's increasing concern with self-expression.

The inscriptions on Zeng Jing's portraits indicate that his contemporaries appreciated his portraits deeply. The content of these inscriptions points to an epochal shift in the function of the portrait from a ritual object to one intended for individual expression, social posturing, and aesthetic appreciation. Through the collective acts of inscribing and appreciating portraits, the Jiangnan literati used Zeng's portraits as a vehicle to foster a sense of camaraderie among themselves. Zeng's portraits therefore hold significant historical value for reconstructing the social relationships and patterns of intellectual exchange among the reclusive literati of late Ming Jiangnan. Zeng painted portraits for specific groups of literati in Jiangnan, as his activity was concentrated in the major cultural centers, including Nanjing, Suzhou, and Hangzhou. During the most prolific years of his career, Zeng was closely associated with the network of relationships, in which Dong Qichang and Chen Jiru were the pivotal figures. Many members of Dong and Chen's coterie in Huating sat for portraits by Zeng, and a number of these portraits bear Dong and Chen's encomia. Zeng's sitters conceived the production of portraits as an expression of friendship and solidarity. The popularity of group portraits also attests to this trend, as exemplified by the group portrait of Dong, Chen, and their coterie titled *Venerable Friends*, painted by one of Zeng's disciples.

Zeng Jing's art historical significance consists above all in the fact that he initiated the flourishing of informal literati portraiture in later Chinese painting. From Zeng's time onward, informal literati portraiture became a major trend distinct from more formal types of portraiture such as ancestor and commemorative portraits. The visual characteristics of

Zeng's portraits were well received and became exemplars for late Ming and Qing informal literati portraits. Zeng's portrait style, characterized by the detailed depiction of faces and minimal rendering of clothes, is echoed in the work of many later portraitists. The cultural production of selfhood and subjectivity pursued in Zeng's portraits had an impact that was not limited to portraiture alone but also enriched the visual tradition of late imperial China as a whole. The literati's self-fashioning efforts, as embodied in Zeng's portraits, appear to have been linked with tendencies toward individualism in late Ming and early Qing painting, tendencies which in turn would contribute to the formation of visual modernity in Chinese art.

APPENDIX

LIST OF EXTANT WORKS BY ZENG JING

I. Dated

1. Zeng Jing and Hu Zongxin, *Portrait of Wu Mengyang*, 1607. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on silk, 146.5 × 81.5 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing (fig. 3.1).
2. Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Wang Shimin*, 1616. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on silk, 64 × 42.7 cm. Tianjin Art Museum (fig. 4.1).
3. Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Shi Pei (Peiran)*, 1619. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on silk, 120.4 × 46.6 cm. Shanghai Museum (fig. 5.4).
4. Zeng Jing and Xiang Shengmo, *Portrait of Dong Qichang*, 1620. Album leaf; ink and colors on silk, 53.2 × 30.5cm. Shanghai Museum (fig. 5.1).
5. Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Pan Qintai*, 1621. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on paper, 116.3 × 58.4 cm. University of Michigan Museum of Art (fig. 6.5).
6. Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Pan Qintai*. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on paper. Shanghai Museum. Source: Marshall Wu, *The Orchid Pavilion Gathering: Chinese Painting from the University of Michigan Museum of Art*, 2 vols. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2000), 1:122–23.
7. Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Zhang Suichen*, 1622. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on silk, 111.4 × 36.2 cm. Zhejiang Provincial Museum (fig. 5.6).
8. Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Yan Yonghui*, 1623. Handscroll; ink and colors on paper. Private collection, China. Source: Fang Xiaozhuang 方小壯, *Zeng Jing Yan Yonghui*

xiang changjuan kaoping 曾鯨嚴用晦像長卷考評 [Discussion on the handscroll portrait of Yan Yonghui by Zeng Jing] (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2005).

9. Zeng Jing and Shen Shigeng, *Portrait of Xu Yuanliang*, 1624. Handscroll; ink and colors on silk, 25.5 × 68.2 cm. Guangdong Provincial Museum (fig. 6.1).
10. Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Zhao Geng*, 1624. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on paper, 68.5 × 52 cm. Guangdong Provincial Museum (fig. 6.7).
11. Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Zhao Shi'e*, 1624. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on silk, 126.1 × 50.9 cm. Shanghai Museum (fig. 6.6).
12. Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Hu Erzhaoh*, 1627. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on silk, 160 × 80 cm, Deqing Museum (Fig. 3.2).
13. Zeng Jing and Chen Fan, *Portrait of Jing Linzi*, 1627. Handscroll; ink and colors on paper, 28.3 × 73.5 cm. National Museum of China, Beijing (fig. 6.2).
14. Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Li Zhaoheng*, 1627. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on silk, 91.7 × 28.1 cm. Shanghai Museum (fig. 5.8).
15. Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Lou Jian*, 1630. Ink and colors on paper, 109.3 × 55.0 cm. Fujian Provincial Museum. Source: Nie Chongzheng 聶崇正, *Zeng Jing* 曾鯨 (Taipei: Jinxiu chuban shiye gufen youxian gongsi, 1996), 22–23; Kondo Hidemi 近藤秀實, *Bochen huapai* 波臣画派 [The Bochen school of painting] (Changchun: Jilin meishu chubanshe, 2003), 70–71.
16. Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Ni Yuanlu*, 1632. Zhejiang Provincial Museum. Source: Kondo, *Bochen huapai*, 78–79.

17. Zeng Jing and Zhang Chong, *Portrait of Hou Dongzeng*, 1637. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on silk, 121.3 × 62.1 cm. Shanghai Museum (fig. 3.3).
18. Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Weng Dehong*, 1639. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on paper, 116.9 × 40.6 cm. Berkeley Art Museum (fig. 4.15).
19. Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Liu Jingting*, 1640. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on paper, 113.2 × 41 cm. Shitou Shuwu collection, Taipei (fig. 6.8).
20. Zeng Jing, *Su Wenzhong (Su Shi) Picking Herbs*, 1641. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on silk, 114.0 × 54.5 cm. Private collection, Japan (Fig. 1.14).
21. Zeng Jing and Zhang Feng, *Portrait of Gu Mengyou*, 1642. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on paper, 105 × 45 cm. Nanjing Museum (fig. 6.4).
22. Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Huang Daozhou*, 1644. Ink and colors on silk, 51.5 × 22.3 cm. Fujian Provincial Museum. Source: Kondo, *Bochen huapai*, 76.

II. Undated

1. Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Fan Jingwen*. Hebei Provincial Museum. Source: Kondo, *Bochen huapai*, 80.
2. Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Ge Yilong*, first half of the 17th century. Handscroll; ink and colors on paper, 32.5 × 77.5 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing (fig. 4.7).
3. Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Miyun Yuanwu*. Nezu Museum. Source: Suzuki Kei 鈴木敬, *Chugoku kaigashi* 中國繪畫史 [History of Chinese painting], vol. 2 (Tokyo: Yoshigawa Kobunkan, 1995), 289 (fig. 2.3).
4. Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Ni Yuanlu*. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on silk. Shanghai Museum.

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Abbreviations

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FIGURES



Figure 1.1 Anonymous, *Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove and Rong Qiqi*, Six Dynasties period. Rubbing of a brick relief from the south wall, tomb at Xishanqiao, Nanjing, Jiangsu province. Nanjing Museum.



Figure 1.2 Wang Wei, attributed, *Portrait of Fu Sheng*, 8th century. Handscroll; ink and colors on silk, height 26 cm. Osaka Municipal Museum.



Figure 1.3 Mi Fu, *Self-Portrait*, 11th century.
Rubbing from an engraving at Fubo Hill,
Guilin, Guangxi Province.



Figure 1.4 Zhao Mengfu, *Small Portrait of Su Shi*,
to head a transcription of the Red Cliff Odes,
1301. Album leaf; ink on paper, 27.2 × 11.1 cm.
National Palace Museum, Taipei.

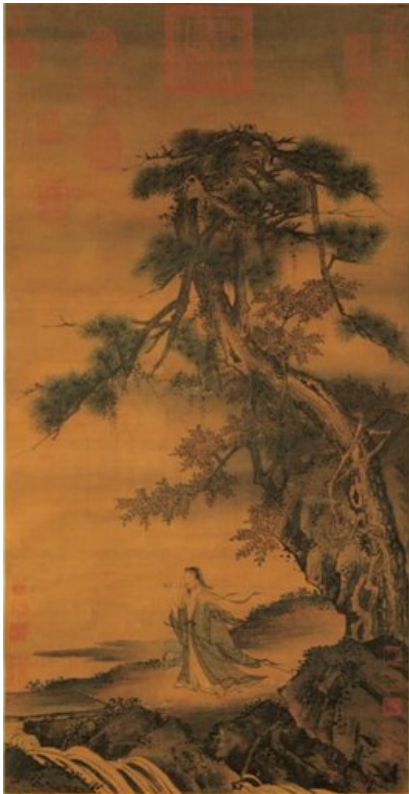


Figure 1.5 Liang Kai, *Scholars of the Eastern Fence*,
12th century. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on silk,
71.5 × 36.7 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.



Figure 1.6 Du Jin, *Tao Yuanming Enjoying Chrysanthemums*, detail, 15th century. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on paper, 148 × 36 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 1.7 Zhao Mengfu, *Small-Self Portrait*, 1299. Album leaf; ink and colors on silk, 24 × 23 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.



Figure 1.8 Zhao Mengfu, *The Mind Landscape of Xie Youyu*, ca. 1287.
Handscroll; ink and colors on silk, 27.4 × 117.0 cm. Princeton University Art Museum.



Figure 1.9 Anonymous, *Portrait of Ni Zan*, ca. 1340.
Handscroll; ink and colors on paper, 28.2 × 60.9 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.



Figure 1.10 Qiu Ying, *Portrait of Ni Zan*, 16th century.
Handscroll; ink on paper. Shanghai Museum.



Figure 1.11 Wang Yi and Ni Zan, *Small Portrait of Yang Zhuxi (Yang Qian)*, ca. 1362. Handscroll; ink on paper, 27.7 × 86.8 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 1.12 Yan Liben, attributed, *Thirteen Emperors*, detail, second half of the 7th century. Handscroll; ink and colors on silk, 51.3 × 531 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



Figure 1.13 Ma Lin, *Portrait of Fu Xi*, from *Portraits of Sages and Worthies* (a set of thirteen paintings), ca. 1230. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on silk, 249.8 × 112 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.



Figure 1.14 Zeng Jing, *Su Wenzhong (Su Shi) Picking Herbs*, 1641. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on silk, 114.0 × 54.5 cm. Private collection, Japan.



Figure 1.15 Chen Hongshou, *Four Pleasures of Nan Shenglu*, detail, 1649. Handscroll; ink and colors on silk, height 31 cm. Rietberg Museum, Zurich.



Figure 2.1 Shi Qu, *Self-Portrait of Zeng Jing*, 1797. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on paper, 46.9 × 22.8 cm. University of Michigan Museum of Art.



Figure 2.2 Ding Yunpeng, *The Three Teachings*, 17th century. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on paper, 115.6 × 55.7 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.



Figure 2.3 Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Miyun Yuanwu*. Nezu Museum. Source: Suzuki Kei, *Chugoku kaigashi* [History of Chinese painting], vol. 2 (Tokyo: Yoshigawa Kobunkan, 1995), 289.



Figure 3.1 Zeng Jing and Hu Zongxin,
Portrait of Wu Mengyang, 1607.
Hanging scroll; ink and colors on silk,
146.5 × 81.5 cm.
Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 3.2 Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Hu Erzhaoy*,
1627. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on silk,
160 × 80 cm, Deqing Museum.

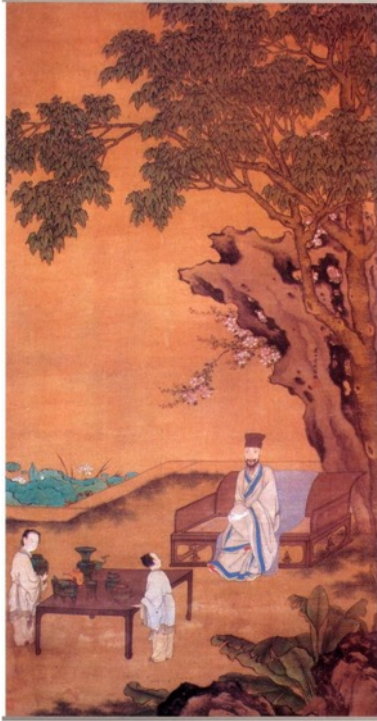


Figure 3.3 Zeng Jing and Zhang Chong, *Portrait of Hou Dongzeng*, 1637. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on silk, 121.3 × 62.1 cm. Shanghai Museum.



Figure 3.4 Xie Huan, *Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden*, detail, ca. 1437. Handscroll; ink and colors on silk, 37 × 401 cm. Zhejiang Provincial Museum.



Figure 3.5 Anonymous, *Scholars of the Liuli Hall*, 13th century. Handscroll; ink and colors on silk, 31.4 × 128.4cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 3.6 Du Jin, *Enjoying Antiquities*, 16th century. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on silk, 187 × 126.1 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.



Figure 3.7 Chen Hongshou, *Portrait of He Tianzhang*, detail, ca. 1649. Handscroll; ink and colors on silk, 35 × 163 cm. Suzhou Museum.



Figure 4.1 Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Wang Shimin*, 1616. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on silk, 64 × 42.7 cm. Tianjin Art Museum.



Figure 4.2 Anonymous, *Portrait of Wang Xijue*, 1614. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on silk, 199.3 × 60.5 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 4.3 Ding Yunpeng, *Five Forms of Guanyin*, ca. 1579. Handscroll; ink and colors on paper, 28 × 134 cm. Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art.



Figure 4.4 You Qiu, *Portrait of Tanyangzi*, 1580.
Hanging scroll; ink and colors on silk, 118.5 × 57.3 cm.
Shanghai Museum.



Figure 4.5 Qiu Ying, *Garden for Self-Enjoyment*,
detail, 16th century. Handscroll; ink and colors on
silk, 28.0 × 519.8 cm. Cleveland Museum of Art.



Figure 4.6 Yu Zhiding, *Portrait of Wang Yuanqi on a Rush Mat*, 1707.
Hanging scroll; ink on paper, 90.8 × 34 cm. Nanjing Museum.



Figure 4.7 Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Ge Yilong*, first half of the 17th century. Handscroll; ink and colors on paper, 32.5 × 77.5 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 4.8 Image of reclining posture, from *Sancai tuhui*. Source: Wang Qi, ed., *Sancai tuhui* (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1970), 4:1650.



Figure 4.9 Anonymous, *Portrait of Wang Rong*, detail from *Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove and Rong Qiqi* (fig. 1.1).



Figure 4.10 Image of Vimalakīrti, Tang dynasty. Mural in Cave 103, Dunhuang, Gansu province.



Figure 4.11 Anonymous, *Portrait of Vimalakīrti*, 13th century. Hanging scroll; ink on silk, 84.0 × 53.6 cm. Kyoto National Museum.



Figure 4.12 Tang Yin, *Painting of Yi'an*, ca. 1519. Handscroll; ink and colors on paper, 30.5 × 112.7 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 4.13 Li Gonglin, attributed, *Vimalakīrti Preaching Buddhist Doctrine*, detail, 11th century. Handscroll; ink on paper, 34.6 × 207.5 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 4.14 Zhang Qi and Xiang Shengmo, *Venerable Friends*, 1652. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on silk, 38.1 × 25.5 cm. Shanghai Museum.



Figure 4.15 Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Weng Dehong*, 1639.
Hanging scroll; ink and colors on paper, 116.9 × 40.6 cm.
Berkeley Art Museum.



Figure 4.16 Chen Hongshou, *Seeking the Dao*, detail,
17th century. Handscroll; ink and colors on silk,
34.3 × 379 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 5.1 Zeng Jing and Xiang Shengmo, *Portrait of Dong Qichang*, 1620. Album leaf; ink and colors on silk, 53.2 × 30.5cm. Shanghai Museum.



Figure 5.2 Xiang Shengmo and Xie Bin, *An Untrammelled Immortal and Sougning Pines*, 1652. Hanging scroll; ink on silk, 39.5 × 40 cm. Jilin Provincial Museum.



Figure 5.3 Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Chen Jiru*, first half of 17th century.
Source: Eli Lancman, *Chinese Portraiture* (Rutland: Charles E. Tuttle, 1966), 142–45.



Figure 5.4 Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Shi Pei (Peiran)*, 1619. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on silk, 120.4 × 46.6 cm. Shanghai Museum.



Figure 5.5 Image of checking pulse, from *Sancai tuhui*. Source: Wang Qi, ed., *Sancai tuhui* (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1970), 4:1482–83.



Figure 5.7 Anonymous, *Portrait of Bi Shichang*, from *The Five Old Men of Suiyang* (a set of five paintings), 11th century. Album leaf; ink and colors on silk, 40 × 32.1 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 5.6 Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Zhang Suichen*, 1622. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on silk, 111.4 × 36.2 cm. Zhejiang Provincial Museum.



Figure 5.9 Chen Guan, *Portrait of Li Rihua*, detail, 17th century. Handscroll; ink and colors on paper, 30.5 × 168 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.

Figure 5.8 Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Li Zhaoheng*, 1627. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on silk, 91.7 × 28.1 cm. Shanghai Museum.



Figure 5.10 Huang Zunwu, *A Noble Gathering at Green Woods*, detail, 17th century. Handscroll; ink and colors on paper, 26 × 83.8 cm. Minneapolis Institute of Arts.



Figure 6.1 Zeng Jing and Shen Shigeng, *Portrait of Xu Yuanliang*, 1624.
Handscroll; ink and colors on silk, 25.5 × 68.2 cm. Guangdong Provincial Museum.



Figure 6.2 Zeng Jing and Chen Fan, *Portrait of Jing Linzi*, 1627.
Handscroll; ink and colors on paper, 28.3 × 73.5 cm.
National Museum of China, Beijing.



Figure 6.3 Lu Zhi, *Traces of Tao Qian*, 1523. Album leaf; ink and colors on paper, 32.4 × 23.8 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.



Figure 6.4 Zeng Jing and Zhang Feng, *Portrait of Gu Mengyou*, 1642. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on paper, 105 × 45 cm. Nanjing Museum.

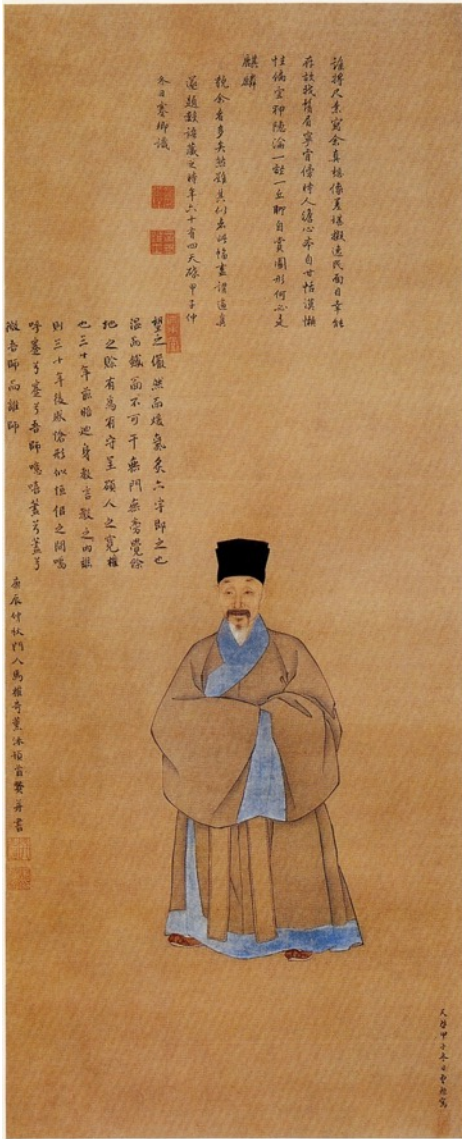


Figure 6.6 Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Zhao Shi'e*, 1624. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on silk, 126.1 × 50.9 cm. Shanghai Musuem.



Figure 6.7 Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Zhao Geng*, 1624. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on paper, 68.5 × 52 cm. Guangdong Provincial Museum.

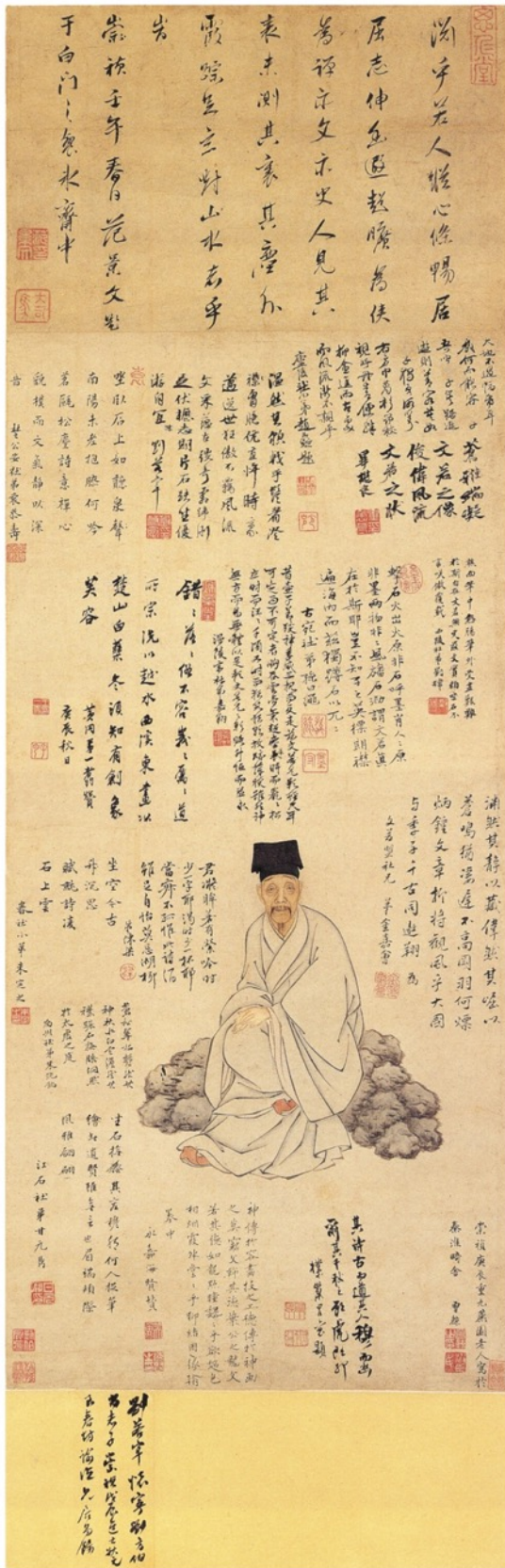


Figure 6.8 Zeng Jing, *Portrait of Liu Jingting*, 1640. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on paper, 113.2 × 41 cm. Shitou Shuwu collection, Taipei.



Figure 6.9 Zhang Feng, *Portrait of Zhuge Liang*, 1654. Hanging scroll; ink on paper, 126.4 × 59 cm, National Palace Museum, Taipei.