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Porous Privacy: The Literati Studio and Spatiality in Song China

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by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Porous Privacy: The Literati Studio and Spatiality in Song China

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Doctor of Philosophy in Asian Languages and Cultures

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Professor Jack W. Chen, Chair

My dissertation examines the distinctive significance of the studio during the Song dynasty (960–1279) through its various literary and visual representations. Simply speaking, the studio was an enclosed site specifically used for reading, writing, and art creation. Pre-Song texts have records of a few early examples of studio sites in China. However, it was during the Song dynasty that the studio became a prominent cultural space for literati. The studio became both an object of scholarly representation and the medium through which the literatus' everyday practices were effected. In this way, the studio served as a medium for the reproduction of literati culture itself. This dissertation concentrates on the spatiality of this medium. I argue that in Song literary representations, the studio was a porous private space: on the one hand, it provided a confined space for personal practices and self-cultivation; on the other hand, the studio was open to limited public interactions and was an emblematic display of literati self-identity.

The main body of this dissertation is divided into five chapters. The first chapter traces the evolution of the literary configuration of the studio till the Song dynasty, to demonstrate the pivotal role that Song literature played in the construction of the studio space. Chapter two

tackles the issue of how the represented studio worked as a private space for Song literati. However, the studio was a *mostly* private space in the sense that it also allowed for limited interactions and was used for display. Hence, in the third chapter, I argue that the studio can also work as a particular kind of social space. Chapter four analyzes the porous privacy of the studio from another dimension, the interrelationship among literati, scholarly objects, and the studio. The last chapter examines the studio in its relation to the exterior space—the interplay between the cultural studio and its natural surroundings in literary and pictorial representations.

The dissertation of Yunshuang Zhang is approved.

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2017

To my family

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Introduction

I Topic and Argument

My dissertation examines the distinctive significance of the studio during the Song dynasty (960–1279) through its various literary and visual representations. Simply speaking, the studio was an enclosed site specifically used for reading, writing, and art creation. In Chinese, this space is often referred to as *shuzhai* 書齋 or simply *zhai* 齋.¹ Besides this frequently used character *zhai*, however, various architectural terms are also applied to describe the studio, including general spatial terms such as *shi* (room 室), *wu* (cottage 屋), and *fang* (house 房), or phrases that indicate specific building types such as *tang* (hall 堂), *an* (hut 庵), *xuan* (chamber 軒), *ting* (pavilion 亭), and *lou* (tower 樓). This diversity of terms reflects the fact that a studio is not restricted by specific architectural forms. Rather, in the Song era, any enclosed space with books and common scholarly objects could be considered a studio. As the modern scholar Yang Zhishui 揚之水 points out, Song literati usually preferred to identify a single room in the residence as the studio.² In some cases, if the literatus could not afford a separate room as the studio, he might even separate out a particular space within the residence by using a writing desk or a screen as a way to construct a studio. In short, the studio was a space marked off by literati to read and write in privacy.

Pre-Song texts have records of a few early examples of studio sites in China. However, it was during the Song dynasty that the studio became a prominent cultural space for literati. The studio became both an object of scholarly representation and the medium through which the literatus'

¹ In English, a “studio” is akin to a workroom for the creation of art, whereas a “study” is a room set apart for reading and writing. The Chinese term *shuzhai* is closer to the word “study.” However, Song literati, besides reading and writing, often practiced painting and calligraphy in the *shuzhai*. Thus, in this dissertation I use the word “studio” to refer to the full function of the *shuzhai*. As for the double meaning of the character *zhai*, I will explain this in detail in Chapter 1.

² Yang Zhishui, “Shufang” 書房, in *Gushiwen mingwu xinzheng* 古詩文名物新證 (Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe, 2004), p. 390.

everyday practices were effected. In this way, the studio served as a medium for the reproduction of literati culture itself. This dissertation examines the spatiality of this medium. I argue that in Song literary representations, the studio was a porous private space: on the one hand, it provided a confined space for personal practices and self-cultivation; on the other hand, the studio was open to limited public interactions and was an emblematic display of literati self-identity.

For the purpose of definitional clarity, let me at the outset differentiate the studio from other related sites, in which the literati played crucial roles similar to those they enacted in their studios. First, I distinguish the studio from the personal library, such as the book-collecting room (*cangshu shi* 藏書室) or book-collecting tower (*cangshu lou* 藏書樓). The studio is primarily intended for everyday usage for reading and studying, whereas the book-collecting room or tower is specifically for the storage of precious books. In the studio, books are to be used; they are not simply for collection. In this project, I focus on the studio. Yet, since many studios in the Song served the functions of both collecting and reading concurrently, I have also included this type of multifunctional site in my discussion.

Moreover, the libraries and institutes (*guange* 館閣) and the academy (*shuyuan* 書院) are also studio-related sites in the sense that they share the function of providing a location for reading and studying; however, compared to the studio, they do so in different ways. The term *guange* was used in the Song to refer to the Three Libraries (San guan 三館) and the Imperial Archives (Mi ge 秘閣).³ Although its specific system was frequently adjusted and it was regarded as an administrative institution provided positions for literati with political potentials, *guange* carries a basic function as the imperial library in the Song era.⁴

³ The Three Libraries include the Institute for the Glorification of Literature (Zhaowen guan 昭文館), the History Institute (Shi guan 史館), and the Academy of Scholarly Worthies (Jixian yuan 集賢院).

⁴ Representative works regarding the libraries and institutes as well as the accompanying literati activities are Chen Yuanfeng's 陈元锋 *Beisong guange hanyuan yu shitan yanjiu* 北宋館閣翰苑與詩壇研究 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2005), Li Geng's 李更 *Songdai guange jiaokan yanjiu* 宋代館閣校勘研究 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2006), and Cheng Mingming's 成明明 *Beisong guange yu wenxue yanjiu* 北宋館閣與文學研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2007).

The term *shuyuan* originated in the eighth century, and at that time the word conveyed a broad range of meanings, including school, studio, and meditation hall.⁵ In the Northern Song, the term *shuyuan* was still used variously to refer to a state-controlled academy, an informal academy, or a private studio. But in the course of the Southern Song, *shuyuan* came to refer more commonly to formal academy. At that time, as John W. Chaffee notes, “although informal academies remained common, many others took a form which was to become characteristic of Ming academies, with income-producing endowments, salaried staffs, and campuses with ceremonial temples, lecture halls, dormitories, and kitchen.”⁶ Thus, *guange* and *shuyuan* are defined as official and family-like sites, respectively, that provided public spaces for reading and learning for the literati through a series of rules and regulations, which are in direct contrast with the private space of the studio scrutinized in this dissertation.

II Historical Context

In outlining the historical background against which the studio became prominent in the Song era, I concentrate on two topics: (1) the transformation of the social class known as *shi* 士, and (2) the rise of print culture.

(1) The Transformation of the *Shi*⁷

The *shi* has been the social class representing the intellectual elite throughout Chinese history. As early as the pre-Qin era, Confucius, by declaring that “the *shi* aims to the Way” 士志於道, defined the *shi* as the defender of social value system. After Confucius, although the *shi* could be

⁵ On studies of the academy in the Song, see Thomas H.C. Lee, *Government Education and Examinations in Sung China* (New York: St. Martin's; Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1985); Wu Wan-chü 吳萬居, *Songdai shuyuan yu Songdai xueshu zhi guanxi* 宋代書院與宋代學術之關係 (Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1991); John W. Chaffee, *The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China: A Social History of Examinations* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995); and Linda Walton, *Academies and Society in Southern Sung China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999).

⁶ John W. Chaffee, *The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China: A Social History of Examinations*, p. 89.

⁷ Since the specific meaning of *shi* changes over time, so here, in outlining the transformation of this concept, I use the *shi* without translation.

generally regarded as educated men who had great concerns over public affairs, the specific identity of the *shi* changed over time. In his book *Shi yu Zhongguo wenhua* 士與中國文化 (*Shi* and Chinese civilization), Yu Ying-shih 余英時 sketches the complicated evolution of the *shi* over more than two thousand years, and summarizes the characteristics of the *shi* in different historical stages.⁸ The Tang-Song transition brought one of the dramatic transformations in the identity of the *shi*. Following the work of Peter K. Bol, between 600 and 1200, we can say that, on the one hand, the *shi* shared three most significant qualities—culture, birth, and office holding; on the other hand, the importance of birth declined while at the same time culture and education became normative criteria for the *shi*. Accordingly, the identity of the *shi* changed from aristocrats in the Tang to scholar-officials (*shidafu* 士大夫) or literati (*shiren* 士人) in the Song. According to Bol, the main body of the *shi* in the Northern Song can be most precisely identified as “scholar-officials,” while during the Southern Song the *shi* was designated as “literati.” Scholar-officials and literati were different in the sense that the former held official positions, whereas the latter were defined by cultural identities. This change derived primarily from the wide gap between the large number of civil service examination degree holders and the limited number of government positions, which led to the elite localism in the Southern Song.⁹ While I agree with this distinction, in general, I use the common term “literati” in this dissertation to refer broadly to intellectual elites in the Song, who were identified primarily with education and culture.

⁸ See Yu Ying-shih, *Shi yu Zhongguo wenhua* 士與中國文化 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2003).

⁹ See Peter K. Bol, “*This Culture of Ours*”: *Intellectual Transitions in T’ang and Sung China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), especially the second chapter, “The Transformation of the *Shih*.” On the concept of the *shi* in the pre-Song context, see David G. Johnson, *The Medieval Chinese Oligarchy* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1977); and Yan Buke 閻步克, *Shidafu zhengzhi yansheng shigao* 士大夫政治演生史稿 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1996). On the formation of local literati community, see the discussions in Robert P. Hymes, *Statesmen and Gentlemen: The Elite of Fu-chou, Chiang-hsi, in Northern and Southern Sung* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986); James T. C. Liu, *China Turning Inward* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988); and Peter K. Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008).

As the Song established the civil bureaucracy and emphasized cultural construction, the literati played a crucial role in both politics and culture. Literati took on multiple identities as officials, scholars, poets, philosophers, historians, painters, calligraphers, and connoisseurs. In the court, literati were the core force of the civil bureaucracy, with the ambition of “taking all under the heaven as their own duties” (*yi tianxia wei jiren* 以天下為己任); while beyond the court, they paid great attention to self-identification by cultivating their own values and tastes, aiming for scholarly elegance (*ya* 雅).¹⁰ The literati shaped the images of themselves in daily life as erudite, versatile, refined, and morally superior gentlemen. According to this image, the literati not only differentiated themselves from other social classes in the Song, but also effectively distinguished themselves from the *shi*, or aristocrats, in the Tang. Accordingly, the studio, exclusively for reading, writing, and self-cultivation, became the perfect space in which Song literati were able to fully articulate their refinement and erudition, and thus to label themselves as the distinctive class of elegance.

(2) The Rise of Print Culture

Aside from the transformation of the *shi* from the Tang to Song and the ensuing shift of the *shi*'s tastes as well as aesthetics, the rise of print culture also had a direct influence on the flourishing of the studio. As Ronald Egan indicates, “The transition from manuscript to print culture, the early stages of which seem to have occurred roughly between 1000 and 1200 in China, likely affected many aspects of the way people thought about and used books.”¹¹ A typical example in this sense is provided by Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1101). In 1076, Su Shi recalled his meeting with some older scholars. According to these elders, “when they were young, they desired to obtain a copy of *Shi ji* or *Han shu* but were not able to get it. If they were lucky

¹⁰ On the tension between *ya* and vulgarity (*su* 俗), see Ronald Egan, “Conclusion,” in *The Problem of Beauty: Aesthetic Thought and Pursuits in Northern Song Dynasty China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), especially pp. 361–62.

¹¹ Ronald Egan, “To Count Grains of Sand on the Ocean Floor: Changing Perceptions of Books and Learning in Song Dynasty China,” in Lucille Chia and Hilde De Weerd, eds., *Knowledge and Text Production in an Age of Print* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), p. 44.

enough to get one, they all copied it out by hand. They read and recited it day and night, for fear that their efforts were not enough” 少時，欲求《史記》、《漢書》而不可得；幸而得之，皆手自書，日夜誦讀，惟恐不及。 However, by Su Shi’s time, “merchants engraved and printed books one after another. For books of the hundred schools of thought, they produced ten thousand pages per day” 市人轉相摹刻，諸子百家之書，日傳萬紙。¹² Although printing did not replace manuscripts, which remained the dominant form, printing made it possible for literati to have greater access to books.¹³ This led both to the notion of collecting and thus possessing one’s own copies of books, and to that of enjoying these books in privacy. A specific site for reading and studying thus became needed. It was in this context that the studio attracted the attention of the literati and was cherished as a place for scholarly cultivation and intellectual enjoyment in the daily life of literati.

III Literature Review and Areas of Contribution

I situate my dissertation in the scholarly contexts of literary history, intellectual history, and material culture. Specifically, I build on the scholarship done in literary and art historical studies of literati spaces and the everyday practices of the literati during the middle period China (800–1400). In this part of the introduction, I examine the existing scholarship, and at the same time discuss the ways in which my project diverges from these studies.

(1) Literati Sites

Following the philosopher Edward S. Casey’s definition, a site “represents the radical simplification of a place: its regularization by a formal pattern that sheers off the irregularities

¹² Su Shi, “Li Shi Shanfang cangshu ji” 李氏山房藏書記, in Kong Fanli 孔凡禮, ed. and annot., *Su Shi wenji* 蘇軾文集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), 11.359. I consult the translation by Ronald Egan, “To Count Grains of Sand on the Ocean Floor,” p. 38.

¹³ Although I emphasize the significance of print culture here, printed books had not replaced manuscripts in the Song. The manuscripts were still widely used. On the persistence of manuscript culture and the ascendance of the imprint, see Joseph P. McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book: Books and Literati Culture in Late Imperial China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006).

that landscape always brings with it.”¹⁴ In contrast with a site, which can be “*anywhere*,” a place “can be only *just here* and its features are only *just these*.”¹⁵ As I will use the terms, a site is the architectural location removed from its context, whereas a place is the site within its historical context. In contrast to site and place, both of which are concrete terms, a space is abstract and exists only in the form of literary or visual representations. In this sense, my project on the spatiality of the studio involves examining how a *site* is represented as the *space* embodying Song literati culture.

An abundance of studies have been published regarding particular sites in ancient China, ranging from cities, palaces, and offices to temples and gardens.¹⁶ Among these, the garden in particular has attracted much scholarly interest.¹⁷ However, most of these studies have generalized the physical forms or basic aesthetic and architectural principles of the garden directly from literary materials, without taking into account the complicated interrelationship between physical architecture and literary writing. Because literature is not an unambiguous

¹⁴ Edward S. Casey, *Representing Place: Landscape Painting & Maps* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), p. 214.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

¹⁶ See, e.g., Zhou Baozhu 周寶珠, *Songdai Dongjing yanjiu* 宋代東京研究 (Kaifeng: Henan daxue chubanshe, 1992); Li Chuntang 李春棠, *Fangqiang daota yihou: Songdai chengshi shenghuo changjuan* 坊牆倒塌以後—宋代城市生活長卷 (Changsha: Hunan chubanshe, 1993); Yang Hongnian 楊鴻年, *Sui Tang liangjing fangli pu* 隋唐兩京坊里譜 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1999); Sun Xu 孫旭, “Songdai Hangzhou siyuan yanjiu” 宋代杭州寺院研究 (Shanghai shifan daxue, PhD diss., 2010). On a comprehensive examination of sites in early and medieval Chinese literature, see Jack W. Chen, “Sites I,” and Wendy Swartz, “Sites II,” in Wiebke Denecke, Wai-Yee Li, and Xiaofei Tian, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Classical Chinese Literature (1000 BCE–900 CE)* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017).

¹⁷ Representative monographs on the Chinese garden in the middle period China include Wang Yi’s 王毅 *Zhongguo yuanlin wenhua shi* 中國園林文化史 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2004); Hou Nai-huei’s 侯迺慧 *Shiqing yu youjing* 詩情與幽境 (Taipei: Dongda tushu gongsi, 1991), and *Songdai yuanlin jiqi shenghuo wenhua* 宋代園林及其生活文化 (Taipei: Sanmin shuju, 2010); Li Hao’s 李浩 *Tangdai yuanlin bieye kaolun* 唐代園林別業考論 (Xi’an: Xibei daxue chubanshe, 1996), and *Tangdai yuanlin bieye kaolu* 唐代園林別業考錄 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2005), to name a few.

reflection of social reality, I understand the represented literati sites as situated in the process of cultural construction.¹⁸

Compared to the considerable number of studies on the garden, only a few scholarly essays and a few popular audience books have taken the Chinese studio as the subject of attention.¹⁹ As for scholarly articles on the studio, Yang Zhishui's "Shufang" 書房 ("The studio") is groundbreaking. Albeit very short, this article, building on archaeological methodology, makes concise comments on the evolution of the studio in China, and points out the cultural meanings of the studio as well as literati tastes in scholarly objects. In addition to Yang Zhishui's essay, I have published two articles in Chinese.²⁰ In the first essay, I propose and discuss "the charm of the studio" (*shuzhai yiqu* 書齋意趣) that first emerged in the Song. The concept of *shuzhai yiqu* refers to Song literati's deep love of the intellectual space of the studio, their addiction to reading and other elegant activities in the studio, and the aesthetics of studio imagery. I conclude that with the *shuzhai yiqu*, Song poetry on the studio constructed a distinctive space for literati daily life, different from that represented in Tang poetry. The second of my essays examines the process by which the studio became an emblem of literati life by discussing the enjoyment of

¹⁸ In this sense, Xiaoshan Yang's book *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere: Gardens and Objects in Tang-Song Poetry* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003) is a significant attempt to reconstruct the notion of literati spatiality through literary works.

¹⁹ Representative popular audience books include Zhu Yafu 朱亞夫 and Wang Minghong's 王明洪 *Shuzhai wenhua* 書齋文化 (Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe, 2008), and Zichuan's 子川 *Siwen zaizi* 斯文在茲 (Beijing: Rongbao zhai chubanshe, 2012). They introduce the studio from various aspects, including its origin, naming, book collection, characteristics, architecture, bookish demeanor (*shujuan qi* 書卷氣), objects, and studio decor. Although their scopes are comprehensive, these books cover only basic information using some well-known materials as evidence, without deeper analysis or specific argument. As for other similar books, see Zhu Yafu, *Mingren shuzhai* 名人書齋 (Shanghai: Shanghai jiaoyu chubanshe, 1995); Cheng Mianzhong 程勉中, *Zhongguo shuyuan shuzhai* 中國書院書齋 (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 2002); Gan Heng 甘桁, *Zhaiming jiguan* 齋名集觀 (Shanghai: Hanyu da cidian chubanshe, 2005); Zhu Yafu, *Mingjia zhaihao qutan xu* 名家齋號趣談續 (Nanchang: Jiangxi meishu chubanshe, 2005); and Wang Zhijian 王志堅 and Chen Fengtong 陳鳳桐, *Zhongguo shuzhai de gushi* 中國書齋的故事 (Ji'nan: Shandong huabao chubanshe, 2006). These books mainly report on stories of famous studios with basic introductions. Moreover, these books are limited mainly to coverage of studios of the past one hundred years.

²⁰ See "Lun Songren de 'shuzhai yiqu' he Songshi de shuzhai yixiang" 論宋人的 "書齋意趣" 和宋詩的書齋意象, *Wenxue yichan* 5 (2011): 65–73, and "Shilun Songdai shuzhai kongjian de jingshenxing jiangou" 試論宋代書齋空間的精神性建構, in *Xingxiang shixue yanjiu* 形象史學研究, ed. Institute of History in Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) (Beijing: renmin chubanshe, 2012), pp. 98–110.

shuzhai yiqu in the physical studio, the studio in the mind, and the studio name. My dissertation builds on these previous studies.

(2) The Practice of Reading

Distinctive practices in certain space enable subjectivity to get involved into this space. In this dissertation, I examine the literati's everyday practices in the studio, in order to better analyze the spatiality of the studio and the subjectivity within this space.

In view of Song literati's penchant for reading in the studio, I build on studies of the practice of reading in the middle period China. Regarding the act of reading, Jack W. Chen's essay "On the Act and Representation of Reading in Medieval China" analyzes the act of vocalized reading (which was the dominant mode of reading during this period), the act of silent reading, and the visual nature of reading in medieval China. Based on work done in Western medieval studies, Chen points out that the act of *lectio* (reading as parsing) and the act of *meditatio* (meditation on the text) represented different aspects of the process of medieval reading.²¹

Regarding the relationship between print culture and reading (as well as writing), Wang Yugen's book *Ten Thousand Scrolls* examines how the emergence of printing and the ensuing proliferation of books shaped the poetic theory and practice of Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 (1045–1105) and the Jiangxi School of Poetry.²² Wang argues that the core of Huang and the Jiangxi School's search for poetic methods was their desire to find a new way of reading and writing that could effectively address the literary landscape of the eleventh century, which had been changed by the increased availability of texts for scholarly consumption. In response to the tendency of the time, concerned merely with the quantity of book possessing and reading, Huang shifted his reading method from emphasizing breadth of reading (*bo* 博) to focusing on depth and

²¹ Jack W. Chen, "On the Act and Representation of Reading in Medieval China," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 129.1 (2009): 57–71.

²² Wang Yugen, *Ten Thousand Scrolls: Reading and Writing in the Poetics of Huang Tingjian and the Late Northern Song* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011).

thoroughness (*jing* 精).²³ Especially in his fourth chapter, “The Reading of Books,” Wang provides a brief overview of reading as represented in early and medieval literature.

In addition, a number of studies on the “poetry on reading” are of particular interest to my work. During the Song dynasty, the subgenre of “poetry on reading” became popular, although here we must distinguish between poetry on *reading* books (*dushu shi* 讀書詩) and poetry on *discussing* books (*lunshu shi* 論書詩). The former provides a poetic representation of reading as an activity in daily life, whereas the latter focuses on the discussion of literary theory or makes remarks on books that the poet has read. Most studies of “poetry on reading” pay attention only to the latter, especially to poetry on discussing poems (*lunshi shi* 論詩詩).²⁴ They make generalizations regarding literary thought or the reception of famous poets from the poetry on reading, and thus treat these poems merely as key sources of literary criticism. Only Mo Lifeng’s 莫礪鋒 article on the literary significance of Lu You’s poems on reading confirms the value of “poetry on reading” as a repository of detailed representations of literati daily activities.²⁵

All of the scholarship described concentrates on the practice of reading; however, few sources pay attention to the interrelation between reading and the physical or even imaginary space in which this activity usually takes place. In my project, I situate reading, as well as other typical literati practices such as writing, art creation, as well as book and art collection, in the studio.

²³ Another important study that addresses the method of reading is Daniel K. Gardner’s *Learning to Be a Sage: Selections from the Conversations of Master Chu, Arranged Topically* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

²⁴ On studies of the poetry on discussing poems, see, e.g., Chou I-Chung 周益忠, “Songdai lunshi shi yanjiu” 宋代論詩詩研究 (National Taiwan Normal University, PhD diss., 1988); Chen Fu-Keng 陳撫耕, “Songshi dui jingdian de chanshi yu chengxian” 宋詩對經典的闡釋與呈現 (Tunghai University, MA thesis, 2004); Chang Kao-ping 張高評, “Beisong dushi shi yu songdai shixue” 北宋讀詩詩與宋代詩學, *Hanxue yanjiu* 2 (2006): 191–223; Chen Yi-Shan 陳逸珊, “Beisong dushu shi yanjiu” 北宋讀書詩研究 (National Cheng Kung University, MA thesis, 2006); Chang Kao-ping, “Cong zishu weishi dao bixing jituo” 從資書為詩到比興寄託, *Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo xuebao* 47 (2007): 283–311; Hsieh Min-Kuei 謝旻桂, “Lu You dushu shi yanjiu” 陸遊讀書詩研究 (Tamkang University, MA thesis, 2010); Tian Duorui 田多瑞, “Lu You lunshi shi yanjiu” 陸遊論詩詩研究 (Lanzhou daxue, MA thesis, 2012).

²⁵ Mo Lifeng, “Lu You dushu shi de wenxue yiwei” 陸遊讀書詩的文學意味, *Zhejiang shehui kexue* 2 (Mar. 2003): 155–61.

Moreover, I argue that through these practices, the literati shaped the studio as a self-contained space for self-cultivation (*xiushen* 修身) and mental enjoyment in everyday life. Here, I use the term *xiushen* in its meaning as it is used in the Confucian classic *Great Learning* (*Da xue* 大學), which considers self-cultivation the process of improving oneself to achieve moral perfection and the basis for “regulating the family” (*qijia* 齊家) and “administering the state” (*zhiguo* 治國).²⁶ As for “mental enjoyment,” I delimit it as the pleasure that the literati achieved from leisure activities in either physical or imaginary space.²⁷

(3) The Notion of Privacy

Indeed, it is the privacy of the studio that guarantees the realization of self-cultivation and mental enjoyment for literati. In view of this, the notion of privacy is pivotal for my dissertation.

Many studies have explicated the notion of privacy as a historical concept in the West. Though its meaning is far from uniform, privacy is commonly used as the opposite of the notion of publicness. As the social and political theorist Jeff Weintraub notes, “The distinction between ‘public’ and ‘private’ has been a central and characteristic preoccupation of Western thought since classical antiquity, and has long served as a point of entry into many of the key issues of social and political analysis, of moral and political debate, and of the ordering of everyday life.”²⁸ This opposition is often used to demarcate a wide range of other important distinctions. A similar dichotomy exists in China as well. But as Christina Whitman reminds us, in premodern

²⁶ On a brief explanation of the notion of *xiushen* used in the *Great Learning*, see Daniel K. Gardner, *Confucianism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 16–29, 77–84.

²⁷ By using the term “leisure,” I borrow the definition by Robert A. Stebbins that leisure is “uncoerced activity undertaken during free time where such activity is something people want to do and, at a personally satisfying level using their abilities and resources, they succeed in doing.” Robert A. Stebbins, “Choice and Experiential Definitions of Leisure,” *Leisure Sciences* 27 (2005): 350.

²⁸ Jeff Weintraub, “The Theory and Politics of the Public/Private Distinction,” in Jeff Weintraub and Krishan Kumar, eds., *Public and Private in Thought and Practice: Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 1.

Chinese texts there is no precise analogy to the Western concept of “privacy.”²⁹ Yet, in most cases, modern scholars tend to use *si* 私 as the word corresponding to “privacy” in discussions of this dichotomous view. In the first work treating Chinese concepts of privacy, Bonnie S. McDougall writes, “As in English, the Chinese word *si* commonly occurs as half of a pair with *gong* [public]; in this context, it refers to a private sphere of activity and/or private interests.”³⁰ Indeed, as early as in the *Han Feizi* 韓非子, the etymology of *si* was explained in opposition to *gong*, as follows: “In ancient times when Cang Jie invented the writing system, the self-involved image was assigned as *si*; and what was opposed to *si* was regarded as *gong*. So the contradiction between *gong* and *si* has already been perceived by Cang Jie” 古者蒼頡之作書也，自環者謂之私，背私謂之公。公私之相背也，乃蒼頡固以知之矣。³¹

Although a handful of modern studies prove this etymological assumption of *si* wrong and raise various new interpretations, Han Fei’s 韓非 (ca. 280–ca. 233 BCE) understanding was broadly accepted in premodern China.³² For instance, in the *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字, Xu Shen 許慎 (ca. 58–ca. 147) directly adopts Han Fei’s explanation, saying, “*Si* means crafty and evil. Han Fei says, ‘When Cang Jie invented characters, the self-involved image was assigned as *si*’”

²⁹ See Christina Whitman, “Privacy in Confucian and Taoist Thought,” in Donald J. Munro, ed., *Individualism and Holism: Studies in Confucian and Taoist Values* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Center for Chinese Studies, 1985), pp. 85–100.

³⁰ Bonnie S. McDougall and Anders Hansson, eds., *Chinese Concepts of Privacy* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2002), p. 8.

³¹ Wang Xianshen 王先慎, *Han Feizi jijie* 韓非子集解, ed. Zhong Zhe 鍾哲 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1998), 19.450. Cang Jie was the legendary inventor of the Chinese writing system during the Yellow Emperor’s (Huangdi 黃帝) era. The self-involved image of *si* is like this—𠂇.

³² On the modern scholarship that disagrees with Han Fei’s interpretation of the *si*, see, e.g., Xu Zhongshu 徐中舒, *Xu Zhongshu lishi lunwen xuanji* 徐中舒歷史論文選輯 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1998); Fan Demao 范德茂 and Wu Rui 吳蕊, “Guanyu ‘si’ zi de yixiang tedian ji jige zhengming” 關於“𠂇”字的象意特點及幾個證明, *Wen shi zhe* 3 (2002): 109–12; Liu Chang 劉暢, “‘Zihuan wei si, beisi wei gong’ bianxi” “自環為𠂇，背𠂇為公” 辨析, *Neimenggu daxue xuebao (renwen shehui kexue ban)* 36.2 (Mar 2004): 66–71; and Song Jinlan 宋金蘭, “‘Si’ zi de yuyuan ji shanbian” “私(𠂇)”字的語源及嬗變, *Hanzi wenhua* 82.2 (2008): 47–53.

△，姦衰也。韓非曰：蒼頡作字，自營為△。³³ Xu Shen’s definition further underlines the ethically negative implication of *si*, which was the opposite of *gong*. Whether they agree with this interpretation or not, modern scholars, as Han Fei or Xu Shen did, treat *si* in premodern China as a moral, ethical, or political term with negative connotations.³⁴

In contrast, in my discussion of privacy associated with the studio space, I understand *si* as a private sphere, which neither conflicts precisely with the public sphere, nor carries distinct negative connotations. Here, I follow Stephen Owen’s definition of a “private sphere” as “a cluster of objects, experiences, and activities that belong to a subject apart from the social whole, whether state or family.”³⁵ This private sphere excludes political and even domestic life, being primarily enjoyed by the individual self. In the context of the Song dynasty, I borrow Zhu Xi’s 朱熹 (1130–1200) definition of *si* in his commentary on an entry in the *Analects* (*Lunyu* 論語). In *Analects* 2.9, Confucius commented on his favorite disciple Yan Hui 顏回 (511–480 BCE), saying,

³³ Xu Shen, *Shuowen jiezi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1963), 9A.189a. *Si* △ is the early form of *si* 私. In *Shuowen*, the character *si* 私 denotes the name of the millet (*Shuowen jiezi*, 7A.144b); but as Duan Yucai’s 段玉裁 (1735–1815) commentary indicates, later *si* △ was abolished and its meaning was carried by *si* 私 (Duan Yucai, annot., *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注 [Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981], p. 781). As for the evolution of these two characters, see also the articles listed in note 32.

³⁴ Representative works about the Chinese values of *gong* and *si* can be found in Robert P. Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer, eds., *Ordering the World: Approaches to State and Society in Sung Dynasty China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Bonnie S. McDougall & Anders Hansson, eds., *Chinese Concepts of Privacy*; Huang Kewu 黃克武 and Zhang Zhejia 張哲嘉, eds., *Gong yu si: jindai zhongguo geti yu qunti zhi chongjian* 公與私：近代中國個體與群體之重建 (Taipei: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 2000); Liu Zehua 劉澤華 and Zhang Rongming 張榮明 et al., *Gongsi guannian yu zhongguo shehui* 公私觀念與中國社會 (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2003).

On the comparison between privacy in China and this notion in other cultures, see, e.g., Mizoguchi Yuzo 溝口雄三, *Chūgoku no kō to shi* 中国の公と私 (Tokyo: Kenbun Shuppan, 1995); Sasaki Takeshi 佐々木毅 and T’ae-ch’ang Kim 金泰昌, eds., *Kō to shi no shisōshi* 公と私の思想史 (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 2001); Huang Jujie 黃俊杰 and Jiang Yihua 江宜樺, eds., *Gong si lingyu xintan: Dongya yu xifang guandian zhi bijiao* 公私領域新探：東亞與西方觀點之比較 (Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 2008).

³⁵ Stephen Owen, *The End of the Chinese ‘Middle Ages’: Essays in Mid-Tang Literary Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 88.

I talk with Hui all day long. He never disagrees with me or asks questions, as if he is stupid. But when he retires, I observe his *si*, and find that he is sufficient to elaborate my teachings. Hui is not stupid!³⁶

吾與回言終日，不違，如愚。退而省其私，亦足以發。回也不愚。

Confucius positions *si* as being in opposition to the social occasions where he, as a teacher, instructs the students. Zhu Xi, in explaining this *si* in his well-known commentary on the Four Books (Sishu 四書), points out, “*Si* refers to dwelling leisurely and staying alone” 私謂燕居獨處.³⁷ The concept of *yanju* 燕居, as defined by the influential Confucian scholar Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200) in the Han dynasty, refers to the status of “retiring from the court and staying” 退朝而處, which clearly indicates the delimitation between court life and a life of dwelling at ease.³⁸ In addition, Zhu Xi adds *duchu* 獨處, or “staying alone,” to his definition of *si*, further emphasizing the solitary nature of living at ease. Indeed, in this dissertation, what I scrutinize is the space for dwelling leisurely and staying alone in literary representations.

In this sense, the studies by Stephen Owen, Robert E. Harrist, and Xiaoshan Yang, which concern the private garden or estate for leisure activities, are directly helpful to my project. In *The End of the Chinese ‘Middle Ages,’* especially in the chapter “Wit and the Private Life,” Owen not only provides the definition of a “private sphere” that I quote above, but also positions the mid-Tang as the period when this sphere originated. Following Owen’s discussion of the mid-Tang garden, Xiaoshan Yang’s book *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere* further elaborates the relationship between the poetic representations of urban gardens and the development of the private sphere in Chinese literati culture. Yang positions the garden as a

³⁶ Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, ed. and annot., *Lunyu yizhu* 論語譯注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 2.9.

³⁷ Zhu Xi, *Sishu zhangju jizhu* 四書章句集註 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), p. 56.

³⁸ On the line “Confucius dwelled leisurely” 仲尼燕居 in the *Book of Rites (Liji 禮記)*, Zheng Xuan comments, “Retiring from the court and staying—this is called *yanju*” 退朝而處曰燕居; see *Liji zhengyi* 禮記正義 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1999), 28.1381. The next chapter of *Liji (Liji zhengyi)*, 29.1392 begins with the line “Confucius dwelled in idleness” 孔子閒居, but there is actually little distinction between *yanju* and *xianju*; see Wang Meng’ou 王夢鷗, annot., *Liji jinzhuzhu jinyi* 禮記今註今譯 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1970), 28.659.

space that “often functions as a retreat from public life,” and that “can also represent a personal space mentally apart from (albeit physically within) the domestic domain associated with familial obligations.”³⁹ In addition to the garden, scholars have examined the estate from the perspective of privacy. In the article “The Formation of the Tang Estate Poem,” Owen draws attention to the estate poem when it first took on its characteristic features during the second reign of Tang Zhongzong (r. 705–710). He points out that the literary estate was located on the margin between wild and domesticated nature, and thus became a space of private withdrawal that did not require the renunciation of public life.⁴⁰ Using an art historical as opposed to a literary method, Robert E. Harrist illustrates literati’s private estates in his *Painting and Private Life in Eleventh-Century China*.⁴¹ According to Harrist, the Northern Song painting *Mountain Villa*, depicting Li Gonglin’s 李公麟 (ca. 1041–1106) private retreat, opens the way for pictorial representation of the estate or garden to epitomize the private sphere of literati. Through painting, literati were able to commemorate specific events in their daily lives, and thus to cultivate their private identities.

According to the studies I have reviewed here, the garden can be regarded as a typical private space, which is in contrast with public spaces such as the court or the marketplace. However, I suggest that the definition of privacy should depend on their respective contexts. Compared with the space of the studio in Song literary writings, the literary garden became a relatively public space. Typical activities in the garden, such as social gatherings and banquets, required a group of participants. The studio, conversely, was represented as a space for the individual self. Though often located in the garden or residence, the studio provided an enclosed space for the studio

³⁹ Xiaoshan Yang, *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere*, p. 250.

⁴⁰ Stephen Owen, “The Formation of the Tang Estate Poem,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 55:1 (Jun. 1995): 39–59.

⁴¹ Robert E. Harrist, *Painting and Private Life in Eleventh-Century China: Mountain Villa by Li Gonglin* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

owner to cultivate himself, enabling the owner to be apart even from interactions with family or friends.

However, private spaces are, after all, never completely private. This porousness of the studio was reflected in at least four aspects. First, although the studio was a private space for individual practices, at the same time it allowed for limited public interactions with intimate friends and like-minded colleagues. In other words, it was also a space for social exchange, but this exchange differed greatly from exchanges in other meeting spaces, because the studio opened only to a very small group of selected friends. Second, the studio was also used as a means for the display of literati selfhood. By representing the studio in literary writings and then making it into circulation, the literati opened a window for others to look into the studio. The studio thus acted as a stage for the display of the studio owner's private life. In particular, the act of naming a studio, which did not become truly popular until the Southern Song, played a crucial role in this sense. Third, the studio, as a cultural space, interacted with its natural surroundings in literary and pictorial representations. No matter located in the mountains, in a garden, or in an urban area, the studio was often accompanied by scenic beauty. Accordingly, the studio constantly communicated with its immediate surroundings as well as with the distant landscape. In literary writings, this interplay is represented as a *mise-en-abyme* through which nature and culture were continuously framed, transformed, and intertwined. Lastly, although the studio functioned fundamentally as a self-contained space for literati's self-cultivation, it was also a space for the literati to nourish their contributions to the state. For Song literati, the notion of cultivating the self was seldom completely separated from the inspiration of "administering the state." The studio was also represented as the seedbed of the fulfillment of social responsibility.

Thus, from these four aspects, I understand the key feature of the studio as porous privacy. This feature constructed as well as confined literati activities that took place in the studio, and thus shaped the studio to become the distinctive medium for the representation of literati's

everyday practices and intellectual pursuits. In this way, the studio indeed became the direct reflection of literati culture beyond the court.

IV The Principal Sources

To dissect the space of the literati studio, I draw from an extensive and interdisciplinary body of Song materials, including literary texts, visual sources, and archeological objects. Among them, literary works are the major source on which I focus, which I generally divide into two parts: (1) the collected works, which consist mainly of poetry, prose, as well as song lyrics; and (2) other genres, ranging from miscellanies to inscriptions and treatises on objects. This broad range of materials constructs and at the same time complicates the picture of the interrelationship between Song literati and the studio space.

The primary literary texts I discuss in this dissertation belong to the subgenres of “poems on the studio” (*shuzhai shi* 書齋詩) and “studio accounts” (*shuzhai ji* 書齋記). I define “poems on the studio” and “studio accounts” as categories of works which take the studio as the subject and theme. These works are not necessary to be composed in the studio, but they all center on descriptions of the studio and on accompanying activities that occur within this space.

In selecting studio poems and accounts, I make a balance between the writings of prominent Song figures and those of minor poets. On the one hand, I draw special attention to eight leading members of the new social class of literati. This list begins with Ouyang Xiu 歐陽脩 (1007–1072), who is considered the leader among the founders of the distinctive Song literary style. In his collected work, Ouyang Xiu’s representations of the studio, though sporadic and tentative, should be regarded as the early forms of the studio as shaped in Song literature. In the next generation, the famous minister Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–1086), though not known primarily for his literary talent, cannot be ignored. His physical construction and literary celebration of the studio called the “Hall for Reading Books” (*Dushu tang* 讀書堂) serve as the very model for later literati’s studio projects. A little later than Sima Guang, Su Shi and Huang Tingjian,

representatives of the versatile literati in the Song, continued the experiment in literary representation of the studio. The last prominent figure of the Northern Song that I choose is the distinguished calligrapher and painter Mi Fu 米芾 (1051–1107), who not only possessed fixed physical studios such as the “Studio of Oceans and Mountains” (Haiyue an 海嶽庵) and the “Precious Jin Studio” (Baojin zhai 寶晉齋), but also constructed a well-known temporary studio called the “Boat of Calligraphy and Painting of the Mi Family” (Mijia shuhua chuan 米家書畫船). He contributes to the literary representation of the studio from the viewpoint of an artist. By the Southern Song, literati’s configuration of the studio became much more prevalent. Lu You 陸遊 (1125–1210) wrote extensive accounts and poems describing his pleasant passing time in his studios, such as the “Nest of Books” (Shu chao 書巢), the “Hut of Studying in Old Age” (Laoxue an 老學庵), and the “Satisfied Studio” (Ke zhai 可齋). As productive as Lu You, his contemporary Yang Wanli 楊萬里 (1127–1206) examined the studio in the scholarly context of “Learning of the Way” (Daoxue 道學), and thus endowed the literary studio with philosophical interest (*liqu* 理趣). Going a step further, the leading Neo-Confucian thinker Zhu Xi, by means of his abundant writings of studio accounts, further explored the implications of the studio from the Neo-Confucian perspective, which emphasizes more on self-cultivation as the fundamental goal of staying in the studio.

Works on the studio by these elite figures serve as milestones in the evolution of literary construction of the studio; at the same time, the writings of other comparatively minor writers in the Song represent the studio in more commonly shared ways. Although these minor poets have different life experiences, intellectual pursuits, and literary styles, with the same identity as literati, they collectively construct a literary imagination of the studio space in the Song. Thus, I pay equal attention to the works of these minor poets, which are collected in the large

compilations of the *Complete Song Poems* (*Quan Song shi* 全宋詩; hereafter *QSS*) and *Complete Song Prose* (*Quan Song wen* 全宋文; hereafter *QSW*).

Aside from a large number of studio poems and accounts, I explore abundant materials on the studio in other genres, including miscellanies, inscriptions, letters, and treatises on objects. Among them, the miscellanies are the greatest treasure for me. Compiled by Song literati, they provide a rich and colorful collection of anecdotes about studios including details of literati's everyday practices in the studios. In addition, because I discuss interactions among literati, the scholarly objects they used in their studios, and the studios themselves, treatises on these objects are of use, such as the *Four Treatises of the Studio* (*Wenfang sipu* 文房四譜) by Su Yijian 蘇易簡 (958–997) and the *Records of the Pure Blissfulness in the Cavern Heaven* (*Dongtian qinglu ji* 洞天清祿集) by Zhao Xigu 趙希鵠 (1170–1242). Flourishing during the Song, these treatises, accompanied by their prefaces and colophons, not only outline the history of scholar's objects, but also express literati's attitudes and anxiety regarding these objects.

Moreover, I also pair these literary sources with pictorial materials and archeological discoveries. Compared to the turning point of the Song when the studio became a popular motif in literature, it was not until the Yuan dynasty that the studio became a prominent theme in Chinese painting. Therefore, within extant Song paintings, the representations of the studio are not as abundant as those in literature. However, these early experiments do initiate a new theme in literati painting. Furthermore, owing to the early status of the pictorial configuration of the studio, most of the paintings pay special attention to the details of the studio; that is, they represent the studio in a concrete and literal way. This mode, on the one hand, draws a sharp contrast with the representation of the studio in the paintings of the Yuan dynasty or thereafter, which gradually simplifies the studio as a rough sketch of a thatched hut. On the other hand, this mode is consistent with the way in which Song literary writings shaped the studio. In this sense, Song paintings of the studio make an excellent complement to the literary materials mentioned previously.

V Overview of Chapters

The main body of this dissertation is divided into five chapters. The first chapter traces the evolution of the literary configuration of the studio till the Song dynasty, to demonstrate the pivotal role that Song literature played in the construction of the studio space. Although pre-Tang scholars probably had already owned studios or studio-like sites, they seldom treated these sites as literary subjects of critical interest. Only during the periods of the mid to late Tang did a quantity of literary writings celebrating the studio emerge. These early works, on the one hand, often represent the studio as a hermitage or as a decoration of the scenic beauty, a space that was interchangeable with other reclusive spaces such as the thatched hut deep in the mountains; on the other hand, they convey the literary possibility of shaping the studio as a space for reading, writing, and art creation. By contrast, the studio in the Song was represented as a cultural space filled with scholarly tastes and intellectual interests.

This cultural space was primarily enjoyed by the individual self to the exclusion of political or domestic relations. Chapter 2 thus tackles the issue of how the represented studio worked as a private space for Song literati. The chapter answers this question mainly from three aspects. First, I examine various ways employed in literary writings to define the studio as a private space in spatial and temporal dimensions. Second, I discuss how the privacy of the studio shaped the intellectual activities performed in the physical studio and determined the realization of its two fundamental goals (i.e., enjoying ultimate pleasure and attaining self-cultivation). Third, I investigate how Song literati, when they were unable to possess fixed physical studios, constructed temporary studios or even an imaginary studio in order to maintain a private space for themselves.

However, the studio was a *mostly* private space in the sense that it also allowed for limited interactions and was used for display. Hence, in the third chapter, I argue that the studio can also work as a particular kind of social space. Although the studio was still fundamentally closed off

to the public, it not only admitted select socially or culturally acceptable members, but it could also serve as a stage for the display of literati's personality and intentions. I choose two actions—"inviting into the studio" and "naming the studio"—to demonstrate this porousness of the studio space.

Chapter 4 analyzes the porous privacy of the studio from another dimension, the interrelationship among literati, scholarly objects, and the studio. By means of literature, literati endowed scholarly objects (e.g., the writing brush, ink, paper, and inkstone) with novel implications and aesthetic values when they were used in the studio; and these objects in turn supported literati's construction of the porous private space of the studio. On the one hand, being surrounded by these "like-minded objects," Song literati were able to further construct the studio as a self-contained space, without interference from the vulgar outside world. On the other hand, these objects, accompanied with the literature of object exchange, were often transferred between literati from one studio to another, which served to link these primarily private spaces as well as create a mutual communication among literati.

The last chapter examines the studio in its relation to the exterior space—the interplay between the cultural studio and its natural surroundings in literary and visual representations. Moreover, since the state of "staying alone" in a beautiful natural environment is easily understood as a means of reclusion, this chapter also delves into how Song literati differentiated the scholarly studio from a reclusive space in their writings.

By way of conclusion, I explore the relationship between the private studio and the political arena outside the studio. Although the literati were able to enjoy time in their daily lives alone in the studio, they also carried the obligation to fulfill their social responsibilities and to serve the state. Therefore, the trope of "leaving the studio" was used in literature to declare the studio owner's dedication to the public world. In this way, the porousness of the private studio was reflected from a different dimension. Although the studio was fundamentally an epitome of

literati's everyday life beyond the court, it also acted as a nourishing space that allowed the literati a means to prepare the contributions they would make to the state.

Chapter One: Evolution of the Representation of the Studio

The early history of the studio in Chinese culture can be illustrated by a handful of anecdotes. Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 (179–117 BCE) in the Western Han period owned a “Reading Den” (Dushu ku 讀書窟) on a mountain in Zitong (in modern Sichuan Province).⁴² The Han scholar Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53 BCE–18 CE) is said to have worked in the “Hall of Composing the *Supreme Mystery*” (Caoxuan tang 草玄堂),⁴³ and Yin Zhongkan 殷仲堪 (d. 399/400) in the Eastern Jin had a small hut for reading, later commonly known as the “Studio for Reading Books” (Dushu zhai 讀書齋).⁴⁴ Yan Yanzhi 顏延之 (384–456) in the Southern Dynasties was known to pass his time reading in a stone cave on the mountain during the period when he was the governor of Shi’an (in modern Guangxi Province).⁴⁵

However, although these pre-Tang scholars owned studios or studio-like sites, they seldom treated these sites as literary topics. During the Tang dynasty, although a few more studios in this period were recorded by later generations, and the studio also began to appear in literary works, the studio was still rarely represented as a subject of critical interest. With the shifting of values in Tang and Song intellectual life and the transformation of studio owners’ status, the new social class of literati in the Song rediscovered the studio, and then frequently represented it as a cultural space reflecting scholarly tastes and intellectual interests. This chapter thus traces the evolution of the literary configuration of the studio till the Song dynasty and demonstrates the pivotal role that Song literature played in the cultural construction of the studio space.

⁴² Yue Shi 樂史 (930–1007), *Taiping huanyu ji* 太平寰宇記, eds. Wang Wenchu 王文楚 et al. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 84.1678.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 72.1469.

⁴⁴ Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢 (557–641), comp., *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚, ed. Wang Shaoying 汪紹楹 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1982), 64.1152.

⁴⁵ Hu Qiwang 胡起望 and Tan Guangguang 覃光廣, ed. and annot., *Guihai yuheng zhi jiyi jiaozhu* 桂海虞衡志輯佚校注 (Chengdu: Sichuan minzu chubanshe, 1986), p. 9.

I The Prehistory

The earliest known literary works that describe a studio scene can be traced to the poems of the prominent Liu-Song poet Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 (385–433). Although his poetic reputation comes mainly from his status as the founder of Chinese landscape poetry, concentrating on mountains and rivers, Xie Lingyun also mused creatively on the studio. His poem “Reading within the Studio” (“Zhaizhong dushu” 齋中讀書) reads as follows:

昔余遊京華，	In the past, I traveled to the imperial capital,
未嘗廢丘壑。	But never did I abandon hills and ravines.
矧乃歸山川，	Let alone, I have returned to the mountains and streams,
心跡雙寂寞。	My mind and my activities are both tranquil and peaceful.
虛館絕諍訟，	The vacant offices are cut off from quarrels and lawsuits,
空庭來鳥雀。	Into the empty courtyard arrive birds and sparrows.
臥疾豐暇豫，	Lying sick, I have plentiful leisure time,
翰墨時間作。	Brush and ink, I now and then take up.
懷抱觀古今，	In my mind's thoughts, I gaze upon past and present,
寢食展戲謔。	During sleeping and eating, I break into mirth.
既笑沮溺苦，	I not only laugh at Ju and Ni toiling away,
又哂子雲閣。	Also I jeer at Ziyun in the Imperial Library. ⁴⁶
執戟亦以疲，	Grasping the halberd can truly be wearying,
耕稼豈云樂。	Ploughing and sowing—how could that bring pleasure?
萬事難並歡，	Myriad affairs are hard to be simultaneously enjoyed,
達生幸可託。	Fortunately, “understanding life” can be relied on. ⁴⁷

A definitive translation of the title is difficult. According to the reputable *wenxuan* commentator Li Shan 李善 (d. 689) from the Tang era, the character *zhai* 齋 in the title refers to the prefectural residence (*junzhai* 郡齋) of Yongjia (in modern Zhejiang Province).⁴⁸ The prefectural residence generally refers to the official dwelling of the prefectural governor, which functioned as both office and home. After Xie Lingyun was exiled to Yongjia from the capital, he lived in the

⁴⁶ Ziyun 子雲 is the courtesy name of Yang Xiong.

⁴⁷ Gu Shaobo 顧紹柏, ed. and annot., *Xie Lingyun ji jiaozhu* 謝靈運集校注 (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1987), p. 61. I use the translation and consult the notes of Jack W. Chen, “On the Act and Representation of Reading in Medieval China,” with slight revision.

⁴⁸ Xiao Tong 蕭統 (501–531), ed., *Wen xuan* 文選, annot. Li Shan (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986), 30.1397.

prefectural residence and composed a couple of poems on daily life there. These poems were later regarded as pioneering works of the subgenre known as “poetry on the prefectural residence” (*junzhai shi* 郡齋詩). “Reading within the Studio,” as a representative of this subgenre, is thus a description of the reading activity in the prefectural residence.⁴⁹ However, the “Five Officials” commentary, produced about sixty years later than Li Shan’s work, depicts the *zhai* as a “quiet room” (*jingshi* 靜室).⁵⁰ Based on the content of the poem and these two early commentaries, it is thus reasonable to understand the *zhai* as a room located in the prefectural residence. This room may not have been a “studio” exactly as I defined in this dissertation, but it functions as a studio; that is, it provides the owner a separate room for the pleasures of solitude—in particular, the pleasure of reading.

The opening two couplets, however, do not pertain directly to reading. Rather, they convey the poet’s consistent passion for mountains and rivers. His demotion from his job in the capital and removal to the remote prefecture is expressed as providing him an opportunity to better enjoy the natural landscape, which calms the poet’s mind. With this tranquil mood, beginning with the third couplet, the poem turns its attention to the interior of the prefectural residence, which is peaceful as well. Both the vacant offices and the birds’ arrival metaphorically indicate how such a peaceful state is obtained: by means of the governor’s nonaction, everything spontaneously turns into harmony. With the fulfillment of official obligations (lines 5 and 6) and the need to recover from sickness (lines 7 and 8), the poet is able to justify his enjoyment of leisure time, during which he indulges himself in reading and writing.

The second half of the poem, then, focuses on the act of reading. The scene seems to be relaxed, as the poet often breaks into laughter while reading. This laughter on the ancients, nevertheless, is in fact a serious reflection on possible lifestyles. According to the poet, he laughs

⁴⁹ On the definition of the “poetry on the prefectural residence,” see Ge Xiaoyin 葛曉音, “Zhongwantang de junzhai shi he cangzhou li” 中晚唐的郡齋詩和滄洲吏, *Beijing daxue xuebao* 50.1 (Jan. 2013): 88–102.

⁵⁰ *Yingyin Song ben Wuchen jizhu Wen xuan* 景印宋本五臣集注文選 (Taipei: Guoli zhongyang tushuguan, 1981), 15.19b.

at Chang Ju 長沮 and Jie Ni 桀溺, conventionally depicted in the *Analects* as model recluses, because they still toiled in agricultural labor; and he disagrees with Yang Xiong because Yang, though merely holding a low official position, still inevitably involved himself in political struggles and jumped out of the Imperial Library, almost costing him his life.⁵¹ The poet, in this way, disapproves of the lives of both the recluse and the official. Seeking a better way of life, he again turns to reading. This time, he finds that the chapter “Understanding Life” (“dasheng” 達生) of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 holds the ideal solution, instructing him to comply with nature and to detach himself from external desires. The poet is thus able to become a hermit in officialdom who finds it necessary neither to exert his body in farming nor to trouble himself with politics. In this way, the act of reading in the *zhai* of the prefectural residence works as a justification of the act itself.

Although the poem does not elaborate on the relationship between the practice of reading and the site in which reading takes place, it indeed explores a new poetic theme, namely, a celebration of scholarly activities performed inside a specific studio-like site.

Unlike the above poem that uses the term *zhai* in a vague way in the title, another poem attributed to Xie Lingyun is explicitly titled “Dushu zhai” 讀書齋, or “The Studio for Reading Books.” The poem reads:

春事日已歇，	The beauty of spring has faded day after day,
池塘曠幽尋。	The pond has been neglected for secluded visiting.
殘紅被徑隧，	Fallen blossoms cover the paved path,
初綠雜淺深。	Verdant leaves are mixed with light and dark colors.
偃仰倦芳褥，	Dwelling at leisure, I am weary of the fragrant cushion,
頻步憂新陰。	Often going for a walk, I feel depressed about the new shades.
謀春不及竟，	My plan for spring has not finished,
夏物遽見侵。	Yet the summer scenery immediately intrudes on me. ⁵²

The content of the poem seems to bear little relation to the title. The poem is completely a lament

⁵¹ For how Xie Lingyun treats the stories of Chang Ju and Jie Ni or the experience of Yang Xiong differently from their conventional significance, see Jack W. Chen, “On the Act and Representation of Reading in Medieval China,” 69–70.

⁵² *Xie Lingyun ji jiaozhu*, pp. 76–77.

for the end of spring. From couplet to couplet, the poet grieves repetitively over the change of seasons. It is easy to find similar opening lines in Xie's poems: the poet is forced to lie in bed due to illness and therefore misses the vibrant spring. The following two couplets elaborate on this theme. Fallen flowers cover the path like a fragrant cushion, and dark leaves form thick shades. Both scenes, though beautiful, reflect the passing of time. Therefore, for the poet, they evoke a melancholy mood. This weariness and depression are conveyed more straightforwardly in the closing couplet. The poet claims he has not fully enjoyed the spring, but the summer has forced itself on him. This change, of course, is also a reminder of the transience of human life. As we can see, nothing in the poem relates to reading or to a space for reading. The title "The Studio for Reading Books" merely indicates the location where the poet composed the poem, and the poem pays no attention to the features of the studio. Not surprisingly, the famous modern commentator on Xie's poetry, Gu Shaobo, suspected that this extant poem may not be a complete piece.⁵³

The poem's relationship to the studio is further weakened by its ambiguous attribution. The modern scholar Lu Qinli 逯欽立 (1910–1973) collected this poem under the name of Xie Lingyun based on the *Gazetteer of Yongjia District* (*Yongjia xianzhi* 永嘉縣志) compiled in 1882. In this gazetteer, the entry for "The Studio for Reading Books" introduces Xie Lingyun's studio located at the former prefectural residence, with two complete poems followed: one is "Reading within the Studio" and the other is "The Studio for Reading Books."⁵⁴ Yet, the latter poem is also included in the *Complete Tang Poems* (*Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩), with only slight variants. This time, it is entitled "Written During the Last Ten Days of the Third Month in the Prefectural Residence" ("Junzhai sanyue xiaxun zuo" 郡齋三月下旬作) and is attributed both to the poets

⁵³ Ibid., p. 77n1.

⁵⁴ *Yongjia xianzhi*, in *Xuxiu Siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書, 21.6a.

Cui Hu 崔護 (*jinshi* 796) and Zhang Youxin 張又新 (*jinshi* 814).⁵⁵

Neither of these two poems, therefore, can be conclusively labeled as representations of the studio.⁵⁶ Both are still best thought of samples of the subgenre of “poetry on the prefectural residence.” The subject of the first poem is ambiguous, as we are not sure whether the *zhai* in the title refers to a general prefectural residence or to a specific studio; the second poem mentions little about the studio, but concentrates on the outside scenery. Nonetheless, these two poems indeed initiate a new poetic possibility whereby the poet not only owns a studio or a studio-like site, but also begins to show an interest in literary representations of this space.

However, few other pre-Tang sources echo Xie’s appreciation of the studio. Only during the mid- to late-Tang periods did similar literary writings begin to emerge. When they mention the studio in poetry or prose, the mid- and late-Tang poets were inclined merely to extend the detached affection celebrated in Xie’s “Reading within the Studio,” but they largely ignored Xie’s attempt to associate the intellectual practices of reading and writing with this space.

One of the many examples is Bai Juyi’s 白居易 (772–846) well-known work, the “Account of the Thatched Cottage” (“Caotang ji” 草堂記). In 816, after being exiled to Jiangzhou (in modern Jiangxi Province), Bai Juyi was delighted at the beautiful scenery in the Lu Mountains, so he began to build a cottage between the Incense-Burner Peak and the Yi’ ai Temple. To immortalize

⁵⁵ *Quan Tang shi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), 368.4147, 479.5451. On the authorship of this poem, Zhang Jinglong 張靖龍 believes that it is Xie Lingyun’s poem, see Zhang Jinglong, “‘Dushu zhai shi’ zuozhe kao” 《讀書齋詩》作者考, *Wenzhou shifan xueyuan xuebao* (1988):55; while some scholars treat it as a Tang poem, see Zhou Chao 周超, “Lu Qinli Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi jiashi juwu” 逯欽立《先秦漢魏晉南北朝詩》校釋舉誤, *Tushuguan lilun yu shijian* 4 (2012): 54; and Zhou Xinglu 周興陸, “Guanyu Xie Lingyun shige de wenxian xue wenti” 關於謝靈運詩歌的文獻學問題, *Fudan xuebao* 2 (2008): 85.

⁵⁶ Another poem, “Written on the Lake on my Way Back to the *Jingshe* at Stone Cliffs” (“Shibi jingshe huan huzhong zuo” 石壁精舍還湖中作) by Xie Lingyun, may also be an example. However, the denotation of *jingshe* is still in dispute. Since the term *jingshe* can refer to a school, a studio, or a Buddhist/Daoist hall, and the main text of this poem describes little about the place itself, it is hard to determine what *jingshe* refers to. In the Tang commentaries of *Wen xuan*, Li Shan defines this *jingshe* as a studio (*dushuzhai* 讀書齋; *Wen xuan*, 22.1044), whereas Lü Xiang 呂向 annotates it as a mountain temple (*shansi* 山寺; *Yingyin Song ben Wuchen jizhu Wen xuan*, 11.16a–16b). In view of Xie’s poem “Shibi li zhaoti jingshe” 石壁立招提精舍 as well as his essay “You mingshan zhi” 遊名山志, it is more reasonable to understand this *jingshe* as a Buddhist temple. See also *Xie Lingyun ji jiaozhu*, pp. 110n1, 112n1.

completion of the cottage in 817, Bai composed an account. The part in which he outlines the construction of the cottage reads:

It contained three rooms divided by two columns, and two chambers with four windows. Its area and proportions both agreed with my conception and my resources. I opened the doorway to the north so that it could allow a cool breeze to enter and mitigate the height of summer. I broadened the doorway to the south so that it could bring in the sunlight and protect against the extreme cold. The wood was merely hewn and left unpainted; the walls were only plastered but not whitewashed. For the steps, I used stone; for covering the windows, I used paper; there were also bamboo shades and burlap curtains—all properly fit the cottage. In the cottage, I set four wooden couches, two pure screens, a lacquered zither, and books on Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism, two or three volumes each.

三間兩柱，二室四牖，廣袤豐殺，一稱心力。洞北戶，來陰風，防徂暑也；敞南薨，納陽日，虞祁寒也。木斲而已，不加丹；墻圻而已，不加白。城階用石，罽窗用紙，竹簾紵幃，率稱是焉。堂中設木榻四，素屏二，漆琴一張，儒、道、佛書各三兩卷。

The language used here stresses the simplicity of the cottage's design. The cottage has three rooms, with the most basic facilities and decor. The objects displayed within it include couches, screens, a zither, and several volumes of books, which imply that the cottage, if not precisely a studio, is used for the poet's leisure enjoyments such as reading and playing zither. Indeed, revisiting his cottage on the way to Hangzhou in 822, Bai states, "I once lived on the foot of the Incense-Burner Peak, / The studio faces the herb terrace" 曾住爐峰下，書堂對藥台.⁵⁷ Here, Bai refers explicitly to the cottage as a "studio" (*shutang* 書堂).

The following paragraph then describes how Bai enjoyed this studio-like space:

Ever since I, Letian [the sobriquet of Bai Juyi], came to be the master of the cottage, I lift my head to watch the mountains, lower my head to listen to the spring, and look around at the bamboo, trees, clouds, and rocks. From the hours of *chen* to *you*, there is not enough time to experience all of them.⁵⁸ Soon the scenery fascinates me, and my vital breath coalesces with it. Outwardly, I feel at ease; inwardly, in harmony. After I lodge here one night, my body is at peace; after the second night, my mind becomes congenial; and after the third night, I am empty of thoughts and in a trance, though unable to understand why.⁵⁹

樂天既來為主，仰觀山，俯聽泉，傍睨竹樹雲石，自辰及酉，應接不暇。俄而物誘氣

⁵⁷ Bai Juyi, "Tibie Yiai caotang jiancheng Li shi shijun" 題別遺愛草堂兼呈李十使君, Zhu Jincheng 朱金城, ed., *Bai Juyi ji jianjiao* 白居易集箋校 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1988), 20.1326.

⁵⁸ The hour of *chen* is from 7 to 9 a.m., and the hour of *you* is from 5 to 7 p.m.

⁵⁹ *Bai Juyi ji jianjiao*, 43.2736–37. I use the translation by Richard Strassberg, *Inscribed Landscapes: Travel Writing from Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. 135, with revision.

隨，外適內和，一宿體寧，再宿心恬，三宿後頹然嗒然，不知其然而然。

Rather than focusing on his enjoyment of intellectual activities while in residence at the cottage, Bai, who claims to be the master (*zhu* 主) of the cottage, immediately shifts his attention to the scene outdoors. From dawn to dusk, he is entranced by the mountains and rivers, and his mind becomes more and more at peace. Harking to Xie Lingyun's philosophical ending in the poem "Reading within the Studio," Bai in describing his mental detachment also alludes to the *Zhuangzi*. "Being empty of thoughts and in a trance" (*tuiran taran* 頹然嗒然), Bai alludes to the words of Nanguo Ziqi 南郭子綦 in the "On the Equality of Things" ("Qiwu lun" 齊物論) chapter of the *Zhuangzi*. Nanguo Ziqi is famous for his state of leaning on the armrest, "in a trance" (*tayan* 荅焉) and losing himself, to enjoy "the pipes of Heaven" (*tianlai* 天籟) or the sounds of nature.⁶⁰ Similarly, through his appreciation of the scenery in the Lu Mountains, Bai is able to stay in harmony with the universe. Indeed, Bai later goes on to elaborate on the beauty outside his cottage, explaining how the scenery helps calm his mind. Thus, on the one hand, the "Account of the Thatched Cottage" constructs a bounded, studio-like space by means of interior decor and scholarly artifacts. On the other hand, the pleasures associated with this space are represented as derived largely from the natural landscape, bearing little relation to the indoor space. The studio serves more as part of a reclusive space, allowing Bai to achieve his ideal of becoming a "middling hermit" (*zhongyin* 中隱).

This tendency to treat the studio as a hermitage for the poet is common in mid- and late-Tang literary works that take the studio as their subject. Also celebrating a studio in the Lu Mountains, for instance, the late-Tang poet Du Xunhe 杜荀鶴 (846–904) writes:

"Thinking of the Studio in Mount Lu" 懷廬嶽書齋

長憶在廬嶽，	Always I remember that I stayed at Mount Lu,
免低塵土顏。	I did not need to lower my face with the dust.

⁶⁰ Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩 (1844–ca. 1896), *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋, ed. Wang Xiaoyu 王孝魚 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1961), 2.43.

煮茶窗底水，	I boiled tea with water flowing at the foot of my windows,
採藥屋頭山。	I picked herbs in the hills above my hut.
是境皆遊遍，	This realm, I traveled throughout,
誰人不羨閒。	Was there anyone who did not admire my carefree life?
無何一名繫，	Before long, the very fame itself restricted me,
引出白雲間。	It drew me out of the white clouds. ⁶¹

Obviously, the poet was no longer in residence at the studio when he wrote this poem, and so he structures the work using fragments of his memory. The key question then is how he selected these fragments. Although calling upon his memories of the studio, the poet barely touches on the interior of the studio. The images he selects, such as boiling tea with mountain spring water (line 3), picking herbs in the hills (line 4), and traveling at leisure (lines 5 and 6), are all typical activities of a hermit and are frequently used as images of reclusion in Tang poetry. Indeed, the distinction between the landscape of reclusion and the wider society is more stressed here compared with Bai Juyi's account. While Bai treats his cottage as a mediating space, enabling him to retreat temporarily from his official duties, Du Xunhe establishes a sharp contrast between the Lu Mountains, enshrouded in white clouds, and the outside dusty world filled with the temptations of fame. It is the Lu Mountains that mark off a reclusive space for the poet. Accordingly, the studio located in the mountains, as a site supporting the poet's reclusive life, is also replete with eremitic implications.

Hence, although the title "Thinking of the Studio in Mount Lu" indicates the studio as the poem's subject—seldom seen in pre-Tang literary works—the poem does not endow this new subject with a distinctive new significance. The poem is difficult to distinguish from landscape poetry with an eremitic theme. The studio here is still part of the reclusive landscape celebrating the delight of withdrawal from society.

Poems on the studio during the mid- and late-Tang periods are mostly similar in this regard; however, other pioneering works shift their attention to intellectual activities occurring in the studio. For example, "The Studio: An Impromptu Verse" ("Shuzhai jishi" 書齋即事), also

⁶¹ *QTS*, 691.7932.

written by Du Xunhe, unfolds a remarkably different scene from “Thinking of the Studio in Mount Lu.” The poem reads:

時清祇合力為儒，	In this peaceful age, the only appropriate thing is to endeavor to be a scholar,
不可家貧與善疏。	I should not, because of the poverty of my family, become estranged from virtue.
賣卻屋邊三畝地，	I sold a three- <i>mu</i> field beside the house,
添成窗下一床書。	Therefore I accumulated a couch of books by the window.
沿溪摘果霜晴後，	Along the creek, I pick fruits in clear days after frost,
出竹吟詩月上初。	In the bamboo grove, I chant poems when the moon just rises.
鄉里老農多見笑，	In the village old farmers often laugh at me,
不知稽古勝耕鋤。	They do not know that examining into antiquity is better than ploughing and weeding. ⁶²

This time, Du Xunhe departs from the reclusive themes common to poetry on the studio. Unlike “Thinking of the Studio in Mount Lu,” which aims to portray a hermit living in his studio, the focus here is the studio owner’s “endeavor to be a scholar” (*liwei ru* 力為儒). This difference, of course, is partly due to different locations of these two studios. But more crucially, it reflects a difference in the ways of poetic construction of the studio space.

The opening couplet immediately distances this studio from the one in “Thinking of the Studio in Mount Lu.” Rather than contrasting with the dusty world, here the studio becomes *part* of the world, offering an opportunity for the poet to cultivate himself in order to stay in harmony with society. The second couplet clarifies the specific function of the studio: it is a space for reading. Moreover, a decisive choice is indicated by use of two verb-complement compounds: that is, the poet “sold” (*mai que* 賣卻) land in order to “accumulate” (*tiancheng* 添成) more books. The second half of the poem further confirms this choice. Rather than making a living by plowing the three-*mu* field, the poet represents his daily life with the images of picking fruits and chanting poems. The closing couplet expresses a similar idea more straightforwardly.

“Examining into antiquity” (*jigu* 稽古) by reading books, the poet declares, is much better than “ploughing and weeding” (*gengchu* 耕鋤). Such a claim reminds us of the rhetorical question

⁶² *QTS*, 692.7972–73.

raised in Xie Lingyun’s “Reading within the Studio”—laughing at the two farmers, he asked, “Ploughing and sowing—how could that bring pleasure?” Such a tension between studying and farming also alludes to a dialogue between Confucius and his disciple Fan Chi 樊遲 (b. 515/505 BCE). When Fan Chi asked Confucius to teach him farming, Confucius answered, “I am not as good as an old farmer” 吾不如老農, and criticized Fan Chi as a petty man. According to Confucius, a gentleman’s duties center on the cultivation of propriety, righteousness, and trustworthiness, rather than on specific techniques.⁶³ Hence, by rewriting Xie Lingyun’s poem and also reflecting the anecdote recorded in the *Analects*, Du clarifies that he prefers to be a gentleman and defines the studio as a space for both moral cultivation and the practice of reading. Going a step further, while Xie and Confucius laughed at the farmers, in Du’s poem, this time it is the old farmers who laugh at the scholar. The farmers’ lack of understanding, in turn, demonstrates the distinctiveness of the poet’s scholarly pursuits.

Such a preoccupation with examination into antiquity in the studio, though scattered, can also be found in mid- and late-Tang prose. Zhang Hongjing’s 張弘靖 (760–824) “Account of the *Xiao* Studio” (“*Xiao zhai ji*” 蕭齋記) can be highlighted in this regard. This time, rather than through reading, the studio owner Li Yue 李約 (751–ca. 810) communes with the ancients via a work of calligraphy. The account reads:

Gentleman Li of Longxi, whose name is Yue, from south of the Yangzi River, obtained the character *xiao* in the flying-white style written on the wall by Xiao Ziyun [487–549].⁶⁴ Because its brushwork was so amazingly impressive, Li boxed it up to treasure it. How Li came to encounter it has been recorded in detail in Li’s own encomium and Supervising Censor Cui Bei’s [*jinshi* 781] account. Li and this character together traveled by boat back to Li’s mansion in the Renfeng Ward in Luoyang. Considering the most suitable way to fully appreciate and preserve the work, Li felt that by putting it in a case or cabinet, he would not be able to approach it and view it at any time, and it would face a threat from closing, opening, and moving the case. Therefore he constructed a fine room, and embedded the character in the wall. This restored the original resonance of the calligraphy, and captured the beauty of the work when viewed from a distance. The character silently faces the empty window, yet its

⁶³ *Lunyu yizhu*, 13.4.

⁶⁴ “Flying-white” (*feibai* 飛白) is a calligraphy style characterized by hollow, dry brush strokes. It is said to have been invented by the Eastern Han scholar and calligrapher Cai Yong 蔡邕 (133–192).

momentum appears to be flying and startling. Even mist and fog crossing in flight, dragon and phoenix coiling, light banners fluttering and stretching, wispy clouds rolling back and forth, cannot encapsulate it.

隴西李君約於江南得蕭子雲壁書飛白“蕭”字，以筆勢驚絕，遂匣而寶之。其遇之之由，則君之贊序與崔監察備論之詳矣。君與字俱載舟還洛陽仁風里第。思所以盡其瞻玩藏置之宜，則箱櫝臨視不時，又有緘啟動搖之變，遂建精室，陷列於垣，復本書之意，得遙觀之美。寂對虛牖，勢若飛驚。雖煙霧交飛，龍鸞縈動，輕旆翻揚，微雲卷舒，不能狀也。

Gentleman Li, because of his extremely high moral character and noble integrity, is well known in his time. He wanders following the pivot of the Way, and forgets glory and gain.⁶⁵ He has an insight into things beyond this world, and spiritually communes with the ancients. In addition to his elegant demeanor, he particularly excels in standard and clerical scripts. The famous calligraphy and other rare works since the Wei and Jin periods [220–420] that he collects have been many. But as these works do not go beyond small pieces of silk or paper, he does not regard them as extraordinarily precious. But because the mural character is an unusual trace, he treats it as a rare treasure. The meaningful form that it carries is not in the common realm. Therefore, Li marveled at it and so constructed a room for it, and composed an essay to record it. As for the character *xiao*, when it is spoken, it sounds distinct and clear; when it is written down, it looks magnificent and orderly. It is suitable for inscribing on a wall. It is suitable for naming a studio. The name “*Xiao Studio*” and this character will together be passed on.⁶⁶

李君以至行雅操，知名當時。逍遙道樞，脫落榮利。識洞物表，神交古人。而風致之餘，特精楷隸。所得魏晉已降名書秘跡多矣，以不越於尺素之間，未為殊珍也。蓋壁字奇蹤，乃為希寶。意象所得，非常域也。故異而室之，文而志之。夫蕭之為言也，切然而清；於文也，蔚然而整。宜乎銘壁，宜乎命齋。蕭齋之名，於此字俱傳矣⁶⁷。

This account is collected in a notable book on the history of calligraphy, the *Essentials of Calligraphy* (*Fashu yaolu* 法書要錄), compiled by the renowned painter, calligrapher, and connoisseur Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠 (ca. 815–ca. 875). The author of the account, Zhang Hongjing, was actually Zhang Yanyuan’s grandfather, a prime minister as well as an art collector in the mid-Tang. Here, Zhang Hongjing records his close friend Li Yue’s construction of the “*Xiao Studio*” (*Xiao zhai* 蕭齋), the name of which is derived from a work of calligraphy

⁶⁵ The phrase “pivot of the Way” (*daoshu* 道樞) refers to the status with no opposites such as “this” or “that,” see *Zhuangzi jishi*, 2.66.

⁶⁶ Zhang Yanyuan, *Fashu yaolu*, ed. Fan Xiangyong 范祥雍 (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1984), pp. 135–36. *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983; 695.7134) includes a short version of this account and attributes it to Zhang Shen 張諗, who was a younger brother of Zhang Hongjing.

⁶⁷ Here I follow the *Shuyuan jinghua* 書苑菁華 version, which reads *yu* 與, rather than *yu* 於, in the closing line; see *Fashu Yaolu*, p. 136.

treasured in this studio.⁶⁸ This calligraphy is distinctly unusual since it is a surviving work in the Flying-White style of the Southern dynasties. The Liang calligrapher Xiao Ziyun, at the request of Emperor Wu of Liang (r. 502–549), inscribed this *xiao* character on the wall of a temple. To obtain possession of this single character, Li Yue, who was also an art collector and connoisseur, traded precious calligraphy works by Huang Xiang 皇象, Yang Xin 羊欣 (370–442) and Xiao Lun 蕭綸 (507–551), as well as a screen painting by Zheng Fashi 鄭法士.⁶⁹ As Zhang Hongjing mentions in the opening of this account, knowledge of the circulation and condition of this calligraphy was introduced by Li Yue and Cui Bei.⁷⁰ Cui Bei's account records the acquisition of the work in detail, and Li Yue's encomium focuses more on the aesthetic value of the *xiao* character. Nicely complementing these two texts, Zhang Hongjing's "Account of the *Xiao* Studio" emphasizes how Li placed this cherished work after he obtained it.

First, Zhang tells us, Li carefully stored the calligraphy work in a case, according to the usual means of displaying and preserving artistic works. Yet, after bringing the work home, Li soon devised a different means of preserving it—he built a studio specially for the purpose of displaying the work and embedded it in the wall of the studio. This separate room not only protected the work from the damage that might ensue from frequent opening and closing, and restored its original form as mural calligraphy, but also enabled Li to view it whenever he liked. Indeed, Zhang uses a series of metaphorical descriptions to show how this single character is viewed, or, we might say, how it refuses to be viewed. Language fails here as the work of art is

⁶⁸ According to Zhang Yanyuan, this studio was in the form of a pavilion (*ting* 亭); see Zhang Yanyuan, *Lidai minghua ji* 歷代名畫記, in Yu Anlan 于安瀾, ed., *Huashi congshu* 畫史叢書 (Shanghai: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1963), 1.6.

⁶⁹ Huang Xiang was a calligrapher in the state of Wu of the Three Kingdoms. Yang Xin was a calligrapher in the Liu-Song period of the Southern Dynasties, who is said to have studied calligraphy with Wang Xianzhi 王獻之 (344–386). Xiao Lun was a son of Emperor Wu of Liang. Zheng Fashi was a painter who lived through the Northern Zhou and Sui dynasties.

⁷⁰ See Li Yue's "Encomium of the *Xiao* Character in the Flying-White Style Written on the Wall" ("Bishu feibai xiao zi zan" 壁書飛白蕭字贊) and Cui Bei's "Account of the *Xiao* Character in the Flying-White Style Written on the Wall" ("Bishu feibai xiao zi ji" 壁書飛白蕭字記). Both are included in the *Fashu yaolu*, pp. 132–35.

so dynamic. Only the studio can provide a perfect space to display its ineffable eminence.

Next Zhang introduces the owner of both the studio and the calligraphy work. The persona of Li Yue, he states, has no attachment to fame or profit, possessing only a penchant for art. This detachment indicates Li Yue's lofty character, while the fondness for calligraphy marks his elegance. His distinctiveness is further demonstrated by the special means he devised to house and display this unusual mural character. The account ends with the naming of the studio. The character *xiao*, we are told, although it refers to a family name in its original context, also suggests purity and decency, and therefore it is appropriate for use as a studio name.

In this way, the account records a complete process of the construction of a studio for the purpose of art connoisseurship. Or to use Zhang's own words, this is a process of "marveling at [the artwork] and so constructing a room for it" 異而室之 and "composing an essay to record it" 文而志之. The first step—designating a separate room as a studio—was not uncommon after the mid-Tang. For instance, in his "Encomium of the *Xiao* Character in the Flying-White Style Written on the Wall," Li Yue portrays his leisure time as follows:

I often appreciate and enjoy ancient calligraphy works, and the favor of painting and calligraphy makes me feel as if I encounter the ancients or make good friends. Moreover, by the zither and wine I feel tranquil and harmonious, and in the studio I dwell at leisure during the day. As for glory and wealth, or lowliness and poverty, at this time, where are they?⁷¹

余每閱翫古跡，而圖書之光，如逢古人，似得良友，加以琴酒靜暢，書齋晝閒，榮富賤貧，是日何在。

Here, a constant joy in Li's everyday life is depicted as viewing works of art in his studio, accompanied by wine and music of the zither. However, the second step—literary celebration of time spent enjoying intellectual practices in one's studio—is rare in the works of mid- and late-Tang scholars or artists. In this regard, the three essays on the *Xiao* Studio are exceptional works, although their attention to the studio still arises largely from the valuable calligraphy work, rather than from the charms of the space itself.

Hence, we have seen that, on the one hand, early examples of literary construction of the

⁷¹ *Fashu Yaolu*, p. 134.

studio space often represent the studio as a hermitage, interchangeable with other iconic reclusive spaces such as the thatched hut deep in the mountains or other rural area. On the other hand, these early examples suggest the literary possibility of shaping the studio as a secluded space for scholarly practices, predicting the ways in which Song literary works would later represent the studio.

II Song Explorations

The Song literati gradually defined the studio as a distinctive cultural space filled with scholarly interests. Not only did the physical space of the studio become increasingly prominent and function as an indispensable space in the daily life of literati; but more importantly, the literati began to celebrate the studio in literature as an enclosed space exclusively for the activities of reading and writing.

At the beginning of the Song dynasty, however, the implications of the studio and the literati's attitudes towards this space are still indefinite. A comparative reading of two poems provides a sense of this: "Being Weary of Studying" ("Juanxue" 倦學) by Liu Jian 劉兼 (fl. 974) and "Repairing the Studio" ("Qi Shuzhai" 緝書齋) by Zhang Yong 張詠 (946–1015). The first poem reads:

樂廣亡來水鏡稀，	Since the passing of Yue Guang, the water mirror has become rare, ⁷²
宓妃媼母混妍媸。	So the beauty of Empress Fu and the ugliness of Momu cannot be distinguished. ⁷³
且于霧裏藏玄豹，	For the moment, the black leopard is hidden in the mist, ⁷⁴
休向窗中問碧鷄。	Don't ask the emerald cock by the window. ⁷⁵

⁷² Wei Guan 衛瓘 (220–291) praised Yue Guang as "the water mirror to other men" 人之水鏡也; see Xu Zhen'e 徐震堦, ed. and annot., *Shishuo xinyu jiaojian* 世說新語校箋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), 8.23.

⁷³ Fu Fei 宓妃 was said to be the goddess of the Luo River. Momu 媼母 was one of the wives of the Yellow Emperor, who was extremely ugly but virtuous.

⁷⁴ On this xuanbao 玄豹 ("black leopard"), see Zhang Jing 張敬, ed. and annot., *Lienü zhuan jinzhū jìnyì* 列女傳今註今譯 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1994), 2.70.

⁷⁵ The emerald cock by the window alludes to the story of Song Chuzong 宋處宗 recorded in the *Youming lu* 幽明錄. It is said that Song Chuzong raised a cock by the window. The cock could speak in human language

百氏典墳空自苦，	With the hundred schools' scriptures and canons, I just bring troubles on myself,
一堆螢雪竟誰知。	With a pile of fireflies and snow, ultimately who knows me? ⁷⁶
門前春色芳如畫，	Outside the door, the spring scenery is as beautiful as in the daytime,
好掩書齋任所之。	I ought to close the studio and go wherever I want. ⁷⁷

The poem is a recitation of complaints. With a density of allusions, the poet expresses his pessimistic attitude toward studying and ultimately decides to shut the studio. The poem begins with an allusion to the celebrity Yue Guang 樂廣 (252–304) of the Western Jin, who was praised as a “water mirror” (*shuijing* 水鏡) who could help others achieve purity and have a penetrating insight. Because now such a water mirror is hard to find, the poet complains, the contemporary world has become a mess. People are even unable to distinguish between the goddess of the Luo River and Momu—that is, between beauty and ugliness. By the same token, the poet, though talented, is not recognized by society. Becoming frustrated, in the second couplet he makes a definitive choice. The black leopard, which hides its beautiful skin in the mountain mist to avoid disaster, is an image of reclusion. The emerald cock resting by the studio window that assists the scholar in studying, conversely, is a symbol of self-cultivation. In a neat antithesis, the poet expresses his approval of the black leopard but refuses to communicate with the emerald cock. Or in other words, as it is of no use to study in the studio, he decides to become a hermit. The following couplet repeats the poet’s belief that studying is useless. Reading the classics of the hundred schools only tortures the poet. Although he is as diligent as Ju Yin 車胤 (ca. 333–ca. 401) and Sun Kang 孫康, who studied at night by the light of fireflies or snow, nobody recognizes him. Finally, the poet decides to free himself from the studio and to enjoy the beauty

and often talked with Song. As a result, Song’s eloquence was greatly improved; see *Yiwen leiju*, 91.1585. Later the “cock window” (*jichuang* 雞窗) was used as a synecdoche of the studio.

⁷⁶ The phrase *yingxue* 螢雪 (“fireflies and snow”) refers to two stories from the fourth century of diligent studying. For Ju Yin’s story, see *Jin shu* 晉書, 83.2177; for Sun Kang’s anecdote, see Xu Jian 徐堅 (659–729), *Chuxue ji* 初學記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 2.28.

⁷⁷ *QSS*, 16.236.

of spring outside.

It is worth noting that the studio in this poem is depicted as a space primarily for studying and reading. The studio is now in contrast with, rather than exemplifying, the reclusive space. The poem thereby breaks from most works of the Tang period on the studio. However, the reading experience in the studio is not yet enjoyable. Unlike Xie Lingyun's "Reading within the Studio," in which the poet ultimately finds comfort in reading the stories of Chang Ju and Jie Ni, Yang Xiong, as well as the *Zhuangzi*, this poem portrays the reading of scriptures and canons as an experience of suffering. Yet, the language the poet uses in voicing his complaint about reading, ironically, draws entirely from reading. Although he claims he is weary of studying, he is not able to break away completely from the scholar's studio.

The closed door of the studio, nevertheless, is reopened in Zhang Yong's "Repairing the Studio," which reads:

綠流北面桃花中，	To the north of the green flowing water, in the midst of peach blossoms,
書齋閑鎖塵蒙籠。	sat a studio quietly locked, veiled with dust.
紗窗掛戶明月空，	Meshed windows hung on the door, in the bright moonlight,
階前草深鳴細蟲。	In front of the stairs, in thick grass, chirped small insects.
千書闕久陰生蠹，	A thousand books had long been closed, so the humidity produced bookworms,
治世之文欲無緒。	Essays on governing the world were about to become clueless.
彫梁語燕不復歸，	Singing swallows on the carved beams did not return,
華池皓鶴先飛去。	White cranes by the Floriate Pond first flew away. ⁷⁸
我來憩駕吟青春，	I came to stop the carriage here to celebrate the spring,
呼奴嘯匠連揮斤。	I called servants, summoned craftsmen, and kept whirling the axe. ⁷⁹
一日整庭戶，	On the first day, I renovated the courtyard,
二日芟荊榛。	On the second day, I cut thorny bushes.
薙草留蕙若，	I weeded, but kept sweet clovers and lavenders,
掃逕連松筠。	I swept the path, and extended it to the pine trees and bamboo.
千花萬木似得意，	A thousand flowers and ten thousand woods seemed to be pleased,
幽香細韻來相親。	Delicate fragrances and subtle resonances came close to me.
衆口藉藉道，	All the people uproariously commented,

⁷⁸ The Floriate Pond 華池 is a legendary pond in the Kunlun Mountains; see Huang Hui 黃暉, *Lunheng jiaoshi 論衡校釋* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), 11.476.

⁷⁹ The phrase *huijin* 揮斤 ("whirling the axe") alludes to the *Zhuangzi*; see *Zhuangzi jishi*, 24.843.

一以如初新。 伊余世上耽書客， 古今萬事羅胸臆。 運海搏風當振翼， 任是青天更高碧。	Consistently they said the studio was as new as its origin. I am a sojourner in the world, addicted to books, Myriad phenomena of the past and present gather in my mind. Stirring the seas and rising up on a whirlwind, I ought to flap my wings, even if I am on the blue sky that is higher and more sapphire. ⁸⁰
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Far removed from Liu Jian's pessimism in "Being Weary of Studying," in this cheerfully optimistic work the poet renovates a dilapidated studio. We can divide this long poem into three parts, from the description of a studio desolate and uncared for (lines 1 through 8), to the renovation of the studio (lines 9 through 18), to the coda commenting on the success of the renovation (lines 19 through 22).

The first part of "Repairing the Studio" works as a continuation of "Being Weary of Studying." Of course, the studios depicted by Liu Jian and Zhang Yong are not the same. But their poems indeed generate an intertextual relationship. We remember that in the closing lines of "Being Weary of Studying," Liu Jian quits the studio to go outside and enjoy the spring scenery. In the opening of "Repairing the Studio," what Zhang Yong finds is exactly such an abandoned studio, enshrouded by the beauty of the spring. In sharp contrast to the springtime river and the glowing peach blossoms, this studio is locked and covered with dust. Long unused, its windows are broken and weeds have grown thick. In consequence, swallows and cranes, which often dwell on richly ornamented and elegant buildings, have flown away, whereas insects abound. Even worse, inside the studio, all the books in the collection are ruined, which metaphorically symbolizes cultural decay.

But the scene of decay changes completely with the arrival of the poet, the lyrical "I" (*wo* 我) in line 9. This "I" is full of energy and confidence in renovating the studio. He takes a series of actions, through which it is easy to sense his dynamism. The verbs *hu* 呼 and *xiao* 嘯 not only mean "to call" or "to summon," but also imply "to roar," suggesting the mood of excitement when the poet directs the servants and craftsmen in the repairs and renovation. In the same line,

⁸⁰ *QSS*, 48.522–23.

another action of “whirling the axe” (*huijin* 揮斤) further highlights his vigor, as it alludes to a story in the *Zhuangzi* in which Carpenter Shi 石 whirled his axe so fast that it generated wind. As a result, the renovation progresses efficiently, with improvements every day. Thorny bushes and grass are weeded; sweet clovers, lavenders, pine trees, and bamboo revive. The selection of plants for the studio is also allegorical. The fragrant herbs are in the tradition of the *Lyrics of Chu*; pine trees and bamboo have been celebrated since the *Book of Rites*, and all are symbols of a person with a beautiful nature and admirable morality.⁸¹ With such efforts, the repair work brings everything into harmony. Moreover, this conclusion is not merely the opinion of the “I.” According to the poet, many in the audience witness the success of his project and confirm that the studio is as new as when it was first built. The poem thereby reverses the loneliness and discouragement of the studio owner in Liu Jian’s “Being Weary of Studying.”

Appraised by his audience, the lyrical “I” (*yiyu* 伊余) appears again in the third part of the poem. Reflecting on his work, he feels pleased that the new studio is a perfect lodging for him—“a sojourner addicted to books” (*danshu ke* 耽書客). The poet further compares himself to the *peng* bird, a huge bird described in the *Zhuangzi*. However, the poem ends far differently from the *Zhuangzi* ending in Xie Lingyun’s “Reading within the Studio.” Rather than detaching himself from the world as Xie does and as prescribed in the *Zhuangzi*, the poet only borrows the free spirit from the image of the *peng* bird to express his ideal of fully developing his abilities and making a great contribution to society.

Up to now, we can clearly see the opposite treatment of the studio by Liu Jian and Zhang Yong. The frustrated mood in “Being Weary of Studying” is replaced in “Repairing the Studio” by enthusiasm. The hundred schools’ canons that bring troubles in the former poem are highly appreciated in “Repairing the Studio,” as they are the gateway to “governing the world” (*zhishi* 治世). The anxiety over the problem of recognition is also resolved in the latter poem. The studio

⁸¹ On the implication of *songyun* 松筠 (“pine trees and bamboo”), see *Liji zhengyi*, 10.716.

is no longer a prison for its owner, but becomes a space imbued with distinctive scholarly interests, allowing its owner to immerse himself in reading and to prepare himself for great social achievements.

The renovation of the studio can be seen at the same time as an innovation in the literary construction of the studio space. The poem, in this sense, establishes a fundamental tone for poetry on the studio in the Song. This innovation, allegorically, reflects the shifting of intellectual values that emerged in the founding of the Song dynasty. The detailed background to the writing of Liu Jian's and Zhang Yong's works is not clear. We know, however, that Liu Jian lived from the time of the Five Dynasties through the Song, whereas Zhang Yong, who passed the civil service examination and achieved the *jinshi* degree in 980, was considered a representative of the new social class of Song literati, who took the reconstruction of "This Culture of Ours" (*siwen* 斯文) as their own responsibility.⁸² Zhang Yong's creativity in the poetry on the studio should also be considered a reflection of the literati's ambitious project of the renewal of civilization. In brief, the repaired studio, as represented in Zhang Yong's poem, becomes a symbol of the newly established literati culture in the Song.

What is missing from "Repairing the Studio" is the specific use of this renovated space. Zhang Yong's contemporary Wang Yuchen 王禹偁 (954–1001), however, clarifies the use of his own studio in his "Account of the Studio of No Resentment" ("Wuyun zhai ji" 無愠齋記). The account reads:

A person of ancient times showed no sign of pleasure when he was awarded an official post three times; and he showed no sign of resentment when he was removed three times from the post. In the previous reign, I was demoted from the post of the Left Remonstrator and the Drafter to the Vice Military Training Commissioner of Shangzhou. Again I was removed from the post of the Hanlin Academician and was sent to be the Prefect of Chuzhou. Now the emperor ascended the throne. I was removed from the post of the Director of the Bureau of Judicial Administration and the Drafter and was sent to govern Qi'an. In the second year after I arrived at the prefecture, I constructed a studio to the west of the public offices. I therefore traced to the ancient principle and took "No Resentment" as the studio's name.

⁸² Generally speaking, "This Culture of Ours" stands for the idea of a civilization that combined both the legacy of antiquity and the patterns of the natural order; see Peter Bol, "This Culture of Ours," pp. 1–3. For Zhang Yong's view on this notion, see Peter Bol, "This Culture of Ours," pp. 157–60.

古人三仕無喜色，三已之無慍色。某在先朝，自左司諫知制誥，左遷商州團練副使；又自翰林學士出知滌上。今天子即位，自尚書刑部郎中、知制誥，出守齊安。到郡之明年，作書齋於公署之西偏，因徵古義，以“無慍”為名。

My successors, who govern this prefect, in leisure time for retreating from the office, should use the zither, books, poems, and wine to make the studio a place for entertaining guests. If one still has energy to spare, then it is fine to gather eminent monks or Daoist priests to boil tea or refine herbs. If there are those who change my studio into a slaughterhouse, kitchen, stable, or warehouse, they are not my sort.⁸³

後之人治是郡者，公退之暇，當以琴書詩酒為娛賓之地，有餘力則召高僧道士煮茶煉藥可矣。若易吾齋而為庖廚廩庫者，非吾徒也。

Wang Yuchen held office during the reigns of both Emperor Taizong (r. 976–997) and Emperor Zhenzong (r. 997–1022). Like Zhang Yong, Wang was celebrated for his forthright criticism of politics. For this reason, he was banished three times: first to Shangzhou (in modern Shaanxi Province) and then to Chuzhou (in modern Anhui Province); he wrote this account in 1000, during his third banishment, to Qi'an (in modern Hubei Province). There he constructed a studio next door to the office. Yet, despite his exile, in his account of the studio Wang does not express upset feelings or give vent to frustration. Rather, he finds comfort in a conversation between Confucius and his disciple Zizhang 子張 (b. 503 BCE) recorded in the *Analects*, discussing the character of Ziwen 子文, who served as prime minister in the state of Chu. As Zizhang summarizes:

When the prime minister Ziwen was awarded three times the official post of prime minister, he showed no sign of pleasure; when he was removed three times from the post, he showed no sign of resentment. He, as the former prime minister, definitely informed the new prime minister about his administrative policies.⁸⁴

令尹子文三仕為令尹，無喜色；三已之，無慍色。舊令尹之政，必以告新令尹。

In view of this, Confucius praised Ziwen for his “loyalty” (*zhong* 忠). Showing his approval of Ziwen’s attitude toward the ups and downs in the official career, Wang Yuchen named his own studio “No Resentment” (Wuyun 無慍). The mood embodied in this name immediately

⁸³ *QSW*, 157.78.

⁸⁴ *Lunyu yizhu*, 5.19.

differentiates Wang's studio from Liu Jian's in "Being Weary of Studying," and again reflects the new intellectual values that emerged in the early Song. As Wang is confident of his integrity and talents, even though he is dismissed, he is able to maintain a positive attitude and find ways to settle his mind.

Besides conducting local government affairs, a crucial way to settle the mind is to enjoy daily life in the Studio of No Resentment. Accordingly, what Wang desires to transmit to his successors is not only the administrative policies his office has followed (as Ziwen did to his successor), but also the studio. In the second half of the account, therefore, Wang sets rules for use of the studio in a serious tone. He first clarifies that the studio should be used "in leisure time for retreating from the office" (*gongtui zhi xia* 公退之暇). That is, the studio, as a place for leisure, nicely complements the public office, and enjoyment of time spent in the studio does not conflict with the duty of a prefect. Next, Wang delimits the function of the studio. First, the studio is primarily "a place for entertaining guests" (*yubin zhi di* 娛賓之地), with elegant activities such as playing the zither, reading books, writing poems, and drinking wine. If this is not enough, Wang also allows Buddhist monks or Daoist priests to be invited into the studio, for boiling tea or refining herbs. As we can see, for Wang, the studio can be a place for both scholarly and religious practices.

Indeed, in a poem entitled "The Studio" ("Shuzhai" 書齋), Wang expresses a similar idea. The first half of the poem reads:

年年賃宅住閑坊，
也作幽齋著道裝。

守靜便爲生白室，
著書兼是草玄堂。

Every year I rent a house and live in a quiet ward,
Even so, I construct a secluded studio and wear the Daoist robe
within it.
I preserve stillness, and so it becomes the "light-filled room,"⁸⁵
I write books, and therefore it is also the Hall of Composing the
Supreme Mystery.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ On the term *shoujing* 守靜 ("preserving stillness"), see Wang Bi, annot., *Laozi daodejing zhu jiaoshi* 老子道德經注校釋, ed. Lou Yulie 樓宇烈 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2008), 16.35. On the *shengbai shi* 生白室 ("light-filled room"), see *Zhuangzi jishi*, 4.150.

⁸⁶ *QSS*, 66.750.

In the opening couplet, the poet declares that wherever he travels, he must have a studio. Even though his life is not stable because he travels frequently on official business and must often live in rented houses, he never forgets to designate a secluded room to be his studio. To explain the function of such a room, in the second couplet, the poet compares his studio to the “light-filled room” (*shengbai shi* 生白室) and the Hall of Composing the *Supreme Mystery*. The first comparison draws our attention to the religious attributes of the space; an empty room with light coming through a hole in the wall is a well-known metaphor in the *Zhuangzi*, depicting the ideal of fasting one’s mind in order to attain enlightenment. Wearing a Daoist robe, the poet therefore achieves stillness and purifies himself in this room. On the other hand, by means of the second analogy (to Yang Xiong’s Hall of Composing the *Supreme Mystery*) the poet stresses the scholarly aspects of his studio. Wang selects a fragment from the life of Yang Xiong that presents a stark contrast to that in Xie Lingyun’s “Reading within the Studio.” Unlike the official who jumped out of the Imperial Library, Yang Xiong in diligently composing the *Supreme Mystery* is said to have kept his integrity and refused to curry favor with those in power.⁸⁷ Hence, by these two analogies, Wang again points to the double functions of his studio as a site for religious practices and scholarly activities. But unlike the studio functions described in his “Account of the Studio of No Resentment,” in this poem Wang emphasizes the secluded attributes of his studio. All practices within the studio are performed by the poet himself, rather than shared with guests or priests.

Thus, both the narrative account and the poem reveal that the studio is an integral part of Wang’s life; nonetheless, the studio does not possess one type of significance to the exclusion of others; its functions still sometimes overlap with those of other spaces for social gathering. The studio is clearly distinct, however, from the “slaughterhouse, kitchen, stable, or warehouse” (*paochu jiuku* 庖廚廐庫). Those who pursue lowbrow activities in the studio, Wang declares, are

⁸⁷ *Han shu* 漢書, 87.3565–66.

not “my sort” (*wutu* 吾徒).⁸⁸

The literary establishment of a studio with distinctive significance would have to wait until the generation of Ouyang Xiu. Through several works on the topic of the studio, the famed Song figure Ouyang Xiu and his companions made innovative efforts in shaping the studio as an enclosed space for the fulfillment of literati’s intellectual pursuits. By way of illustration the following “Account of the Eastern Studio” (“Dongzhai ji” 東齋記), composed in 1033, shows how Ouyang Xiu raises several key issues in regard to the literati studio space. Ouyang Xiu begins by stating:

To the east of the government offices, there is a pavilion for resting leisurely. There are those who call it a studio [*zhai*], saying that one may dwell in idleness and pacify the mind in order to nurture one’s thoughts, as if one is abstinent [*zhai*] in this place—it is for this reason it is called a *zhai*. The Assistant Magistrate of Henan District, Zhang Yingzhi [the courtesy name of Zhang Gu 張谷], resides in the district offices, and he also fixed up a small studio. Although Henan is an imperial district, there are only seven or eight thousand taxpaying households, and the income from farming hardly reaches the field with one-*zhong* harvest. The population is sparse, and the soil is not fertile; therefore there are few lawsuits. Fortunately there are few famine years and also no rent in arrears. In general, the duties of an Assistant Magistrate are quite few. Consequently, Yingzhi never worries about official obligations, but is able to delight in leisure and carefree pleasures. Moreover, Yingzhi has long been sickly and emaciated, so it is fitting for him to have that by which he can dwell in idleness and pacify his mind.

官署之東有閣以燕休，或曰齋，謂夫閒居平心以養思慮，若於此而齋戒也，故曰齋。河南主簿張應之居縣署，亦理小齋。河南雖赤縣，然征賦之民戶才七八千，田利之入率無一鍾之畝。人稀，土不膏腴，則少爭訟。幸而歲不大凶，亦無逋租。凡主簿之所職者甚簡少，故未嘗憂吏責，而得優遊以嬉。應之又素病羸，宜其有以閒居而平心者也。

The opening lines play on the term *zhai* 齋, which carries a double meaning here. Although the studio is constructed as a pavilion (*ge* 閣), it is still generally regarded as a studio (*zhai*). This is because the use of the pavilion—for “dwelling in idleness” (*xianju* 閒居) and “pacifying the mind” (*pingxin* 平心)—reminds people of the practice of “being abstinent” (*zhaijie* 齋戒), which is expressed by the same character *zhai*. Indeed, as *Shuowen jiezi* explains, “*Zhai* means being

⁸⁸ Later, this Studio of No Resentment did in fact become a stable. Fortunately, at the end of the Northern Song, it was reconstructed as a studio by an official there; see Zhu Bian 朱弁 (1085–1144), *Quwei jiuwen* 曲洧舊聞, ed. Kong Fanli (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2002), 8.205.

abstinent, being clean” 齋：戒，潔也。⁸⁹ This underscores the character’s connotations of self-purification and mental pacification. When it is used as a spatial term, the character thus denotes a space for maintaining precepts and calming the mind.⁹⁰ Hence, based on this usage of *zhai*, Ouyang is able to define the underlying feature of the studio as a space for mental purification.

Following this, however, instead of depicting the studio and the practices that occur within it, Ouyang still wanders outside, introducing the administrative affairs of the district. Henan is an imperial district, he says, which is the highest among the seven categories of districts.⁹¹ Therefore, as the Assistant Magistrate of Henan, the studio owner Zhang Gu should be very busy. But the district fortunately is at peace, and thus government affairs there are not heavy. This seemingly digressive paragraph, in effect, justifies Zhang’s enjoying life in the studio. Primarily because his official duties are easily fulfilled, it is fitting for Zhang to spend much of his time at leisure in the studio, rather than working in the office. In a word, Ouyang’s “digression” is critical, as it conveys that the proper management of official service works as a prerequisite of self-enjoyment in the studio.

Another reason for Zhang to stay in the studio, we are told, is that he is in poor health and needs rest. As for how the studio cures illness, Ouyang explains in the next paragraph:

Although Yingzhi is sickly, he exerts himself in studying. He often says, “My illness is caused because my vital energy is stagnated and does not move, and my blood is blocked and flows backwards. Therefore, this illness makes me cough up blood. However, whenever my body does not feel comfortable, I choose either the Six Classics and the hundred schools, or works written by the ancients, and read them aloud. I love their in-depth, broad, brilliant, and magnificent discourses. In this case, I would definitely become cloudy and so begin to ponder, and feel at ease and thus be pacified. Therefore I am so relieved that I do not realize that illness is with me.” Accordingly, he abundantly accumulates ancient books and writings, and stores them in the studio. Whenever he takes a rest for a while, he then explores and reads there.

⁸⁹ *Shuowen jiezi*, 1A.8a.

⁹⁰ For example, in the religious context, *zhai* often refers to the abstinence hall dedicated for Buddhist observances; see Robert Ford Campany, “Abstinence Halls (*zhaitang* 齋堂) in Lay Households in Early Medieval China,” *Studies in Chinese Religions* 1.4 (2015): 323–43.

⁹¹ Districts are ranked in seven categories according to prestige and population size; see Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), p. 32.

應之雖病，然力自為學，常曰：“我之疾，氣留而不行，血滯而流逆，故其病咳血。然每體之不康，則或取六經、百氏，若古人述作之文章誦之，愛其深博闊達、雄富偉麗之說，則必茫乎以思，暢乎以平，釋然不知疾之在體。”因多取古書文字貯齋中，少休，則探以覽焉。

Zhang's preoccupation with studying and reading in the studio brings him relief from his serious illness. This theme can be traced back to the "Seven Stimuli" ("Qifa" 七發) by the noted rhapsody writer Mei Sheng 枚乘 (d. 140 BCE) in the Western Han. In that rhapsody, the Crown Prince of Chu fell ill, and a guest from Wu visited him. The guest suggested various sensual pleasures to comfort the prince but his efforts failed. However, the prince immediately recovered from his sickness by imagining listening to the "important sayings and marvelous doctrines" (*yaoyan miaodao* 要言妙道) of the sages and dialecticians.⁹² Now, Ouyang creatively transforms the charm of ancient figures whose words have healing powers to suggest an almost magical power of the studio. Here, the action of "abundantly accumulating ancient books and writings, and storing them in the studio" 多取古書文字貯齋中 is indispensable to healing. The studio allows its owner to read these ancient books and therefore to communicate with the learned ancients at any time he wants. As a result, his mind is pacified and he is healed.

Ouyang comments further on this "studio therapy" in the following paragraph:

As for those who are good at medical skills in the world, they must abundantly store things such as the elixirs and hundreds of herbs in order to poison the illness. These substances inevitably make patients dizzy and then cure the disease. Yingzhi alone is able to peacefully dwell in the studio so as to nurture his thoughts, and further pacifies his mind by means of the Way of the sages, and then he forgets his illness. Indeed he is like the ancients who were fond of goodness!

夫世之善醫者，必多畜金石百草之物以毒其疾，須其暝眩而後瘳。應之獨能安居是齋以養思慮，又以聖人之道和平其心而忘厥疾，真古之樂善者歟！

Here, Ouyang analogizes the studio owner to a good doctor. Like a doctor who must store many medicines, Zhang collects many books in his studio to relieve his suffering. Nevertheless, the therapeutic processes invoked are different. As the *Book of Documents* (*Shangshu* 尚書) states,

⁹² *Wen xuan*, 34.1559–73.

“If the medicine does not make one dizzy, one’s sickness cannot be cured” 若藥弗暝眩，厥疾弗瘳。⁹³ While the medicines a doctor prescribes inevitably distress the patient, Zhang’s use of the studio, conversely, consistently makes his body comfortable and even nourishes his mind, as he follows the Way of the sages. This contrast thus further demonstrates the studio’s function of mental cultivation.

In the closing paragraph, Ouyang turns his attention to the immediate surroundings of the studio:

Beside the studio, there is a small pond, with bamboo and trees surrounding it. Yingzhi often invites guests to sit amid them. They drink wine, talk and laugh, without weariness even for the whole day. Since before I followed Yingzhi there, I inscribed this on the wall.⁹⁴

傍有小池，竹樹環之，應之時時引客坐其間，飲酒言笑，終日不倦。而某嘗從應之於此，因書於其壁。

With a pond, bamboo, and trees, a gardenscape is constructed outside the studio. Activities in the garden, we can see, include day-long social gatherings and banquets. A clear distinction is outlined between the uses of the studio and the garden. In the studio Zhang enjoys himself, whereas in the garden he hosts his guests. In other words, the guests are limited to the natural area and not allowed to intrude on the studio. We still remember that in Wang Yuchen’s “Account of the Studio of No Resentment,” Wang allows his studio to serve as “a place for entertaining guests.” However, in Ouyang’s hands, the studio is defined as a space for the individual self, providing an enclosed domain for the studio owner to cultivate his internal state of mind without being required to communicate with others.

Up until this point, in the “Account of the Eastern Studio,” we see recurring themes from Xie Lingyun’s “Reading within the Studio.” Both works stress the fulfillment of official responsibilities as the prerequisite for the enjoyment of leisure time, and both studio owners claim that they are sickly. More importantly, their sicknesses are ameliorated by extensive time

⁹³ Li Min 李民, and Wang Jian 王健, ed. and annot., *Shangshu yizhu* 尚書譯注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2004), p. 170.

⁹⁴ Li Yi’an 李逸安, ed., *Ouyang Xiu quanji* 歐陽修全集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 64.935.

spent reading in the studio, which comforts and purifies their minds. What makes Ouyang's account from Xie's work, however, is the clear definition of the studio space. The comparatively vague *zhai* in Xie's poem is now specified as the Eastern Studio. This studio embodies as well as reconciles the double meaning of *zhai*, shaped as a space set apart, dedicated to intellectual practices and enjoyed by the studio owner himself.

The Eastern Studio is just one of many examples of the representation of the studio space by Ouyang and his literary circles. The principal characteristics of the studio Ouyang describes are shared among their works and were further inherited by future generations. Later works on the studio adopt similar themes, imagery, and rhetoric from these early explorations and at the same time develop or negotiate with them. About two hundred years after Ouyang composed the "Account of the Eastern Studio," another account of an Eastern Studio further illustrates these principles. This time, in the "Account of the Eastern Studio in the Administrative Offices of the Stabilization Fund Bureau" ("Changpingsi ganting Dongzhai ji" 常平司幹廳東齋記), we can observe how the key issues that Ouyang raises in regard to the studio are echoed and evolved.

In 1231, Li Zhitui 李知退 composed this account on behalf of his cousin Li Zhizhi 李知至 (1187–1250), who was at that time a subordinate official of the Stabilization Fund Bureau. In describing his studio, however, Li Zhitui first introduces the administrative affairs of the bureau, as Ouyang does in the opening of the "Account of the Eastern Studio." But Li Zhitui reverses Ouyang's strategy of spotlighting the simplicity of government affairs as a justification for passing leisure time in the studio. Rather, he emphasizes that the management of tea and salt monopolies in the bureau is very complicated and so an official's duties there are extremely heavy. Then he turns to the need of a studio:

[The official's] hard work is indeed extreme. But during one's retreat from the office, there must be a place for concentrating on studying, for devoting himself to cultivation, and for keeping study in mind when wandering in delight or in retiring. This place can nurture his vitality, relax his mind, and pacify the body, and thus he is capable of coping with future affairs. As for the branch of the Stabilization Fund Bureau, although its official residence was generally complete, it had not had a single room to serve the interests of privacy. Isn't this a deficiency? In the last month of winter in 1230, since my cousin Zhizhong [the courtesy name

of Li Zhizhi] took this official position, he calculated his monthly income, considerably took its surplus, accumulated and saved little by little. By the fourth month of the next year, he had saved several strings of coins. So he assembled construction workers and calculated building materials. To the north of the offices, he opened up land and built two houses. Then he used “Eastern Studio” to name it.

勞其至矣，而其退也必有藏修遊息之地，蓄精神，舒心目，安形體，乃可以應方來之事。常平之屬，其廡宇雖略備，乃未有一室以便其私，此非缺歟？紹定庚寅季冬之月，予弟致中既服官次，計月廩之入，頗取其盈，銖累而寸積之。明年四月得緡錢若干，鳩工度材，即廳事之北，闢地爲屋二楹，而以東齋名之。

Exactly because the official is so industrious, Li Zhitui declares, a retreat is urgently needed. This retreat should act as an indispensable complement to the public offices. Li generalizes the function of the site as “a place for concentrating on studying, for devoting himself to cultivation, and for keeping study in mind when wandering in delight or in retiring” 藏修遊息之地. In fact, he borrows this assertion from a statement in the *Book of Rites*, which reads, “As for studying, the gentleman concentrates on it, devotes himself to cultivating it, thinks about it when retiring, and keeps it in mind when wandering in delight” 君子之於學也，藏焉，脩焉，息焉，遊焉。⁹⁵ The original text from the *Book of Rites* depicts the ideal state of studying. Yet, what is creative in Li’s account is the specification of the studio as the space in which this ideal can be attained. Of course, like the studio in Ouyang’s account, this studio is also a place to pacify one’s mind and recuperate one’s strength. But connecting the studio to the classical ideal of study further accentuates the significant status of the studio.

Another aspect that Li Zhitui highlights is the construction costs of the studio. In the passage above, we already see that Li Zhizhi raises the money entirely from savings of his own salary, without appropriating public funds. In the next passage (not cited here), Li Zhitui continues to praise Li Zhizhi for this generosity, noting that although he built the studio as his own retreat, future officials will enjoy it as well. In this sense, Li Zhizhi actually uses his personal property to benefit the public, which demonstrates his morality and nobility.

Furthermore, as the ending sentences of the cited passage indicate, although the studio was

⁹⁵ *Liji zhengyi*, 18.1058.

constructed on a site north of the offices, Li Zhizhi named it the Eastern Studio. Neither the namer nor the author of the account questions this decision. Rather, Li Zhitui writes:

Yet, in regard to the implications of naming the studio [*zhai*], there is still something that can be discussed. We say “fasting [*zhai*] the mind”⁹⁶; we say “solemnity [*zhai*], seriousness, adherence to the Mean, and correctness”⁹⁷; we say “being abstinent [*zhai*] and bathing oneself”⁹⁸; we say “fasting [*zhai*] and purifying themselves and putting on the richest dresses”⁹⁹—the implications of *zhai* are serious to such an extent. Now you raise the name of the Eastern Studio. While staying in the studio, you reflect upon its name. Then the construction of the studio is not just for making the body in leisure nor just as a place for resting in idleness. Only after offering one’s services, can one dwell in leisure. Only after the accomplishment of duties, can one have the enjoyment of resting in idleness. The studio admonishes and encourages us, as if our strict teachers and esteemed friends are in front of us. So there must be little indolence or dissipation that would blind our thoughts; there must be little flattery or adulation that would take away our principles.¹⁰⁰ Wicked Mind and evil thoughts invisibly disappear before they are aroused. Great impartiality and perfect correctness are prevalent in occasions with extensive adaptability. If we carry out this mind, it is fitting to use it to form a trinity with Heaven and Earth and to assist in the transforming and nourishing process.¹⁰¹ Is this merely an issue of fulfilling one’s duty as a subordinate official? I dare not talk about this to others, but only tell you, my cousin. Zhizhong, please do your utmost!

然名齋之義尚有可言，曰齋心，曰齋莊中正，曰齋戒沐浴，曰齋明盛服，齋之為義其嚴如此。今揭名東齋，居其齋，思其名，則齋之建也，非專以逸其身也，非專以燕閒之地也。服勞乃可以居逸，職業之修乃可燕閒之適。警戒策勵，常若嚴師畏友之在前，必無荒怠逸豫以昏吾志也，必無便僻側媚以奪吾守也。非心邪念潛消於未發之先，大公至正流行於泛應之際，推是心也，以之參天地、贊化育可也，豈但一屬官稱職而已！予不敢以語他人，獨以告吾弟，致中勉之哉！

As for the moment when public business has been finished, with clerks disperse and the

⁹⁶ The phrase *zhaxin* 齋心 (“fasting the mind”) is from *Liezi*; see Yang Bojun, ed. and annot., *Liezi jishi* 列子集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), 2.40. The *xinzhai* 心齋 is much better known; see *Zhuangzi jishi*, 4.146–47.

⁹⁷ This sentence is from the *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhongyong* 中庸); see *Liji zhengyi*, 53.1460. In the *Doctrine of the Mean*, it reads 齋莊中正. The meanings of “solemnity,” “fasting,” or “being abstinent,” *qi* 齊 and *zhai* 齋 are often interchangeable. Here I use the translation by Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969 printing, 1963), p. 112, with slight revision.

⁹⁸ This sentence is from the *Mozi*; see Wu Yujiang 吳毓江, annot., *Mozi jiaozhu* 墨子校注, ed. Sun Qizhi 孫啓治 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1993), 27.303.

⁹⁹ This sentence is from the *Doctrine of the Mean*; see *Liji zhengyi*, 52.1443. In the *Doctrine of the Mean*, it reads 齋明盛服. Here I use the translation by Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, p. 102.

¹⁰⁰ The phrase *pianpi cemei* 便僻側媚 (“flattery or adulation”) is from the *Shangshu*; see *Shangshu yizhu*, p. 397.

¹⁰¹ This sentence is a paraphrase of a line in the *Doctrine of the Mean*: 可以贊天地之化育，則可以與天地參矣, 53.1448. I consult the translation by Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, p. 108.

courtyard empty, there are the summer breeze that cools the bamboo mat and the winter sun that shines upon the thatched hut. During a nice day or a beautiful night, with a goblet of wine, you discuss writings. This pleasure is endless. Some other day when your letter comes, why not describe it to me?¹⁰²

若夫公事既畢，吏散庭空，涼竹簟之暑風，曝茅簷之冬日，好天良夜，樽酒論文，其樂無涯，他日書來，盍為我言之。

Though not explicitly stated, the concern over naming of the Eastern Studio—particularly regarding the implications of *zhai*—reveals the possible connection between Li Zhitui’s account and Ouyang Xiu’s “Account of the Eastern Studio.” Continuing Ouyang’s play on the double meaning of *zhai* (“the studio” and “being abstinent”), Li Zhitui finds more evidence of use of the character *zhai* in the canons. These examples are scattered throughout the texts of the *Zhuangzi*, *Mozi*, and *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhongyong* 中庸). But although some use *zhai* in its comparatively original meaning of “fasting” and others use the character in its extended sense suggesting “solemnity,” Li Zhitui finds a common point—*zhai* always implies something serious and strict (*yan* 嚴). Based on this implication, Li Zhitui suggests revising Ouyang’s definition of the studio. In the “Account of the Eastern Studio,” Ouyang uses *zhai* primarily to mean self-purification and therefore positions the studio as a place for dwelling in idleness and pacifying the mind. Admittedly, Li Zhitui accepts this feature as well. In the closing lines cited above, Li also imagines the studio owner’s endless pleasure in passing his leisure in the studio. However, Li emphasizes the seriousness and sincerity associated with the practice of abstinence. Hence, he clarifies that the studio is not simply for resting in idleness. Rather, he emphasizes the aspects of seriousness and self-restraint associated with the studio. He not only stresses once again that accomplishment of official duties is the prerequisite for personal enjoyment; more crucially, by using the language of Neo-Confucianism, he shapes the studio as the pathway to cultivation of morality and finally to attainment of the Heavenly Way as stated in the *Doctrine of the Mean*.

With this Neo-Confucian interpretation of the effect of the studio, this account reflects a new dimension in the literary genealogy of the studio space. It samples how a later representation of

¹⁰² *QSW*, 7665.83-84.

the studio echoes and rewrites its early model. At the same time, the account also partially shows how a studio can “serve the interests of privacy” (*bian qi si* 便其私), a notion that I will scrutinize in the next chapter.

Chapter Two: The Studio as a Private Space

“Official documents and judicial dossiers are restricted to the Hall of Making Governance Evenhanded. In the studio, they are not known” 簿書獄訟止於平政堂，齋中不知也。¹⁰³
—Wang Shipeng 王十朋 (1112–1171), “Account of the Studio of Unrestraint” (“Xiaosa zhai ji” 瀟灑齋記)

Spatiality carries the imprint of subjectivity, as a space is always encoded with personal or social practices performed by the subject. At the same time, a space also shapes and determines subjectivity and practices. In the line cited above, Wang Shipeng, as a Song literatus, succinctly indicates that only in the office space should public services, such as dealing with government affairs and handling legal cases, be conducted, whereas the studio space is separated from all of these matters. However, if the studio does not encompass political affairs, what activities should be “known” in a studio? And how do these activities shape the studio space? This chapter will tackle the issue of how Song literati defined the studio as a private space in their literary writings and how this space framed their intellectual activities. I answer this question by exploring literary works that take as their subject matter distinctive activities in which the literati engaged in their physical studios, their construction of temporary studios (for instance, a studio on a boat), and their construction of imaginary studios in the mind.

I The Spatial and Temporal Dimensions

In constructing the studio as a private space exclusively enjoyed by the individual self, through literary works, Song literati clearly separated the studio from the political or domestic domain. In so doing they further defined privacy in terms of both spatial and temporal dimensions.

The sharp distinction between a government office and a studio, as Wang Shipeng asserts, is one that was broadly shared among Song literati. It is even used as a trope in studio poems and accounts in order to highlight the studio as a personal retreat from the public world. Chao

¹⁰³ *QSW*, 4636.128.

Gongsu's 晁公邁 (*jinsi* 1138) poem "The Studio" ("Shuzhai" 書齋) is a typical example in this sense:

廷尉已執天下平，	The Chamberlain of the Law has taken charge and all under Heaven is pacified,
更出一節令循行。	Moreover once a tally is issued, the command is carried out.
時清斷獄歲大減，	The age is peaceful, so the lawsuits greatly decrease by year,
小臣何功君聖明。	What merit does the minor official have?—The emperor is enlightened.
紙窗風破夜自語，	The paper window is torn by the wind—the night speaks to itself,
瓦溝雨來寒有聲。	In the tile gutters the rain comes—the cold possesses a sound.
官閒無事但宴坐，	Idle in office and without concerns, I just sit at leisure,
滿室惟對書縱橫。	Filling the room, all I face are books piled up this way and that. ¹⁰⁴

The title of the poem reveals that its focus must be a studio. However, it is easy to see that the first half of the poem delivers an encomium to the government. It is not until the second half that the poem turns to the studio. Moreover, the rhetoric used in the two halves of the poem is also distinct.

The first two couplets unfold a picture of brilliant government. Under the leadership of the enlightened emperor, "all under Heaven" (*tianxia* 天下) is highly disciplined and regulated, and the poet, as a minor official, has fulfilled his duty. By virtue of the collective efforts of the court and the offices, all political commands are carried out effectively, crime has decreased, and the whole country is pacified.

The studio scene represented in the last two couplets, conversely, completely lacks order. The paper window has been torn by the wind, and books lie about haphazardly. This is a space where little social interference occurs, but rather belongs uniquely to the poet. The space is so quiet that the sounds of rain and wind can be clearly heard. It provides an enclosed space for the poet to "sit at leisure" (*yanzuo* 宴坐), immersed in reading as he pleases.

This contrast between the halves of the poem, on the one hand, reminds us of Ouyang Xiu's "Account of the Eastern Studio" discussed in Chapter 1. In the account, Ouyang introduces the

¹⁰⁴ *QSS*, 2001.22425.

stability of the district prior to his celebration of the leisurely studio life that the assistant magistrate enjoys, which implies that the accomplishment of public business is a prerequisite for self-enjoyment in the studio. Chao's poem, by juxtaposing the government scene and the studio scene, further clarifies this point. It is the political achievements elaborated in the first half of the poem that enable the poet to pass his time "idle in office and without concerns" (*guanxian wushi* 官閒無事) and to behave according to his own desires. On the other hand, this bisectonal structure of the poem also underscores a clear delimitation between the public and private spaces. The public affairs to which the first half of the poem alludes should not interfere in the personal studio, delineated in the second half. In the studio all is casual, and the outside world with its rules and its enforcement of laws is not of concern in the studio.

As a private space, the studio is separated not only from government-related but also from domestic affairs. In Zheng Qingzhi's 鄭清之 (1176–1251) poem "Sitting Alone in the Studio" ("Shuzhai duzuo" 書齋獨坐), for instance, family relations are replaced by other elements in the studio:

避事寧違俗，	Avoiding my service, I rather reject the common realm,
端居悟及身。	When I sit idly, enlightenment extends to my person.
穎泓供媵御，	The brushtips and inkpools serve as concubines and maids, ¹⁰⁵
方冊替親賓。	Bamboo scripts and volumes substitute for relatives and guests.
室闇月闌入，	The room is dark so the moonlight bursts right in,
庭空花自陳。	The yard is empty yet the flowers display themselves.
所安惟適耳，	What comforts me is just how this suits me,
誰復辨秋春。	Who can still distinguish between autumn and spring? ¹⁰⁶

The poem title, referencing "sitting alone" (*duzuo* 獨坐), points clearly to the solitude of the studio. Indeed, each couplet of the poem describes this solitude from a distinct perspective. The opening couplet immediately delimits a private space from the outside. The poet, as the studio owner, declares himself uninterested in the "common realm" (*su* 俗); he prefers to sit idly in his

¹⁰⁵ The phrase *yinghong* 穎泓 ("brushtips and inkpools") is the synecdoche for writing brushes and inkstones. On the origin of this phrase and its significance for the studio, see Chapter 4.

¹⁰⁶ *QSS*, 2905.34669.

studio. In such a relaxed atmosphere, he experiences a moment of enlightenment. To depict more of his private experience, in the second couplet, the poet imaginatively substitutes studio objects for his domestic relations. Writing brushes and inkstones replace concubines and maids; various books take the place of relatives and guests. In the studio, family activities are entirely absent; instead, scholarly objects and books keep company with the studio owner. This substitution guarantees the poet a space for staying alone, to read and write in private.

The next couplet turns to the surroundings of the studio. The rhetoric here is very similar to that of the third couplet in Chao Gongsu's "The Studio" analyzed above. The moon and the flowers, the sole entities to display themselves, appear entirely natural, subject to no external interference. Finally, the ending couplet directly shows the mood of the poet when he "sits alone" in the studio. The space is congenial, and its owner so comfortable and absorbed in his musings that he becomes oblivious to the passage of time.

In this way, the poet shapes the studio into a space for the individual self, disengaged from interpersonal communication even with family or guests. A poem by Wen Tong 文同 (1018–1079) further warns, though in a jocular way, about the danger of guests' intrusion into the studio.

It reads:

"Inscribing on the New Wall of My Friend's Studio" 題友人書齋新壁

彩櫥縱橫設，	Colorful book jackets are arranged in stacks and rows,
雕厨次第開。	Decorated bookcases have been opened in succession.
須防何法盛，	You should watch out for He Fasheng,
直入此中來。	He may rush straight in here. ¹⁰⁷

The poet composes this quatrain in honor of the renovation of a studio owned by his friend. The first couplet, indeed, celebrates the glory of the studio—the book jackets are exquisite and the bookcases beautifully arranged. In the second half, however, Wen Tong's tone suddenly becomes cautionary; he has advice to offer the studio owner. He expresses his worry through an anecdote about He Fasheng 何法盛 and Xi Shao 希紹. According to the *History of the Southern Dynasties*

¹⁰⁷ QSS, 445.5420.

(*Nan shi* 南史), after Xi Shao finished writing a historical work entitled *History of the Eastern Jin* (*Jin zhongxing shu* 晉中興書), He Fasheng schemed to induce Xi to inscribe He's name on the book in order to enhance He's reputation. Not surprisingly, Xi refused. But in Xi's absence, He slipped into Xi's studio and stole the manuscript. Consequently, this book then circulated under He Fasheng's name.¹⁰⁸ Of course, Wen Tong's use of this allusion is playful. It serves more as a compliment to the studio, implying that the studio collection is so valuable that others will covet it. Yet, at the same time, the allusion points to the potential danger guests pose to the studio—namely, invasion of the studio owner's privacy. The studio, therefore, should not be disturbed by outsiders.¹⁰⁹

In fact, in addition to detaching the studio from political, domestic, and social relations, in studio poems and accounts, Song literati employ various means to define the privacy of the studio. From the spatial dimension, they spotlight the studio as the individual's exclusive refuge from the world. For example, Tang Geng's 唐庚 (1071–1121) poem “The Studio: An Impromptu Verse” (“Shuzhai jishi” 書齋即事) zooms in on the studio and provides a distinct definition for this space. The work reads:

書生不事事，	This scholar does not concern himself with duties,
書齋春晝長。	The studio's spring day is prolonged.
竹色語笑綠，	In the bamboo's luster, speech and laughter greens,
松風意思涼。	In the pine tree's breeze, thoughts and longing grow cool.
簞瓢樂仁義，	By the bamboo cup and gourd dish, I delight in morality,
圖史披興亡。	In charts and histories, I thumb through dynastic rises and declines.
此間有佳趣，	Within this space, there is an elegant charm,
此外皆茫茫。	Without this space, all is blurred and indistinct. ¹¹⁰

As the title indicates, this poem on the studio can also be classified as belonging to the subgenre of “impromptu poetry” (*jishi shi* 即事詩), implying it was composed extemporaneously to depict

¹⁰⁸ *Nan shi*, 33.859.

¹⁰⁹ We may notice, on the other hand, that Wen Tong himself was a guest who entered his friend's studio and even inscribed the poem on the studio wall. On how the studio works as a special social space, see Chapter 3.

¹¹⁰ *QSS*, 1326.15043.

what the poet saw right before his eyes. Admittedly, we need not fully believe the claim of improvisation, as some in this genre are composed merely to *appear* improvised. However, by including the term *jishi* in the title, the poet does suggest his writing process was casual, simply describing directly what he saw. In this sense, Tang Geng, by using this title, also intends to convey that he is describing the studio and his activities there exactly as they occur in his everyday life.

The first couplet encapsulates the meanings of both the opening and ending couplets of Zheng Qingzhi's "Sitting Alone in the Studio" discussed above. In the studio, the scholar (referring to the poet himself) shuns social interactions; in the absence of tedious chores, the day seems happily prolonged. In the following couplet, the poet further defines the studio as an enclosed space by surrounding it with bamboo and pine trees. The green of the bamboo colors the poet's talk and laughter with its verdure, and a pleasant breeze from the pine trees calms his mind. Within this comfortable setting, the poet delights in cultivating himself by extensive reading. Line 5 reveals his reading of Confucian classics. The "bamboo cup and gourd dish" (*danpiao* 簞瓢) allude to the pleasure of Yan Hui, Confucius's favorite disciple. According to the *Analects*, although he lived in a "narrow alley" (*louxiang* 陋巷) and possessed only a single bamboo cup of rice and a single gourd dish of water, Yan Hui joyfully cultivated his morality.¹¹¹ Here, the poet models himself on Yan Hui. Although there was not yet a dedicated studio in Yan Hui's time, the poet compares his studio to Yan Hui's narrow alley, and thus endows the studio with the significance of moral development. In a neat parallel to line 5, line 6 focuses on the reading of historical books. So long as he is in the studio, the poet is able to enjoyably study the vicissitudes of history in his reading, but without involving himself in them.

All the pleasures celebrated above are derived from the studio; or to use the phrase in the closing couplet, they occur entirely "within this space" (*cijian* 此間). The contrast between *cijian*

¹¹¹ See *Lunyu yizhu*, 6.11.

and *ciwai* (“without this space” 此外) is distinct. Only things *within* the studio have definition, whereas things *without* do not. The world outside the studio is “blurred and indistinct” (*mangmang* 茫茫), lacking significance or boundaries. To borrow photographic terms, the effect created in the poem resembles selective focus using a shallow depth of field—in de-emphasizing the background, the image of the studio sharpens. Isolated from the outside, the studio is highlighted as the poet’s unique private space.

While the above work zooms in on the studio space horizontally, other poems employ verticality to emphasize the privacy of the studio. Sima Guang’s “Book Tower” (“Shulou” 書樓) reads:

使君有書癖，	You, the governor, have an addiction to books,
記覽浩無涯。	What you can recite and have read is vast, without bounds.
況此孤樓迥，	Not to mention this solitary tower is far-removed,
端無外物嘩。	It indeed has no noise from exterior things.
橫肱欹曲几，	With arms spread out, you lean against the crooked wood stand,
搔首落烏紗。	You scratch your head, and let drop the black gauze cap.
此趣人誰識，	This charm, who can understand?
長吟窗日斜。	You chant slowly as the sun sets through the window. ¹¹²

This poem belongs to the “Seventeen Companion Pieces to He Jichuan’s ‘Miscellaneous Poems on West Lake in Hanzhou’” (“He He Jichuan Hanzhou Xihu zayong shiqi shou” 和何濟川漢州西湖雜詠十七首). When He She 何涉 (*jinsi* 1034), whose courtesy name is Jichuan, governed Hanzhou (in modern Sichuan Province), he composed a series of poems on the scenic sites around West Lake, “Book Tower” being one of them. He She’s poem is not extant today, but from the above matching poem with the same title, we can see how Sima Guang constructs the privacy of this studio.

To highlight the close relationship between the book tower and its owner, in the opening couplet, Sima Guang portrays He She as addicted to reading. It is then not hard to imagine how a studio filled with books is appropriate for an obsessed reader. The assets of the studio, however,

¹¹² *Sima Wenzheng gong chuanjia ji* 司馬文正公傳家集 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1973), p.132.

are more far ranging. In the following couplet, the poet specifies the “solitary” (*gu* 孤) and “far-removed” (*jiong* 迥) qualities of this tall building. These features recall us to Gaston Bachelard’s discussion on the significance of the garret, which reads as follows: “We always *go up* the attic stairs, which are steeper and more primitive. For they bear the mark of ascension to a more tranquil solitude.”¹¹³ Although the attic in eighteenth-century Paris is far from the same as the tower that Sima Guang describes here, both share a sense of verticality; that is, the vertical structure offers a way for the inhabitant to detach from the noisy exterior world.

In such a personal space, the second half of the poem shows, the studio owner is able to enjoy complete seclusion and leisure. Spreading out his arms and leaning against the wood stand (line 5) indicate the literatus’s relaxation and self-satisfaction, while scratching his head and dropping his cap (line 6) on the one hand manifest his casual manner while staying in the book tower, and on the other hand further metaphorically separate life in the studio from official concerns (the black gauze cap, i.e., the official cap, is a common synecdoche for official affairs). As a final comment on all these pleasures, in the last lines, the poet asks who can understand the charm of the book tower. The question is rhetorical; these delights are exclusive to the studio owner and need not to be shared with outsiders.

According to other poems in the “Seventeen Companion Pieces to He Jichuan’s ‘Miscellaneous Poems on West Lake in Hanzhou,’” the scenery outside the book tower is very beautiful. However, throughout the poem, Sima Guang’s articulated viewpoint is almost always within the studio. This choice of perspective further demonstrates that the height of the tower perfectly guarantees a private space for the individual’s addiction to reading as well as for spending time at ease.

In addition to the vertical or horizontal zooming-in, studio poems and accounts often emphasize the narrowness of the space as a means of demonstrating the privacy of the studio. Lu You provides us an example of a small studio in recounting his experience in the Nest of Books,

¹¹³ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*; trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), p. 26.

a studio constructed during his final retirement in Shaoxing (in modern Zhejiang Province). In the “Account of the Nest of Books” (“Shuchao ji” 書巢記), the paragraph describing Lu You’s studio reads:

Within my studio, there are nothing but books in all directions wherever I look: some are stored in cabinets; some are spread out on my desk; some are strewn all over my bed. As I eat and drink, sit or stand, no matter if I am moaning sadly or intoning poems, consumed by grief or overwhelmed with anger, I am always together with my books. Guests do not come calling, and I pay no attention to my wife and children. Wind, rain, thunder, and hail come and go and I am unaware of them. From time to time if I feel like going out, I find that the haphazard piles of books surround me, like bundles of dried branches, so that sometimes I am actually unable to move. Whenever this happens I laugh at myself and say, “Isn’t this precisely what I mean by ‘nest’?”¹¹⁴

吾室之內，或棲於櫥，或陳於前，或枕藉於床，俯仰四顧，無非書者。吾飲食起居，疾痛呻吟，悲憂憤歎，未嘗不與書俱。賓客不至，妻子不覲，而風雨雷雹之變，有不知也。間有意欲起，而亂書圍之，如積槁枝，或至不得行，輒自笑曰：“此非吾所謂巢者邪？”

Here, Lu You analogizes his studio to a bird nest. Just as twigs and branches constitute a nest, books scattered in a disorderly fashion construct an enclosed space. This space is so small that the represented self can only curl himself up and “roost” in it. In his literary characterizations of several studios he owned, Lu You frequently employs this trope of spatial narrowness. For instance, the poem “A Small Room Newly Set up” (“Xin kai xiaoshi” 新開小室) begins, “Under the eaves I set up a small room, / It can only accommodate a single wood stand” 並簷開小室，僅可容一几¹¹⁵; and in the first poem of “Six Pieces on the End of the Year” (“Suimu liushou” 歲暮六首), he writes, “The studio steals the shape of the snail shell, / It can only accommodate my old and sickly body” 書房偷得蝸廬樣，僅僅能容老病身。¹¹⁶ Bachelard notes: “In the house itself, in the family sitting room, a dreamer of refuges dreams of a hut, of a nest, or of nooks and

¹¹⁴ Lu You, *Weinan wenji* 渭南文集, 18.458, in Qian Zhonglian 錢仲聯 and Ma Yazhong 馬亞中 et al., eds. and annot., *Lu You quanji jiaozhu* 陸遊全集校注 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang jiaoyu chubanshe, 2011), vol. 9. I use the translation by Ronald Egan, “To Count Grains of Sand on the Ocean Floor,” in Lucille Chia and Hilde De Weerd, eds., *Knowledge and Text Production in An Age of Print: China, 900–1400*, p. 59, with slight revision.

¹¹⁵ Qian Zhonglian, ed. and annot., *Jiannan shigao jiaozhu* 劍南詩稿校注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1985), 64.3638.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 74.4083.

corners in which he would like to hide away, like an animal in its hole. In this way, he lives in a region that is beyond human images.”¹¹⁷ Here, using the metaphors of a bird nest or a snail shell, Lu You also defines the studio as a refuge for himself. Rather than modifying the space subjectively, the self in turn is shaped by this space. The nest-like studio shelters him, determines his lifestyle, and takes care of both his physical and mental needs. Inside the studio, the represented self is able to keep his distance from both natural occurrences outside, and social as well as domestic relations. The narrowness of the studio enhances the intimacy between the individual and the space.

Song literati, spatially, shape the studio as a harbor for the individual; and moreover, temporally, they represent the studio as a means for its owner to enjoy private time. An illustration of this is Huang Tingjian’s “Inscription of Hong Jufu’s Studio of Jade-like Time” (“Hong Jufu Biyin zhai ming” 洪駒父璧陰齋銘), which touches on the topic of how one spends one’s private time in the studio. The preface of the inscription reads:

My nephew Hong Chu, whose courtesy name is Jufu, serves as Supervisor of Wines in Huangzhou. He works hard in his position, without freeloading. Meanwhile, he is also able to treasure his leisure time and to use it to study in privacy, naming the place where he resides “The Studio of Jade-like Time.” I appreciate this from my heart, saying, “One in the official position should practice his privacy only for studying.” Therefore, on behalf of him, I composed this inscription.¹¹⁸

甥洪芻駒父，仕為黃之酒正。勤其官，不素食矣，又能愛其餘日以私於學，名其所居曰璧陰齋。余內喜之，曰：“在官而可以行其私也，惟學而已矣。”為之作銘。

In the opening lines, Huang Tingjian first praises Hong Chu 洪芻 (*jinsshi* 1094) for his dedication to his public duties. As we discussed earlier in this chapter, in literary writings on the studio, celebrating the fulfillment of public service works to justify the literatus’s enjoyment of time spent in the private studio.

Here, Hong Chu named his studio “Jade-like Time” (Biyin 璧陰), and designated his studio as

¹¹⁷ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, p. 30.

¹¹⁸ *QSW*, 2328.262–63.

a place where he could “study in privacy” (*si yu xue* 私於學). This studio name can be traced back to a statement in the *Huainanzi* 淮南子, which says, “The sage does not think highly of a one-*chi* jade disc, but values the one-*cun* time. It is because time is hard to obtain but easy to lose” 聖人不貴尺之璧，而重寸之陰，時難得而易失也。¹¹⁹ Slightly modifying this assertion, the name “Jade-like Time” also stresses the inestimable value of time. It is then worth noting that Hong Chu used this *temporal* term to name the *space* of the studio. According to Huang Tingjian’s explanation, by means of this naming, Hong aims to spend, and at the same time to treasure, all his “leisure time” (*yuri* 餘日) in the studio. Hong is able to “practice his privacy” (*xing qi si* 行其私)—that is, to study—by taking advantage of his private time in his personal studio. Indeed, in the main body of the inscription, Huang continues elaborating on the importance of cherishing time in the studio, and even draws a connection between attainment of the Way and treasuring of time. In this way, the privacy of the studio is realized both spatially and temporally.

In Hong Chu’s Studio of Jade-like Time, time is fleeting and thus must be treasured. Other literary works on the studio share this concern over the perception of time, expressed in different ways. For instance, in the poem “Staying Alone in the Studio, I Joyfully Chanted a Poem” (“Shushi duchu xinran youyong” 書室獨處欣然有詠) by Lu You, we see, instead, a prolongation of time in the studio:

鑿空學道本無師，	Opening a path to study the Way, from the beginning there was no teacher, ¹²⁰
歇盡狂心頗自奇。	I completely exhausted my crazy mind, but am still impressed with myself.
閑坐始知冬日永，	Not until I sit idly do I begin to know the permanence of the winter day,
高談未覺老年衰。	When I talk proudly, I do not realize the frailty of my old age.

¹¹⁹ He Ning 何寧, ed. and annot., *Huainanzi jishi* 淮南子集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1998), 1.54.

¹²⁰ The phrase *zaokong* 鑿空 (“opening a path”) originally is a description of the achievement of Zhang Qian 張騫 (d. 114 BCE) of the Western Han, who was the first imperial envoy from the Han court to Central Asia; see *Shi ji* 史記, 123.3169.

治棺準備膏肓日，	I get the coffin ready, in preparation for the day that I am on my death bed, ¹²¹
釀酒枝梧雨雪時。	I brew wine, in order to get me through the raining and snowing seasons.
常笑祖龍癡到底，	I often laugh at the ancestral dragon who was stubborn to the end, ¹²²
一生辛苦覓安期。	Throughout his life, he was painstakingly looking for Anqi. 123

As a way to celebrate the joy of the studio, Lu You creatively structures the poem with a theme of time. As soon as the poet comes into the studio, time appears to slow down, which enables the poet to achieve mental reassurance.

As the opening couplet of the poem shows, the poet has no teacher to whom he can look to guide him to attain the Way. So this confident poet returns to his studio. Not until he spends time alone in the studio is he able to achieve an experience of enlightenment. In real life, the “winter day” (*dongri* 冬日) and “old age” (*maonian* 耄年) imply the end of the year and the end of one’s life, respectively. Both remind people unhappily of the transience of human life. However, by passing leisure time in the studio, talking enthusiastically to himself, the poet experiences time as prolonged, if not suspended—the winter seems to last forever (line 3) and the self becomes rejuvenated (line 4). In fact, the transcendence of time is often a motif of the “poetry of pursuing immortality” (*qiuxian shi* 求仙詩). In those poems, the poetic self, anxious about the fleetingness of time, wishes to reach Heaven or the sacred mountains in order to transcend time and become immortal. Yet, in Lu You’s poem, the studio space easily relieves this anxiety. As indicated in the third couplet, when the poet enjoys spending prolonged time in his studio, rather than immersing himself in a fantasy of achieving immortality, he finds the courage to face optimistically the cruel reality that he is not immortal. Cheerfully, he prepares a coffin to cope with death, just as he

¹²¹ Literally, the term *gao* 膏 refers to the fat at the tip of the heart; and *huang* 肓 refers to the space between the heart and the diaphragm. It is said that if a disease has reached the space of *gaohuang* 膏肓, it becomes incurable; see Yang Bojun, ed. and annot., *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu* 春秋左傳注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), Cheng 10.4.

¹²² The “ancestral dragon” (*zulong* 祖龍) refers to the first emperor of Qin; see *Shi ji*, 6.259.

¹²³ *Jiannan shigao jiaozhu*, 55.3228.

brews wine to kill time in bad weather. This lighthearted attitude is in sharp contrast to the anxiety of the pursuers of immortality. Therefore, it is not surprising that, in the final couplet, Lu You laughs at the first emperor of Qin. As recounted in the *Collected Biographies of Immortals* (*Liexian zhuan* 列仙傳) edited by Liu Xiang 劉向 (77–6 BCE), in order to achieve immortality, the first emperor sent an expedition with hundreds of people to seek the immortal Master Anqi 安期, who was said to live at Mount Penglai; the expedition failed.¹²⁴

Unlike the first emperor's insane fight against time, the poet clearly understands that changing the transitory nature of human life is impossible. Rather, the studio is the space he relies on. The studio can grant its owner a distinctive temporal and spatial sequence, within which the self will be able to find shelter from the outside and to obtain extended leisure.

II Literati Activities in the Physical Studio

In discussing the method of reading (*dushu fu* 讀書法), Zhu Xi asserts, “Closing the door, shutting the window, and controlling the crossroads—this is the right moment for reading” 關了門，閉了戶，把斷了四路頭，此正讀書時也。¹²⁵ This expression, of course, should be understood in a metaphorical way: by means of a series of actions involving closing things (door, window, etc.), Zhu Xi vividly emphasizes the significance of creating a mental environment (i.e., becoming calm, concentrated, and single-minded) in preparation for reading. However, the physical space of a studio can indeed work as an embodiment of this ideal environment. Zhu Xi is not alone in this among Song literati, for they often situated typical intellectual practices such as reading, writing, art creation, or book and art collection, in the physical space of the studio. The privacy of the studio space shapes the features of these activities, and thus guarantees the realization of mental enjoyment and self-cultivation for literati.

¹²⁴ Wang Shumin 王叔岷, *Liexian zhuan jiaojian* 列仙傳校箋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), p. 70.

¹²⁵ Li Jingde 黎靖德, comp., *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類, ed. Wang Xingxian 王星賢 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), 10.163.

Zhu Xi's "Account of the Studio of Ultimate Pleasure" ("Zhile zhai ji" 至樂齋記), in this sense, can be read as a full commentary on the assertion of "closing the door, reading the book."

Gentleman Fu of Pangu stays away from home in a Buddhist temple east of Quanzhou. On the west side of his residence, he opened up a room. It has windows on both the south and the north. So the room is very bright and dry. It is full of books: from the Six Classics, to a hundred schools of thought, historical records, and literary works, and even to the Buddhist and Daoist scriptures, incredibly weird and humorous writings, and books on planting, medicine, and divination as well as game playing. All are placed there; nothing needs to be sought from the outside. Gentleman Fu thus every day meditates and roams within the studio. He idly glances over books of all sorts and reads them aloud, tirelessly, from dawn to dusk. Others cannot understand his intention; however, Gentleman Fu feels that all the pleasures under Heaven cannot replace it. Therefore, borrowing Master Ouyang's poetic line, he named this room "Studio of the Ultimate Pleasure." Then he asked me, "Please record this for me."

盤谷傅公客於泉州城東之佛寺，間即其寓舍之西偏治一室，達其南北，以為軒窗，極爽塏。左右圖史，自六經而下，百家諸子、史氏之記籍與夫騷人墨客之文章，外至浮屠老子之書，荒虛譎詭，談諧之說，種植方藥、卜相博奕之數，皆以列置，無外求者。公於是日俯仰盤礴於其間，繙羣書而誦之，蚤夜不厭。人蓋莫窺其所用心，而公自以為天下之樂無易此者。故嘗取歐陽子之詩以名其室曰“至樂之齋”，而顧謂某曰：“為我記之。”

In the sentences that follow, Zhu Xi modestly declines to compose this record on behalf of Gentleman Fu. But Fu insists, and Zhu Xi starts again, in the second main part,

The reason that a man can make his virtue numinous and brilliant and respond to everything without becoming exhausted, is the mind. From the beginning of studying, the gentlemen of ancient times would endeavor to the sprinkling and sweeping, answering and replying, advancing and retreating, and thus internally cultivate their minds. After a long time when they were familiar with it, their minds were pacified and their *qi* were harmonious. Then they felt comfortable and happy. There was no gap between them and the phenomena of the world. Thus when they observed changes of the phenomena of the world, there would be nothing that was not their pleasure. Not to mention that what the books transmit is from Fuxi and Shennong to nowadays. Among them, all phenomena are included: the practices of the sages, the origin of learning, the reasons for approving and disapproving, gaining and losing, peace and chaos, survival and downfall, rise and fall. Nothing is missed. If one reads the texts and one's mind is congenial, isn't the joy drawn from the books extreme?

人之所以神明其德，應物而不窮者，心而已。古之君子自其始學，則盡力於灑掃應對進退之間而內事其心。既久且熟矣，則心平而氣和，沖融暢適，與物無際。其觀於一世事物之變，蓋無往而非吾樂也。而況載籍所傳，上超羲農，下至於茲，其間聖賢之行事、學問之源奧、是非得失理亂存亡廢興之故，包括籠絡，靡不畢具。苟涉其辭義而心必契焉，則其可樂而玩也，豈不亦至矣哉！

However, contemporary scholars do not fully understand this. They just busy themselves with memorization and chanting. Thus, they feel the best words as incompatible and do not absorb them into their minds. Only coarse and inharmonious words can move and get into them. In this case, they become agitated, pugnacious, and irritable. Then how can they feel pleasure? I

think the gist of Master Ouyang’s poem and the reason that Gentleman Fu selected this poem is probably this. Thereupon, I wrote it in order as Gentleman Fu’s studio account.¹²⁶

惟世之學者或不足以知此，而勞於記誦佔畢之間以為事，是以語之至者既扞格而不入於心，惟其粗厲而不平者感而入焉，則其間勃然而鬪而怒矣，亦何樂之云哉？某惟歐陽子之詩與公之所以取焉者，蓋其指略如此，因序次以為公齋記云。

As Zhu Xi points out, the studio name is derived from a poem by Ouyang Xiu. Specifically, it comes from a couplet in Ouyang Xiu’s poem “Reading” (“Dushu” 讀書). In this long poem (seventy lines), Ouyang Xiu delights in recounting his experiences of reading at different stages of life, from his youth to the prime of his life, from his current middle age to his anticipated old age. At the beginning of this poem, Ouyang Xiu vividly outlines these experiences by drawing an analogy between the practice of reading and a fierce battle:

吾生本寒儒，	From the beginning, I was a poor scholar,
老尚把書卷。	Now getting old, I still have books in hand.
眼力雖已疲，	Though my eyesight has already weakened,
心意殊未倦。	Somehow my mind is not yet tired.
正經首唐虞，	The canon starts with Yao and Shun,
僞說起秦漢。	While the apocrypha begins from the Qin and Han.
篇章異句讀，	Chapters vary in punctuations,
解詁及箋傳。	as well as explanations and commentaries.
是非自相攻，	The true and false innately repute each other,
去取在勇斷。	Whether I discard or accept depends on my resolve.
初如兩軍交，	At the beginning it is like a battle between two troops,
乘勝方酣戰。	Riding to victory I just fight fiercely.
當其旗鼓催，	When flags and drums urge me on,
不覺人馬汗。	I do not feel that the horse or I are sweating.
至哉天下樂，	The ultimate pleasure under Heaven,
終日在几案。	is being at the writing desk all day. ¹²⁷

The enthusiastic and inspired reading career that the poem elaborates is thus precisely condensed in one sketch: sitting at the writing desk one can achieve the greatest happiness. In other words, by means of a writing desk, a “battlefield” has been created. On this field, the critical reader is able to totally absorb himself in the practices of reading and writing—he becomes a general, fighting his own battles.

¹²⁶ *QSW*, 5659.149.

¹²⁷ *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 9.139.

This discourse extolling reading as the ultimate pleasure was widely accepted by Song literati. Not only did they frequently quote or paraphrase Ouyang Xiu's well-known couplet in their literary representations of reading in the studio, many literati also named their studio "Ultimate Pleasure"; Gentleman Fu is just one example. This naming further strengthens the intimate relationship between the practice of reading and the studio. Reading, along with other intellectual activities, which is the source of ultimate pleasure, is now framed in the Studio of Ultimate Pleasure. The studio not only provides a physical architecture for reading, but more importantly it also guarantees cultivation of a perfect *mental* space for intellectual activities.

Wang Shipeng's "Rhapsody on the Studio of Ultimate Pleasure, with Preface" ("Zhile zhai fu bing yin" 至樂齋賦並引) further demonstrates this point by contrasting the pleasure to be enjoyed in the studio with that occurring in other spaces:

When I read Ouyang's poem, there is one couplet, "The ultimate pleasure under Heaven, / is being at the writing desk all day." Thus I selected this expression to name my studio; and accordingly I composed this rhapsody for it:

予讀歐陽詩，有“至哉天下樂，終日在書案”之句，因採其語以名齋，又從而賦之：

The guest and I were sitting in the studio. The guest lifted his head and looked, then lowered his head and laughed, saying, "Do you know pleasures under Heaven? They disperse to the multifarious aspects of the phenomena, and at the same time assemble on the two separate paths leading to frustration and success. Yet all these are finite. I will explain, and you listen! On noble carriages and horses, with golden belts and official seals, with people in front shouting and people behind guarding—this is the pleasure of the literatus who achieves his ambition during the current age. But the moment will come that he feels sick of it. The literatus who was previously at court departs by a skiff, with the misty waves getting deeper. Pillowing on the stream and rinsing with rock, chanting the wind and whistling the moon, picking in the mountains, fishing in the springs—this is the pleasure of the literatus who desires nothing from the world. But there will again be a moment that he changes. The literatus who was in the mountains and forests before leaves the curtains empty, with the gibbons and cranes startled."

予與客坐於書齋之內，客仰而顧，俯而笑，曰：“子知天下之樂乎？散於事物之萬端，會於窮達之兩途，然皆有窮焉，吾言而子聽諸！高車駟馬，腰金曳組，前者呵，後者衛，士之得志於當時者之樂也，然有時而厭焉。前日朝廷之士，扁舟去而煙浪深也。枕流漱石，吟風嘯月，採於山，緡於泉，士之無求於世者之樂也，然有時而改焉。前日山林之士，總帳空而猿鶴驚也。”

I answered, "What you talked about are all external pleasures, thus these pleasures are finite. But do you know that there is also the so-called ultimate pleasure, which is infinite? A single bamboo cup of rice and a gourd dish of water—that was the pleasure of Yan Hui. A single

house and one field—that was the pleasure of Yang Xiong. They indeed had no intention of seeking official positions, but they also did not indulge their will living in the mountains or forests. They were fulfilled from the inner mind and took delight in the Way. Now, I let my mind find its enjoyment within the studio, and I feel gratified among yellow scrolls.¹²⁸ I regard Yan Hui as my teacher, and take Yang Xiong as my friend. I enjoy it here and rest well here. This is the ultimate pleasure under Heaven. Then how can it be finite?”¹²⁹

予曰：“子之言皆外物之樂也，樂故有窮，烏知天下有所謂無窮之至樂哉！一簞食，一瓢飲，顏回之樂也；宅一區，田一廛，揚雄之樂也。是固無心於軒冕，亦不放志於山林，得乎內而樂乎道也。吾今遊心於一齋之內，適意乎黃卷之中，師顏回，友揚雄，遊於斯，息於斯，天下之至樂也。又烏得而能窮？”

Following the common dialogue structure of the rhapsody, Wang Shipeng establishes a conversation between the host and the guest. This conversation aims to explore a definition of “pleasures under Heaven” (*tianxia zhi le* 天下之樂). Interestingly, both the host and the guest frame this topic as a discussion of spaces—namely, the court, the mountain, and the studio. First, looking around the studio with disfavor, the guest is dissatisfied with the host’s naming of the studio as a space for enjoying extreme pleasure. To challenge this, he changes the emphasis to two other spaces (the court and the mountains) and elaborates on the happiness derived from these spaces, respectively: the court is the space for the enjoyment of social glory and honor, and the mountains should be the perfect space for enjoyment of the pleasure of reclusion. However, even the guest himself seems less than fully confident about this declaration, because the happiness derived from these two spaces is not stable. This problem of instability becomes the starting point of the host’s refutation. The joy to be derived from spending time either at court or in the mountains, according to the host, is nothing but an “external pleasure” (*waiwu zhi le* 外物之樂), while to the contrary, the pleasure provided by spending time in the studio is internal. As Ouyang Xiu’s renowned lines summarize, “reading alone in the studio” is the key to achieving mental reassurance. As soon as the host “lets the mind find its enjoyment within the studio” 遊心於一齋之內, he becomes able to “feel gratified among yellow scrolls” 適意乎黃卷之中, and

¹²⁸ The “yellow scrolls” (*huangjuan* 黃卷) refer to books; see Yang Mingzhao 楊明照, *Baopu zi waipian jiaojian* 抱朴子外篇校箋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1991), 25.638n16.

¹²⁹ *QSW*, 4615.146–47.

accordingly he can achieve ultimate and unlimited inner happiness.

Many Song literati writings share this focus on the process of “going into the studio—practicing intellectual activities—gaining mental enjoyment.” We find a very similar description in Zhu Xi’s account of Gentleman Fu’s studio. Even the comparatively informal song lyrics represent the same experience in a slightly different way. For instance:

Zhou Jin 周晉 (ca. d. 1256), To the Tune of “Clear and Even Music” 清平樂

圖書一室，	It is a room of books,
香暖垂簾密。	The fragrance is warm and the hanging curtains are thick.
花滿翠壺薰研席，	The flowers that fill the emerald vase scent my inkstone and mat,
睡覺滿窗晴日。	When I wake up, the windows are full of the clear day.
手寒不了殘棋，	My hands are chilly, so I do not finish the remaining game of chess,
篝香細勘唐碑。	I burn incense to carefully examine the Tang stele. ¹³⁰
無酒無詩情緒，	Nor wine, nor poem—this is the mood.
欲梅欲雪天時。	The plum, about to blossom, and the snow, about to fall—this is the moment. ¹³¹

The opening line immediately draws our eyes into the studio; and indeed, all the following scenes occur within this space. Moreover, the second line further separates the private studio from the outside by evoking the thick curtains and permeating fragrance inside. Books as well as various studio objects suggesting refinement, such as the vase, incense burner, and inkstone, surround the poet and create a genial atmosphere for his enjoyment of scholarly pursuits. All these activities, as well as the emotions that accompany them, he describes in a casual tone: he gets up late, briefly enjoys a game of chess, but soon turns his interest to examining the stele. All of these activities are relaxed, with few fixed purposes or goals, and he even lets emotions take their course, without conscious direction. Consequently, everything he does seems to be by chance. The whole song lyric is about the pleasures of casual living. On the other hand, this casual enjoyment is framed in a studio space that remains constant. His activities may vary, such as reading, examining the stele, or playing chess, but the work implies that the time he spends in

¹³⁰ It is very likely that the “Tang stele” (*Tang bei* 唐碑) refers to the rubbings of stele in the Tang dynasty.

¹³¹ Deng Qiaobin 鄧喬彬, Peng Guozhong 彭國忠, and Liu Rongping 劉榮平, annot., *Juemiao haoci yizhu* 絕妙好詞譯注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2000), p. 140.

the studio is always like this, enabling him to maintain an extended experience of leisure and mental pleasure for himself.

An enclosed studio such as this one has already functioned as much more than a space that protects its owner from outside interruptions; it works as a self-contained space that can satisfy almost all of a literatus's mental needs in daily life. To use Zhu Xi's phrase in the "Account of the Studio of Ultimate Pleasure," "nothing needs to be sought from the outside" 無外求者. A more elaborate description of this motif is found in Yang Wanli's "Preface of the Catalogue of Book Collection in the Increasing Studio" ("Yizhai cangshumu xu" 益齋藏書目序) written on behalf of his good friend You Mao 尤袤 (1127–1194). Here, Yang summarizes You Mao's daily life as follows: "Whenever Yanzhi retreats from the office, he closes the door and declines visitors. Every day he schedules time to transcribe several ancient books by hand" 延之每退，則閉戶謝客，日記手抄若干古書. Once when both Yang and You happened to be at Piling (in modern Jiangsu Province) at the same time, You visited Yang. Yang "spent the night talking with You, with candles in hand, and asked You what he does when dwelling in idleness" 與之秉燭夜語，問其閒居何為. You answered,

The books that I transcribed are so many *juan*. I will gather and catalogue them. When I am hungry, I read them as if they are meats; when I am cold, I read them as if they are fur coats; when I feel lonely, I read them as if they are friends; and when I feel distressed, I read them as if they are bells and zithers.¹³²

吾所抄書今若干卷，將彙而目之。饑讀之以當肉，寒讀之以當裘，孤寂而讀之以當友朋，幽憂而讀之以當金石琴瑟也。

You Mao finds it necessary to explain his satisfaction with the studio with the assistance of a series of metaphors. It seems that the Increasing Studio is too powerful to be described in ordinary language. Containing a large book collection, the space can meet both You's material requirements (e.g., food and clothes) and his mental needs (e.g., friendship and entertainment).

¹³² Xin Gengru 辛更儒, ed. and annot., *Yang Wanli ji jianjiao* 楊萬里集箋校 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 78. 3200–201.

Therefore, it is not surprising that You nestles comfortably in his studio and experiences no unfulfilled external desires.

A similar metaphorical depiction is provided by Hong Shi 洪適 (1117–1184). In representing Zhang Hong's 張紘 experience of reading in the “Hall of Ten Thousand Scrolls” (Wanjuan tang 萬卷堂), Hong Shi writes,

Boshou [the courtesy name of Zhang Hong] wanders within it, just as one who is hungry needs to be fed, or one who gets weary of traveling expects to return home, or one who holds something hot desires to be cooled by the fresh breeze.¹³³

伯壽儂伴其間，如枵腹者之須哺，倦遊者之企歸，執熱者之思濯清風。

Again, the studio owner simply hides alone in the studio, where his various desires can be fully satisfied. In this way, the studio works as a self-contained space for Song literati. Moreover, the gesture of “being alone in the studio” is constructed as the epitome of literati daily life.

Turning back now to Zhu Xi's “Account of the Studio of Ultimate Pleasure,” we can better understand the significance of the ultimate pleasure he derives from the studio space. Zhu Xi, however, does not stop here. In the second part of his account, he takes a further step in defining the studio as a space for self-cultivation in the everyday life of literati. He stresses that it is essential to “internally cultivate the mind” (*neishi qixin* 內事其心) in one's studio. Even the extreme pleasure that he depicts in the first part should be based upon the effects of cultivation of the mind. This point is underscored especially in the Southern Song, though we can indeed observe its germination in the Northern Song (e.g., in Ouyang Xiu's “Account of the Eastern Studio”). In Southern Song literati writings which take the studio as the object, self-cultivation is regarded as the ultimate goal, while all other studio activities, such as reading and writing, are also means of achieving this goal.

Such a tendency inarguably has a close relationship with the rise of “Learning of the Way,” but the penchant for cultivating the self in the studio is not limited to Zhu Xi's school of Neo-

¹³³ Hong Shi, “Wanjuan tang ji” 萬卷堂記, *QSW*, 4742.371.

Confucianism. Rather, it works as a shared concern among literati in the Southern Song. For instance, towards Ding Mu's 丁木 (*jinshi* 1211) "Dongyu Studio" (Dongyu shufang 東嶼書房), Zhu Xi and the statecraft thinker Ye Shi 葉適 (1150–1223), whose teaching is considered an alternative to Neo-Confucianism,¹³⁴ express a very similar idea regarding the superiority of self-cultivation over other studio activities. Zhu Xi's "Inscribing on the Dongyu Studio" ("Ti Dongyu shufang" 題東嶼書房) begins as follows: "The studio is located at Dongyu, / Books are arbitrarily selected and studied" 書房在東嶼, 編簡亂抽尋, but the narrative soon reaches a point where, "Sitting and lying, you alone observe your mind" 坐卧獨觀心.¹³⁵ In the same way, Ye Shi, in his "Mr. Ding's Dongyu Studio" ("Ding shi Dongyu shufang" 丁氏東嶼書房), first depicts Ding's addictive practice of reading in the studio, saying, "In the morning you are immersed in sunlight from the lattice, / Thousands of books are randomly selected and skimmed; At night you light a lamp at the window, / Of one single character you explore the origin" 朝納檯上光, 千帙亂抽翻。夜挑窗下明, 一字究本源. Yet later Ye Shi asserts, "Books can also be put aside, / Alone you observe your mind" 書亦且置之, 獨自觀此心.¹³⁶ Both of them thus emphasize the essential function of the studio as a space for reflection and cultivation of the mind.

Indeed, the privacy of the studio guarantees the realization of mental reflection. It is precisely the confined space that allows Ding Mu to be "alone" (*du* 獨), both physically and mentally. The assertion of "closing the door, reading the book" that I proposed at the outset of this section can thus be extended as, "closing the door, reading the book, and cultivating the mind." As the poem "Gentleman for Rendering Service Zhou Yan's Studio of Seeking in the Self" ("Zhou chengwu Yan Qiuzhuji zhai" 周承務鄉求諸己齋) by Lü Benzhong 呂本中 (1084–1145) conveys,

¹³⁴ See, for example, Peter K. Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History*, p. 308 n17.

¹³⁵ *QSS*, 2393.27662.

¹³⁶ *QSS*, 2662.31233.

爲腹不爲目，	Provide for the stomach but not for the eye,
貴久不貴速。	Value the permanence, but not the fleeting.
人皆求其餘，	Others all pursue the surplus,
我獨心易足。	I alone am easily satisfied by my mind.
人皆重外慕，	Others all treasure external desires,
我獨御其獨。	I alone control the “solitude.”
閉門想顏子，	Closing the door, I recall Master Yan,
默坐相追逐。	Sitting silently, I follow after him.
壽夭有定分，	Whether long life or early death, both are pre-destined,
簞瓢乃其福。	The bamboo cup and the gourd dish were Yan’s treasures.
脩身雖多途，	Albeit self-cultivation takes multiple paths,
要在不遠復。	The key is “returning before going far.” ¹³⁷

By means of the action of “closing the door” (*bimen* 閉門), Lü Benzhong delimits an interior space from the outside. The space can first refer to the physical Studio of Seeking in the Self, which enables its owner to sit alone and enjoy himself in peace. At the same time, this space points to the interiority of one’s mind. In the very first line of this poem, Lü begins to address the appropriate way for the inner mind to deal with external things. He directly borrows the line from *Laozi* 老子 as, “This is why the sage provides for the belly but not for the eye” 是以聖人為腹不為目。¹³⁸ According to Wang Bi’s 王弼 (226–249) commentary, “To provide for the belly is to use things to nourish oneself. To provide for the eye is to use things to enslave oneself. Therefore the sage does not provide for the eye” 為腹者以物養己，為目者以物役己，故聖人不為目也。¹³⁹ Because external things can easily increase one’s greed to the point of insatiability, the sage does not desire such things; rather, he focuses on inner nourishment in order to lead a simple life. Using this prosy line at the beginning, Lü establishes the tone of inwardness for the whole poem. The following lines elaborate on this inward tendency: when others are coveting external objects or pleasures, one stays alone in the studio and cultivates one’s inner mind in

¹³⁷ *QSS*, 1624.18226.

¹³⁸ *Laozi daodejing zhu jiaoshi*, 12.28. I use the translation by Richard John Lynn, *The Classic of the Way and Virtue: A New Translation of the Tao-te ching of Laozi as Interpreted by Wang Bi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 12.70. On the modern interpretations of this line, see Chen Guying 陳鼓應, ed. and annot., *Laozi jinzhū jīnyì* 老子今注今譯 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1970), 12.77.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.28. I use the translation by Richard John Lynn, *The Classic of the Way and Virtue*, 12.70.

solitude, just as Confucius' favorite disciple Yan Hui did, dwelling joyfully in a narrow alley and subsisting on a single bamboo cup of rice and a gourd dish of water.¹⁴⁰

Finally, the last couplet provides a full summary of this inwardness. The couplet is actually a paraphrase of Hexagram 24, "Return" ("Fu" 復), from the *Book of Changes* (*Yi* 易). In explaining the image of the First Yang (*chujiu* 初九), the lines indicate, "This one returns before having gone far, so there will be no regret here, which means fundamental good fortune" 不遠復, 無祇悔, 元吉. The commentary on the images (*xiangzhuan* 象傳) then clarifies, "'Return before going far' provides the way one should cultivate his person" 不遠之復, 以修身也,¹⁴¹ thus establishing a direct relationship between self-cultivation and the action of "returning." "Returning" is an ambiguous concept in the original text, and later commentators interpret it in various ways.¹⁴² However, in the context of Lü's poem, the direction of this movement is sufficiently clear: it is a return from the outer world, which stimulates material desires, to the inner mind; only through this action can one achieve self-cultivation. In discussing these issues in a poem entitled by a studio name, Lü thus draws a perfect parallel between spending time in the studio and returning to one's inner mental space.

This parallel structure is further confirmed by the name of the studio, the "Studio of Seeking in the Self." As its meaning is denoted in the *Mencius* (*Mengzi* 孟子), "The man who would be benevolent is like the archer. The archer adjusts himself and then shoots. If he misses, he does not murmur against those who surpass himself. He simply turns round and seeks the cause of his failure in himself" 仁者如射, 射者正己而後發。發而不中, 不怨勝己者, 反求諸己而已

¹⁴⁰ See *Lunyu yizhu*, 6.11.

¹⁴¹ Zhou Zhenfu 周振甫, ed. and annot., *Zhouyi yizhu* 周易譯註 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1991), 24.87–88. I use the translation by Richard John Lynn, *The Classic of Changes: A New Translation of the I Ching as Interpreted by Wang Bi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 287.

¹⁴² See "Appendix," in Kidder Smith, Jr., Peter K. Bol, Joseph A. Adler, and Don J. Wyatt, *Sung Dynasty Uses of the I Ching* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 237–54.

矣。¹⁴³ The notion of “seeking-in-the-self” (*qiu zhu ji* 求諸己) emphasizes one’s self-reflective nature. Accordingly, by this naming, the studio becomes the space to lodge the self. Indeed, it is not necessary for one to “go far,” since the self inhabits the studio. In short, for the sake of self-cultivation, one should return to the private studio.

An even more in-depth analysis of the intimate relationship between the studio and the self’s inner mind can be seen in the “Account of the Studio of Overcoming by Quietness” (“Jingsheng zhai ji” 靜勝齋記) by Zhang Jiucheng 張九成 (1092–1159):

My friend who passed the civil service exam in the same year as me, Chen Kaizu from Yongjia, sent me a letter on the eighteenth day of the second month in 1153. It included several papers. One of them said, “Recently I opened a studio. It has several *zhang* in depth. It is full of books, with half illustrations and half histories. And I named it ‘Overcoming by Quietness,’ since I want to stay in leisure and retain quietness, and accordingly overcome the confusion of phenomena. As for approval and disapproval, riches and nobility, honor and disgrace, all of them are not enough to move my mind. You, please, record this on behalf of me.”

同年友永嘉陳開祖紹興癸酉二月十八日遺余書，凡數紙，其一曰：“近闢書室，深可數丈，左右圖史，相半其中，且榜之曰‘靜勝’，蓋欲居閒守靜，以勝事物之紛紜也。至於人是人非、人富人貴、人榮人辱，皆無足以動其心者。子其為我記之。”

I said: It has always been the case that the phenomena cannot be overcome. Rather than “overcome the phenomena,” it is better to “overcome the self.” How to “overcome the self?” The mind is disturbed; the blood and breath are unsettled. The one who is in movement cannot feel this, while the one in quietness is able to see it. Sees it, then he hates it. Hates it, then he feels as if he is immersed in fire or water. He wants to escape but is incapable. Hating it more and more, he then understands Master Yan’s theory of “subduing oneself”; then he considers Master Zeng’s theory of “examining the self on three counts”; and then he fathoms Zisi’s theory of “self-watchfulness in solitude.” Then he is able to repress his bad mind and the evil *qi* is excluded. Consequently the significance of the royal perfection and the Confucian teaching become clear. As for approval and disapproval, riches and nobility, honor and disgrace, they originally have little relation with me. I do not have the intention of overcoming them, and they do not have the thought to overcome me. They and I forget each other, then all phenomena under Heaven are accomplished. How significant “overcoming the self” is!

余曰：物之不可勝也久矣，與其勝物，不若自勝。自勝如何？思慮潰亂，血氣飄盈，動者莫覺，而靜者見之。見之則惡之矣，惡之則若居焚溺中，思有以脫去而弗得也。惡之又惡之，乃悟顏子克己之說，乃得曾子三省之說，乃入子思謹獨之說，使非心不萌，邪氣不入，而皇極之義，孔門之學，於斯著焉。若夫人之是非、富貴、榮辱，初不相關，我無勝彼之心，彼無勝我之念，彼我兩忘，天下之能事畢矣。自勝其大矣乎！

¹⁴³ Yang Bojun, ed. and annot., *Mengzi yizhu* 孟子譯注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), 3.7. I use the translation by James Legge, *The Works of Mencius* (Taipei: SMC Publishing INC., 1991), p. 205.

Kaizu has been working on the teaching of Yichuan [the sobriquet of Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033–1107)] for forty years, and has been practicing this for a long time. Now you sent me this discourse on “overcoming the phenomena.” Is this the same as the conditions when Confucius wished Qidiao Kai to enter an official employment or when Confucius talked with Zilu about floating on the sea?¹⁴⁴ I am old, and have experienced a lot and think carefully. Therefore I dare to be over-confident and discuss in terms of what I observed. I write it down and send it to you. If it is not correct, please teach me.¹⁴⁵

開祖用意伊川之學四十年矣，其於斯理履踐久矣，今乃以勝物之說遠遺於余，豈用夫子使漆雕開仕與夫語子路浮海之意乎？余老矣，亦飽經而熟議矣，故敢不揆，以所見為說，因書以遺之。如其不然，願以見教。

As Chen Kaizu’s letter to Zhang Jiucheng reveals, Chen had recently constructed a studio. Its large dimensions, as well as the great multitude of books it contained, effectively ensured the quietness of the space. Considering this feature, Chen subsequently named the space the “Studio of Overcoming by Quietness” (Jingsheng zhai 靜勝齋), and explained the meaning of the name to his friend Zhang. However, Zhang seems not to agree with Chen’s understanding. More significantly, by interpreting the studio name in different ways, Zhang and Chen in effect explore the issue of how the quiet and private space provided by the studio can lead one to the achievement of mental cultivation.

We can summarize their differences as a contrast between the notions of “overcoming the phenomena” (*shengwu* 勝物) and “overcoming the self” (*zisheng* 自勝).¹⁴⁶ Sitting in the quiet studio, Chen claims, can help one escape from the disturbance of outer *things*, making one able to nourish inner serenity; in Zhang’s subtle but critical revision, sitting quietly in the studio actually works as a mirror to reflect the disquiet of one’s mind, and thus one realizes one must overcome the *self* in order to achieve serenity of the mind. The former emphasizes the power of the studio to exclude exterior things, whereas the latter closely examines the self within the

¹⁴⁴ See *Lunyu yizhu*, 5.6 and 5.7.

¹⁴⁵ *QSW*, 4042.153–54.

¹⁴⁶ Zhang Jiucheng also even used *zisheng* to name one of Chen Kaizu’s sons. In a letter to Chen Kaizu, Zhang first promised to send Chen the “Account of the Studio of Overcoming by Quietness” after further revising and transcribing. Then, at the request of Chen, he provided four names for Chen’s sons. All of the names included the character *zi* 自, stressing the cultivation of the self; see *QSW*, 4033.29.

studio space.

Indeed, Zhang stresses the self throughout this studio account. He even uses three allusions pointing to the self in succession, in order to demonstrate the proper behavior that should be framed by the studio. The first allusion, the discourse of “subduing oneself” (*keji* 克己), comes from the *Analects* 12.1:

Yen Yüan asked about benevolence. The Master said, “To return to the observance of the rites through overcoming the self constitutes benevolence. If for a single day a man could return to the observance of the rites through overcoming himself, then the whole Empire would consider benevolence to be his. However, the practice of benevolence depends on oneself alone, and not on others.”¹⁴⁷

顏淵問仁。子曰：“克己復禮為仁。一日克己復禮，天下歸仁焉。為仁由己，而由人乎哉？”

That is, it is the self, rather than others, that guarantees the achievement of benevolence. The next reference, Master Zeng’s proposition of “examining the self on three counts” (*sanxing* 三省), is also from the *Analects*:

Tseng Tzu said, “Every day I examine myself on three counts. In what I have undertaken on another's behalf, have I failed to do my best? In my dealings with my friends have I failed to be trustworthy in what I say? Have I failed to practice repeatedly what has been passed on to me?”¹⁴⁸

曾子曰：“吾日三省吾身：為人謀而不忠乎？與朋友交而不信乎？傳不習乎？”

This proposition highlights the practice of facing oneself, a more positive formulation than “subduing oneself.”

From restraining to examining the self, Zhang then points to the third step, “self-watchfulness in solitude” (*jindu* 謹獨; also commonly used as *shendu* 慎獨), which suggests a much closer relationship between self-nourishment and the private space. This notion appears in both the *Great Learning* and the *Doctrine of the Mean*. The *Great Learning* proposes this concept when illustrating the moral principle of “making the will sincere” (*chengyi* 誠意), saying, “What is

¹⁴⁷ *Lunyu yizhu*, 12.1. I use the translation by D.C. Lau, *Confucius: The Analects* (Chinese University Press, 2000), 12.1.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.4. I use the translation by D.C. Lau, *Confucius*, 1.4.

meant by ‘making the will sincere’ is allowing no self-deception, as when we hate a bad smell or love a beautiful color. This is called satisfying oneself. Therefore the superior man will always be watchful over himself when alone.” 所謂誠其意者，毋自欺也，如惡惡臭，如好好色，此之謂自謙，故君子必慎其獨也。¹⁴⁹ Moreover, in the *Doctrine of the Mean*, this concept becomes even more prominent as it is placed at the beginning of the text. Song literati commonly attribute the opening paragraph of the *Doctrine of the Mean* to Confucius’s grandson Zisi 子思 and consequently believe that it transmits the essence of the teaching of Confucius; thus, every single word is of great value and significance. It is precisely this paragraph that addresses the notion of “self-watchfulness in solitude”: “There is nothing more visible than what is hidden and nothing more manifest than what is subtle. Therefore the superior man is watchful over himself when he is alone” 莫見乎隱，莫顯乎微。故君子慎其獨也。¹⁵⁰ Admittedly, modern scholars debate the meaning of the character *du* 獨 in these two texts. It is hard to determine whether it refers to a physical space in which one passes time alone or to a mental space reserved for innermost solitude.¹⁵¹ However, when Song literati frequently use this character in literary writings on the studio (for example, “controlling the ‘solitude’” [yu qi du 御其獨] in Lü Benzong’s “Gentleman for Rendering Service Zhou Yan’s Studio of Seeking in the Self” or “self-watchfulness in solitude” in Zhang’s “Account of the Studio of Overcoming by Quietness”), they indeed imply that being physically alone in a private studio plays a significant role in the enjoyment of mental solitude. This understanding of *du* as a physical space can be confirmed by the texts as well as by

¹⁴⁹ *Liji zhengyi*, 42.1592. I use the translation by Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, p. 89.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 31.1422. I use the translation by Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, p. 98.

¹⁵¹ See, e.g., Wei-ming Tu, *Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Confucian Religiousness* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989), pp. 108–9; Liang Tao 梁濤, “Zhu Xi dui shendu de wudu jiqi zai jingxue quanshi zhong de yiyi” 朱熹對“慎獨”的誤讀及其在經學詮釋中的意義, *Zhexue yanjiu* 3 (2004): 48–53; Le Aiguo 樂愛國 and Zhong Xiaoming 鍾小明, “Zhu Xi Zhongyong zhangju dui shendu de quanshi” 朱熹《中庸章句》對“慎獨”的詮釋, *Zhongguo zhexue shi* 4 (2012): 86–93. On the discussion of the notion of self-watchfulness, see also William Theodore de Bary, *Learning for One’s Self: Essays on the Individual in Neo-Confucian Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), pp. 241, 306–8, 342; Chun-chieh Huang, *Mencian Hermeneutics: A History of Interpretations in China* (New Brunswick, N.J., and London: Transaction, 2001), pp. 148–54.

commentaries on the *Great Learning* and the *Doctrine of the Mean*. For instance, in the *Great Learning*, the lines regarding “self-watchfulness in solitude” quoted above are contrasted with the discussion noting, “When the inferior man is alone and leisurely, there is no limit to which he does not go in his evil deeds” 小人閒居為不善。¹⁵² Since the word *xianju* clearly refers to the condition whereby one passes time privately and idyllically in a physical space, within this contrast, *du* should also be understood in a physical sense. The commentary also points to the same issue in a more direct way. As Zheng Xuan notes in his commentary on the *Doctrine of the Mean*, “The ‘self-watchfulness in solitude’ means being cautious over how one behaves when alone and at leisure” 慎獨者，慎其閒居之所為。¹⁵³ Again, *du* is equivalent to *xianju*.

Returning to Zhang Jiucheng’s writings, we can see the same usage. In his *Commentary on the Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhongyong shuo* 中庸說), Zhang remarks on the “self-watchfulness in solitude” lines as follows:

Human nature cannot be left for an instant. Therefore one should always pay attention to the moment when one is not seen or is not heard. “The superior man is cautious over the moment when he is not seen and apprehensive over the moment when he is not heard.” Then when he is with a large crowd, gathering in the same hall and sitting together on the same mat, how can he not be cautious or apprehensive? This exactly matches the doctrine of inside and outside, and is the reason why human nature cannot be left for an instant. At the moment when one is not seen or is not heard, if one behaves a little carelessly, it seems that there is no harm. However, the negligence has explicitly showed in one’s mind. It is too obvious to be hidden. Thus in one’s appearance of the spirit and one’s practice of the Way, there must be bad mind and evil *qi* mixed. Therefore it is not enough to move others or to affect the phenomena; but rather, it can incur insult and seek disaster. This is why the superior man is watchful over himself when he is alone.¹⁵⁴

惟性不可須臾離，故於不睹不聞處每致意焉，夫“戒慎乎其所不睹，恐懼乎其所不聞”，況於稠人廣衆、合堂同席之間，其有不戒慎恐懼者乎？此正合內外之道，不可須臾離之本也。夫不睹不聞，少致其忽，宜若無害矣，然而怠忽之心已顯見於心目之間，昭昭乎不可掩也，其精神所發、道理所形，亦必有非心邪氣雜於其間，不足以感人動物，而招非意之辱，求莫為之禍焉。此君子所以慎其獨也。

Here, contrasting the *du* space with the public, physical space makes clear that the space unseen

¹⁵² *Liji zhengyi*, 42.1592. I use the translation by Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, p. 89.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 31.1422.

¹⁵⁴ Yang Xinxun 楊新勛, ed., *Zhang Jiucheng ji* 張九成集 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2013), p. 1086.

and unheard by outsiders can also be objectified. Certain private space is needed to provide the basis for self-cultivation. In this context we can return to Zhang’s “Account of the Studio of Overcoming by Quietness.” Indeed, the studio is precisely such a space. Zhang’s explanation of how to nourish the individual in solitude is actually largely shared in his description of the process of overcoming the self in the Studio of Overcoming by Quietness. This intertextuality, again, confirms that the private studio not only provides an interior architecture in which to stay alone, but also constitutes a mental space in which to lodge as well as to cultivate the inner mind of the self.

To conclude this section, I discuss one more example, a quatrain that is written on the studio window and outlines the activities framed by the studio:

Lu You, “Miscellaneous Writings on the North Window of the Retreat of Studying in Old Age”
老學庵北窗雜書 (third of seven)

茅齋遙夜養心君， 靜處工夫自策勛。 正喜殘香伴幽獨， 鴉鳴窗白又紛紛。	In the thatched hut, through the long night, I nurtured my mind, As for cultivation in the quietness, I alone honored it. At that moment I was enjoying the lingering fragrance that accompanies solitude, The crows cried and the windows brightened—the noisy day came again. ¹⁵⁵
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On the one hand, this representation of the studio at night is quite similar to Chen Kaizu’s Studio of Overcoming by Quietness, in that it also defines a quiet space for the studio owner to cultivate himself. On the other hand, the relaxed and casual language of this poem shapes the studio as a much more leisurely space than Chen’s restrained studio represented in the *Daoxue* manner. This difference reminds us of a remark made by Cheng Yi on a line from the *Analects*: “During his leisure moments, the Master remained correct though relaxed” 子之燕居，申申如也，夭夭如也。¹⁵⁶ To clarify how to understand Confucius’s leisure behavior described by these two adjective reduplications—*shenshen* 申申 and *yaoyao* 夭夭, Cheng Yi comments:

¹⁵⁵ *Jiannan shigao jiaozhu*, 67.3792.

¹⁵⁶ *Lunyu yizhu*, 7.4. I use the translation by D.C. Lau, *Confucius*, 7.4.

This shows that the disciples are very good at describing the sage. Since the characters of *shenshen* cannot fully depict the sage, so they further add the characters of *yaoyao*. Nowadays in leisure moments, if one is not lazy and unbridled, one must be too strict. When one is too strict, one cannot use these four characters; when one is lazy and unbridled, one cannot use these four characters either. Only the sage spontaneously owns the *qi* of the harmony of the mean.¹⁵⁷

此弟子善形容聖人處也，為申申字說不盡，故更著夭夭字。今人燕居之時，不怠惰放肆，必太嚴厲。嚴厲時著此四字不得，怠惰放肆時亦著此四字不得，惟聖人便自有中和之氣。

That is to say, the ideal state at leisure should be neither too relaxed nor too severe. One should pursue true harmony, by spending time at ease but without committing any transgressions. Since the studio is the core space for the leisure life of the Song literati, the perfect representation of the studio should also guide the intellectual activities within it in this harmonious way. In this sense, the above works by Lü Benzhong or Zhang Jiucheng are inclined toward too much seriousness or too much strictness, while Lu You's poems, such as the "Miscellaneous Writing on the North Window of the Retreat of Studying in Old Age," properly convey the twofold meaning of the studio space: it is a self-contained space for both ultimate pleasure and self-cultivation.

III The Construction of a Temporary Studio

Indeed, it is the studio that provides Song literati a perfect, enclosed space for intellectual activities. However, the literati cannot stay in an established physical studio at all times. When they are traveling, such as in the course of official business or for sightseeing, they often construct for themselves a temporary studio. By means of such a studio, the literati are able to maintain a separate space apart from the outside world, and thus ensure scholarly enjoyment and mental pleasure in private even in unstable conditions as occur when traveling.

One strategy to set aside a stable studio space for private enjoyment is to construct a mobile studio that can accompany the studio owner *en route* wherever he goes. In this sense, Mi Fu's

¹⁵⁷ Zhu Xi, *Sishu zhangju jizhu*, pp. 93–94. There are two ways to understand the meanings of *shenshen* and *yaoyao*. One is to interpret them with different, if not opposite, meanings. Cheng Yi's elaboration is based on this interpretation; see also *Lunyu yizhu*, 7.4. The other way is to treat them as synonyms, such as Yang Shi's 楊時 (1053–1135) definition; see *Sishu zhangju jizhu*, p. 93.

renowned “floating studio” provides a typical example. As a reputable literatus, Mi Fu certainly owned well-established studios, such as his Precious Jin Studio, which housed a rich collection of art, including several treasured works from the Jin dynasty.¹⁵⁸ However, when Mi Fu went on the road and therefore was unable to stay in his Precious Jin Studio, he explored a solution to maintain his private life in the studio. It is said,

During the era of Chongning [1102–1106], Yuanzhang [the courtesy name of Mi Fu] was the Supply Commissioner of Jiang-Huai. He put up a sign on his floating boat, inscribing “Boat of Calligraphy and Painting of the Mi Family.”¹⁵⁹

崇寧間元章為江淮發運，揭牌於行舸之上，曰“米家書畫船”。

To learn more about this boat, we can read Huang Tingjian’s poem “Playfully Presenting to Mi Yuanzhang” (“Xizeng Mi Yuanzhang” 戲贈米元章):

萬里風帆水著天，	In ten thousand <i>li</i> sailing in the wind, the river touches the sky,
麝煤鼠尾過年年。	With fragrant ink and weasel-fur brush, you pass year after year.
滄江靜夜虹貫月，	On the river, on a quiet night, the rainbow crosses the moon,
定是米家書畫船。	It must be the Boat of Calligraphy and Painting of the Mi Family. ¹⁶⁰

The last line clearly indicates that the subject of this poem is Mi Fu’s studio boat. The word “must be” (*dingshi* 定是) implies that the first three lines serve as sufficient conditions for identifying the so-called Boat of Calligraphy and Painting. Indeed, the former lines delineate the characteristics of a studio boat from different perspectives. The first line spatially locates the boat in the setting of an extremely broad expanse of water. Though it describes a static image, it can inspire readers to imagine the dynamic state of the boat, sailing smoothly in the wind. By contrast, the second line zooms in to examine fairly small objects—the ink and brush, imperative implements used in the studio. Although this line reveals a temporal sequence (“passing year after year,” *guo niannian* 過年年), it transforms the sequential experience into a timeless picture.

¹⁵⁸ See Mi Fu, *Shu shi* 書史, in *Congshu jicheng chubian*, p. 17.

¹⁵⁹ Ren Yuan’s commentary on Huang Tingjian’s “Xizeng Mi Yuanzhang” 戲贈米元章, Ren Yuan, Shi Rong 史容, and Shi Jiwen 史季溫, annot., *Huang Tingjian shi jizhu* 黃庭堅詩集注, ed. Liu Shangrong 劉尚榮 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003), p. 564.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 563.

The space labeled by scholarly objects, though on a mobile boat, is represented as immobile to guarantee the owner enjoyment of his scholarly activities in private. However, ordinary scholarly objects seem inadequate to outfit this studio boat. Therefore, the third line indicates that something more is found inside. According to the Song commentator on Huang’s poetry, Ren Yuan 任淵, this line alludes to the *Shihan shenwu* 詩含神霧, which records that Nüshu 女樞 gave birth to the legendary sage-king Zhuanxu 顓頊 because she was moved by a miraculous celestial phenomenon—the rainbow-like pole star crossed the moon. By positioning the studio boat in this marvelous scene, Huang “intends to mean that in the boat, there is an air of treasures” 言船中有寶氣.¹⁶¹ Thus, readers can infer that on board the boat are precious collections of books and artworks.

In fact, Mi Fu did not pioneer the practice of housing a collection of books and paintings aboard a boat. In Du Mu’s 杜牧 (803–852) poem “Zheng Guan, the Chief Musician” (“Zheng Guan xielü” 鄭瓘協律), the protagonist Zheng Guan takes similar actions:

<p>廣文遺韻留樗散， 雞犬圖書共一船。 自說江湖不歸事， 阻風中酒過年年。</p>	<p>The remaining resonance of Guangwen is left as unused as the Stinky Quassia,¹⁶² Chickens, dogs, and books are all together in one boat. You talk to yourself about the affair of not returning to the rivers and lakes, Upwind, drunkenly, you pass year after year.¹⁶³</p>
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¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 564.

¹⁶² Guangwen 廣文 refers to Zheng Guan’s grandfather Zheng Qian 鄭虔 (685–764), who held the positions of Chief Musician (xielü lang 協律郎) and Erudite of the Institute for the Extension of Literary Arts (Guangwen guan boshi 廣文館博士). His biography can be found in *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書, 202.5766–67.

The phrase *chusan* 樗散 refers to the Stinky Quassia, the timber of which is considered useless; see *Zhuangzi jishi*, 1.39. I use the translation of this tree name (*chu* 樗) by Victor H. Mair, *Wandering on the Way: Early Taoist Tales and Parables of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Bantam Books, 1994), 1.8. Du Mu may borrow this phrase directly from Du Fu’s poem “Song Zheng shiba Qian bian Taizhou sihu” 送鄭十八虔貶台州司戶, which uses *chusan* to describe Zheng Qian; see Qiu Zhao’ao 仇兆鰲, annot., *Dushi xiangzhu* 杜詩詳注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), 5.425.

¹⁶³ Wu Zaiqing 吳在慶, ed. and annot., *Du Mu ji xianian jiaozhu* 杜牧集繫年校注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2008), p. 562. There is also Meng Jiao’s 孟郊 (751–814) poem “Hu bupin xi Lu Tong shuchuan gui Luo” 忽不貧喜盧仝書船歸洛 that takes *shuchuan* 書船 as the subject. But since this boat was used as a vehicle for transportation of books, rather than as a studio, I will not discuss it here.

It is worth noting that Ren Yuan cites this poem in particular to comment on Huang’s “Playfully Presenting to Mi Yuanzhang.” Accordingly, a striking contrast between these two poems appears. First, although books are placed aboard Zheng Guan’s boat, chickens and dogs are also on board, in sharp contrast to the pure and elegant studio scene on Mi Fu’s boat. Second, rather than enjoying a leisurely life with scholarly implements, as Mi Fu does, Zheng Guan is represented as weary, passing years (again, *guo niannian*) sailing against a head wind and drinking bitter wine. More importantly, since Zheng Guan’s talents, inherited from his grandfather Zheng Qian, are not recognized, he feels so frustrated that he has no choice but to pack up his belongings and drift on the river. His boat thus suggests his rejection of the public. Mi Fu, in contrast, at the time he constructed his Boat of Calligraphy and Painting, held the position of Supply Commissioner. He passes time in his floating studio in order to guarantee himself to enjoy reading, art creation, and practicing his connoisseurship even when he is away from his stationary studio. Thus his boat does not represent direct conflict with the public sphere. In a word, Zheng Guan’s boat serves as a temporary reclusive space, while Mi Fu’s boat delimits a private space for the literatus to enjoy his intellectual life.

Inscriptions written by Mi Fu himself on works in his art collection also provide vivid scenes of such self-enjoyment while aboard the boat. Mi Fu’s *Inscribing on the Preface to Orchid Pavilion* 題蘭亭序 (Figure 1: 1102, handscroll, ink on paper, 24 × 47.5 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing) is one such example:

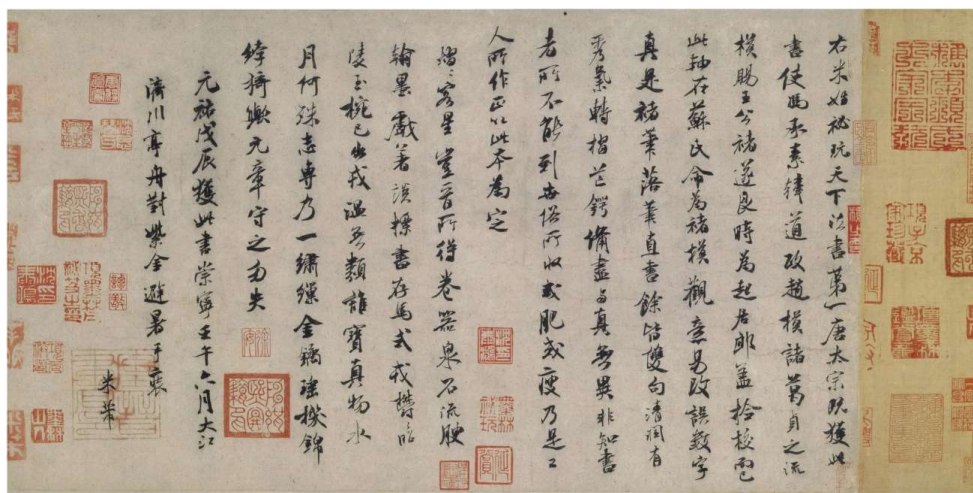


Figure 1

This inscription can be divided into three parts. The first two parts record Mi Fu's appreciation of the calligraphy in the *Preface to Orchid Pavilion* copied by the famous Tang calligrapher Chu Suiliang 褚遂良 (596–658), as well as expressing Mi's own wish to permanently preserve it. In the form of a prose piece and a four-syllable poem, Mi traces the production of this work and analyzes Chu's excellent writing technique. Then Mi ends:

In the sixth month of the year of *renwu* [1102], at the Crossing-Stream Pavilion on the Yangzi River, my boat was facing the Purple Gold Mountains. I was away from the summer heat, and mounted this work personally.

崇寧壬午六月，大江濟川亭，舟對紫金，避暑手裝。

A revised and detailed version can also be seen in Mi's literary collection:

On the ninth day of the sixth month in the year of *renwu*, at the Crossing-Stream Pavilion on the Yangzi River, I moored the Boat of Precious Jin Studio. Facing the Purple Gold and Floating Jade Mountains, against the rapid wind, I found relief from the summer heat, and remounted this work.¹⁶⁴

壬午閏六月九日，大江濟川亭，艤寶晉齋舳，對紫金浮玉羣山，迎快風銷暑重裝。

Quite similarly, in his *Colophon of the Preface to Orchid Pavilion in the Yellow-Silk Edition Copied by Chu* 褚臨黃絹本蘭亭序跋贊 (Figure 2: 1102, Palace Museum, Beijing), Mi inscribes detailed notes about his connoisseurship, and then clearly indicates the time and location of his writing at the end:

¹⁶⁴ Mi Fu, “Chu mo Youjun *Lanting yanji xu zan*” 褚摹右軍蘭亭燕集序贊, *Baojin yingguang ji* 寶晉英光集, in *Congshu jicheng chubian* (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1937), 6.50.

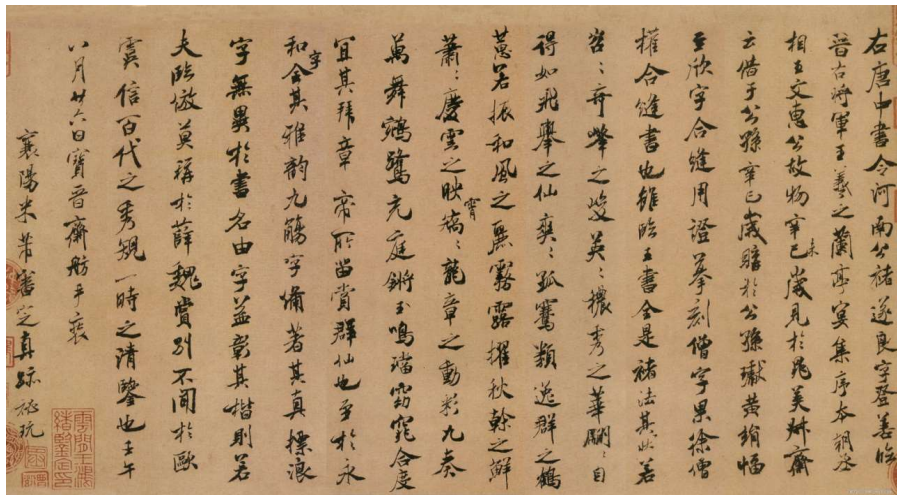


Figure 2

On the twenty-sixth day of the eighth month in the year of *renwu*, in the Boat of Precious Jin Studio, I mounted the work personally. Xiangyang Mi Fu examined authentic works and treasure objects.¹⁶⁵

壬午八月廿六日，寶晉齋舫手裝。
襄陽米芾審定真跡秘玩。

In both cases, the so-called “Boat of Precious Jin Studio” (Baojin zhai huang 寶晉齋舫 or Baojin zhai fang 寶晉齋舫) may be the alias of the Boat of Calligraphy and Painting of the Mi Family. This studio boat provides a bounded space for Mi himself. Here he can not only practice his connoisseurship of the precious calligraphy works that fill the interior, but he can also enjoy the pleasant natural surroundings outside.

Later generations imitated the construction of such a private studio boat.¹⁶⁶ For instance, in the *Sayings of an Uncultivated Man of the East of Qi* (*Qidong yeyu* 齊東野語), Zhou Mi 周密 (1232–1298) records the studio boat owned by Zhao Mengjian 趙孟堅 (1199–1264) and relates it directly to the model of Mi Fu’s boat:

[Zhao Mengjian] was elegant and erudite. He was good at handwriting, expert in poetry and prose, and extremely addicted to calligraphy. He collected many inscriptions on bronze and stone as well as famous handwritings dating from the Three Dynasties on. When he found one

¹⁶⁵ Mi Fu, “Ba Chu mo *Lanting tie*” 跋褚模蘭亭帖, *Ibid.*, 7.59.

¹⁶⁶ On the influence of the Boat of Calligraphy and Painting of Mi Family to Dong Qichang 董其昌 (1555–1636) in the Ming dynasty, see Fu Shen 傅申, “Dong Qichang shuhua chuan: Shuishang xinglü yu jianshang chuanguo guanxi yanjiu” 董其昌書畫船：水上行旅與鑑賞、創作關係研究, *Taida meishu shi yanjiu jikan* 15 (2003): 205–97.

he liked, he would even ungrudgingly empty his pocket to trade for it. He was also skilled in painting plum blossoms and bamboo, which always captured the exquisiteness of Taochan and Shishi.¹⁶⁷ He excelled particularly at landscape painting. His contemporaries treasured his work. His mind was unconstrained and fresh, maintaining the manner of the worthies of the Six Dynasties. His contemporaries compared him with Mi Fu. Zigu [the courtesy name of Zhao Mengjian] himself also thought that they were comparable.

脩雅博識，善筆劄，工詩文，酷嗜法書。多藏三代以來金石名蹟，遇其會意時，雖傾囊易之不靳也。又善作梅竹，往往得逃禪、石室之妙。於山水為尤奇，時人珍之。襟度瀟爽，有六朝諸賢風氣。時比之米南宮，而子固亦自以為不歎也。

Whether roaming east or west, he always carried all the possessions in his collections with him. In one boat, he piled up all these things in a disorderly fashion, leaving only one tiny place for sitting or resting. He could reach any item he wanted from left or right at will. He played with his possessions, chanting and reading, to the extent that he forgot about sleeping or eating. Wherever his boat arrived, those, who knew it or not, gazed at it, and recognized it as the Boat of Calligraphy and Painting of the Mi Family.¹⁶⁸

東西薄遊，必挾所有以自隨，一舟橫陳，僅留一席為偃息之地，隨意左右取之，撫摩吟諷，至忘寢食。所至，識不識望之，而知為米家書畫船也。

Although this time the boat should actually be the “Boat of the Zhao Family,” people still referred to it as Mi Fu’s studio boat. This misidentification in turn demonstrates that Mi Fu’s boat had become a motif representing the private space a literatus might maintain while traveling away from home. Moreover, the spatial arrangement created by Zhao Mengjian further augments the privacy of the studio boat. Most of the space in the boat is occupied by Zhao’s possessions (*suoyou* 所有)—a prized collection of art and literature in which the self is represented as deeply immersed. Zhao has little desire to follow normal daily routines or to communicate with the outside world. In this way, the studio boat serves as a self-contained space for his leisure activities.

Another elaboration of the studio boat can be found in Yao Mian’s 姚勉 (1216–1262) poem

“Presenting to Candidate Youwen” (“Zeng Youwen xiucai” 贈郵文秀才):

風行水上真文章，
不羽不脛遊四方。

Wind moving above the water is a true patterning,
Without wings, without legs, it travels in four directions.

¹⁶⁷ Taochan 逃禪 is the sobriquet of Yang Buzhi 楊補之 (1097–1169), who is famous for painting plum blossoms. Shishi 石室 refers to Wen Tong 文同 (1018–1079), whose ink bamboo paintings are well known.

¹⁶⁸ Zhou Mi, *Qidong yeyu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 19.357.

妙語綴入牙頰香，
意有佳客揚其芳。
美君金璧不願將，
多文爲富紛儲藏。

牙籤玉軸緗縹囊，
書船貫月飛虹光。
鼎肉試取一臠嘗，
珠璣璀璨錦繡張。
疾指快讀下五行，
虎鳳蔚躍蛟龍翔。

尚欲效學雞林商，
遍索偉製豐行裝。

哲匠謹勿麾門牆，
當遣紙價貴洛陽。

When splendid words are composed, the mouth becomes fragrant,
I suspect that there must be a refined guest who spreads this aroma.
I appreciate that you don't want gold and jade,
You regard an abundance of literature as wealth, and thus you
enrich your collection.

Ivory book tags, jade scrolls, and bluish silk book jackets,
The studio boat crosses the moon, like the flying rainbow.
Of the cooked meat, I attempt to taste a small slice,
Then the gem has become bright, and the brocade has unfolded.
When I rapidly point and quickly read through five lines,
The tiger and phoenix are jumping together and the dragon is
flying.

Still you desire to imitate and follow the Silla merchants,¹⁶⁹
You exhaust yourself searching for excellent works to enrich your
travel belongings.

Talented literary man, please take care not to run from the scholarly
gateway,
You'll surely bring about an increase in paper cost in Luoyang.¹⁷⁰

The opening couplet of this poem succinctly captures the distinctive features of a studio boat by employing both an allusion to the *Book of Changes* and a homographic pun. The first line describes the ripple or “patterning” (*wen* 文) of the water by the wind when the boat is sailing smoothly, while on the other hand, it refers to Youwen’s excellent literary composition or “patterning” (*wen* 文). The implication becomes more complicated when we examine this line intertextually. First, the line alludes to the commentary on the images in Hexagram 59, “Scatters” (“Huan” 渙), about “wind moving above the water—scattering” 風行水上，渙。¹⁷¹ According to the judgment of the *Book of Changes*, this scattering leads to the advantage in crossing the great river.¹⁷² The use of this allusion thus points out the high quality of the studio as a boat. At the same time, the boat’s excellence as a studio is highlighted by the reference to Su Xun’s 蘇洵

¹⁶⁹ It is said that the poems written by the famous Tang poet Bai Juyi were so popular that the “Silla merchants” (*Jilin shang* 雞林商) sought for them and sold them to the prime minister of Silla in a high price; see Yuan Zhen 元稹 (779–831), “Bai shi *Changqing ji xu*” 白氏長慶集序, in Ji Qin 冀勤, ed. and annot., *Yuan Zhen ji* 元稹集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 51.555.

¹⁷⁰ QSS, 3406.40509–10.

¹⁷¹ *Zhouyi yizhu*, 59.210.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

(1009–1066) argument, “‘Wind moving above the water—scattering,’ this is indeed the utmost patterning under Heaven” “風行水上渙。”此亦天下之至文也。¹⁷³ Because the wind “patterns” the water spontaneously, Su Xun deduces that the best literary “patterning” should also be achieved effortlessly, without intention.¹⁷⁴ Following this idea, Yao Mian praises Youwen for the “true patterning” (*zhen wenzhang* 真文章) he achieves in his studio. Hence, the fact that the “utmost patterning” (*zhiwen* 至文) is spread by this boat immediately distinguishes the studio boat from other boats. The studio boat, that is, represents a space to cultivate literary talents.

After establishing the boat’s value in this manner, Yao Mian further delineates the construction of this space in the first half of the poem. According to Yao, Youwen spends money in a refined way: he spends large sums on books and accumulates abundant literary and artistic works in his studio boat. By simply juxtaposing a series of nouns (the book tags, scrolls, and book jackets) in one poetic line, Yao underscores the high quality of Youwen’s scholarly collection. Subsequently, the next line directly connects Youwen’s boat to Mi Fu’s model through Huang Tingjian’s “Playfully Presenting to Mi Yuanzhang,” further elevating the value of these objects. Moreover, this collection is not just for decoration, as Yao demonstrates by sketching the actual use of the collection in the ensuing lines. Spending even a little time enjoying the books, he says, can bring significant rewards; the effect is even greater when one immerses oneself in them. But still, Youwen is not satisfied, but ceaselessly enriches his studio boat. On this basis, Yao presents, at the end of the poem, the reasonable expectation that Youwen’s talent must be well cultivated as a result of the time he passes on his studio boat, and therefore he must surely be known in the world. Thus, the floating studio successfully carries out all of the functions of the regular studio. The literati, even when mobile, are still able to pass leisure time alone,

¹⁷³ Su Xun, “Zhongxiong zi Wenfu shuo” 仲兄字文甫說, Zeng Zaozhuang 曾棗莊 and Jin Chengli 金成禮, ed. and annot., *Jiayou ji jianzhu* 嘉祐集箋注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1993), 15.412–13.

¹⁷⁴ I thank Prof. Michael Fuller for calling my attention to the relation between Yao Mian’s use of “wind moving above the water” and that of Su Xun. For a detailed analysis of Su Xun’s use, see Michael A. Fuller, *Drifting among Rivers and Lakes: Southern Song Dynasty Poetry and the Problem of Literary History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, Harvard University Press, 2013), pp. 50–52.

precisely as they would in a regular (immobile) studio.

However, the studio boat does not suit everyone, particularly because financial situations varied among the Song literati. Therefore, for the sake of guarding their private spaces, Song literati frequently employ another expedient strategy, namely, “raising the studio name wherever one is” 隨所在揭之.

This strategy is evoked in accounts of Huang Tingjian’s “Hall of Withdrawal and Obedience” (Tuiting tang 退聽堂), for instance. During the Yuanyou 元祐 (1086–1094) era, when Huang held an official position in the capital Bianjing (in modern Henan Province), he constructed a studio beside the Puchi Temple 醜池寺 which he named the Hall of Withdrawal and Obedience. This name is derived from the *Book of Changes*. In Hexagram 52, “Restraint” (“Gen” 艮), which mainly explores the relationship between acting and stopping, the commentary on the images of the Second Yin (*liuer* 六二) says, “‘This one does not raise up his followers,’ nor does he withdraw and obey the call” 不拯其隨，未退聽也。¹⁷⁵ The commentary proposes the proper attitude with which to achieve quietude when one is not in movement. Hence, by selecting this as his studio name, Huang already prescribes the studio as an inward space for the withdrawn lifestyle, which is in distinct contrast to the public space in which he needs to work as an official. However, in the following years which he spent in exile, Huang was no longer able to return to this studio. As Ren Yuan states, however, “Thereafter, this studio name was raised wherever Huang was” 此堂名，其後隨所在揭之。¹⁷⁶ That is to say, Huang labeled different dwellings with the same studio name, and by this means, he was able to achieve stability and composure even when struggling with hardships.

The effects of this action—naming each temporary studio with the same name in order to lodge one’s mind—are indicated more clearly in Wang Zongji’s 王宗稷 observation of the

¹⁷⁵ *Zhouyi yizhu*, 52.187. I use the translation by Richard John Lynn, *The Classic of Changes*, p. 468.

¹⁷⁶ *Huang Tingjian shi jizhu*, p. 3.

“Studio of Unaffected Thought” (Siwuxie zhai 思無邪齋), which was named by Su Shi. In the chronicle of Su Shi’s life, Wang Zongji notes Su Shi’s acts of naming. Under the entry for the year 1096, he writes,

[Su Shi] had the poem “Written in Response to Tao Yuanming’s ‘Moving My Dwelling,’” saying, “In the third month of last year, I moved from the Jiayou Temple in the east of the river to the Hejiang Tower. One year passed. I got an open ground with several *mu* beside the Guishan Prefecture. The local elders said that it had previously been a Baihe Daoist Temple. I joyfully wanted to live here.”¹⁷⁷ The construction of the new White Crane Dwelling is from that period. The poem contains a line about constructing the Studio of Unaffected Thought. In 1094, when the master sojourned in the Jiayou Temple, he had already composed “A Eulogy on the Studio of Unaffected Thought.” In 1095, he moved to the Hejiang Tower. He also had the “Writing on the Anecdotes of Gentleman Cheng” composed in the Studio of Unaffected Thought within Xinghua Residence. Now in 1096 he planned to build a new dwelling, and he again mentioned the construction of the Studio of Unaffected Thought. During these three years, though he moved houses frequently, I think that the name of the Studio of Unaffected Thought is also a way to make him feel at peace wherever he is.¹⁷⁸

有《和陶淵明移居》詩云：“余去歲三月，自水東嘉祐寺遷去合江樓，迨今一年，得歸善後隙地數畝，父老云，古白鶴觀也。意欣然居之。”營白鶴新居，始於是矣。詩中乃有葺思無邪齋之句。先生甲戌寓居嘉祐寺，已有《思無邪齋贊》矣。乙亥遷合江樓，先有《書程公逸事》于星華館思無邪齋。今丙子欲營新居，又曰葺為無邪齋。雖三年之間，遷居不常，意其思無邪齋之名，亦隨寓而安矣。

During his three-year banishment (1094–1096) in remote Huizhou (just before subsequent exile to Danzhou), Su Shi had to move houses three times. The preface of the two poems “Written in Response to Tao Yuanming’s ‘Moving My Dwelling’” (“He Tao Yuanming ‘Yiju’” 和陶淵明移居) that Wang cites here had already outlined the unsettled state that Su Shi experienced. The main text of the poems further represents the dynamic and unstable process of moving house. In the first poem of the set, Su Shi recalls his first two moves. He begins by saying, “In the past, I came here for the first time, / East of the river there was a secluded home” 昔我初來時，水東有幽宅; and follows with, “Who commanded me to move close to the market? / Everyday there

¹⁷⁷ This is a loose quotation of Su Shi’s preface of his poem set “He Tao Yuanming ‘Yiju’” 和陶淵明移居; see Wang Wengao 王文誥 (b. 1764), annot., *Su Shi shiji* 蘇軾詩集, ed. Kong Fanli (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 40.2191.

¹⁷⁸ Wang Zongji, “Dongpo xiansheng nianpu” 東坡先生年譜, in Wang Shuizhao 王水照, ed., *Songren suo zhuan san Su nianpu huikan* 宋人所撰三蘇年譜彙刊 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1989), pp. 373–74.

were burdens to visit” 誰令遷近市，日有造請役。¹⁷⁹ These two couplets respectively address his lodging in the Jiayou Temple 嘉祐寺 when he first arrived at Huizhou and his later move to the Hejiang Tower 合江樓. Then in the second poem, Su Shi shifts to his third lodging, at the ruined Baihe Daoist Temple 白鶴觀 in Guishan Prefecture, which reads:

<p>洄潭轉碕岸， 我作《江郊》詩。 今為一廛氓， 此邦乃得之。 葺為無邪齋， 思我無所思。 古觀廢已久， 白鶴歸何時。 我豈丁令威， 千歲復還茲。 江山朝福地， 古人不我欺。</p>	<p>The whirling pond turned along the winding bank, I composed the poem, “The River Suburb.” Now I become a one-field commoner, With this area, finally I realized that. I constructed the Studio of Unaffected Thought, I think that I do not have things about which to think. The old Daoist temple has been abandoned for a long time, When will the white crane return? Am I actually Ding Lingwei, after one thousand years returning to this place? The rivers and mountains face this blissful land, The ancient people did not deceive me.¹⁸⁰</p>
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As we can see, Su Shi is quite consciously affected by his frequent moving. However, he does not allow himself to be trapped in the floating life; rather, in these poems, he comforts himself from multiple aspects. First, the framework of the set, as responding poems (*heshi* 和詩), enables Su Shi to communicate with and be recognized by his ancient model Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 (ca. 365–427). By matching the rhyme of Tao’s “Moving My Dwelling” (“Yiju” 移居), Su Shi sets his own experience in parallel to Tao’s, and therefore transforms the originally distressing emotions into the pleasure Tao experienced on moving to the new, though still ramshackle hut. Second, Su Shi declares that by moving to Guishan, his own dream is realized. When Su Shi visited Guishan for the first time in 1094, he was already attracted by the beautiful scenery there and composed the poem “The River Suburb” (“Jiangjiao” 江郊). Because he can really stay there now, he tells himself that he should feel satisfied. Third, the fact that the new house is located in the ancient Baihe Daoist Temple grants Su Shi an opportunity to enjoy the fantasy of attaining

¹⁷⁹ *Su Shi shiji*, 40.2192.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

the Daoist Way. Inspired by the name of the “White Crane” (*baihe* 白鶴), Su Shi associates himself with the renowned Daoist immortal Ding Lingwei 丁令威 of the Han dynasty, who is said to have retreated into the mountains to learn the Way and then was transformed into a crane to return to his hometown a thousand years later.¹⁸¹

More significantly, as Wang Zongji points out, Su Shi highlights the construction of the Studio of Unaffected Thought again in the poem, though he has already used this name for his studios in the first two dwellings in Huizhou. Indeed, no matter where he sojourned, he first designated a particular building as a studio; second, he named all these studios in succession with the same name. In his works from this period, we can also see that he often clearly mentions “[he is] writing in the Studio of Unaffected Thought” 思無邪齋書.¹⁸²

Su Shi elucidates the implication of this studio name in his “Inscription of the Studio of Unaffected Thought, with Preface” (“Siwuxie zhai ming bingxu” 思無邪齋銘並敘):

I delightedly understood something from the saying of Confucius, “The three hundred pieces in the *Classic of Poetry* can be encapsulated in one phrase: Having unaffected thoughts.” As for those who have thoughts, they are all affected; those who lack thoughts, then they are like dust or wood. By means of which can I obtain the Way?—only by having thoughts but not having things to think about. So I put on a silk ribbon scarf and sat upright, without speaking all day long. I looked straight ahead, but did not see anything; I concentrated my mind, but did not feel anything. In this way I obtained the Way. Therefore I named the studio “Unaffected Thought.”¹⁸³

居士欣然有得於孔子之言曰：“《詩》三百，一言以蔽之，曰思無邪。”夫有思皆邪也，無思則土木也，吾何自得道，其惟有思而無所思乎？於是幅巾危坐，終日不言，明目直視，而無所見，攝心正念，而無所覺。於是得道，乃名其齋曰“思無邪”。

This description demonstrates perfectly the function of the studio as a space for mental cultivation. Both philosophical thinking and meditative action in the studio lead to the pacification of the inner mind. It is here that Su Shi’s studio departs from Tao Yuanming’s hut.

¹⁸¹ Wang Shaoying 汪紹楹, ed. and annot., *Soushen houji* 搜神後記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), 1.1.

¹⁸² For example, “Shu waizengzu Cheng gong yishi” 書外曾祖程公逸事 (*Su Shi wenji*, 66.2052–53), “Shu Yuanming dongfang you yishi shihou” 書淵明東方有一士詩後 (67.2115), and “Shu Huang Luzhi huaba hou sanshou” 書黃魯直畫跋後三首 (70.2218–19).

¹⁸³ *Su Shi wenji*, 19.574–75.

Tao's original lines read, "When there is farm work, each returns, / In leisure, we immediately miss each other" 農務各自歸，閒暇輒相思，¹⁸⁴ expressing his craving for a community with shared delight after his move; while Su Shi's responding couplet reads, "I constructed it as the Studio of Unaffected Thought, / I think that I do not have things about which to think" 葺為無邪齋，思我無所思, which separates him from the outside and focuses on the inner world. This, therefore, explains why Su Shi insists on the consistency of the studio name: The unique name functions as an adhesive to figuratively attach Su Shi to the place and thereby solidify his private space in an otherwise unstable situation. It maintains a space for Su Shi not only to enjoy intellectual activities, but also to cultivate his mind in order to achieve a calm and unaffected attitude in regard to the hardships he is experiencing. Huang Tingjian's action of "raising the studio name wherever one is" is therefore transcribed with an optimistic attitude—"feeling at peace wherever one is" 隨寓而安, as Wang Zongji indicates with precision. In other words, by using the same studio name for all of them, one is able to link the temporary studios of which he makes use, and thus to obtain in the studio ultimate pleasure even while traveling or away from home.

IV The Studio in the Mind

In the various representations of the temporary studio, a certain bounded physical studio is still required. However, in order to possess the privacy that is provided by the studio space in any place and at any time, Song literati were even able to construct a virtual studio. In turn, this construction of an imaginary studio further strengthened the attribute of the studio as a reification of mental pursuits.

Song literati were capable of designating a nonstudio site as a studio by means of certain objects. The anonymous Song painting *Seated Gentleman with His Portrait* 人物圖 (Figure 3:

¹⁸⁴ Lu Qinli 逯欽立, ed. and annot., *Tao Yuanming ji* 陶淵明集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), 2.57.

12th century, album leaf, ink and color on silk, 29 × 27.8 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei)

vividly illustrates such a rebuilding process:



Figure 3

This painting centers on a scholar who is sitting elegantly on a couch. Yet, because the background of the painting, where the scholar and all the furniture and objects are located, is blank, it is difficult to distinguish whether this scene takes place in an exterior or interior space. However, the painting meticulously depicts the multitude of refined objects that surround the scholar, including both furniture (such as a large screen, a low couch, and four crane-knee-shaped tables) and scholarly objects (such as stacks of books, scrolls, an inkstone, a chessboard, a zither, tea-making implements, and a vase with flowers). By virtue of the deployment of all these objects, a space is constructed in an enclosure. The scholar portrayed is therefore leisurely enjoying this self-contained space. Thus, although the space depicted cannot be explicitly identified as an indoor scene, it indeed *functioned* as an enclosed studio.¹⁸⁵

This approach is also used in literary representations. While the painting depicts an

¹⁸⁵ For discussions of this painting from the perspective of art history, see Wu Hung, *The Double Screen: Medium and Representation in Chinese Painting* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 232–33; Chen Yunru 陳韻如, “Wenren de shenfen rentong” 文人的身分認同—談宋人人物冊, *Gugong wenwu yuekan* 276 (Mar. 2006): 74–83; Yang Zhishui, “Tang Song shidai de chuang he zhuo” 唐宋時代的床和桌, in *Zhongzhao cailan* 終朝采藍: 古名物尋微 (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2008), pp. 19–20; and Hui-shu Lee, *Empresses, Art, & Agency in Song Dynasty China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010), p. 106.

arrangement of various exquisite and refined objects, in literary writings the Song literati also utilized everyday items to construct an imaginary studio. The prominent poet Chen Shidao 陳師道 (1053–1101), for instance, often imaginatively reconstructs his single-room home as a studio by means of a couch and a quilt. Since Chen Shidao was so impoverished that he had to send his wife and children to live with his father-in-law, it was hard for him to afford to build a dedicated studio. Nevertheless, Chen compensates for his poor condition in his own way. As noted in the Song miscellany (*biji* 筆記) *Jade Dew in the Forest of Cranes* (*Helin yulu* 鶴林玉露):

It is commonly said that every time Wuji [the courtesy name of Chen Shidao] had poetic inspiration, he would embrace a quilt, lie on the couch, and moan for days. Only in that way could he finish the writing.¹⁸⁶

世傳無己每有詩興，擁被臥床，呻吟累日，乃能成章。

A more detailed and vivid record is provided by Ye Mengde 葉夢得 (1077–1148):

Mr. Ye of Shilin [the sobriquet of Ye Mengde] recorded: It is commonly said that every time Chen Wuji went climbing and sightseeing and thus found some poetic lines, right away he would return home hurriedly, lie on the couch, and cover his head with a quilt. He called it “the couch for chanting.” His family was familiar with this, and would even chase away all the cats and dogs. The infants and young children were also all carried and taken to stay with the neighbors. Only by waiting out the time, until he got up, proceeded to the brush and inkstone, and finished writing the poem, could the whole family return to normal. Perhaps he needed to be focused and did not want to hear the sounds of people, fearing that they would disturb his thoughts.¹⁸⁷

石林葉氏曰：世言陳無己每登覽得句，即急歸，臥一榻，以被蒙首，謂之吟榻。家人知之，即貓犬皆逐去，嬰兒稚子亦皆抱持寄鄰家，徐待其起就筆硯即詩已成，乃敢復常。蓋其用意專，不欲聞人聲，恐亂其思。

Chen Shidao’s abnormal behavior reflects his eagerness to mark off a space of his own. The creation of a temporary “couch for chanting” (*yinta* 吟榻), just like the construction of a physical studio, allows no delay. Otherwise, he cannot pursue his intellectual activities. Albeit simply with a couch and a quilt, it is sufficient for Chen to feel sheltered. The series of even more extreme actions required of Chen’s family members further highlights his urgency to construct the private

¹⁸⁶ Luo Dajing 羅大經 (fl.1224), *Helin yulu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), p.100.

¹⁸⁷ Ma Duanlin 馬端臨 (1254–1325), *Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2000), 237.1885.

space. By excluding themselves from the domestic space to which they actually belong, the family members successfully help Chen to transform *their* family space into *his* studio space.

Even worse than Chen Shidao's situation, Huang Tingjian, when banished to remote Yizhou (in modern Guangxi Province) in his final years, still strived to possess a studio space. He writes to his good friend on a scroll,

It is the eleventh month of 1104. It has been half a year since I was exiled to Yizhou. The local government ordered that I should not live in the suburban area. So on the fourth day of the same month, I carried my quilt and went to lodge in the south of the city. The Noisy-but-Quiet Studio that I rent gives no cover from the rain above or barrier against the wind from the sides. The sounds of market were noisy and disorderly. Others thought that one could not endure this distress. But I considered, since originally my family was rooted in farming, if I did not advance to the *jinshi* degree, my hut in the field would have been like this. Could I not endure the distress in that case? After setting up the couch, I burned incense and I am now sitting down, directly facing the table for slaughtering cattle of the neighbor to the west. I wrote this scroll for Zishen, and I simply used a cock-feather brush that cost me three coins.¹⁸⁸

崇寧三年十一月，余謫處宜州半歲矣。宮司謂余不當居關城中，乃以是月甲戌，抱被入宿子城南，予所僦舍喧寂齋，雖上雨傍風無有蓋障，市聲喧憤，人以為不堪其憂。余以為家本農耕，使不從進士，則田中廬舍如是，又可不堪其憂耶？既設臥榻，焚香而坐，與西鄰屠牛之机相直。為資深書此卷，實用三錢買雞毛筆書。

When Huang arrived at Yizhou, the local government kept forcing him to change his residence as a way to torment him. Every time Huang lodged in one place, the governor censured him and drove him to move to an even worse place.¹⁸⁹ This time, Huang had to rent a dilapidated house located in the marketplace. Huang named it the “Noisy-but-Quiet Studio” (Xuanji zhai 喧寂齋). It is “noisy” (*xuan* 喧) indeed. As Huang describes, the house is so shabby that it is open to the outside. It fails to shelter Huang from either bad weather or the noise of the market. From inside the house, he can even see without obstruction into the neighboring slaughterhouse. No wonder that once when Lu You is irritated by the noise outside, he comforts himself in the poem “Sitting During the Daytime, I Heard the Noise of Voices Outside the Wall that Quite Disturbed My

¹⁸⁸ Huang Tingjian, “Ti zishu juan hou” 題自書卷後, Liu Lin 劉琳, Li Yongxian 李勇先, and Wang Ronggui 王蓉貴, eds., *Huang Tingjian quanji* 黃庭堅全集 (Chengdu: Sichuan daxue chubanshe, 2001), 25.645.

¹⁸⁹ See, e.g., Yang Wanli, “Yizhou xin Yuzhang xiansheng citang ji” 宜州新豫章先生祠堂記, *Yang Wanli ji jianjiao*, 72.3028.

Meditation; So I Playfully Wrote the Poem” (“Zhouzuo wen qiangwai rensheng shubai yousi xizuo” 晝坐聞牆外人聲殊敗幽思戲作), saying, “It is much better than the time when the Grand Scribe [Huang Tingjian] suffered in the south, / At night, the low lampstand was facing the table for slaughtering cattle” 也勝太史落南時，短檠夜對屠牛機。¹⁹⁰ Compared with Huang’s private space invaded by the public marketplace, Lu You’s situation is undoubtedly much better.

However, simply by arranging a couch and an incense burner, Huang dramatically transforms this noisy house into a “quiet” (*ji* 寂) space. He feels relieved as soon as he sets up the couch and sits in the fragrant incense, constructing a studio space virtually using these limited material resources. From this moment, Huang is protected. Accordingly, he now feels a sense of self-composure when facing the same slaughterhouse; he even reveals a sense of pride in his use of the cheap and poor quality cock-feather brush.

Song literati also employed this strategy when they were traveling. As Chao Buzhi 晁補之 (1053–1110) claims in the second of “Two Poems Inscribing at the Gushu Post-House” (“Ti Gushu yishe ershou” 題穀熟驛舍二首):

一官南北鬢將華，	With an official duty, in the north and in the south, my hair is turning gray,
數畝荒池淨水花。	In the desolate pond of several <i>mu</i> , there are pure lotus flowers.
掃地開窗置書几，	I sweep the floor, open the window, and place a writing desk,
此生隨處便爲家。	In my life, anywhere then becomes my home. ¹⁹¹

The post-house is a typical in-between space that gives rise to the unsettled and unsafe feelings of the traveler. While staying in the post-house, the poet cannot help sighing deeply at his life, wandering far away from home. The tension between the struggles of the unsettled official career and the craving for a stable life is further intensified when the poet becomes aware of his own aging. Nevertheless, Chao does not allow himself to become depressed. Rather, he offers the solution to this tension in the second half of the quatrain, describing the actions he takes in

¹⁹⁰ *Jiannan shigao jiaozhu*, 57.3335–36.

¹⁹¹ *QSS*, 1140.12882.

succession: by cleaning the floor, opening the window, and more significantly, setting up a writing desk, he transforms the originally liminal space to an intimate one. The installation of the writing desk particularly reminds us of Ouyang Xiu's declaration that "The ultimate pleasure under Heaven, / is being at the writing desk all day," thereby staging this post-house, or any unstable space, as a setting for the utmost happiness.

However, the construction of a virtual studio is not bound to the placement or arrangement of objects. Rather, it is much more a process of mental activity, as Xu Fei 許棐 (d. 1249) conveys in his "Account of the Plum Studio" ("Meiwu ji" 梅屋記). This work dramatically represents the process of building an imaginary studio. In its first half, Xu Fei depicts challenges involved with the construction of a physical "Plum Studio" (Mei wu 梅屋):

My small villa is located far north of the Qin River. The houses are low and the spaces are narrow. So in the south of the river, I additionally constructed several rooms to act as the place for reading. Under the four eaves, I planted plum trees, and accordingly inscribed "Plum Studio" on the plaque. In 1227, after shaking, the rooms collapsed and the plum trees fell. So I moved the plaque back to my old dwelling. A guest looked at the plaque and asked, "In the past, "chanting" Bu [Lin Bu (967–1028)] loved plum trees, so never even a single day, did he leave them. You love plum trees; but you do not have a Plum Studio; yet you hang a "Plum Studio" plaque. It is just as if someone who is hungry is drawing a rice cake. Is it beneficial? Please remove the plaque."

予小莊在秦溪極北，屋庫地狹，水南別築數椽，為讀書所。四簷植梅，因扁“梅屋”。丁亥震凌，屋僕梅壓，移扁故廬。客顧扁而問曰：“昔吟逋愛梅，未嘗一日去梅。爾愛梅，無梅屋，扁梅屋，猶饑人畫餅，奚益？請去扁。”

The key question raised here is—where is the Plum Studio? At the beginning, Xu builds a physical studio step by step. He first selects a good location for the studio, separated but at the same time not far from his home. Next he constructs a building that he dedicates as a studio. He further sets apart this private space by surrounding it with plum trees. Finally, he names it the Plum Studio and inscribes this name on a plaque. However, this carefully constructed private space soon collapses. The house is ruined and the plum trees fall, compelling Xu to move back to his home taking only the plaque. Because the house has no room that he can use exclusively as a studio, Xu places the plaque on his home. The use of the plaque is questioned, however, through the voice of an anonymous guest, according to whom, because there is no longer any studio or

plum tree, it is meaningless to keep the plaque to deceive oneself. Responding to these challenges, Xu writes,

I answered, “Previously, I took plum trees as plum trees; whereas now I regard my mind as plum trees. Why must you ask about the plaque? The plaque can be perceived in terms of principle, rather than be viewed in terms of materiality. The piece of wood contains two characters and that’s all; but when I perceive it in terms of principle, the four walls are the universe, and the ten thousand *juan* become the spring breeze. Are the fragrance on Yu Peak and the jade-like plum blossoms on Gu Mountain things beyond one’s lapel and sleeves! Argumentatively one disputes its nonexistence; verbosely one shows off its existence—neither is the standard of the principle of phenomena. Please particularly assume a distinct eye.” The guest responded, “Yes.”¹⁹²

予曰：“向也以梅為梅，今也以心為梅，扁何問焉？扁可以理觀，不可以物視。片木，二字而已；理觀，四壁天地，萬卷春風。庾嶺香，孤山玉，豈襟袖外物哉！斷斷以爭其無，喋喋以銜其有，皆非物理之平也。請別具隻眼。”客曰：“唯。”

Xu immediately elevates the discussion to the mental level by highlighting the function of the “mind” (*xin* 心). Based on this prerequisite, he fights for his own studio. Specifically, he proposes two possible ways of treating the plaque inscribing the studio name: (1) “to perceive it in terms of principle” (*liguan* 理觀); and (2) “to view it in terms of materiality” (*wushi* 物視). The guest, whose thinking is limited to the second way, finds little difference between a studio plaque and a piece of wood. Xu, conversely, inspired by the principle of phenomena (*wuli* 物理), is capable of constructing an imaginary studio based on nothing more than a plaque. It becomes interchangeable between a physical studio that has walls as well as books and a vibrant universe; that is, one can locate the studio anywhere in the universe. The space of the studio is infinite. This infinity does not undermine the private attributes of the studio, but rather, it intensifies its privacy, since locating the studio “everywhere” amounts to settling it in one’s own mind. Ownership of the studio is thus not determined by occupation of the physical space. One is definitely the host of one’s imaginary studio if one is competent to be in charge of one’s state of mind. No one can intrude into this space.

Hence, the whole account can be read as a representation of the process, from the construction

¹⁹² *QSW*, 7680.378–79. On Xu Fei’s life and poetry, see Zeng Weigang 曾維剛, “Lun Xu Fei jiqi shi” 論許棐及其詩, *Wenxue yichan (wangluo ban)* 文學遺產 (網絡版) 2 (2010).

to the dissolution and, finally, to the reconstruction of a private studio. Xu's insistence on maintaining the Plum Studio demonstrates the indispensable value of the studio to the literati. No matter how deficient material conditions may be, it is essential for a literatus to possess a studio space for the individual self. This space should not be limited by physical forms, but rather can be a product of the imagination. In fact, the loss of the privacy of a physical studio leads to the birth of a private space existing in the mental dimension.

However, Xu still highlights the value of the plaque in supporting his experience of the studio in the material sense. Some literati, conversely, elaborate even further on the notion of the studio as a mental phenomenon. Yang Wanli's "Account of the Vast Studio" ("Hao zhai ji" 浩齋記) explores precisely this idea of the studio in the mind. The account was written for the construction of the "Vast Studio" (Hao zhai 浩齋) of Liu Tingzhi 劉廷直, who was Yang Wanli's teacher. The narrative begins with a letter from Liu Tingzhi's son Liu Dezhong 劉得中 to Yang Wanli:

My close friend Liu Yanyu [the courtesy name of Liu Dezhong] of Anfu sent me a letter, saying, "My late father studied the teaching of the Cheng brothers from Master Hu [Hu Anguo 胡安國 (1074–1138)]. He used "Vast" to name his studio. He traveled north and south for official duties, and he was untainted and impoverished all his life. In the end he had not yet completed even a single room as his studio. His unexceptional orphan son Dezhong, when recalling his late father's intention, is extremely fearful of losing it and thus making his late father ashamed. So I wore ragged clothes, ate simple food, and accumulated money little by little, in order to construct this new studio. As you are my late father's old friend, I wish that you can record this completion, to assume his solitary light. If my late father still had consciousness, he would not feel regret in the underworld."

某所親安福劉彥與，以書來曰：“先君子得伊洛之學於文定胡先生，以浩名齋。宦游北南，清貧沒齒，竟未克就齋房之一椽。其不肖孤得中，追惟先志，大懼貫墜，以貽前人羞。懸鶉捭茹，銖積取餘，以作新此齋。子吾先君子故人也，願記其成，以假其孤光，先君子尚有知，其不銜於九京矣。”

It turns out that Liu Tingzhi, who named the Vast Studio and "stayed" in it throughout his life, was too impoverished to build a physical studio. Now that Liu Tingzhi has passed away, it is his son who strives to embody the Vast Studio in a tangible form and invites Yang Wanli to compose an account in order to memorialize the spirit of Liu Tingzhi. After recollecting several fragments

of his experience studying with Liu Tingzhi, Yang focuses his attention on the Vast Studio:

Someone asked, “The vastness of the master perhaps fill up all between Heaven and earth. Now why is the studio just this narrow?” I answered, “This is already broad. Formerly, the master named the studio but had no actual room. Someone asked him where his studio was. The master said, ‘My studio is between Heaven and earth, and thus there is no place where is not.’ Accordingly, he pointed to the bookcase, saying, ‘It is my studio. This is already broad.’”¹⁹³

或曰：“先生之浩，蓋將天地之塞，今齋房乃爾隘耶？”某曰：“此已廣矣。昔者先生名齋而未屋也，有問之以齋焉在者，先生曰：‘吾齋天地間，無所不在。’因指其書篋曰：‘即吾齋也，此已廣矣。’”

Similar to the “Account of the Plum Studio,” others question the Vast Studio: before the completion of the new physical studio, someone doubts Liu Tingzhi’s action in “naming the studio but having no actual room” 名齋而未屋; and after Liu Dezhong constructs a room for the studio, others still argue that such a narrow room is incompatible with the “vastness” (*hao* 浩) revealed in Liu Tingzhi’s personality as well as in the studio name. However, Liu Tingzhi’s answer, recalled by Yang, resolves all the above tensions—he is able to construct the studio any time and any place. External things cannot impede his enjoyment in the studio. No matter whether he embodies his “studio” in the grand universe or in the small bookcase, the imaginary studio is in effect always in his mind, acting as a unique private space for self-cultivation.

Thus, in holding the studio name all his life, Liu Tingzhi was able to nourish himself with the mental strength endowed by the studio. He derived the name for his studio directly from the notion of the “vast and flowing passion-nature” (*haoran zhi qi* 浩然之氣) praised in the *Mencius*.

Mencius explains this passion-nature as,

This is the passion-nature: It is exceedingly great, and exceedingly strong. Being nourished by rectitude, and sustaining no injury, it fills up all between Heaven and earth. This is the passion-nature: It is the mate and assistant of righteousness and reason. Without it, man is in a state of starvation. It is produced by the accumulation of righteous deeds; it is not to be obtained by incidental acts of righteousness. If the mind does not feel complacency in the conduct, the nature becomes starved.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ Yang *Wanli ji jianjiao*, 73.3055–56.

¹⁹⁴ *Mengzi yizhu*, 3.2. I use the translation by James Legge, *The Works of Mencius*, p. 190.

其為氣也，至大至剛，以直養而無害，則塞於天地之間。其為氣也，配義與道；無是，餒也。是集義所生者，非義襲而取之也。行有不慊於心，則餒矣。

This definition stresses the nourishment of the mind by the constant practice of righteousness.

Comparing this with Liu Tingzhi's discourse above, we can see that Liu is practicing exactly this passion-nature by virtue of his studio. In fact, this interaction among the vast passion-nature, the Vast Studio, and the studio owner had already been recognized by Yang Wanli's contemporary Zhou Bida 周必大 (1126–1204) in his "Inscription of Yang Tingxiu's 'Account of the Vast Studio'" ("Ti Yang Tingxiu 'Hao zhai ji'" 題楊廷秀浩齋記).¹⁹⁵

In short, by constructing a studio in his mind, Liu Tingzhi is able to symbolically possess a separate space all the time. It is this virtual studio that enables him to enjoy solitude. The self and the studio are thus bound. Unsurprisingly, right before composing this account, Yang, as he himself outlines, needs to practice ritualized actions such as "tidying the robe, rectifying the cap" (*shēyī zhèngguān* 攝衣正冠) and "respectfully saluting" (*duānbài* 端拜), since writing about a studio is at the same time a means of exploring the studio owner's private life and mental world.

¹⁹⁵ See *QSW*, 5128.343.

Chapter Three: The Studio as a Social Space

Private spaces are never completely private. The studio is represented in literature of the Song dynasty as a *mostly* private space in the sense that it also allows for limited interactions and is used for self-display. The studio admits only a select number of socially or culturally acceptable members, though it is still fundamentally closed off to the public. At the same time, it can serve as a stage for the performance of literati's personality or intentions.

A painting by a twelfth century artist may help us to explore this function of the studio. *Mountain Villa* 龍眠山莊圖 (copy after Li Gonglin, twelfth century, handscroll, ink on paper, 27.7 × 513 cm; Palace Museum, Beijing) depicts the artist's retreat, which was located in Mount Longmian (in modern Anhui Province). Although the original work no longer exists, the most nearly complete extant copy, as well as the oldest one, is a monochrome draft version now in the Palace Museum in Beijing.¹⁹⁶ As Robert E. Harrist points out, "It was the specificity and self-referential content of his painting that made Li's *Mountain Villa* a key monument in the history of Chinese art."¹⁹⁷ That is to say, *Mountain Villa* is one of the earliest Chinese paintings that depict the artists' own lives in conjunction with their property.¹⁹⁸

In the copy of *Mountain Villa* held by the Palace Museum in Beijing, the painter juxtaposes eleven sites that constituted the entirety of Li Gonglin's *Mountain Villa*. One of these sites is Li's studio, marked by the name of the "Hall of Ink Meditation" (Mochan tang 墨禪堂; Figure 4).

¹⁹⁶ For the multiple copies of *Mountain Villa* throughout dynasties, see Robert E. Harrist, "The Extant Copies of *Mountain Villa*," in *Painting and Private Life in Eleventh-century China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 113–18.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁹⁸ The *Wangchuan Villa* 輞川圖 by Wang Wei 王維 (701–761) and the *Thatched Hut* 草堂圖 by Lu Hong 盧鴻 (act. ca. 713–742) can be regarded as *Mountain Villa*'s predecessors. See Harrist, *Painting and Private Life in Eleventh-century China*, pp. 67–87.

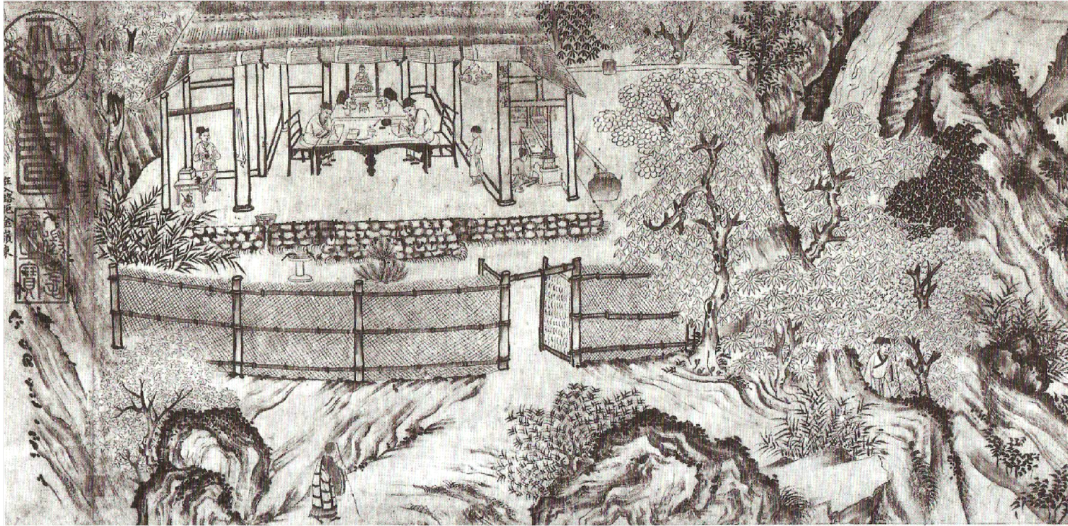


Figure 4. Section of *Mountain Villa*: the Hall of Ink Meditation

Harrist compares the order of these eleven sites as depicted in the Beijing draft of *Mountain Villa* with their sequence in Su Che's 蘇轍 (1039–1112) set of “Written on Li Gonglin’s *Mountain Villa*, with Preface” (“Ti Li Gonglin *Shanzhuang tu bingxu*” 題李公麟山莊圖並敘; said to have been composed after Su Che viewed the *Mountain Villa*). Harrist concludes, “Given the visual prominence of the Hall of Ink Meditation—it is the only building not drawn in a schematic aerial view or in a miniaturized scale—Li Gonglin apparently moved the image of this building to a position near the opening of the final version of *Mountain Villa* to stress its importance among the sites on his property.”¹⁹⁹ Similarly, Anne de Coursey Clapp also confirms that the Hall of Ink Meditation “was surely the heart of Mountain Villa and of Li’s life as an artist. It celebrated the practice and appreciation of art and asserted that they are the scholar’s proper disciplines.”²⁰⁰ Both scholars agree that the studio achieves a prominent treatment in this long handscroll.

More importantly for the topic of this chapter, the pictorial representation of Li’s studio precisely reveals the porousness of this primarily private space. First, the represented studio enunciates clearly to viewers of the painting the studio owner’s personal pursuits of art and Chan

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 44.

²⁰⁰ Anne de Coursey Clapp, *Commemorative Landscape Painting in China* (Princeton, N.J.: P.Y. and Kinmay W. Tang Center for East Asian Art, 2012), pp. 27–28.

meditation. The detailed depictions of the central chamber in the Hall of Ink Meditation—a hanging scroll of a seated Buddha on the wall, as well as the ink sticks, inkstones, and brushes on the table—convey the intellectual interests attached to this studio in a literal way. The hanging scroll echoes the character of *chan* (meditation 禪) in the studio name, and the inkstones and other writing instruments denote the *mo* (ink 墨) character. Such interests are further confirmed by Su Che, whom Li invited to inscribe a poem for this scene. Su Che writes,

“Hall of Ink Meditation,” in the “Twenty Poems Written on Li Gonglin’s *Mountain Villa*, with Preface”

此心初無住，	This mind is initially nonabiding,
每與物皆禪。	Whenever together with phenomena, it is always in meditation.
如何一丸墨，	How does one cake of ink,
舒卷化山川。	ebbing and flowing, transform the mountains and rivers? ²⁰¹

Rather than directly describing the elements of the painting, this poem focuses on interpreting the studio name by exploring the direct relationship between the studio and the studio owner’s personal interests. Su Che may have made this choice partly because he had not visited the Mountain Villa himself before writing this poem. More significantly, however, it reveals Su Che’s belief that the studio name can serve as an epitome of the studio owner’s personality.

The first two lines of the poem elaborate on the *chan* aspect. The notion of “nonabiding” (*wuzhu* 無住) refers to the impermanence of phenomena, which is often used in meditative tradition. According to this notion, because no phenomena have any real existence, clinging to them becomes meaningless. This couplet praises Li for his achievement of inner detachment through the practice of meditation. However, when Su Che changes his focus to the *mo* aspect in the last two lines, a paradox arises. If Li has detached from exterior things, how can he still immerse himself in creating pictures of those things? To solve this problem, Su Che wittily interprets the studio owner’s artistic pursuit as occurring on a higher level. That is, Li’s ink-play is not simply a practice of painting, but rather works as his own way of transforming (*hua* 化) the

²⁰¹ Chen Hongtian 陳宏天 and Gao Xiufang 高秀芳, ed., *Su Che ji* 蘇轍集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), 16.313.

natural landscape. In Buddhist contexts, the character *hua* often denotes the process of transforming the myriad things into enlightenment. Therefore, Li's attachment to painting can actually be an expedient way to pass beyond myriad things and even the means of enlightening the phenomena in the world. This interpretation by Su Che is inspired by Li's pictorial representation as well as by the studio name itself. The studio thus works as a stage for the display of the studio owner's identity. The interpretations of the studio owner and his like-minded friends collaborate to celebrate and publicize the personality of the studio owner.

Second, as we can see from the studio scene in the painting, in the central chamber of the studio, Li is not alone but rather is sitting opposite another scholar at a large table. The two depicted figures are painting and writing, respectively. The long handscroll of *Mountain Villa* depicts a great many figures, but only a particular guest is invited into the studio. It is interesting, of course, to specify who he is,²⁰² but more importantly, the figure depicted functions as a position. Whoever can fit this position must be the studio owner's closest friend. This selectivity in terms of guests is also a key element to examine in scrutinizing the studio as a distinctive social space.

I Invitations to the Studio

Though the studio is a private space for individual practices, at the same time it allows for limited public interactions with like-minded friends and colleagues. In other words, the studio is also a space for social exchange, but this exchange differs greatly from interactions in other meeting spaces in the sense that the studio opens to a very small group consisting only of invited friends. This "porous privacy" that we see in the painting *Mountain Villa* is further highlighted in literary writings of the Song era.

(1) The Exclusivity of the Studio

²⁰² Harrist specifies the figure as Li Chongyuan. See *Painting and Private Life in Eleventh-century China*, p. 44.

An anecdote describes the different ways Yan Shu 晏殊 (991–1055) treated his sons-in-law:

Fu Wenzhong [Fu Bi 富弼 (1004–1083)] and Yang Yinfu [Yang Cha 楊察 (1011–1056)] were both Duke Yan Yuanxian's [Yan Shu] sons-in-law. During the days when the Duke served in the Two Administrations, both Fu and Yang had already been promoted to high official positions. Every time Fu visited Yan, they spent the entire day conversing in the studio. Fu would join their family dinner and then leave. When Yang sometimes visited, Yan sat in the reception hall, arranged a feast, and at ease asked entertaining girls to play music and to sing and dance, in order to entertain Yang. Based on this, people thus knew how the Duke treated these sons-in-law with favor and disfavor. The achievement, fame, and official rank of these two sons-in-law, moreover, obviously did not match each other.²⁰³

富文忠、楊隱甫，皆晏元獻公婿也。公在二府日，二人已升貴仕。富每詣謁，則書室中會話竟日，家膳而去。楊或來見，坐堂上置酒，從容出姬侍奏弦管、按歌舞，以相娛樂。人以是知公待二婿之重輕也，二婿之功名年位，亦自不相倫矣。

Although it is hard to verify the authenticity of anecdotes of this type recorded in Song miscellanies, they do convey the cultural inclinations of the period. In this anecdote, a correspondence is implied between one's achievement and the meeting space. Yan Shu's different attitudes towards Fu Bi and Yang Cha are reflected by the types of treatment, or more specifically, by the meeting spaces to which they are invited: Fu Bi is invited into Yan's studio and communicates with Yan all day long, while Yang Cha is received in the reception hall to enjoy singing and dancing. This contrast of meeting spaces, as well as the corresponding activities that take place in the two spaces, becomes the basis on which people can discern Yan Shu's evaluations of his two sons-in-law. Moreover, the contrast can be used to justify the different achievements and statuses that Fu Bi and Yang Cha would obtain: the one who is received in the studio indeed becomes much more eminent than the other who is received in the hall. In this way, the story highlights the extraordinary status of the studio, and further implies that this particularity is a societal consensus. Compared to the reception hall, the studio is a space for social identification: only people who are deemed socially and culturally acceptable to the host can be invited into the studio. The invitation to the studio is in effect a process of the host's self-selection.

²⁰³ Gao Huisou 高晦叟 (fl. 1101), *Zhenxi fangtan* 珍席放談, in *Congshu jicheng chubian* (Changsha: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1939), p. 9.

Thus, this action can be employed by the host of the studio as an effective means to declare his special respect for or appreciation of others. The following anecdote, recorded in the Song miscellanies *Notes on Passing the Hall* (*Guoting lu* 過庭錄), reflects such a situation:

Ding Shi was a prefectural graduate. He was the townsman of Liu Shenlao [Liu Zhi 劉摯 (1030–1097)]. When the results of the prefectural examination were published, Shenlao ranked first, and Ding fourth. Ding was also a talented man. However, afterwards, he lost his way and ended by working at the Music Office. When Shenlao became prime minister,²⁰⁴ Ding Shi came on a visit to congratulate Shenlao together with Ding Xianjian.²⁰⁵ Shenlao, because of their past familiarity, did not want to humiliate Ding Shi in the hall. So he received Ding Shi in the studio, and greeted to him again and again. Ding Shi said, “I remember that in the past I succeeded in the prefectural examination with you, the prime minister. Now our status, the noble and the lowly, are extremely different from each other, so originally I felt too ashamed to see you, the prime minister. However, I dare not break from court tradition. I truly feel ashamed.” Xianjian thereupon presented himself to the prime minister, saying, “Since Shi was cast aside by you at the south entrance of the alley, even now he is unable to catch up with you.” Liu burst out laughing.²⁰⁶

丁石，舉人也。與劉莘老同里。發貢，莘老第一，丁第四。丁亦才子也，後失途在教坊中。莘老拜相，與丁線見同賀莘老。莘老以故，不欲廷辱之，乃引見於書室中，再三慰勞丁石。丁石曰：“某憶昔與相公同貢，今貴賤相去如此，本無面見相公，又朝廷故事，不敢廢，誠負慚汗。”線見因自啓相公曰：“石被相公南巷口頭擲下，至今趕逐不上。”劉為大笑。

The so-called “court tradition” (*chaoting gushi* 朝廷故事) that Ding Shi was compelled to obey is explained in another entry in the *Notes on Passing the Hall*:

In the era of Yuanyou [1086–1094], the entertainer Ding Xianjian was the commissioner of the Music Office. He was famous for humorous performance. When a new prime minister was assigned, the commissioner of the Music Office was required to follow the official hall-visiting, and to make an impromptu joke. Then the prime minister awarded him five *pi* of silk. This is the tradition.²⁰⁷

元祐間，伶人丁線見教坊長，以諧俳稱。宰相新拜，教坊長副庭參，即事打一俳戲之語，賜絹五匹，蓋故事也。

Thus, during the official ceremony, the assignment of court entertainers is to amuse the new

²⁰⁴ Liu Zhi was appointed as the prime minister in 1091; see his biography in *Song shi* 宋史, 340.10856.

²⁰⁵ Ding Xianjian 丁線見, also recorded as Ding Xianjian 丁仙現, was one of the most famous court entertainers in the Song, but he was regarded as more than simply an entertainer by Song literati, as indicated in Ye Mengde 葉夢得 (1077–1148), *Bishu luhua* 避暑錄話, in *Song Yuan biji xiaoshuo daguan* 宋元筆記小說大觀, ce 3 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2001), p. 2674.

²⁰⁶ Fan Gongchen 范公偁, *Guoting lu* 過庭錄, ed. Kong Fanli (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2002), p. 321.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 321.

prime minister by telling a joke inspired by the current situation. As we can see in the anecdote above, Ding Xianjian successfully fulfills his task by providing a bantering remark based on the interaction he has just witnessed between Ding Shi and Liu Zhi.

What Ding Xianjian had observed was a reunion between Liu Zhi and Ding Shi. The situation is indeed awkward because these two former prefectural graduates from the same town, despite initial successes, have since followed entirely different career paths: Liu Zhi became a high official, while Ding Shi became an entertainer, considered a lowly occupation at that time. We can sense that both men are aware of this awkwardness during their meeting, and because of this, Liu Zhi feels obliged to take steps in order to somehow resolve this tension. The crucial point is the action Liu Zhi chooses to accomplish this: he changes the meeting space from the public hall to his private studio. Through this invitation into the studio, Liu Zhi succeeds in altering the superior-entertainer relationship to an intimate friendship. Or we can say, he is able to make Ding Shi feel included precisely by means of the *exclusivity* of the studio space.

In Yan Shu's story, the studio owner enacts this special meaning of "invitation to the studio," which is accepted as a consensus by his contemporary; and in the anecdote of Liu Zhi, the studio owner manipulates this shared opinion to prove his respect for a particular person. The following account tells a similar story about entering the studio, but mainly from the perspective of the invitee:

Liu Gongfu [Liu Ban 劉攽 (1023–1089)], in the past, accompanied with the Duke of Jing [Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021–1086)] with the upmost sincerity. When the Duke of Jing was at court, Gongfu also resided in the capital, where he held a position in the Academy. Whenever they visited each other, they were certain to spend the entire day together. Later, the Duke of Jing became the Participant in Determining Governmental Matters. One day, Gongfu called on him. The Duke of Jing happened to be having dinner, so he asked his clerk to invite Gongfu to the studio. Gongfu saw that there was a draft of writing underneath the inkstone, so he picked up and read. The draft was an essay discussing military affairs. Gongfu was by nature with a strong memory. Once he read something, he would not forget it. After reading the draft, Gongfu returned it to its original position. Then he specifically reflected, "I, as a subordinate officer, visited the prime minister, and rashly entered his personal room. This is not proper." Therefore he hastily withdrew from the studio and waited in the corridor.

劉貢甫舊與王荊公遊甚款，荊公在從班，貢甫以館職居京師，每相過必終日。其後荊公為參知政事，一日，貢甫訪之，值其方飯，使吏延入書室中。見有藁草一幅在硯下，

取視之，則論兵之文也。貢甫性強記，一過目輒不忘。既讀復寘故處，獨念吾以庶僚謁執政，徑入其便坐，非是，因復趨出，待於廡下。

The second part of the story takes place after Liu Ban is invited for a second time into the studio by Wang Anshi:

When the Duke of Jing finished dinner and came out, he again invited Gongfu to come into the studio and have a seat. He talked with Gongfu for a long time, and asked him, “Have you recently written anything of import?” Gongfu answered, “Recently I have been composing a piece called ‘Discussion of Military Affairs.’ But it is still in a draft stage and I have not finished it.” The Duke of Jing inquired about the general ideas in the paper, and Gongfu took what he had read in the draft as his own opinion and answered. The Duke of Jing did not realize that Gongfu had seen his own work. He remained silent for a long time, then slowly took his own draft from under the inkstone and tore it up. It is probably because the Duke of Jing definitely desired to exceed everyone’s expectations in his daily discussions. If others held opinions similar to his own, he would regard these opinions as lowbrow.²⁰⁸

荊公飯畢而出，始復邀入坐。語久之，問：貢甫近頗為文乎？貢甫曰：近作《兵論》一篇，草創未就。荊公問所論大概如何，則以所見藁草為己意以對。荊公不悟其嘗見己之作也，默然良久，徐取硯下藁草裂之。蓋荊公平日論議必欲出人意之表，苟有能同之者，則以為流俗之見也。

Various Song records shape Liu Ban as a witty figure who continually teases others, with little regard for the occasion, and Wang Anshi as one who always desires to attract attention with his novel and unconventional ideas.²⁰⁹ The anecdote above also greatly contributes to the construction of these literary images of Liu and Wang. Liu makes fun of Wang by presenting Wang’s writing as his own opinion, for no particular reason other than playing a joke. Wang definitely fails to appreciate the joke, but in turn is annoyed because it appears his ideas are not unique.

What concerns us, however, is that two figures with such strong personalities adhere to a consensus regarding the studio space. That Liu could be invited into Wang’s studio even when

²⁰⁸ Xu Du 徐度, *Quesao bian* 卻掃編, in *Congshu jicheng chubian* (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1936), pp. 122–23.

²⁰⁹ As for Liu Ban’s making fun of others, see, for example, Wei Tai 魏泰, *Dongxuan bilu* 東軒筆錄, ed. Li Yumin 李裕民 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 12.138.

Wang Anshi’s preference for unconventional ideas can be seen directly in his own writings; see, e.g., Liu Chengguo 劉成國, “Lun Wang Anshi de fan’an wenxue” 論王安石的翻案文學, *Zhejiang shehui kexue* 2 (2014): 105–13.

Wang was absent reflects the extremely intimate relation of the two men. Their close friendship is emphasized at the very beginning of the story (“Whenever they visited each other, they were certain to spend the entire day together” 每相過必終日). Nevertheless, Liu still feels it necessary to actively withdraw from Wang’s studio, to follow the general rule that the studio is a private space. The anecdote tells us that Liu suddenly realizes that besides the personal companionship, there is also a superior/subordinate relation between the two. The friendship allows Liu to freely walk into Wang’s studio, whereas the superior/subordinate relationship undermines this eligibility. Liu cannot re-enter the studio until Wang is present. In this way, the anecdote clearly illustrates the porous privacy of the studio. The private studio sometimes opens, but only to a limited group of intimate friends.

(2) A Case Study: The Gatherings in 1086

The three anecdotes discussed in the previous section highlight the significance of “invitations to the studio”; nevertheless, they may risk giving us an impression that such inviting is a one-way action. In fact, literati often mutually invite sympathetic friends into their studios. Hence, each studio functions as a node by which the social network of the literati is connected. Compared to other social webs, woven by either public spaces (e.g., government office, tavern, tea house, and temple) or by comparatively private spaces (e.g., reception hall and garden), the network connected by studios is narrow. To draw a detailed picture of the construction of such a limited network, I will explore as a case study the studio gatherings of Su Shi and his associates in 1086.

The year 1086 was the beginning of the Yuanyou era, marking the end of the New Policies. Accordingly, literati who had been exiled because of their opposition to the New Policies were recalled to the capital and promoted. Su Shi was therefore appointed to the Hanlin Academician; so did many of his friends. In this same period, Su Shi met Huang Tingjian in person for the first time, though they had built a solid friendship by correspondence many years before this encounter. Under these circumstances, it becomes convenient for Su Shi to communicate

frequently with contemporary literati, making use of an extensive network. However, social exchanges happening within a studio involved only a limited number of close friends. The lighthearted interaction in Su Shi's studio recorded in the piece entitled "Written at the End of 'Lyric of Huangni Slope'" ("Shu Huangni Ban cihou" 書黃泥坂詞後), for example, fully illustrates this point. The first half reads,

Previously I was at Huangzhou. Being greatly drunk, I composed this lyric. The children hid the draft away. After I woke up, I did not see the draft again. Last night, I sat with Huang Luzhi [Huang Tingjian], Zhang Wenqian [Zhang Lei 張耒 (1054–1114)], and Chao Wujiu [Chao Buzhi]. These three guests, turning over my writing desk and rummaging through my bamboo cases, happened to retrieve it. Half of the characters could not be recognized. So through the meaning, we examined and studied it. Finally, we were able to recover its completeness. Wenqian was extremely happy. He personally transcribed a copy and gave it to me, then took the original version away with him.²¹⁰

余在黃州，大醉中作此詞，小兒輩藏去稿，醒後不復見也。前夜與黃魯直、張文潛、晁無咎夜坐，三客翻倒几案，搜索篋笥，偶得之，字半不可讀，以意尋究，乃得其全。文潛喜甚，手錄一本遺余，持元本去。

Here, Su Shi first explicitly points out that the gathering includes only the studio owner and three guests, Huang Tingjian, Zhang Lei, and Chao Buzhi. These three guests are Su Shi's bosom friends, all of whom are among "the Six Gentlemen in Su's Circle" (*Sumen liu junzi* 蘇門六君子), which became a fixed title no later than the early Southern Song period.²¹¹ Su Shi then sets the scene as a gathering occurring at night, the moment when the outside world is quiet and impinges minimally on the inside space. Within this closed space, the three friends enjoy an evening of hilarity. This is not to be an evening of elegant or refined pleasures; in high spirits, the friends rummage around Su Shi's studio, not satisfied until they make an unexpected discovery—an unpublished manuscript by Su Shi. Since half of the manuscript is hard to read, the friends collectively rewrite the lyric. The scene becomes even more joyful when Zhang Lei ultimately claims the manuscript for his own, leaving only a copy for its original creator, Su Shi;

²¹⁰ *Su Shi wenji*, pp. 2137–38.

²¹¹ On the formation of "the Six Gentlemen in Su's Circle," see Ma Dongyao 馬東瑤, *Sumen liu junzi yanjiu* 蘇門六君子研究 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2005), especially chapter 4.

the friends are not confined even by ordinary social etiquette on this exuberant evening.

As aberrant as the evening was, Su Shi cherishes it as a sweet memory. His attitude is further revealed in the second half of the colophon:

The day after, I received Wang Jinqing's [Wang Shen 王詵 (ca. 1048–ca. 1103)] letter, saying, "I incessantly purchase your calligraphy, without tiring. Recently I again bargained three bolts of silk for two pieces. If you have recent works of calligraphy, you should give a few to me, to avoid excessively wasting my silk." Therefore, using the paper of Clear Heart Hall and the ink of Li Chengyan, I wrote down the above text to present it to him. It is on the twenty-first day of the eleventh month of 1086.²¹²

明日得王晉卿書，云：“吾日夕購子書不厭，近又以三縑博兩紙。子有近書，當稍以遺我，毋多費我絹也。”乃用澄心堂紙、李承晏墨書此遺之。元祐元年十一月二十一日。

This passage explains that the “Lyric of Huangni Slope” was written at the request of Wang Shen, an imperial in-law and an enthusiastic art collector. Wang even built a “Hall of Precious Artworks” (Baohui Tang 寶繪堂) to house his collection. He is also an acquaintance of Su Shi, as a result of which he was implicated and punished in the notorious Crow Terrace Poetry Trial at which Su Shi was prosecuted in 1079.

On this occasion, he straightforwardly appeals to Su Shi to create a calligraphy work for him in order to enrich his collection. Yet, he does not specify the desired content of the work, so Su Shi has the freedom to determine what to write. As it was common to write a poetic work in such a social situation, in response Su Shi wrote down his “Lyric of Huangni Slope.” However, the anecdote that Su Shi attaches is meaningful, particularly because it is a personal memory involving three friends other than Wang Shen. One might argue that perhaps Su Shi chose the content arbitrarily. But the fact that he selected both the treasured paper of Clear-Heart-Hall and the ink of Li Chengyan indicates that he aimed to shape the writing into a valuable artwork that would be appropriate for Wang's precious collection. Hence, we see that Su Shi takes great delight in recalling and recording the playful scene that had transpired in his studio, and moreover, he is eager to share it—not only with the participants, but with all those of his intimate friends who are qualified to enter his studio.

²¹² *Su Shi wenji*, p. 2138.

Not only does this group of close friends gather at Su Shi's studio, Su Shi visits their studios as well. In the same year, Huang Tingjian, for instance, records Su Shi's behaviors in Huang's studio in the colophon of "Playfully Composed Poems on Orangutan-hair Brush" ("Xiyong xingxing maobi" 戲詠猩猩毛筆)²¹³:

Qian Mufu [Qian Xie 錢勰 (1034–1097)] went on a mission as envoy to Goryeo. There he obtained orangutan-hair brushes, which he treasured highly. He presented one to me as a gift, and invited me to compose poems for it. Su Zizhan loves the firmness of this brush, which accords with his taste. Every time he stops by my writing desk, he can't resist picking it up and writing something with it. At present, both gentlemen are on duty in the Central Drafting Office. So I composed two poems: the former one is to present to Mufu, the latter one to Zizhan.²¹⁴

錢穆父奉使高麗，得猩猩毛筆，甚珍之。惠予，要作詩。蘇子瞻愛其柔健可人意，每過予書案，下筆不能休。此時，二公俱直紫微閣，故予作二詩，前篇奉穆父，後篇奉子瞻。

Similar to the informal behavior of Huang, Zhang, and Chao in Su Shi's studio, here it is Su Shi depicted as enjoying himself to the full in Huang Tingjian's studio. As he did not possess the peculiar brush imported from Goryeo, Su Shi seized every opportunity to stop by Huang's desk to play with it. Furthermore, Huang's tone in recording this episode, particularly in vividly describing Su Shi's obsessive-compulsive interest in the orangutan-hair brush, is as playful as Su Shi's tone in "Written at the End of 'Lyric of Huangni Slope.'"

In the autumn of the same year, Huang composes a poem describing another gathering in his studio. This time, the guests are Chao Buzhi and Zhang Lei:

北寺鎖齋房，	In the northern temple the studio is locked up,
塵鑰時一啟。	The dusty bolt occasionally opens.
晁張蹀然來，	Chao and Zhang, with light footsteps, come,
連璧照書几。	Linked jade disks shine on the small writing desk. ²¹⁵
庭柏鬱葱葱，	Cypress trees in the courtyard are dense and lush,

²¹³ This so-called orangutan-hair brush may have actually been a weasel-fur brush. Ren Yuan explains this by quoting *Jilin zhi* 雞林志 in his commentary on another poem by Huang, "Heda Qian Mufu yong xingxing maobi" 和答錢穆父詠猩猩毛筆 (*Huang Tingjian shi jizhu*, p. 149). See also He Yanquan 何炎泉, "Gaoli xingxing maobi" 高麗猩猩毛筆, *Meiyuan* 5 (2014): 60–67.

²¹⁴ *Huang Tingjian shi jizhu*, p. 150.

²¹⁵ The "linked jade disks" is an allusion to the close relationship between Pan Yue (247–300) and Xiahou Zhan (243–291), *Shishuo xinyu jiaojian*, 14.9.

紅榴罇多子。 The cracks of red pomegranates burst with a multitude of seeds.
 時蒙吐佳句， Often I am indebted to you for expressing fine lines,
 幽處萬籟起。 From the secluded area, a myriad of sounds arise.²¹⁶

This is the fourth piece in a set of eight poems entitled “Respectfully Harmonizing with Wenqian’s Piece ‘Presented to Wujiu’ that Frequently Mentions Me, With the Rhymes of ‘Now That I Have Met the Gentleman, How Can I Not Rejoice?’” 奉和文潛贈無咎篇末多見及以既見君子云胡不喜爲韻. The long title itself conveys the context of the poem. It is obviously a matching poem to the original “Eight Poems: Presented to Wujiu, With the Rhymes of ‘Now That I Have Met the Gentleman, How Can I Not Rejoice?’” 贈無咎以既見君子云胡不喜爲韻八首. Yet, the original eight poems, as the title shows, are written *by* Zhang Lei and *to* Chao Buzhi, whereas it is Huang Tingjian who now responds to the poems. This is not only due to the fact that Zhang Lei mentions Huang several times in the original poems, but also because all of them belong to one intimate community. Just as Wang Shen is included by Su Shi, Huang is also included by Zhang Lei and Chao Buzhi although he is not the direct recipient of the poems.

This formation of a community is further strengthened by the selection of rhymes. Although Huang does not precisely follow the rhyme-characters in Zhang’s original poems, both use the same rhyme-categories.²¹⁷ In the set of eight poems, each piece uses one character in the line of “Now That I Have Met the Gentleman, How Can I Not Rejoice?” 既見君子，云胡不喜 as the rhyme. For example, as the quoted poem above is the fourth poem in the set, it must take the fourth character *zi* 子 to be the rhyme. This method of rhyme selection brings an amusing element to poetry composition. More significantly, however, since the rhyme-characters come from a full sentence with explicit meanings, by using these characters one by one, the poet actually locates his newly composed poems within an interpretive frame provided by the full sentence. Accordingly, because we find that the line of “Now That I Have Met the Gentleman,

²¹⁶ Huang Tingjian *shi jizhu*, pp. 155–56.

²¹⁷ The fourth poem in Zhang Lei’s set can be seen in Li Yi’an 李逸安, Sun Tonghai 孫通海, and Fu Xin 傅信, ed., *Zhang Lei ji* 張耒集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), 7.90.

How Can I Not Rejoice?” derives from a particular poem in the *Classic of Poetry* (*Shi jing* 詩經)—“Wind and Rain” (“Fengyu” 風雨)²¹⁸—describing the poet’s happiness when meeting a gentleman, we understand that both sets of poems, by Zhang and Huang, must be understood in the framework of friendship among these individuals and their shared values.

Indeed, the quoted poem by Huang focuses on a studio visit by his like-minded friends. The opening line points to the location of this gathering. As Ren Yuan commentates, “The northern temple refers to the Puchi Temple in Bianjing. Shangu lodged his desk and inkstone there.” 北寺謂汴京圃池寺，山谷寓几研於此。²¹⁹ Thus, the studio here is precisely the Hall of Withdrawal and Obedience in the Puchi Temple discussed in Chapter 2. The first couplet then depicts the opening of the studio. The normal status of the studio is contrasted with this occasional change in its status: from the “locked” (*suo* 鎖) studio to the “dusty bolt” (*chenyue* 塵鑰), Huang portrays the studio as a normally closed space, which no one else interrupts; it becomes open only “occasionally” (*shi* 時). The syntax of this couplet reminds us of the famous lines in Du Fu’s poem “A Guest Comes” (“Ke zhi” 客至), which read, “The flowery path has never been swept for the purpose of a guest, / Today my thatched gate for the first time is open for you, my lord” 花徑不曾緣客掃，蓬門今始為君開。²²⁰ In both cases, the normally closed gates would open only for certain special visitors.

As the second couplet shows, the guests who enjoy the privilege of entry to Huang’s private studio are Chao Buzhi and Zhang Lei. As if crafting a stage entrance for both of them, Huang describes his friends’ arrival in terms of sound and appearance, respectively. The third line describes the sounds of their footsteps, which not only reflects the delighted mood of Chao and Zhang, but further implies that their visit brings the sole sound in this usually quiet place. The

²¹⁸ *Maoshi zhengyi* 毛詩正義 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1999), 4.313.

²¹⁹ *Huang Tingjian shi jizhu*, p. 155.

²²⁰ *Du shi xiangzhu*, 9.793.

next line uses “linked jade disks” to portray the visitors, which alludes to an entry in the *Recent Anecdotes from the Talk of the Ages* (*Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語): “Pan Anren [Pan Yue] and Xiahou Zhan both had handsome appearances, and they enjoyed going together. Contemporaries called them the ‘linked jade disks’” 潘安仁、夏侯湛並有美容，喜同行，時人謂之連璧。²²¹ Obviously, by using this allusion, Huang compares Chao and Zhang to Pan Yue and Xiahou Zhan, evoking the solid friendship between them. Then, however, Huang creatively extends this metaphor by saying that the “shining disks” (his friends) bring brightness to his writing desk, which again underscores that the location of this event is his studio. The couplet that follows works both as a description of the surroundings of the studio and as a metaphor for the brilliant talents of the visitors. Those talents, as the closing couplet states, are reflected in the visitors’ production of refined poetic lines. Again, the chanting of poems temporarily adds splendid melody to the usually secluded studio.

Therefore, this poem not only embodies the idea of “Now That I Have Met the Gentleman, How Can I Not Rejoice?” framed by the rhymes, but further enriches this idea by selecting the studio as the meeting space. Because the studio is primarily a private space, the “gentleman” who can be received within it must have an intimate relationship with the host, and thus their rejoicing when they come together must be even stronger. Altogether, these three fragments illustrate how an intimate network is connected by nodes of studios. The visit to studios is in effect a process of mutual selection.

(3) Vimalakīrti’s Chamber or Wei Yingwu’s Couch?

The highly selective nature of the studio space is much more frequently celebrated in Southern Song poetry. Su Shi and Huang Tingjian’s writings, for instance, touch on but do not highlight the topic of guest selection in the studio, whereas Southern Song literati tend to pay more attention to shaping the studio as a special social space. That is, they manipulate certain

²²¹ I use the translation by Richard B. Mather, *Shih-shuo Hsin-yu* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 2002), 14.9, with very slight revision.

tropes and allusions to define the studio as a meeting space exclusively for the studio owner and his closest friends. As Liu Kezhuang’s 劉克莊 (1187–1269) poem “Inscribing on Revenue Manager Lin’s Cold Studio” (“Ti Lin Sihū Hanzhai” 題林戶曹寒齋) states,

舉世爭馳勢利場，	All over the world people competitively gallop in the field of profit seeking,
君於冷處看人忙。	You, inside the cold place, look out at the bustle of people.
不營摩詰散花室，	Rather than build Vimalakīrti’s chamber with heavenly flowers scattered, ²²²
只設蘇州聽雨床。	You only set up Suzhou’s couch for listening to the rain. ²²³
種果園林無虎守，	In the garden where you plant fruit trees, there are no tiger guardians,
勘書窗几有螢光。	On the writing desk by the window where you collate books, there is the glow of fireflies.
直須喚起西塘老，	You only need to beckon the Elder of the Western Pond, ²²⁴
來向齋中伴石塘。	So that he comes into the studio to accompany you, the Stone Pond. ²²⁵

This poem was written for the “Cold Studio” (Han zhai 寒齋) owned by Lin Gongyu 林公遇 (1189–1246), who was a close friend as well as brother-in-law of Liu Kezhuang. The name of the studio, according to Liu’s self-commentary, “is derived from Zheng Jiefu’s [Zheng Xia 鄭俠 (1041–1119)] line, ‘Accumulated snow covers the cold studio’” 取鄭介夫 “積雪冒寒齋” 之句。²²⁶ Zheng’s line renders the studio as an icy space from the natural perspective, while Liu

²²² The *sanhua shi* 散花室 refers to Vimalakīrti’s chamber. The scene involving the scattering of heavenly flowers is specifically depicted in chapter 6 of *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*; see Taishō Daigaku Sōgō Bukkyō Kenkyūjo Bongo Butten Kenkyūkai, comp., *Bon-Zō-Kan taishō “Yuimakyō” 梵藏漢对照 “維摩經”* (Tokyo: Taishō Daigaku Shuppankai, 2004), p. 271.

²²³ The “Suzhou” 蘇州 is an alternative title for Wei Yingwu, as he had held the position of Prefect of Suzhou. The *tingyu chuang* is a phrase derived from Wei Yingwu’s poem “Shi Quanzhen Yuanchang” 示全真元常; Tao Min 陶敏 and Wang Yousheng 王友勝, ed. and annot., *Wei Yingwu ji jiaozhu* 韋應物集校注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1998), 3.183.

²²⁴ The “Elder of the Western Pond” (“Xitang lao” 西塘老) is a sobriquet of Zheng Xia. Zheng Xia was also a townsman of Lin Gongyu. His biography is in *Song shi*, 321.10434–37.

²²⁵ *QSS*, 3042.36278. Shitang 石塘 is Lin Gongyu’s hometown in Fuqing (in modern Fujian Province); see Liu Kezhuang, “Lin Hanzhai muzhiming” 林寒齋墓誌銘 (*QSW*, 7624.229).

²²⁶ In Zheng Xia’s extant poems, this line cannot be found. But a similar line “Thick snow exposes the cold studio” 濃雪暴寒齋 can be found in his poem “Ruixiang ge tong Yang Ji xueye yinjiu” 瑞像閣同楊驥雪夜飲酒 (*QSS*, 892.10428).

extends the illustration to suggest coldness from the perspective of the human world.

In the opening couplet, Liu directly draws a sharp contrast between the frenzied world outside, where people chase fame and wealth, and the Cold Studio, where Lin Gongyu rests and calmly watches the bustle, with no desire for external things. In Liu's interpretation, therefore, the studio is not only literally chilly, covered by heavy snow, but more importantly it represents Lin's dispassionate and clear attitude towards the world.

However, despite its isolation from the world, the studio does not completely reject social interaction. The mode of social gathering associated with the studio is defined in the second couplet. Two options are listed here: Vimalakīrti's 維摩詰 chamber, or Wei Yingwu's 韋應物 (733?–ca. 793) couch. The former refers to the famous assembly that took place in the layman bodhisattva Vimalakīrti's tiny chamber of ten feet square. According to the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* 維摩經, Vimalakīrti pretended to be sick and therefore took the opportunity to spread the teachings of Dharma to all his visitors. Although his room was minuscule, containing only a single couch, according to legend it easily accommodated Mañjuśrī and followers consisting of eight thousand bodhisattvas, five hundred śrāvakas, and a hundred thousand gods²²⁷; there was even room for a goddess to scatter heavenly flowers over the bodhisattvas and great disciples. Conversely, the story of Wei Yingwu's couch, although it also pertains to a chamber containing a couch, is far different, having no association with such a majestic congregation. Rather, the Tang poet Wei Yingwu enjoyed a gathering comprising only two other persons. The phrase “a couch for listening to the rain” (*tingyu chuang* 聽雨床) comes from Wei's poetic lines, “Who would know that on a night with wind and rain, / again we could face each other on a couch and sleep” 寧知風雨夜，復此對床眠。²²⁸ Though Wei originally wrote the poem for his two nephews,

²²⁷ See chapter 4 in *Bon-Zō-Kan taishō* “*Yuimakyō*,” pp. 158–87.

²²⁸ The couplet is recorded as “Who would know that on a night with wind and snow, / again we could face each other on a couch and sleep” 寧知風雪夜，復此對床眠 in *Wei Yingwu ji jiaozhu*, but many remarks on poetry in the Song render these two lines as “Who would know that on a night with wind and rain, / again we could face each other on a couch and sleep.” See, for example, Huang Che 黃徹 (*jinshi* 1124), *Gongxi shihua*

expressing family affection, later literary allusions to this scene are not limited to domestic relations. For example, the person addressed in Bai Juyi's noted line, "Can you come to stay overnight together? / In listening to the rain we face each other on a couch and sleep" 能來同宿否? 聽雨對床眠, is in fact his best friend Zhang Ji 張籍 (768–830).²²⁹ As several Song miscellanies discuss, this "couch for listening to the rain" is invoked in poems describing the relations of either friends or brothers.²³⁰ Consistently, Song literati employ this set phrase to express deep affections between one and the other. Accordingly, we can clearly see the differences between Vimalakīrti's chamber and Wei Yingwu's couch: one is a space for massive public gatherings, aiming to realize the Mahāyāna teachings to enlighten all sentient beings, whereas the other space opens only to intimates, in order to share one's personal feelings. Thus we see that when Liu Kezhuang uses the strong intentioned phrases "rather than building" (*bu ying* 不營) and "only setting up" (*zhi she* 只設) at the beginning of the lines, respectively, he makes the choice for the Cold Studio, a space that can be shared only with close friends.²³¹

The couplet that follows echoes the second in the sense that it also constructs a contrast between an outward scene and an inward view. The orchard guarded by tigers refers to the legend of Dong Feng 董奉 (ca. third century), who was a reputable physician in the Eastern Han dynasty. Instead of accepting fees from patients, Dong Feng asked his patients to plant apricot trees around his house. Because of his excellent medical skills, an apricot orchard soon grew. People could exchange apricots for equivalent amounts of grain. But whoever stole apricots or

碧溪詩話, in Ding Fubao 丁福保, comp., *Lidai shihua xubian* 歷代詩話續編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983, p. 374).

²²⁹ Bai Juyi, "Yuzhong zhao Zhang siye su" 雨中招張司業宿, *Bai Juyi ji jianjiao*, 26.1785.

²³⁰ See, for example, Wang Mao 王楙 (1151–1213), *Yeke congshu* 野客叢書, ed. Zheng Ming 鄭明 and Wang Yiyao 王義耀 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1991, 10.146).

²³¹ I thank Prof. Anna Shields for her great conversations with me about literati's sharing intimate spaces or beds. Prof. Shields also kindly shared with me her draft paper on the metonymy in mid-Tang texts on male friendship. On a comprehensive study of the literature of friendship in the mid-Tang, see Anna M. Shields, *One Who Knows Me: Friendship and Literary Culture in Mid-Tang China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015).

stinted on the amount of grain owed would be chased or even killed by the five tiger guardians. Finally, by means of the collected grain, Dong was able to relieve the poor and offer aid to travelers.²³² This is a story about communications and public contributions, with the tiger guardians functioning as the protectors of social justice. Hence, by stating that Lin's garden contains no such guardian, Liu again eliminates the social aspect of the studio. Instead, he claims that what Lin owns is the fireflies' glow by his writing desk. The "glow of fireflies" (*yingguang* 螢光) alludes to the story of Ju Yin. Too poor to buy oil, Ju Yin captured fireflies to light his room in order to study at night.²³³ This glow thus becomes a metonymy for "hard-working scholar." Thus Liu vividly outlines a consistent image of Lin Gongyu: he stays inside at his writing desk, studying, without interacting frequently with others. Finally, the closing lines of the verse complement the second couplet in another way. The reference to Zheng Xia not only reminds us of the origin of the studio name, but more significantly, it provides a model of the kind of guest with whom Lin is likely to share Wei Yingwu's couch.

As we can see, unlike Vimalakīrti's chamber, which anyone who is eager to listen to Buddhist teachings may enter, the studio may be entered only by bosom friends. They may even share "a couch for listening to the rain," spending the night in the studio as the guest of the studio owner. Compared to an ordinary invitation to the studio, an invitation to stay overnight further strengthens the intimacy between host and guest. Therefore, Song literati have a penchant for recording such instances in their poems. Moreover, as a revision of Wei Yingwu's lines, "Who would know that on a night with wind and rain, / again we could face each other on a couch and sleep," Song literati tend to emphasize that rather than sleeping, overnight guests at the studio would stay awake all night, talking about personal affairs. As Hu Zhongshen 胡仲參 (fl. 1265) describes in his poem "Staying Overnight at Mr. Chen's Studio" ("Liusu Chen shi shuzhai" 留宿

²³² Hu Shouwei 胡守為, ed. and annot., *Shenxian zhuan jiaoshi* 神仙傳校釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2010), 10.335. See also Robert F. Campany, *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth: A Translation and Study of Ge Hong's Traditions of Divine Transcendents* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 144.

²³³ *Jin shu*, 83.2177.

陳氏書齋):

因訪吟朋到竹居， 春寒策策動窗虛。 幾番好雨偏留客， 一盞青燈共讀書。 徐孺舊曾親下榻，	To visit my poet-friend, I reach the bamboo dwelling, The chill of the spring soughingly beats the window open. With several intervals of good rain, the guest stays, At a single blue lamp, together we read. Xu Ru, in the past, could make [Chen Fan] set down a couch for him, ²³⁴
陳遵見說好投車。 與君靜夜評心事， 萬斛閑愁盡掃除。	Chen Zun, I heard, had a penchant for throwing out carriages. ²³⁵ You and I, this quiet night, mull over what was on our minds, Ten thousand pecks of idle sadness are completely swept away. ²³⁶

The title indicates directly that this poem is about the experience of being an overnight guest at a friend's studio. Indeed, the main body of the poem records the complete experience of the overnight sojourn from the perspective of the guest, from arrival at the studio to the activities the friends enjoy together, and finally to the psychological effects of the experience.

The opening couplet introduces the impetus for the studio visit. This is no ordinary gathering of friends, but a meeting with a “poet-friend” (*yinpeng* 吟朋), with whom the poet shares refined interests. Shifting from the arrival to the invitation to stay overnight, the second couplet paints a harmonious picture of the guest's experience lodging at the studio. Outside it is raining steadily, on a chilly spring day, but the indoor scene is very warm. Day turns to night as the rain falls, but instead of falling asleep as that in Wei Yingwu's poem, the host and guest take this valuable opportunity to read “together” (*gong* 共) at a single lamp. In Song poems, the single lamp is an image often associated with the solitary studio owner, yet here it is shared by two friends with the same scholarly interests.

Next, unlike the second couplet, which directly depicts a studio scene, the following couplet illustrates the same intimate feeling in an allusive way: it borrows the story of Xu Zhi 徐穉 (97–

²³⁴ Xu Ru refers to Xu Zhi, whose courtesy name is Ruzi 孺子; see his biography in *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書, 53.1746.

²³⁵ According to *Hanshu*, what Chen Zun threw away would be the linchpins of wheels, rather than entire carriages; see *Hanshu*, 92.3710.

²³⁶ *QSS*, 3337.39845.

168), who according to legend was regarded as an honored guest, and the episode of Chen Zun 陳遵, renowned in the Han dynasty as an extremely hospitable host. It is said that when Chen Fan 陳蕃 (d. 168) was the governor of Yuzhang, the virtuous man Xu Zhi was the only person whom Chen Fan would treat with great respect: “In the county, Chen Fan did not receive guests. Only when Xu Zhi came, would Chen particularly set up a couch for him. Once Xu left, Chen would hang the couch back” 蕃在郡不接賓客，唯穉來特設一榻，去則縣之。²³⁷ Equally peculiarly, Chen Zun, whenever he hosted a banquet at home, would prevent his guests from leaving not only by closing the gate, but even by throwing the linchpins of the guests’ carriages (*chexia* 車轄) into a well. Consequently, both incidents successfully spotlight the hospitality of hosts, echoing the “lodging” or “overnight visit” theme of this poem. From the aspect of poetic technique, these two allusions also fit the poem well because both model hosts have the family name Chen 陳, which is the same as the studio owner’s, as the title of the poem shows.

Yet, unlike the highly performative actions in these two stories, when the fourth couplet returns to Mr. Chen’s studio, the activity that host and guest enjoy together is represented as casual and relaxed. In addition to reading books together, these two friends simply talk all night. Simple as it is, such a scene powerfully demonstrates their sincere relationship. They need no other activities, but find talking late into the night so genial that any worries or sadness either guest or host was feeling are dispelled. The use of the adverbial *jin* (completely 盡) in the ending line further emphasizes this powerful effects of the overnight visit.

In this way, Song literati employ the imagery of overnight visits to each other’s studios as a trope in poetry to highlight intimate friendships. Even when separated from friends, the poet uses this trope as a means to express his deep feelings towards far-away friends. Zhu Song’s 朱松 (1097–1143) poem “Expressing My Feelings in the Studio and Respectfully Sending it to My Friend Minbiao; Today I Received the Letter from Minbiao” 書室述懷奉寄民表兄是日得民表

²³⁷ *Hou Han shu*, 53.1746.

書 is one example:

丈室無塵棊几橫，	The ten-foot square room has no dust, with a yew-wood stand stretched across it,
吏休鳧鷺散無聲。	Functionaries take leave, just as ducks disperse, leaving no sound.
舞風竹影傲傲轉，	Dancing in the wind, the shadows of bamboo lightly wave,
縈夢鑪香嫋嫋清。	Entwining with my dream, the fragrance from the incense burner sinuously becomes clear.
已笑榮枯廬白戲，	I already laugh at life's flourishing and decaying, like the game of black and white,
不須物我觸蠻爭。	There is no need to distinguish things from the self as that in the battle between Clansmen Butt and Barbarossa. ²³⁸
故人剪燭西窗約，	With you, my old friend, I had an appointment to trim the candle by the western window,
知復何時話此生。	Do you know when, again, we can get together to talk about this life? ²³⁹

After receiving his close friend Zhuo Minbiao's 卓民表 letter, Zhu Song composed this poem as a reply. But instead of straightforwardly expressing his longing for Zhuo, Zhu Song frames his strong feelings with reference to the studio space. Sitting in his studio, he is writing a poem about the studio, with the expectation that he will someday receive his friend for an overnight visit there. Thereby, the studio itself acts as a medium for the nurturing of friendship.

The first half of the poem follows the formula discussed in Chapter 2 for representing the studio as a typical private space. First, the small room provides a space where one may “break away” from official affairs; then, labeled twice by the character *wu* 無, in the studio even dust and noise are eliminated—that is, the studio is completely detached from the bustling world. The bamboo outside the studio and the fragrance lingering inside further delimit this enclosed space.

Such a private studio is perfect for spiritual enlightenment. Indeed, as the third couplet shows, the studio owner has cultivated a clear insight towards the world. Through the strict parallelism of these two lines, the poet clearly manifests his detachment from the external dichotomies in human life. It is of no use to be obsessed by the distinctions between the “ups and downs” of life,

²³⁸ I use the translation of these two names (*chu* 觸 and *man* 蠻) by Victor H. Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 25.258.

²³⁹ *QSS*, 1856.20734.

or the distinctions between things and the self. Here, the poet first analogizes the “flourishing and decaying” (*rongku* 榮枯) associated with human life to a simple “game of black and white” (*lubai xi* 盧白戲). This gambling game may refer to one type of the game “Clutch and Reed” (*chupu* 擣蒲). As Li Zhao’s 李肇 *Supplements to the History of the Tang* (*Tang guoshi bu* 唐國史補) explains, in “Clutch and Reed,” five blocks of wood serve as dice; one side of each die is colored black and the other side white. If one throws all the woods black, it is called *lu* 盧; and if all white, it is called *bai* 白. Both *lu* and *bai* belong to the best wagers.²⁴⁰ In the next line, the poet neatly pairs this gambling game with the battle between Clansman Butt and Clansman Barbarossa. This time, the distinction between external things and the self (*wuwo* 物我) is compared to the constant fighting between the two kingdoms set up, figuratively, on the left and right horns of a snail, as suggested by the *Zhuangzi*.²⁴¹ Based on these two analogies, Zhu Song thereby argues that the vicissitudes and distinctions in human life are no more than a gambling game or a trivial competition reducible to the two horns of a snail. By positioning “already laughing at” (*yixiao* 已笑) and “being no need” (*buxu* 不須) at the beginning of each line, Zhu clarifies his attitude that he would definitely not attach himself to these meaningless social values.

Up until now, the poet has separated himself from the social world, both spatially and ideologically. However, precisely because of this disengagement, his expression of attachment to friendship at the end of the poem becomes even more striking. He is, after all, not completely detached. The closing couplet borrows from Li Shangyin’s 李商隱 (811/813–858) famous lines, “When shall we together trim the candle by the western window? / Right then we can discuss the moment of night rain at Ba Mountains” 何當共剪西窗燭，卻話巴山夜雨時。²⁴² This portrays

²⁴⁰ *Tang guoshi bu* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1979), pp. 61–62.

²⁴¹ *Zhuangzi jishi*, 25.891–92. See also Victor H. Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 25.258.

²⁴² Li Shangyin, “Yeyu jibei” 夜雨寄北, Liu Xuekai 劉學鍇 and Yu Shucheng 余恕誠 ed., *Li Shangyin shige jijie* 李商隱詩歌集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988), p. 1230.

an intimate scene of friends talking late at night.²⁴³ Zhu Song’s lines revise this to further specify the “western window” (*xichuang* 西窗) as the window in his own studio, fitting the image into the trope used frequently by Song literati: inviting one’s best friend for an overnight sojourn at one’s studio. Although the studio is regarded as private, the studio owner is still eager to share it, but only with his “old friend” (*guren* 故人).

(4) Appreciating the Music

Explicitly or otherwise, poems about inviting a guest to visit one’s studio, or even to stay overnight, share one purport: to reflect the mutual appreciation that obtains between the studio owner and the guest. The close friendship, which works as the key to open the door of a studio, is based on the common interests enjoyed by the inviter and the invitee. As the following poem by Kong Pingzhong 孔平仲 (*jinsi* 1065) depicts in detail:

“In the Eleventh Month of 1080, the Gentleman and District Aide Shi Fazhi Moored the Boat at Xunyang; He Brought Out His Collected Works of Calligraphy and Showed Them to Me; the Depth of His Interest, the Multiplicity of the Collection, and the Refinement of the Mounting—All Were Worth Appreciating; I Composed a Poem to Record This Event” 元豐三年十一月施君發之縣丞艤舟潯陽出所收書相示好之篤蓄之多裝裱之妙可尚也詩以記其事

發之之舟繫湓水，
示我名書百餘紙。

自言此乃十之一，
訪尋藏蓄尚未已。
裝褉卷襲皆精緻，
從前所見無此比。
城荒俗陋誰與遊，

如君好事固可喜。
天寒手冷不厭觀，

似我賞音知有幾。
自今有得當助君，

Fazhi’s boat was moored at Pen River,
He showed me famous calligraphy works, more than one hundred pieces.

He said these were only one-tenth of his collection,
His searching and collecting have not ended.
Both the mounting and decorating are exquisite,
I have never seen others that compared.
As the city is desolate and the customs here are vulgar, with whom may one go wandering?

People with keen interests, like you, are indeed gratifying.
Though the weather is freezing and my hands were cold, I enjoyed the calligraphy without tiring,

How many people, like me, can appreciate the music?
From now on, whenever I obtain something, I will definitely send it to you,

²⁴³ A traditional view holds that the recipient of this poem was Li Shangyin’s wife, but this view lacks solid evidence. See, e.g., Stephen Owen, *The Late Tang: Chinese Poetry of the Mid-Ninth Century (827-860)* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), pp. 351–52; Wang Zhiqing 王志清, “Li Shangyin ‘Yeyu jibei’ yiyi bianxi” 李商隱《夜雨寄北》疑義辨析, *Jiangnan xueshu* 1 (Feb. 2014): 102–7.

不憚緘封寄千里。

I am not afraid to seal and send it to you from one thousand *li* away.²⁴⁴

The title clarifies that this work follows the tradition of recording an event (*ji qishi* 記其事) by means of poetry. The event that here inspires the poet to write such a long narrative poem is a connoisseur's activity in the studio. Similar to the Boat of Calligraphy and Painting of the Mi Family that I discussed in Chapter 2, Shi Fazhi uses his boat as a floating studio that carries a large collection of treasured artistic works. However, unlike in Huang Tingjian's rendering of Mi Fu's boat, which focuses on the exclusivity of the studio space, this time the studio-boat, in Kong Pingzhong's representation, is open at least slightly. It invites Kong to come in.

The first half of the poem acts as a poetic paraphrase of the prose-like title, which records the events associated with the studio visit: The studio owner Shi was so hospitable that he not only invited Kong to come into his studio, but also actively introduced his art collection to Kong. Shi further explained his ambitions to his guest: although he already possessed a rich collection, he was not yet satisfied with it but aimed to collect still more treasures. Following this exchange, the invitee Kong highly praised the quality of his host's collection. Kong's praise is not simply a routine response to the gracious invitation. Rather, in the second half of the poem, Kong elevates the meaning of this visit to a higher level. He first juxtaposes the "outside" environment with the "inside" connoisseur's activity. The city is desolate and frozen, and the local people uncultured. Therefore, it is easy to conclude that Shi's elegant tastes, reflected in the collection in his studio, are too high-minded to be appreciated by the local people. It is in this context that Kong appears on the stage and not surprisingly represents himself as uniquely suited to appreciate Shi's collection. He positions himself not only as a connoisseur capable of judging his host's artistic acquisitions, but more importantly, as someone also able to truly value the distinctive personality and tastes of Shi, his host. In this manner, the relationship of host and guest is reframed to reflect the bonds between "one with keen interests" (*haoshi zhe* 好事者) and "one who can appreciate

²⁴⁴ *QSS*, 925.10866.

the music” (*shangyin zhe* 賞音者), in Kong’s words.

An intertextual reading of Kong’s poem further supports this reframing. Both the location and the sentiment of the encounter described remind readers of the well-known narrative poem “Song of the Lute” (“Pipa xing” 琵琶行) by Bai Juyi. In 816, along the same Pen River in Xunyang (in modern Jiangxi Province), Bai Juyi lamented his misfortune at being demoted to serve in this desolate area where there was no refined music.²⁴⁵ He then by chance heard and felt deeply moved by a lute performance given by an elderly entertainer. Just as Bai felt appreciation for the lute music, so Kong is fully aware of the value of Shi’s collection. In this sense, Kong’s poem retells Bai’s story of understanding. Kong, as Bai did, plays the role of “one who can appreciate the music.” But he transforms the sympathy in Bai’s tale, between an officer and an entertainer, to express the resonance between two scholars; as well, he alters the notion of “appreciating the music” from its literal meaning to a metaphorical level, which underscores the understanding of scholarly taste.

In this way, the gesture of inviting into the studio emphasizes intellectual communication. Hence, it is not even necessary for the invitee to physically visit the studio. Sympathetic friends can still be invited even though they are temporally or spatially far away. One such expedient measure, for example, can be seen in the following poem by Gao Side 高斯得 (*jinshi* 1229):

“In the Studio, I Raise the Portraits of Liu Yuancheng and Chen Liaozhai with the Purpose of Self-Encouragement” (“Shushi jie Liu Yuancheng Chen Liaozhai xiang yi zili” 書室揭劉元城陳了齋像以自厲)²⁴⁶

我昔天台遊，	In the past, I went wandering in the Tiantai mountains,
偶得陳公像。	By chance I obtained the portrait of Gentleman Chen.
以公謫是邦，	Because the gentleman was exiled to this place,
祠堂懸真相。	The memorial temple hung up his image.
尋執憲於衡，	Soon I was in charge of Heng,
復得劉元城。	Once again I acquired the portrait of Liu Yuancheng.
以公子孫寓，	Because the gentleman’s descendants lived there,

²⁴⁵ Bai Juyi *ji jianjiao*, 12.685–86.

²⁴⁶ Yuancheng 元城 and Liaozhai 了齋 are the sobriquets of Liu Anshi and Chen Guan, respectively.

家傳遺寫真。	The family handed down his portrait.
揭之書室內，	I hung both portraits in my studio,
朝夕得晤對。	From dawn to dark I am able to look at them and talk to them.
焉能爲之役，	How can I be their follower?
妄意他年配。	Wishfully I hope I can match their achievements in the future.
劉公色貞堅，	Gentleman Liu's countenance looks upright and unyielding,
疾惇固宜然。	It was indeed reasonable for him to bear a grudge against Dun. ²⁴⁷
陳公甚和易，	Whereas Gentleman Chen appears extremely gentle and mild,
排京乃敢言。	Only in scolding Jing did he venture to speak. ²⁴⁸
惇京爲腐草，	Dun and Jing have become rotten straw,
二公長不老。	While these two gentlemen will live forever and never get old.
汝其擇於斯，	You should make your choice from this,
庶以傳不朽。	If you wish to be forever remembered. ²⁴⁹

Although he lived about a hundred years later than Liu Anshi 劉安世 (1048–1125) and Chen Guan 陳瓘 (1057–1124), Gao Side still sensed a spiritual resonance between himself and these two predecessors. Because of this sympathy, the poet was eager to invite them into his studio, as one would typically treat bosom friends. He accomplished this goal in a creative sense, by hanging the gentlemen's portraits in his studio. Hence, on the surface, the poem is about the viewing of paintings within the studio; but it can also be read as an alternative rendering of the studio invitation and the studio gathering.

The first eight lines of the poem explain how the author came into possession of these two portraits: via social relations (the public hall that commemorates Chen Guan) and via family ties (Liu Anshi's decedents), respectively. As lines 9 through 12 reveal, the poet takes the newly acquired portraits back to his studio. But instead of treating them as precious paintings, he claims to all the time “look at them and talk to them” (*wudui* 晤對). As the verbal phrase *wudui* normally refers to a person rather than an object, the poet here figuratively replaces the portrait with the person who is portrayed. He aims to associate personally with Liu and Chen, and even

²⁴⁷ Liu Anshi held the position of censor. In his biography of *Song shi* (345.10954), he is described very strong and brave, with the nickname “Tiger at Court” (*dianshang hu* 殿上虎).

²⁴⁸ In contrast to the description of Liu Anshi, in *Song shi* (345.10964), Chen Guan is described modest and elegant.

²⁴⁹ *QSS*, 3229.38555.

to become their follower or counterpart. In lines 13 through 16, the poet explains why Liu and Chen attract him so deeply. Lines 13 and 15 are observations regarding the physical countenances of Liu and Chen depicted by the paintings, but they can also be understood as descriptions of the subjects' personalities. In lines 14 and 16, the poet further clarifies that, while one man's face appears gentle and the other firm, both Liu and Chen behaved courageously at court. They were known for frank remonstrance and for daring to criticize those in great power (i.e., the prime ministers Zhang Dun 章惇 [1035–1105] and Cai Jing 蔡京 [1047–1126]). These are precisely the traits that the poet highly appreciates. As the next two lines indicate, in sharp contrast to Zhang and Cai—who, as “rotten straw,” are long dead—Liu and Chen will be remembered forever as ministers who were upright in their affairs. Finally, the ending lines of this long poem return to the poet himself. Claiming Liu and Chen as his role models, he will emulate them in steadfastness. It is worth noting that although this is a poem of “self-encouragement” (*zili* 自厲), at this point the poet suddenly ceases using the previous first person pronoun (I [*wo* 我]) and adopts the second person (you [*ru* 汝]). The unexpected use of *ru* endows the originally self-narrative text with an imperative tone, firmly admonishing the self of the urgency of modeling these two gentlemen. Biographies of Gao Side (such as that in the *History of the Song*) indicate that the poet did inherit the virtues of Liu and Chen, and became an upright officer who was demoted many times due to frank remonstrance.²⁵⁰

Therefore, the hanging of portraits in one's studio, understood as an expedient way of inviting chosen close friends into the studio, can also serve as a way of showing recognition to others as well as seeking recognition from others. The studio is thus further confirmed as a special social space, by means of which literati are able to achieve mutual recognition and to build their most intimate community.

II Naming the Studio

²⁵⁰ See Gao Side's biography in *Song shi*, 409.12322–28.

Aside from “inviting into the studio,” the act of “naming the studio” also greatly contributes to the construction of the social nature of the studio space. The identity of a literatus is tied closely to the sociality of naming. By naming one’s studio and then making the name widely known within social networks, the literatus opens a window for others to look into the studio and his own identity. The act of naming therefore plays a crucial role in the display of literati selfhood, which works as a means for self-identification and social-identification.

(1) The Justification for Studio Naming

In terms of the early history of studio names, there are a handful of antecedents. However, based on extant materials, it is hard to conclude that the studio owners named these sites themselves. Consider Sima Xiangru’s Reading Den as an example. According to an illustrated geography (*tujing* 圖經) cited by the *Universal Geography of the Taiping Era* (*Taiping huanyu ji* 太平寰宇記), during his journey in the Shu area, from far away Emperor Xuanzong of Tang (r. 712–756) saw a den located on the Divine Mountain 神山 in Zitong County. His courtier reported that it was the reading den (*dushu zhi ku* 讀書之窟) used by Sima Xiangru, who lived during the Han dynasty. Learning this, Emperor Xuanzong ordered the name of the mountain to be changed to Changqing Mountain 長卿山, and named the den the “Stone Chamber of Changqing” (Changqing shishi 長卿石室).²⁵¹ In view of this story, the name of Reading Den is perhaps merely a direct description of the shape of the site, with the name Stone Chamber of Changqing bestowed commemoratively, long after Sima’s time, and not intended to specify it as a studio.

Indeed, even up to the Tang dynasty, naming a studio was not common. It was not until the Song era, especially in the Southern Song, that the naming of studios gradually became popular. An extremely large number of studio names are recorded in Song literary writings. The literati become absorbed in naming their studios and in explaining the meaning of the names to others.

²⁵¹ Yue Shi, *Taiping huanyu ji*, 84.1678. The courtesy name of Sima Xiangru is Changqing.

Yet, compared with the later Ming and Qing dynasties, when the practice became widespread, in the Song, literati sometimes still found it necessary to justify the act of studio naming. This sort of anxiety is revealed clearly in a letter by Wang Zijun 王子俊 (fl. 1214):

“Letter of Asking for the Studio Name” (“Qiu zhaiming shu” 求齋名書)

The fact that studios have names is not ancient. Naming the studio and further inscribing it—this is almost like children’s game playing. Let alone to say that it should not resemble the public school. Those are indeed as you said. But I am afraid that although the custom itself is not ancient, it does reveal an ancient taste. The ancients’ basins had inscriptions, and all the things such as stools and staffs, or lances and spears, also had inscriptions, respectively. Probably since Cheng Tang [ca. 1675–1646 BCE] and Lü Wang [fl. eleventh century BCE], everything had an inscription, while the gentlemen did not regard this as wrong. The studio is a site for a scholar to concentrate on studying, to devote himself to cultivation, and to keep study in mind when wandering in delight or retiring. If the scholar inscribes it and further considers it good, he looks up to see the plaque and looks down to read the inscription, but he sees that in his own mind there is nothing that can match the name. In this case, a feeling of shame arises in him spontaneously. Therefore, the practice of naming is also an aid to advance in virtue.

齋舍有名非古也，名之又從而銘之，殆如兒戲，且不應與公家學校類，誠如來論。某切以為是雖非古也，而亦古之意也。古人盤有銘，几杖戈矛之類色色有銘，蓋自成湯、呂望以來，比比有之，君子不以為非也。齋舍，學者所以藏脩遊息者，使其銘之而又善於此，仰而視其扁，俯而誦其辭，反顧吾心，一物不應，則愧心油然而生，此亦進德之一助也。

Gentleman Sima’s [Sima Guang] garden is called “Solitary Enjoyment,” and his hall is named “Reading Books.” He further composed accounts and poems for them.²⁵² Personally I wonder the gentlemen who lived in the Jiayou era [1056–1063] would also not consider these wrong. Not to mention the Duke of Jin’s [Wang Hu 王祐 (924–987)] “Three Locust Trees,” Gentleman Han’s [Han Qi 韓琦 (1008–1075)] “Drunken Bai,” and the Duke of Lu’s [Wen Yanbo 文彥博 (1006–1097)] “Being Revered in Accompany with Virtue.”²⁵³ Generally speaking, among the affairs under Heaven, there are those that are not derived from ancient times, but can still take place based on reason. Gentlemen would not abolish those. Supposing that people must follow the old routine, then what we have is the cold mat that Confucius did not have time to sit on.²⁵⁴ Did the studio itself exist in the beginning? Let alone the name of the studio!

²⁵² See Sima Guang, “Dule Yuan qiyong” 獨樂園七詠 and “Dule Yuan ji” 獨樂園記, *Sima Wenzheng gong chuanjia ji*, pp. 33, 876.

²⁵³ See Su Shi’s “Sanhuai tang ming bingxu” 三槐堂銘並敘, “Zuibai tang ji” 醉白堂記, and “Dewei tang ming bingxu” 德威堂銘並敘, respectively.

²⁵⁴ This refers to the story that Confucius became so engaged in expounding his teaching that he never sat on a mat long enough to make the mat warm. The story was told to prove Confucius’s devotion to society. But Wang Zijun, in his letter, borrows this anecdote about Confucius mainly to argue that if stick to old traditions, people nowadays should still sit on the mat.

司馬公園曰“獨樂”，堂曰“讀書”，有記有詠，竊計嘉祐諸公亦未必以為非。王晉公之“三槐”，韓公之“醉白”，文潞公之“德威”，又不論也。大抵天下之事，雖非古始而可以義起者，君子亦有所不廢。如必沿其故，則孔席不暇，何嘗有齋，而況於名乎！

As for public schools, in the ancient times they did not have names neither. It was Hu Anding [Hu Yuan 胡瑗 (993–1059)] who first set up the “Studio of the Way to Order” and other studios, establishing them as study chambers for students. The court thus dispatched people to go to Huzhou and took Hu’s rules as the model. The fact that schools have names is always traced back to this time. As the common people’s rules can be used as public rules, why cannot public rules in turn be employed as the common people’s rules?

至於公家學校，古亦未嘗有名，自胡安定始置治道等齋，以為諸生肄業之地，朝廷遂下湖州取以為法。庠序齋舍之有名，往往自此始。匹夫之法可以為公家之法，公家之法顧不可以為匹夫之法耶？

Someone asked, what is the title of Lü Bogong [Lü Zuqian 呂祖謙 (1137–1181)]? This is the fault of the one who asked. It is because if people do not think about the meanings but merely choose certain names by which to address one another, this is almost the same as the behavior of establishing a title in privacy. There is nothing under Heaven dirtier than manure. But when the Wang clan was living in the “Lane of Horse Dung,” their contemporaries called them the “Wang Clan of the Lane of Horse Dung.”²⁵⁵ In this case, people who were related to horse dung connoted glory. He Yan [ca. 195–249] spoke of Xiahou Taichu [Xiahou Xuan 夏侯玄 (209–254)] using the title “Deep” from the *Changes*; at the same time Taichu referred to Yan using the title “Spirit-like.” Nevertheless, both of these men were hypocritical and frivolous, and finally could not avoid disasters.²⁵⁶ In this way, the so-called “Deep” and “Spirit-like” in turn became associated with humiliation.²⁵⁷

或問呂伯恭有何稱號，此問者過也。蓋不惟其義而直差擇其名以相稱謂，殆類私立名字者矣。天下之至穢者莫如糞壤，而諸王居馬糞巷，時人號為馬糞巷諸王，則以馬糞自繫者反榮矣。何晏目夏侯泰初以《易》之所謂“深”，而泰初復目晏以“神”，然浮偽輕剽，卒不免禍，則所謂“深”與“神”者反辱矣。

The writer of this letter was Wang Zijun, a close friend of the celebrated literati Yang Wanli and Zhou Bida. Although the specific context in which the letter was written is not clear, from its content it is not hard to ascertain that it is a reply to a letter that questioned the legitimacy of

²⁵⁵ The “Wang Clan of the Lane of Horse Dung” is a branch of the Wang clan of Langya. The representatives are Wang Sengqian 王僧虔 (425–485) and his son Wang Zhi 王志 in the Southern dynasty; see *Nan shi*, 22.608.

²⁵⁶ See *Weishi chunqiu* 魏氏春秋 quoted in *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 (9.292). But Wang Zijun’s version is a little different from *Weishi chunqiu*, since in *Weishi chunqiu*, it was He Yan who desired to praise himself as “Spirit-like,” rather than receiving the title from Xiahou Xuan. Both “Deep” and “Spirit-like” come from a statement in the *Book of Changes*, see *Zhouyi yizhu*, p. 245. Both He Yan and Xiahou Xuan were executed in political struggles; see *Sanguo zhi*, 9.292, 9.299.

²⁵⁷ *QSW*, 6427.240.

studio naming. As the opening sentences convey, the original letter must have criticized the act of studio naming in at least two aspects: (1) The naming of studios, as well as the composition of studio inscriptions, is not an old tradition and thus should not be considered seriously; and (2) because only public schools deserve good names, it is not proper for private studios to share this privilege.

Wang, of course, refutes these two points in his reply. First, he proposes that although the naming of the studio is not derived from ancient times, it does reflect the “ancient taste” (*gu zhi yi* 古之意). The practice continues the tradition of naming and inscribing objects that began as early as the Shang and Zhou dynasties. Hence, studio naming is a development from, rather than a break from, the intentions of ancient sages.

After tracing the practice back to its origins in the inscription of objects, Wang moves on to posit a practical point of view regarding the use of the studio name and inscription. The studio name, in his scheme, works as a motto for the studio owner. Both when studying seriously and when at leisure, the literati often spend time in the studio in their daily lives; it is therefore inevitable for them to pay attention to the studio name and to examine their own behaviors in light of the criteria implied by the studio name. This is regarded another advantage of studio naming; to use Wang’s words, the studio name also functions as “an aid to advance in virtue” 進德之一助.

In the ensuing paragraph, Wang continues his defense of the act of studio naming by providing several examples. He now focuses on more recent instances. Though most of the five names listed here are generally used for “para-studio” sites rather than particularly for studios, they are indeed the precedents of the fashion of naming that prevailed in the Southern Song. Here, the logic is, since all of these names are given, used, and interpreted by the most exemplary literati in the Northern Song, they must be considered proper and even taken as models. Wang then summarizes his refutation of the first question: studio naming is definitely reasonable not only because it reflects ancient taste but also because it has been tested by recent

practice and has proven its validity.

Wang next refutes the second query employing the very argumentation used in the letter to which he is replying. As the former letter emphasizes the significance of following tradition, Wang now traces the origin of the naming of public schools, pointing out that the practice derives from what was originally an individual practice: the well-known educator Hu Yuan's departmental teaching method. It is said that when Hu Yuan was teaching in Huzhou (in modern Zhejiang Province), he founded the disciplinary division in the Prefectural School, and named the departments the "Studio of Classics Argumentation" (Jingyi zhai 經義齋) and the "Studio of the Way to Order" (Zhidao zhai 治道齋). In 1044, when planning for the establishment of the Imperial University in the capital, the court "took the master's rules as the Imperial University's rules. Till now they still work as written regulations" 取先生之法以為太學法，至今為著令。²⁵⁸ In other words, an individual practice was adopted by the court became a nationwide regulation. In this way, Wang bridges the gap between "common people's rules" (*pifu zhi fa* 匹夫之法) and "public rules" (*gongjia zhi fa* 公家之法). Since the naming of public schools originated from a personal experiment, this practice should in turn influence personal practices, i.e., the naming of private studios.

Wang has thus so far effectively solved the problems raised in the letter to which he is replying. In the last part of the letter, he shifts the topic slightly to personal titles and sobriquets. This seemingly digressive topic, however, is still closely relevant to the discussion of the naming of studios, in the sense that since the Song dynasty (especially the Southern Song), the literati have shared a keen interest in taking studio names as their own sobriquets. I will discuss this new phenomenon in detail in the third part of this section, but in Wang's letter, he concentrates more on the relationship between a name and reality, that is, whether or not a name can accurately represent an individual's personality.

²⁵⁸ Ouyang Xiu, "Hu xiansheng mubiao" 胡先生墓表, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 25.389.

We can infer that in the previous letter, the author, or someone cited by the author, questioned the effectiveness of naming by taking Lü Zuqian as an example. It seems that Lü had a certain inelegant nickname that did not match his identity as an influential Confucian scholar. To explain this, Wang first posits Lü's title as only a personally used nickname that should not be considered seriously. He then moves on to address the relationship between names and reality. A name as disgusting as "Horse Dung," he asserts, does not obscure the intrinsic grace of the person who owns this name; similarly, a title as refined as "Deep" or "Spirit-like" cannot hide the fact that the person is incompetent. In this sense, one should be aware that a name cannot always fully reflect reality. By the same token, Lü's nickname should also be detached from our assessment of his personal morality.

Wang Zijun is not the only figure who is aware of this anxiety regarding the relationship between name and reality. A critique by Wang Mao 王楙 (1151–1213), a contemporary of Wang Zijun, complements Wang Zijun's argument, reads as follows:

Generally speaking, the name should not surpass the actuality. Rather than boasting and exaggeration, it is better to slightly depreciate. In view of the learning of the Duke of Wen [Sima Guang], he simply named his garden as "Solitary Enjoyment" and his hall as "Reading Books." He never showed off. Nowadays, however, people all search for beautiful names in order to embellish their buildings, without considering what name fits themselves.²⁵⁹

大抵名不可過實。與其浮誇，不若少貶。以溫公學術，而園曰“獨樂”、堂曰“讀書”，初未嘗誇耀。今人率求美名以飾其處，不顧己之所安。

Again, the names of Sima Guang's garden and studio are selected as early models for the naming of studios. According to Wang Mao, in sharp contrast to Sima Guang, people now indulge in seeking good names while they tend to neglect the cultivation of the selves that these names represent, which are exactly the same frivolous behaviors that Wang Zijun criticizes in He Yan and Xiahou Xuan.

In this manner, Wang Zijun's "Letter of Asking for the Studio Name" establishes a theoretical basis for the legitimacy of studio naming. In fact, in practice, Wang also owned a studio called

²⁵⁹ *Yeke congshu*, 14.187.

the “Studio of Investigation” (Ge zhai 格齋). Zhu Xi had even promised to inscribe this name in large characters and present this as a gift to Wang.²⁶⁰ Moreover, Wang also used this studio name as his own sobriquet, and was thus remembered by later generations as “Wang, of the Studio of Investigation” (“Wang Gezhai” 王格齋).

Wang Zijun’s Studio of Investigation is but one example among the numerous studio names that literati recorded during the Song era. In addition to naming the studio, however, more importantly, Song literati become enthusiastic about penning interpretations of studio names. Besides the inscriptions (*ming* 銘) of studio names defended by Wang Zijun, we can also read multitudes of accounts (*ji* 記), admonitions (*zhen* 箴), colophons (*ba* 跋), and poems that purport to *explain* studio names. Although anxiety persists regarding the “name–reality” relationship, by means of these literary representations, the literati are eager to demonstrate a direct connection between names and their own lives. Thus, the studio name serves as a stage for the display of the literati’s personalities and intentions.

(2) A Stage for Display

The studio was often named by the studio owner himself. In addition to naming the studio, however, the studio owner also often chose to explain in his literary writings the implication of the name, as a means to manifest his self-chosen identity. Consider, for example, Lu You, who wrote, “My Studio Is Named the ‘Satisfied Studio’; As Someone Asked about Its Meaning, I Composed This Poem to Tell Him” (“Shushi ming Kezhai huowen qiyi zuoshi gaozhi” 書室名可齋或問其義作詩告之):

得福常廉禍自輕，	In obtaining good fortune, I have kept my integrity, thus misfortune diminishes itself,
坦然無媿亦無驚。	Fully at ease, I do not feel ashamed or frightened.
平生秘訣今相付，	Now I present to you the secret of my whole life—
只向君心可處行。	Just follow where your heart is satisfied. ²⁶¹

²⁶⁰ Zhu Xi, “Da Wang Caichen” 答王才臣, *QSW*, 5579.29.

²⁶¹ *Jiannan shigao jiaozhu*, 1. 120.

Throughout his life, Lu You named various studios, and every time, he offered written interpretations for the names he chose. Though the studio name itself normally consisted of only one or two characters, Lu always offered an entire poem or essay by way of explanation. The commonly used word *ke* 可, for instance, can be understood in different ways, whereas it is the poem that prescribes a limit to its implication, and thus guarantees its efficiency in expressing the inner mind of the studio owner.

In the first couplet of the above poem, the poet declares his understanding of the character *ke* as an ideal of the state of mind. The term emphasizes the state of being “fully at ease” (*tanran* 坦然) with regard to the outside world. If one can achieve peace of mind, one will be peaceful in life. The fourth line of the poem echoes this idea, which further points explicitly to the way to be fully at ease: always having a satisfied mind.

This poem, though ostensibly describing a personal attitude cultivated in a private studio, was not written only for the studio owner himself. As the title claims, someone has expressed curiosity about the meaning of the studio name, and therefore the poet offers this poem in explanation. The inclination to share the name with others is even more obvious in the third line of the poem. Not only is the implication of the studio name sublimated to be “the secret of my whole life” (*pingsheng mijue* 平生秘訣), but also the poet portrays himself as an old man who desires to instruct others on the basis of his life wisdom, and to advertise his excellent mental cultivation to others. In this sense, the studio name, along with the interpretation of the name, becomes a vehicle for revealing the self to others.

Compared to a poem, an essay provides even greater freedom for the author to elaborate on the relationship between his studio name and his personality. In such an essay, the studio owner usually introduces the name’s origin and explains its implications and impact in greater detail. An early example can be found in Ouyang Xiu’s “Account of the Hall of Criticizing the Wrong as Wrong” (“Feifei tang ji” 非非堂記):

As for weights and steelyards' weighing things, if they are moving, the weight will be inaccurate; but when they are in a static state, even a tiny weight will not be left out by mistake. As for water's mirroring things, if the water is in movement, nothing can be seen; but when it is still, even a single hair can be distinguished. When it comes to a person, the ears are in charge of listening, and the eyes are in charge of watching. If they are in movement, their sharpness and distinction will be disturbed. But when they are in a static state, what they hear and see must be in detail. If one who conducts the self in society is not dazzled and disturbed by exterior things, his mind is tranquil. If the mind is tranquil, the intelligence is bright, and he is able to recognize the right as right and to criticize the wrong as wrong. When he makes a judgment, he will never be unsuccessful. To regard the right as right may appear as flattery, and to criticize the wrong as wrong may look like slander. Yet if unfortunately I go beyond what is proper, I would rather slander than flatter. To do right is normal for the gentleman. When I confirm it, what else can I add to it? From this point of view, it is more proper to criticize the wrong as wrong.

權衡之平物，動則輕重差，其於靜也，錙銖不失。水之鑒物，動則不能有睹，其於靜也，毫髮可辨。在乎人，耳司聽，目司視，動則亂於聰明，其於靜也，聞見必審。處身者不為外物眩晃而動，則其心靜，心靜則智識明，是是非非，無所施而不中。夫是是近乎諂，非非近乎訕，不幸而過，寧訕無諂。是者，君子之常，是之何加？一以觀之，未若非非之為正也。

In my second year of staying in Luoyang, I renovated the official compound. There was an essay posted on the wall.²⁶² I constructed the western chamber as a hall. Its door was open to the north, where several groves of bamboo were planted. I opened windows on the south wall, in order to let in the light of the sun and moon. I set up a desk and a couch, and on the bookshelf put several hundred volumes of books. I spend the entire day, from dawn to dark, in this chamber. Benefited by its quietness, I close my eyes and calm my mind; then I can examine the current and understand the ancient. Finally my thoughts penetrate everywhere. Therefore, I named this hall as "Criticizing the Wrong as Wrong."²⁶³

予居洛之明年，既新廳事，有文紀於壁末。營其西偏作堂，戶北向，植叢竹，辟戶于其南，納日月之光。設一几一榻，架書數百卷，朝夕居其中。以其靜也，閉目澄心，覽今照古，思慮無所不至焉。故其堂以非非為名云。

As ambiguous as Lu You's use of *ke*, Ouyang Xiu's studio name *feifei* 非非 is also hard to understand if no context is provided. Therefore, explicating the choice of name in writing becomes indispensable. Indeed, in the account above, Ouyang Xiu demonstrates the reasonableness of his choice of studio name step by step.

Beginning with the steelyard and water analogies, Ouyang Xiu first sets up a premise for his argument. Just as steelyard weights must be free of outside influence to accurately measure

²⁶² See Ouyang Xiu, "Henan fu chongxiu shiyuan ji" 河南府重修使院記, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 64.924.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 64.930–31.

objects, and water must be static in order to mirror objects, so a person must be tranquil in mind in order to be perceptive. These analogies may directly remind the readers of a statement in the *Zhuangzi*, which reads,

When water is still, it clearly reflects whiskers and brows. It is so accurate that the great craftsman takes his standard from it. If still water has such clarity, how much more so pure spirit! The stillness of the mind of the sage is the mirror of heaven and earth, the looking glass of the myriad things.²⁶⁴

水靜則明燭鬚眉，平中準，大匠取法焉。水靜猶明，而況精神！聖人之心靜乎！天地之鑑也，萬物之鏡也。

However, the “water/mind” rhetoric is also where Ouyang Xiu deviates from the *Zhuangzi*. In using this analogy, the *Zhuangzi* aims to prove the significance of “non-action,” a concept that is key in Daoism. Conversely, Ouyang Xiu posits quietude as a prerequisite for positive “action”; he immediately invokes the Confucian idea of self-cultivation, referring to the notions of “recognizing the right as right” (*shishi* 是是) and “criticizing the wrong as wrong” (*feifei* 非非). This expression is derived from the “Self-Cultivation” (“Xiushen” 修身) chapter of *Xunzi* 荀子, which states: “To recognize the right as right or to criticize the wrong as wrong is called ‘wisdom’; to criticize the right as wrong or to recognize the wrong as right is called ‘stupidity’” 是是非非謂之知，非是是非謂之愚。²⁶⁵ In other words, Ouyang Xiu is eager to use the virtue of stillness to cultivate the faculty of judgment towards various social phenomena. Yet, Ouyang Xiu does not stop at the phase of “wisdom.” Taking this idea a step further, he further distinguishes the two notions that are both regarded as actions of “wisdom”: criticizing the right as right and the wrong as wrong. Because it is a basic principle for a gentleman to behave in the right way, it is not necessary to praise him for such behavior. Challenging wrong behavior, however, requires greater intelligence and courage; thus one should value this action more highly.

Up to this point, Ouyang Xiu has demonstrated the logical process from quietude to the gain

²⁶⁴ *Zhuangzi jishi*, 13.457. I use the translation by Victor H. Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 13.119–20.

²⁶⁵ Wang Xianqian 王先謙, *Xunzi jijie* 荀子集解, eds. Shen Xiaohuan 沈嘯寰, and Wang Xingxian 王星賢 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988), 2.24.

of wisdom and finally to the even more highly valued action of “criticizing the wrong as wrong,” and refines this process with two characters (*feifei*). He now names the new studio precisely with these two characters. An ordinary studio—with natural lighting, basic furniture, and shelves piled with books—is thus immediately endowed with profound meanings by the act of naming. The studio name reframes the space as the particular pathway whereby the theoretical process described can be enacted. It stages the studio owner, who is consistently nurturing his value judgment by “spending the entire day, from dawn to dark, in this chamber” 朝夕居其中。 Accordingly, the studio name, in being identified and circulated, serves as an emblem of the studio owner’s personhood.

This emblematic attribute of the studio name becomes even more evident when the studio is named in an allegorical mode. Literati often enjoy playing with the multiple meanings carried by a single symbol, by means of which they are able to negotiate a proper way to represent the self. Such a preoccupation can be seen in the following essay by Zhang Lei:

“Account of the Chamber of the Wild Goose” 鴻軒記

The Chamber of the Wild Goose is my reading hut. A guest had some words to say: “I heard the wild goose is one that travels back and forth at the right times, in order to avoid the harm of the cold winter and the hot summer, and one that flies aloft and afar, which makes hunters have no desire. Now, because you are silly and lack common sense, several times you have been censured and dishonored in the sage age, suffered disgrace and endured humiliation in filth, and you are greedy for a meager salary to support yourself. But you desire to compare yourself to the wild goose. Don’t you feel ashamed?” I answered, “What you said is correct. However, I came to stay here in the autumn of the year *jimou* [1099], while I will move in the spring of the year *gengchen* [1100]. Am I not similar to the wild goose that is crying *aoao* in the marsh, preying on food to survive, coming in autumn and leaving in spring?” The guest responded, “Yes.”²⁶⁶

鴻軒者，張子讀書舍也。客有言曰：“吾聞之，時其往來，以避寒暑之害，而高飛遠舉，能使弋人無慕者，鴻也。今子以慧暗不見事，幾得譴辱於聖世，蒙垢忍恥於泥塗，苟升斗以自養，而欲自比於鴻，不亦愧乎？”張子曰：“子之言是也。然予居此以己卯之秋，其遷也庚辰之春，與夫磬磬陂澤中獵食以活，秋至而春去者，得無類乎？”客曰：“唯。”

The opening line explicitly points out the subject of the account as Zhang’s (the persona of

²⁶⁶ Zhang Lei ji, 49.767.

Zhang Lei) reading room, the “Chamber of the Wild Goose” (Hong xuan 鴻軒). The subsequent text is framed as a dialogue between the host and a guest. Similar to the structure used in the rhapsody, the dialogue begins with a guest’s challenge, continues with the host’s refutation, and closes with the agreement of the guest.

The dispute shows that both the host and the guest hold the consensus that one can read Zhang Lei’s person in the studio name, since both explicitly compare Zhang to the wild goose and interpret the name from an allegorical perspective. However, their understandings of the wild goose allegory are distinctively different. The guest portrays the wild goose as a glorious creature, consistent with the conventional literary image of the wild goose. As the guest summarizes, the wild goose is so wise that it can easily resolve the dangers it faces from both nature and the human world. Keeping this sensible image in mind, the guest deeply doubts that Zhang, who is known to behave poorly and to continually get into difficulties, deserves such a good title. Indeed, when Zhang named the Chamber of the Wild Goose, he had recently been banished to Fuzhou (in modern Hubei Province) for several months as a member of the so-called Yuanyou faction, which was punished for opposing the New Policies. Rather than roaming at ease like the wild goose, Zhang found himself virtually imprisoned in a remote area.

However, Zhang explores an alternative justification for the wild goose metaphor. Instead of disputing the self-contradiction proposed by the guest, he wittily invokes another implication of the wild goose motif, depicting the bird’s roaming as a reluctant act necessary for survival. This interpretation echoes a couplet that Zhang wrote during the same period, which also alludes to the unstable character of the wild goose, saying, “Seasons are like a rolling hub, carrying a wheel that never stops turning, / A sojourner resembles the flying wild goose, with no stable dwelling” 時如轉轂無停軌，客似飛鴻不定家。²⁶⁷ In this couplet, the poetic self, as a sojourner, is pictured as helpless via two similes. In the temporal dimension, his life is transient; time is as

²⁶⁷ The long title of the poem also introduces the background: 鴻軒下有薔薇，予初至時，生意蓋僅存耳，予爲灌溉壅護，今年春遂大盛，仲春著花數百萼，大幾如芍藥，豐盛妍麗，頃所未見也，余有黃州之行，酌酒賞別，*Zhang Lei ji*, 23.406.

fleeing as a continually rolling wheel. In the spatial dimension, he is continually in transit, like a bird who migrates by necessity. In this account, such a rendering of the wild goose as an unsettled image is further intensified through Zhang’s description of the bird as “crying *aoao* in the marsh” 嗚嗚陂澤中. By means of the crying, Zhang allusively connects this single wild goose with the geese in the poem “Wild Geese” (“Hongyan” 鴻雁) in the *Classic of Poetry*, the third stanza of which reads,

鴻雁於飛，	The wild geese are flying,
哀鳴嗚嗚。	Melancholy they are crying <i>aoao</i> .
維此哲人，	Here are wise men,
謂我劬勞。	They recognize our toil.
維彼愚人，	There are stupid men,
謂我宣驕。	They regard us as insolent. ²⁶⁸

Although historically scholars have held divergent views on the theme of “Wild Geese,”²⁶⁹ they agree that the poem is about refugees, and that by invoking comparison (*bi* 比), it analogizes the refugees to wild geese in the sense that both are homeless, exhausted, and melancholy. Hence, by alluding to this poem, Zhang once again defines the wild goose as a sad figure whose instability results from external factors. In fact, it is not hard to find the reason Zhang preferred this image. Beginning in 1094, when the persecution of Yuanyou officials began, Zhang was driven to frequently change official positions and thus moved frequently to different geographical areas. After being exiled to Huangzhou in 1097, he was further banished to Fuzhou in the autumn of 1099, and in the spring of 1100, he was ordered to return to Huangzhou.²⁷⁰ His movements were, indeed, like the migration of a bird.

So far, Zhang has provided two opposite interpretations of the wild goose: the image of glorious freedom, and the image of suffering. His account seems to suggest that he named his

²⁶⁸ *Maoshi zhengyi*, 11.663. I have consulted the translation by James Legge, *The She King* (Taipei: SMC Publishing INC., 1991), p. 293.

²⁶⁹ See, e.g., *Maoshi zhengyi*, 11.660; Chen Zizhan 陳子展, *Shijing zhijie* 詩經直解 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 1983), 18.607–8.

²⁷⁰ See Zheng Lei’s chronicle in *Zhang Lei ji*, pp. 997–1004.

studio with the second image in mind, to mark his painful experience. Nevertheless, in the guest's voice, he reminds readers of the positive portrait of the wild goose as well. Beneath the surface meaning, the account actually thus expresses a sense of pride. Rather than immerse himself in indignation over the unfair treatment he has received, Zhang conveys a sense of self-approval by the metaphor implied in his studio name. His figuration of the self follows the traditional expression in rhapsody regarding the scholar's frustration and unrecognized talent.²⁷¹ No wonder he wittily alludes to the last stanza of the poem "Wild Geese": only the "wise men" (*zheren* 哲人) are able to recognize his bitterness, whereas the "stupid men" (*yuren* 愚人) can never understand.

Thus, a studio name, such as the Chamber of the Wild Goose, works as the studio owner's means of expressing his inner mind, while at the same time, the account of the name's meaning further guarantees the implication he wishes to convey as the name circulates. As Owen has pointed out, "[I]t is important to keep in mind that this poetry of the private sphere is public; it is given to friends and circulated."²⁷² Indeed, the name, accompanied by the written interpretation of the name, is not enjoyed only by the studio owner himself. Rather, the name sets the stage for the studio owner's performance; he invites others to watch, ponder, and appreciate.

(3) Disputing the Studio Name

Such a performance is not always a monologue. Besides self-naming and self-interpreting, the studio owner sometimes invites a like-minded friend or a respected teacher to grant a studio name and/or to provide an interpretation of the name. The one who is invited takes seriously the task of selecting a name and/or composing a poem or essay to explain the meaning of the name, attempting to correlate the personality and interests of the owner with the chosen name. Hence, through this process, the studio owner and his invited interpreters collectively shape the connotation of the name, and display the identity or expected identity of the owner accordingly.

²⁷¹ See Hellmut Wilhelm, "The Scholar's Frustration: Notes on a Type of 'Fu'," in *Chinese Thought and Institutions*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp. 310–19, 398–403.

²⁷² Stephen Owen, *The End of the Chinese 'Middle Ages'*, p. 104.

For instance, Yang Wanli once inscribed a poem for a studio on behalf of the studio owner Gong Feng 鞏豐 (courtesy name Zhongzhi 仲至; 1148–1217), saying:

“Written on Gong Zhongzhi’s Studio of Cultivating the Words” 題鞏仲至脩辭齋

人道莊周夢蝴蝶， 我言蝴蝶夢莊周。 莊周解飛蝶解語， 說向蝴蝶應點頭。 脩辭齋中子鞏子， 年少詩狂狂到底。 蹇馱破帽衝達官， 白眼清談對餘子。 東萊一翁印斯人， 世人皆憎翁不嗔。 爲渠落筆三大字， 政自不妨詩入神。	Others state that Zhuangzi dreamt of the butterfly, I say that the butterfly dreamt of Zhuangzi. Zhuangzi knows flying and the butterfly understands speech, If one tells this to the butterfly, the butterfly should nod its head. ²⁷³ In the Studio of Cultivating the Words, there is Master Gong, He is young, and his poems are mad—mad in the extreme. On a limping donkey, with a tattered hat, he offends high-ranking officials, Turning up the whites of his eyes, in pure talks, he faces others. ²⁷⁴ The old man of Donglai was impressed by this person, The common people all dislike him but the old man never faults him. On his behalf, I inscribed three large characters, Right at this moment, unexpectedly this poem came into my mind. ²⁷⁵
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From the closing couplet of the poem, we can conclude that Gong Feng must have asked Yang Wanli to inscribe his studio name—the “Studio of Cultivating the Words” (Xiuci zhai 脩辭齋)—in large characters that could be collected as a calligraphy work or used as the studio plaque. Becoming enthused about his calligraphy task, Yang further composed a poem to convey his understanding of the name. The poem is structured as three stanzas. Each stanza interprets the studio name from a distinct aspect, with a different rhyming scheme in each stanza.

At first glance, the opening stanza of four lines seems to be digressive. The stanza paraphrases the well-known parable of Zhuangzi’s dream of a butterfly: Zhuangzi dreamt that he was a butterfly, but after he woke up, he found that he was still Zhuangzi. Confused, he wondered whether he was Zhuangzi dreaming that he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming that it was Zhuangzi. Generally speaking, this story aims to demonstrate things as equal in terms of a

²⁷³ On Zhuangzi’s dream of a butterfly, see *Zhuangzi jishi*, 2.112.

²⁷⁴ It is said that Ruan Ji was good at making the whites of eyes (*baiyan* 白眼); see “Jin baiguan ming” 晉百官名 quoted by Liu Xiaobiao, *Shishuo xinyu jiaojian*, 24.4.

²⁷⁵ *Yang Wanli ji jianjiao*, 30.1559.

depiction of the “transformation of things” (*wuhua* 物化), which seems to have little connection with cultivating the words. Nevertheless, in Yang’s retelling, it is worth noting that he reframes the story by emphasizing the power of language. The ambiguity between Zhuangzi and the butterfly becomes the result of divergent speeches: “others state” (*rendao* 人道) is juxtaposed with “I say” (*woyan* 我言), and “one tells to” (*shuoxiang* 說向). In other words, Yang is pointing out that the parable of Zhuangzi and the butterfly itself derives from distinctions in the speaking position.

Moving on to the second stanza, Yang takes a different approach to explaining the name by focusing on the studio owner Gong Feng. He selects three aspects of Gong, each spotlighting a facet of Gong’s speech or composition. The first scene depicts Gong Feng sitting in his studio madly composing poems. Such a gesture is not uncommon in literary representations of poets, who are often said to be addicted to writing. For example, Bai Juyi’s lines in “In the Mountains, Chanting Alone” (“Shanzhong duyin” 山中獨吟) vividly portray his process of composition: “Madly chanting, I startle woods and ravines, / Gibbons and birds all peek at me” 狂吟驚林壑，猿鳥皆窺覷。²⁷⁶ In both Yang and Bai’s works, the “mad chanting” is more like a performance to differentiate the poetic self from the public. Here, however, Yang changes the stage from the mountains to the studio, the quintessential intellectual space in the Song.

The second scene, depicting a person riding a limping donkey and wearing a tattered hat, reminds us of Su Shi’s playful reimagining of Du Fu’s composition of the famous satirical poem “Song of the Beautiful Ladies” (“Liren xing” 麗人行). In the original song, Du Fu wrote, “On their [the beautiful ladies’] backs, what could I see? / Pearls weighted the waistbands, which steadily fit them” 背後何所見？珠壓腰褱穩稱身。²⁷⁷ Making a joke on these two lines, in his “A Sequel of the ‘Song of the Beautiful Ladies’” (“Xu liren xing” 續麗人行) Su Shi explains why

²⁷⁶ *Bai Juyi ji jianjiao*, 7.407. I have consulted the translation by Jack W. Chen.

²⁷⁷ *Du shi xiangzhu*, 2.157.

Du Fu described those ladies from the back:

杜陵饑客眼長寒， 蹇駝破帽隨金鞍。	At Duling, the hungry sojourner's eyes were always cold, On a limping donkey, with a tattered hat, he followed golden saddles.
隔花臨水時一見， 只許腰肢背後看。	Across flower beds, beside the river, he happened to see them once, But he was only allowed to view the backs of their waists. ²⁷⁸

As a result, the image of the limping donkey and the shabby hat is sometimes used as a synecdoche of Du Fu.²⁷⁹ By using this imagery, Yang thus compares Gong Feng with Du Fu. Indeed, like the frustrated Du Fu, Gong suffered from the fact that his outstanding talent was not recognized by the court, thus he held only low official positions all his life.²⁸⁰ Yet, in the poetic representation, Gong's behavior is even madder than Du's, in the sense that Gong dares to directly offend high officials, while Du observes those in power and writes satirical poems about them later.

Gong's madness is further stressed in the third scene. This time, Yang associates Gong with the drunken eccentric Ruan Ji 阮籍 (210–263), famous for his ability to turn up the whites of his eyes to show his contempt for unrefined men, and for his fondness for the metaphysical “pure talks” (*qingtan* 清談). Thus, all three scenes invoked in Yang's poem are about literary talent and the pride or even madness that may accompany great talent. Together these scenes contribute to another interpretation of the studio name of *xiuci* 脩辭, i.e., the composition of literature.

As a figure possessing great literary talent and unyielding character but holding a low official position, not surprisingly Gong is unappreciated and even rejected by society. Indeed, in the last four-line stanza, Yang models such a relationship between Gong and the “common people” (*shiren* 世人). But just as Owen observes, since the mid-Tang, “we find the proposition that the

²⁷⁸ *Su Shi shiji*, 16.812.

²⁷⁹ See, e.g., “Shu Wu Xilao Zui Du Fu xiang” 書吳熙老醉杜甫像 (*QSS*, 1074.12227), and “Ti Yinxian tu” 題飲仙圖 (*QSS*, 3092.36924).

²⁸⁰ As for the biography of Gong Feng, see Ye Shi, “Gong Zhongzhi muzhiming” 鞏仲至墓誌銘, *QSW*, 6511.347–49.

‘good’ writer (with ambiguity between the morally ‘good’ and ‘good’ in a purely literary sense) will necessarily be ignored or actively rejected by society.”²⁸¹ Scorn from the crowd, therefore, works paradoxically as a confirmation of the individual’s value. Yang positions Gong in precisely such a position. At the same time, like the effect of being unappreciated by the public, special recognition from a celebrated figure can enhance a person’s reputation. For this purpose, Yang singles out the Daoxue figure Lü Zuqian as a representative of the group who is able to appreciate Gong. Since Gong studied with and accompanied Lü Zuqian for more than ten years, Yang’s emphasis on Lü not only elevates Gong, but also clarifies that Gong’s achievement as well as character has an orthodox origin. Finally, Yang brings himself into the poem, to play the role of another admirer of Gong. Yang’s behaviors—inscribing the studio name in calligraphy at Gong’s request, and composing a poem to express his understanding of the name as well as the owner of the name—demonstrate his approval of Gong. Last but not least, Yang’s spontaneous composition of the above poem can also be understood as a vivid commentary on the name *xiuci*.

In short, by invoking figures such as Zhuangzi, Du Fu, and Ruan Ji to haunt the poem, Yang interprets the studio name *xiuci* as an act of literary composition or speech, and he celebrates Gong for his literary talents. However, regarding this same name, Zhu Xi provides a fundamentally different analysis, and moreover, based on his understanding, Zhu Xi even refuses to write an account for Gong’s studio. In a letter to Gong, Zhu Xi writes,

You asked for my crude writing [of a studio account], which especially makes me feel grateful that you do not despise me. For me, should I be stingy with it? However, in recent years, I have put aside all such things. Previously I had promised the Liberated Old Man [Lu You] to compose an “Inscription of the Studio of Studying in Old Age” for him, but later I dared not write about that either. You, the wise person, should have understood this on your own. It is not necessary for me to explain in detail.²⁸² And I also heard, the way that ancient sages and worthies instructed people is no more than elucidating the moral principles under Heaven, in order to enlighten the intelligence of one’s mind. Only then does one endeavor to practice, and stick to it to the end of life. Then, all that can be seen in discourses and that can

²⁸¹ Stephen Owen, *The End of the Chinese ‘Middle Ages,’* p. 13.

²⁸² Zhu Xi’s refusal to compose the studio inscription on behalf of Lu You is partly because of the prohibition of the Qingyuan (1195–1200) factionalists. As for the relationship between Zhu Xi and Lu You in Zhu Xi’s later years, see Shu Jingnan 束景南, *Zhuzi dazhuan* 朱子大傳 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2003), pp. 1095–1100.

be carried out in tasks is derived from this without exception. Essentially there is no other way that one can exert oneself in order to acquire ornate wording and glorious tasks.

所需惡語，尤荷不鄙。此於吾人豈有所愛？但近年此等一切廢置，向已許爲放翁作《老學齋銘》，後亦不復敢著語。高明應已默解，不待縷縷自辨數也。抑又聞之，古之聖賢所以教人，不過使之講明天下之義理，以開發其心之知識，然後力行固守，以終其身。而凡其見之言論、措之事業者，莫不由是以出，初非此外別有歧路可施功力，以致文字之華靡、事業之恢宏也。

Thus, in commenting on the Third Yang of the Hexagram “Pure Yang,” the “Commentary on the Words of the Text” of the *Book of Changes* actually elucidates the beginning and end of studying. What it means by saying, “By being loyal and trustworthy, he fosters his virtue,” is to let our minds indeed understand the principle and thus truly love or hate it, just as one loves a beautiful color or hates a bad smell. What it means by saying, “By cultivating his words and establishing his sincerity, he keeps his task in hand,” is to let us be watchful over where to start and obtain the essence, which is strongly prior to the speech, which is easy to release but hard to withdraw. It talks about “cultivating the words,” but does it mean the “composition of literature”? Now when someone names his studio as Cultivating the Words, I indeed do not know what he means. Even if the naming is completely based on the essential purport of the “Commentary on the Words of the Text,” I am still afraid that this concern should be secondary to “being loyal and trustworthy” and to “fostering virtue,” and thus it should not be reached hurriedly. If its meaning is as what one was chanting and celebrating in the poems, then I am afraid that it goes further from rather than closer to the idea of “making earnest efforts and with evening still taking care.” With my humble opinion, I indeed cannot have no doubt about it. Now, although I dare not undertake your request to compose the account, I consider that the issue involved in this affair is not trivial to people, and is something that I have no choice but to talk about. Therefore I venture to tell you about this in privacy. I hope that you think about it for the moment, and reply with a sentence to me in order to distinguish the right and the wrong.²⁸³

故《易》之《文言》於《乾》九三實明學之始終，而其所謂忠信所以進德者，欲吾之心實明是理而真好惡之，若其好好色而惡惡臭也。所謂修辭立誠以居業者，欲吾之謹夫所發，以致其實，而尤先於言語之易放而難收也。其曰修辭，豈作文之謂哉？今或者以修辭名左右之齋，吾固未知其所謂。然設若盡如《文言》之本指，則猶恐此事當在忠信進德之後，而未可以遽及。若如或者賦詩之所詠歎，則恐其於乾乾夕惕之意又益遠而不相似也。鄙意於此深有所不能無疑者，今雖不敢承命以爲記，然念此事於人所關不細，有不可以不之講者，故敢私以爲請。幸試思之，而還以一言，判其是非焉。

As many as twenty letters from Zhu Xi to Gong Feng are still extant, all of them written in Zhu Xi's later years. The earliest one is dated in the first month of 1199, right after the first encounter between Zhu and Gong.²⁸⁴ The one cited here is a part of the fourth letter, which details Zhu's reflections regarding Gong's studio name. From Zhu's reply, it is easy to infer that Gong must

²⁸³ Zhu Xi, “Da Gong Zhongzhi” 答鞏仲至, *QSW*, 5591.219.

²⁸⁴ For the dates of Zhu Xi's letters to Gong Feng, see *Zhuzi dazhuan*, p. 1100n1.

have, in a previous letter, invited Zhu to compose an account for his Studio of Cultivating the Words; Zhu, however, declined this request. Throughout his life, Zhu wrote a multitude of studio accounts or inscriptions on behalf of his friends or himself, and he was on good terms with Gong; why, then, did he refuse Gong? Zhu provides a detailed answer in the letter, pointing out a deep deficiency in the studio name.

Zhu's understanding of the name *xiuci* is based primarily on a statement from the *Book of Changes*. In Hexagram 1, "Pure Yang" ("Qian" 乾), the Third Yang (*jiusan* 九三) reads, "The noble man makes earnest efforts throughout the day, and with evening he still takes care; though in danger, he will suffer no blame" 君子終日乾乾，夕惕若。厲，無咎。²⁸⁵ In commentating on this passage, the "Commentary on the Words of the Text" (*wenyan* 文言) says in the voice of Confucius, "The noble man fosters his virtue and cultivates his task. He fosters his virtue by being loyal and trustworthy; he keeps his task in hand by cultivating his words and establishing his sincerity" 君子進德脩業，忠信，所以進德也；脩辭立其誠，所以居業也。²⁸⁶ Zhu precisely traces the etymology of *xiuci* to this saying and, accordingly, is able to define the meaning of *xiuci* in the context of Confucian thought. First, *xiuci*, or "cultivating the words," is substantially different from the "composition of literature" (*zuowen* 作文), as the former serves the attainment of the principle of the Way, while the latter pertains mainly to aesthetics. Therefore, Zhu argues, Gong makes a fundamental mistake if he adopts "cultivating the words" in its sense of "composition of literature" to name his studio. It is hard to know whether Gong had previously explained the name as meaning "composition of literature" to Zhu, or whether Zhu had also read Yang Wanli's "Written on Gong Zhongzhi's Studio of Cultivating the Words," but the letter makes clear that Zhu was aware that some references to the Studio of Cultivating the Words do celebrate the name as referring to literary composition. Furthermore, Zhu objects,

²⁸⁵ *Zhouyi yizhu*, 1.1. I use the translation by Richard John Lynn, *The Classic of Changes*, p. 134.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.5. I use the translation by Richard John Lynn, *The Classic of Changes*, p. 135.

even in the Confucian context “cultivating the words” is a minor goal that should not be overemphasized. Although in the letter Zhu does not declare that attentiveness to “cultivating the words” will harm one’s pursuit of the Confucian Way, he does highlight an ideal sequencing, or “the beginning and end of studying” 學之始終. That is, “cultivating the words” is definitely “secondary to ‘being loyal and trustworthy’ and ‘fostering the virtue’” 當在忠信進德之後, which cannot be overstepped. Consequently, because a studio name acts as the emblem of the intention and personhood of the studio owner, even if Gong does treat *xiuci* as a Confucian notion rather than as referring to the “composition of literature,” it is still inappropriate for him to choose the branch (i.e., “cultivating words”) instead of the root (i.e., “fostering virtue”) to label himself.

This passage which Zhu composed regarding the appropriateness of the studio name is even longer than many of the studio accounts that he wrote for others; he states firmly that this issue is absolutely “not trivial to people” 於人所關不細. Even after turning to another topic (poetic criticism) in the next part of the letter (not cited here), Zhu returns again to the naming issue, ending the main body of the letter by saying, “In the future if we have the chance to discuss face to face, perhaps it [the poetic criticism] can be completely clarified. But I am afraid that at that moment we ought to finish the case of ‘cultivating the words,’ and have no time to touch other topics” 他時或得面論，庶幾可盡。但恐彼時且要結絕修辭公案，無暇可及此耳。²⁸⁷

We know that, rather than waiting to meet in person, Gong must have replied to Zhu not long after Zhu’s fourth letter, because Zhu responds in his fifth letter to Gong by saying,

The basic meaning of the studio name of Cultivating the Words is like this [the meaning in the *Book of Changes*]; nevertheless, the essential purport of the *Book of Changes* originally indicates what should come first and what last—I have talked about this in the previous letter. The character of *li* appears twice in the “Book of Yu.” In both cases it has the implication of reverence and seriousness. Naming the studio by means of it does not simply adopt its meaning of wood. As for the plaque, I would like to write it for you. But I have had a pain in my arms for several days, and I am not able to wield the brush. Please wait a little while.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁷ *QSW*, 5591.220.

²⁸⁸ *QSW*, 5591.222.

“修辭”齋名本意乃如此，然《易》之本旨自有先後，前書固已言之矣。“栗”字再見《虞書》，皆莊敬謹嚴之意。以是名齋，非徒有取於木也。扁榜便欲爲書，偶數日臂痛，不能運筆，且當少須也。

From Zhu's letter above, we can deduce that in Gong's reply, he must have claimed that the name Cultivating the Words did originate from the *Book of Changes*; however, he has abandoned this name in favor of a new name, the "Studio of Reverence" (Li zhai 栗齋). The new name receives Zhu's approval, since it derives from the Confucian classic *The Book of Documents* with "the implication of reverence and seriousness" 莊敬謹嚴之意. Indeed, in both the "Canon of Shun" ("Shundian" 舜典) and the "Counsels of Gaoyao" ("Gaoyao mo" 皋陶謨) in the "Book of Yu" ("Yushu" 虞書), the character *li* appears in the phrase "being affable yet dignified" 寬而栗, which defines the proper attitude that a gentleman should hold.²⁸⁹ Hence, his previous objections having been answered, Zhu agrees to inscribe a plaque for Gong for his Studio of Reverence, as a way of bestowing his recognition.

In brief, the change from the Studio of Cultivating the Words to the Studio of Reverence is far from simply a process of renaming. Rather, the process involves redefining the personal image of the studio owner, from a mad and frustrated literary man (as in Yang Wanli's poem) to a dignified Confucian scholar (as in Zhu Xi's letter). This anecdote further demonstrates the studio name as a stage for performance. On this stage, both the studio owner and the name interpreters shape the social identity of the owner, as well as project their own character through their interactions.

(4) The Studio Name as My Name

There is a long tradition for scholars to possess sobriquets. In the Southern Song, however, two remarkable changes occurred. First, the self-choosing of sobriquets became so popular that almost every literatus used one or more sobriquets. Second, literati became interested in referring to themselves by directly using their studio names as sobriquets. These changes are reflected in the book *Record of Self-Chosen Sobriquets (Zihao lu 自號錄)* compiled by Xu Guangpu 徐光溥

²⁸⁹ See *Shangshu yizhu*, pp. 19, 37.

(fl. 1247). Little is known about this compiler, but based on the active periods of the figures included in the *Record of Self-Chosen Sobriquets*, the famous book collector Lu Xinyuan 陸心源 (1834–1894) in the Qing dynasty concluded that Xu Guangpu must have lived in the late Southern Song era and may have still been alive in the early Yuan.²⁹⁰ The *Record of Self-Chosen Sobriquets* is the earliest extant manual for sobriquets in China. Before discussing this book, it is worth examining its preface, which was written by Xu Guangpu's contemporary Tan Youwen 譚友聞 (fl. 1247) and provides a succinct outline of the new trends in the use of sobriquets in the Song dynasty.

“Preface to the *Record of Self-Chosen Sobriquets*” 自號錄序

In the summer of the year *dingwei* [1247] of the Chunyou era [1241–1252], I sojourned in the capital. After the full moon in the sixth month, Xu Guangpu of Qiantang, who compiled a book entitled *Record of Self-Chosen Sobriquets*, visited me, saying, “The literati have sobriquets, the origin of which is truly ancient. Yuanming exalted himself using the term ‘Master Five Willows’²⁹¹; A-Xun [Zheng Xun 鄭薰 (*jinsi* 828)] calls himself the ‘Retired Gentleman of Seven Pine Trees’²⁹²; and there are the unrestrained ‘Banished Immortal’ and the impoverished ‘Thatched Hut.’²⁹³ The names are really numerous and perplexing. People such as ‘Easygoing Man’ or ‘Mad Sojourner,’²⁹⁴ either following where the person stayed or what the person saw, all competitively styled themselves without exceptions. When students, as children, are reading and chanting, who do not know that those sobriquets actually refer to the masters of Tao, Zheng, Li and Du? But as for the eminent gentlemen in our own dynasty and the elegant literary men of recent times, they chose sobriquets, adopted peculiar phrases, and competed with their peers. If not the one who dresses official robes or rides a boat on the academic sea, who is able to recognize those sobriquets? Because of this, I collected those sobriquets from trusted friends, and compiled this book.”

淳祐丁未夏，予僑寓上都。六月既望，有錢唐徐光溥哀書一編，謂《自號錄》，訪予曰：

²⁹⁰ Lu Xinyuan, “Ke *Zihao lu xu*” 刻自號錄敘, Xu Guangpu, comp., *Zihao lu*, in Lu Xinyuan, comp., *Shiwan juan lou congshu* 十萬卷樓叢書 (Taipei: I’wen yinshuguan, 1968).

²⁹¹ See Tao Yuanming, “Wuliu xiansheng zhuan,” *Tao Yuanming ji*, 6.175.

²⁹² See Zheng Xun’s biography in *Xin Tang shu*, 177.5288.

²⁹³ The “Banished Immortal” is Li Bai’s sobriquet given by He Zhizhang 賀知章 (ca. 659–744); see Meng Qi 孟榮, *Benshi shi* 本事詩 (Shanghai: Gudian wenxue chubanshe, 1957), 3.15. Though *Zihao lu*, as its title shows, focuses on self-chosen sobriquets (*zihao* 自號), Tan Youwen’s preface does not strictly differentiate self-chosen sobriquets from sobriquets given by others. Strictly speaking, early examples in the preface such as Li Bai’s Banished Immortal should not be included as they were given by others.

²⁹⁴ The “Easygoing Man” is Yuan Jie’s 元結 (719–772) sobriquet given by his contemporary; see Yuan Jie, “Zishi shu” 自釋書, *QTW*, 381.3872. The “Mad Sojourner” may refer to He Zhizhang’s self-chosen sobriquet, “Mad Sojourner at Siming” (“Siming kuangke” 四明狂客); see *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書, 190.5034.

士大夫有號，其來亦良古。淵明以五柳先生自高，阿熏以七松處士自狀，豪放之謫仙，窮餓之草堂，紛紛藉藉。如漫郎、狂客輩，或隨所居，或據所見，莫不爭自標榜。經生學士齟齬閱誦，孰不知其為陶、鄭、李、杜諸公也。至若我朝之名公鉅卿，近代之騷人墨客，摘號取奇，行輩相望，非曳仕塗之裾、駕學海之航者，誰得而知之？夫是以采之信友，哀為一編。

People who faced three locust trees or led dappled horses are certainly accounted for in the book, at the same time, people who stole a ladle of water or borrowed a beam of light can also be attached at the end of the book. During the pleasurable leisure time of reading, one can sometimes please the eyes by means of this book. In this way, worthy individuals of earlier times and talented men nowadays are clearly displayed in detail. Recalling their noble characters, by means of their sobriquets, one can also evaluate their profundity of talent and knowledge. Therefore, does the compilation of such a book contribute to society in only a minor way? In the past, when Li Changji [Li He 李賀 (790–816)] celebrated the statue of the bronze immortal, he composed the song that went like this: “In the Maoling mound lies a man with the surname Liu, guest of the autumn wind.”²⁹⁵ Originally this was no more than a poem of grieving over the times and a meditation on the past, but because of this poem, later generations regard Emperor Wu of Han [r. 141–87 BCE] as the “Guest of the Autumn Wind.” Does this title augment or diminish Emperor Wu of Han? It must be able to elucidate the intention of Emperor Wu. The Western Studio Tan Youwen, with the courtesy name Mingzhi, sincerely composed this preface.²⁹⁶

面三槐、手五花者，固星聚於其間，而竊勺水、借隙光者，亦得籛之篇末。詩書之暇，間一玩目，前賢後喆，粲然具陳，追想高風，因此亦可以品量其器業之宏狹，是編之作，豈小補哉！昔李長吉之歌金銅仙人像也，且有“茂陵劉郎秋風客”之詞，始焉不過傷時懷古，後人因得以秋風客目之，其為漢武損益何如哉，必有以發明斯意云耳。西齋譚友聞明之謹序。

Both Xu Guangpu and Tan Youwen feel obligated to justify the compilation of such a sobriquet manual because the volume has little academic significance and little apparent relationship to Confucian values. The preface thus represents a justification for the collection of sobriquets. The author begins with a common strategy for justification, that is, tracing the long tradition of the practice. By using figures such as Tao Yuanming in the Southern Dynasties and Zheng Xun, Li Bai, and Du Fu in the Tang as early examples, the preface aims to demonstrate that the use of sobriquets by well-known elites has a long history. Furthermore, it also generalizes the denominating methods of sobriquets: “either following where the person stayed or what the

²⁹⁵ Li He, “Jintong xianren cihan ge” 金銅仙人辭漢歌, Wang Qi 王琦 (fl. 1758) et al., annot., *Sanjia pingzhu Li Changji geshi* 三家評注李長吉歌詩 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1998), 2.66.

²⁹⁶ *Zihao lu*, in Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849), comp., *Wanwei biechang* 宛委別藏 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1988).

person saw” 或隨所居，或據所見。In other words, a person’s sobriquet usually either derived from where he lived or was based on phenomena that happened around the figure. Indeed, three of the four main examples here are related to dwelling places: According to the “Biography of Master Five Willows” (“Wuliu xiansheng zhuan” 五柳先生傳), the sobriquet “Master Five Willows” (“Wuliu xiansheng” 五柳先生) is derived from the five willows that the fictive Tao Yuanming owned beside his cottage. Similarly, Zheng Xun named himself “Retired Gentleman of Seven Pine Trees” (“Qisong chushi” 七松處士) because he planted seven pine trees in his yard; and Du Fu’s “Thatched Hut” (“Caotang” 草堂) of course comes from his construction of the thatched hut when he sojourned in Chengdu. These can indeed be regarded as the precedents of a multitude of dwelling-name sobriquets that became popular in the Song.

After tracing the history of the practice, the preface moves on to the contemporary era. The author observes that by the Song, the use of sobriquets was remarkably prevalent. All the literati, whether famous or not, shared this penchant for sobriquets. Because there were so many, it became difficult to identify them all, making the manual for sobriquet identification absolutely necessary. This is the basic function of the *Record of Self-Chosen Sobriquets*. As the preface claims, the book comprehensively collects sobriquets of Song literati, including those used by celebrities as well as minor figures. Yet the significance of the book is not limited to a handy reference book. The preface further declares that in reading this manual one is able to sense the personality of the person associated with the sobriquet and even to examine his “profundity of talent and knowledge” 器業之宏狹. The author selects the case of Emperor Wu of Han to demonstrate this point. The sobriquet “Guest of the Autumn Wind” (“Qiufeng ke” 秋風客), although it comes directly from Li He’s poetic line, perfectly labels Emperor Wu with his own “Song of the Autumn Wind” (“Qiufeng ci” 秋風辭). It is said that Emperor Wu composed the “Song of the Autumn Wind” while he was crossing the Fen River during the sacrifice to the

Great Earth (*houtu* 后土).²⁹⁷ The song expresses both the pleasure of imperial glory and sorrow about the transitory nature of human life, which works as a comprehensive outline of Emperor Wu's intention. The closing part of the preface thus makes a case for the close relationship between a sobriquet and the individual's personality or talent.

While the preface serves to prove the legitimacy of sobriquets, the main text of the *Record of Self-Chosen Sobriquets* provides the actual situation of the usage of sobriquets in the Song. Admittedly, the book is not as comprehensive as the preface declares; Lu Xinyuan compiled a list of Song literati sobriquets that the book omits.²⁹⁸ However, as a collection of sobriquets used by Song literati, compiled during the Southern Song either directly by the compiler or gleaned from his "trusted friends" (*xinyou* 信友), the volume still effectively unfolds a general picture of the use of sobriquets in the Song.

The book divides the sobriquets of Song literati into thirty-seven categories based on the last one or two characters of the sobriquets. Thirty-six main categories are included as well as a miscellaneous group (*zalei* 雜類) accounting for sobriquets that do not end with the same characters as those in the main categories. For instance, within the category of *zhai* (studio 齋), the compiler listed all the sobriquets that end with the character *zhai*; and under each sobriquet, he provided the name (sometimes as well as the courtesy name) of the person with whom the sobriquet is associated. For example, Gong Feng's second studio name—Studio of Reverence, which I discussed earlier in this section—is also used as Gong Feng's sobriquet, and accordingly, it is listed in the *zhai* category as "Reverence: Gong Feng, Zhongzhi" 栗：鞏豐仲至。

Conversely, if a sobriquet, such as the "Friend of the Moon" ("Yuepeng" 月朋), ends with characters that do not belong to the thirty-six categories, it is categorized as miscellaneous.

Figure 5 shows all categories of sobriquets in the manual, as well as the number of names in each

²⁹⁷ For the background of this poem, see Jack W. Chen, *The Poetics of Sovereignty: On Emperor Taizong of the Tang Dynasty* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2010), pp. 367n108, 369.

²⁹⁸ Lu Xinyuan, "Ke Zihao lu xu," *Zihao lu*, in *Shiwan juan lou congshu*.

category.

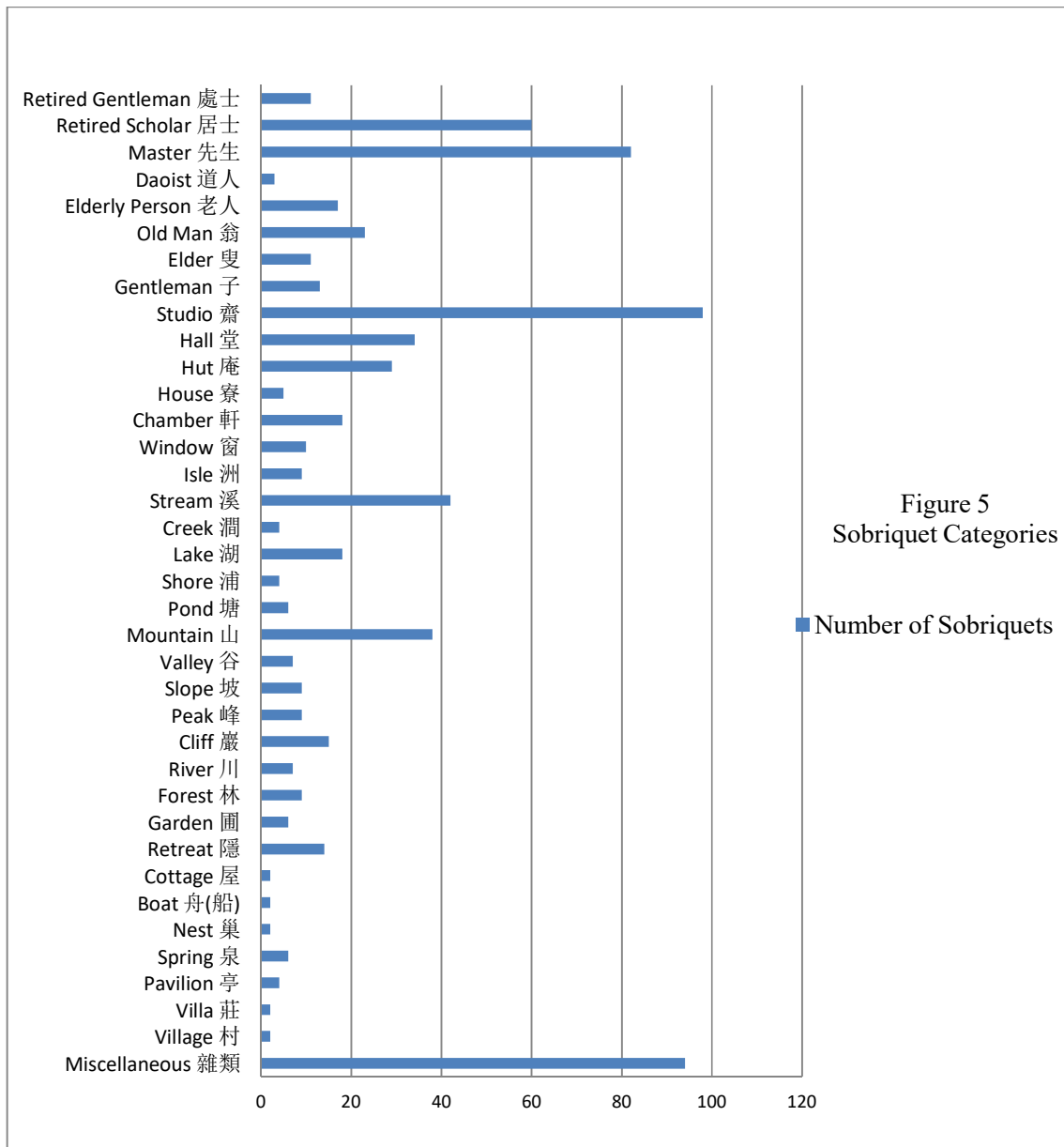


Figure 5
Sobriquet Categories

■ Number of Sobriquets

A quick glance at the thirty-seven sobriquet categories reveals that these categories do not have a consistent taxonomy. Based on their meanings, however, these category names can be generally divided into three groups: (1) personal identity (e.g., “Retired Gentleman” or “Master”); (2) architecture (e.g., “Studio” or “Pavilion”); and (3) landscape (e.g., “Mountain” or “Lake”). The sobriquets in the miscellaneous category can also be rearranged into these three groups. For example, the “Fisherman at Three Streams” (“Sanxi diaotu” 三溪釣徒) in the miscellaneous classification actually belongs to the first group (“personal identity”); and the “Stone Chamber”

(“Shi shi” 石室) can definitely be categorized under “architecture.”

The category of “Studio,” with a total of 98 sobriquets, forms the largest peak in the graph, followed by the “miscellaneous” category with 94 sobriquets and the “Master” category with a total of 82. No other category has more than 60 entries, and 76 percent of categories contain fewer than 20 sobriquets. Therefore, the graph reveals the tendency that in the Song, use of studio names as sobriquets was prevalent among the literati. Though the literati also chose other architectural names, features of the landscape, or natural scenery as sobriquets, none of these categories was as popular a choice as use of the studio name as a sobriquet.

Moreover, the percentage of the “studio sobriquets” is in fact even higher than the graph shows explicitly, given that a large number of other sobriquets are derived from studio names that do not happen to end with the character *zhai*. As I clarified in the introduction, in addition to *zhai*, the most frequently used term, a series of architectural terms such as *tang* 堂, *an* 庵, and *xuan* 軒 can also refer to studios. Accordingly, the terms that represent “studio sobriquets” are actually also distributed among the group of “architecture sobriquets.” For example, Xu Fei’s sobriquet, the Plum Studio, which is also his studio name, is listed in the “cottage” category because its ending character is *wu* 屋.²⁹⁹ Similar cases can also be found in the miscellaneous category. For instance, although the manual classifies “Oceans and Mountains” (“Haiyue” 海嶽), a sobriquet of Mi Fu, as miscellaneous, this sobriquet actually comes from Mi Fu’s studio name, the Studio of Oceans and Mountains and therefore can also be regarded as a studio sobriquet. Thus, the total number of studio sobriquets collected in the *Record of Self-Chosen Sobriquets* is considerably larger than that reflected explicitly in the “Studio” category. It further indicates that Song literati are penchant not only for naming their studios, but also for styling themselves with these names.

Such a process of “double naming” became an indispensable part of life for Song literati.

²⁹⁹ See Xu Fei’s “Account of the Plum Studio,” discussed in Chapter 2.

Even in funeral texts such as entombed epitaph inscriptions (*muzhiming* 墓誌銘), spirit path stele inscriptions (*shendao bei* 神道碑), and accounts of conduct (*xingzhuang* 行狀), which were expected to record the deceased person's lineage and main accomplishments, the double naming process is frequently embedded. By way of illustration, in the Account of Conduct of Lou Yue 樓鑰 (1137–1213), the author Yuan Xie 袁燮 (1144–1224) recalls,

[Lou Yue] inscribed his studio by means of the name “Attacking Shame,” saying, “One worries that he does not know his faults. But if he knows but is unable to correct them, this is a lack of courage.”³⁰⁰ He styled himself with the sobriquet of “Host of Attacking Shame.” Even if he only had a minor fault, he dared not to forgive himself. He expected to reach the status that no shame needs to be attacked.³⁰¹

榜書齋以“攻媿”，曰：“人患不知其過。知之而不能改，是無勇也。”自號為攻媿主人，小有過差，不敢自恕，期至於無媿之可攻。

First, the name of “Attacking Shame” (“Gongkui” 攻媿) defines the studio as a space for moral cultivation, and at the same time represents the personality of the studio owner. But here the studio owner took the further step of using the studio name to refer directly to himself.³⁰² In other words, the space and the person become integrated. The studio name serves as the perfect medium to represent the self-image of the studio owner.

Just as the studio name works as a stage for display, the studio sobriquet was also circulated and used in literati social circles. Not surprisingly, in social exchanges the literati often addressed one another using their studio sobriquets. For instance, not only does Lou Yue refer to himself as Attacking Shame, but his companions and followers also address him as “Lou, of the Attacking Shame” (“Lou Gongkui” 樓攻媿) or the “Master of Attacking Shame” (“Gongkui xiansheng” 攻媿先生).

³⁰⁰ This statement comes from Han Yu's 韓愈 (768–824) “Wuzhen” 五箴, Ma Qichang 馬其昶, ed. and annot., *Han Changli wenji jiaozhu* 韓昌黎文集校注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986), 1.56.

³⁰¹ Yuan Xie, “Zizheng dian da xueshi zeng shaoshi Lou gong xingzhuang” 資政殿大學士贈少師樓公行狀, *QSW*, 6378.272.

³⁰² The terms of identity used in sobriquets can sometimes be omitted. Here, the *zhuren* part in Lou Yue's sobriquet of “Gongkui zhuren” 攻媿主人 is optional. For example, the *Record of Self-Chosen Sobriquets* lists Lou Yue's sobriquet as “Gongkui zhai” 攻媿齋, without *zhuren*.

As a final illustration of this point, Liu Guo's 劉過 (1154–1206) “Respectfully Presented to the Studio of Sincerity” (“Tou Chengzhai” 投誠齋) embeds three studio sobriquets as the appellations of literati within a seven-syllabic quatrain:

省齋去國良齋老，	The Studio of Self-Examination left the capital, and the Studio of Restraint turned old, ³⁰³
不獨宣尼嘆乏才。	It is not only Confucius who sighed over the lack of talented persons.
試數諸公有名者，	For the moment I count the gentlemen who are well-known,
廬陵那得兩誠齋。	At Luling, are there two Studios of Sincerity? ³⁰⁴

This is the first of seven poems that Liu Guo presented to Yang Wanli when he called on Yang in 1190. As a Rivers and Lakes poet, Liu Guo often sought influential figures as patrons; this set of poems was written in precisely such a context. Striving for the favor of Yang Wanli, Liu Guo praises Yang highly, stating simply that all other figures are now passé: Yang is currently the only eminent gentleman from the Luling area.

It is worth noting that Liu Guo refers to all personages using their studio sobriquets in this poem written as part of a social exchange. The title identifies the recipient of Liu's poem as the “Studio of Sincerity” (Cheng zhai 誠齋), which is the studio name as well as the sobriquet of Yang Wanli. It is said that when Yang Wanli visited Zhang Jun 張浚 (1097–1164), “Zhang Jun encouraged him in terms of the study of ‘rectifying the mind and making the will sincere.’ Wanli obeyed Zhang's instruction all through his life. So he named his reading room as the Studio of Sincerity” 浚勉以正心誠意之學，萬里服其教終身，乃名讀書之室曰‘誠齋’。³⁰⁵ Study consisting of “rectifying the mind and making the will sincere” is the Confucian moral basis as proposed in the *Great Learning*. Choosing this as the studio name is thus a way to label Yang's

³⁰³ The poem was written in 1190. At that time, Zhou Bida had just been demoted from the position of prime minister and had left the capital; see Wang Congcong 王聰聰, “Zhou Bida nianpu changbian” 周必大年譜長編, Ph.D. diss., Huadong shifan daxue, 2014, pp. 416–17.

³⁰⁴ QSS, 2706.31857. Yang Wanli, Zhou Bida, and Liu Guo were all from Luling (in modern Jiangxi Province). Xie E's hometown Xinyu was also near Luling.

³⁰⁵ See Yang Wanli's biography in *Song shi*, 433.12863.

moral pursuit. Moreover, Yang takes this studio name to use as his own sobriquet, to further clarify the close relationship between the studio name and his own personality. At the same time, extant writings from Yang's time show that his contemporaries also frequently used this studio sobriquet to address Yang; even Yang's distinctive poetic style was called the "Style of the Studio of Sincerity" (*Chengzhai ti* 誠齋體).

In a similar way, Liu also refers to other two figures in the poem, Zhou Bida and Xie E 謝諤 (1121–1194) using their studio sobriquets. The "Studio of Self-Examination" (Xing zhai 省齋) represents the former prime minister Zhou Bida, who "in youth, named himself the Retired Scholar of the Studio of Self-Examination" 少自號省齋居士³⁰⁶ and continued to use the sobriquet of the "Elderly Person of the Studio of Self-Examination" ("Xingzhai laoren" 省齋老人) in his later years.³⁰⁷ In the same line of the poem, the "Studio of Restraint" (Gen zhai 艮齋) points to Xie E. He "named his leisure site as the Studio of Restraint, and all the people under Heaven called him the 'Master of the Studio of Restraint'" 名其燕坐曰艮齋，天下稱艮齋先生。³⁰⁸ Even the emperor knew his studio sobriquet. According to the *History of the Song*, when Zhou Bida recommended Xie E using his full name (*xingming* 姓名) to Emperor Xiaozong (r. 1162–1189), the emperor in turn asked, "Do you mean the Studio of Restraint?" 是謂艮齋者耶, revealing that Xie E's studio sobriquet was well known.³⁰⁹ In summary, all three of the studio sobriquets denoted in the poem were in broad circulation. Liu Guo's use of studio sobriquets in

³⁰⁶ Lou Yue, "Shaofu Guanwen dian da xueshi zhishi Yiguo gong zeng Taishi shi Wenzhong Zhou gong shendaobei" 少傅觀文殿大學士致仕益國公贈太師諡文忠周公神道碑, *QSW*, 5987.229.

³⁰⁷ For example, Zhou Bida inscribed the Elderly Person of the Studio of Self-Examination in the colophon "Ba Miaoxi xibi" 跋妙喜遺筆, *QSW*, 5129.368.

³⁰⁸ Yang Wanli, "Gu gongbu shangshu Huanzhang ge zhixueshi chaoyi dafu zeng tongyi dafu Xie gong shendaobei" 故工部尚書煥章閣直學士朝議大夫贈通議大夫謝公神道碑, *Yang Wanli ji jianjiao*, 121.4693. The character *gen* denotes "stop" (*zhi* 止), which is derived from Hexagram 52, "Restraint," in the *Book of Changes*. The meaning of Hexagram 52 is explained in Chapter 2 where I discuss Huang Tingjian's Hall of Withdrawal and Obedience, the name of which also comes from Hexagram 52.

³⁰⁹ See Xie E's biography in *Song shi*, 389.11931.

the poem should thus also be understood in this social context.

From the selection of a wonderful name for one's studio, to the interpretation and negotiation of the studio name, and finally to the use of the studio name as one's own sobriquet, the process of "naming the studio" is in fact the construction of a stage for the performance of the studio owner. The carefully selected studio name links as well as displays the significance of the studio space and the characters or intentions of the studio owner. In this respect, a "double representation" is at work: The literati represent and elaborate studio names in literary works, and at the same time, the studio names serve as representation of the literati's self- and social identities.

Chapter Four: Objects in the Studio

As there is no extant architecture of Song dynasty studios, to enjoy scholarly objects in Song literati's studio and their literary celebrations of these objects, we may first give some attention to another distinctive space for Song literati—the burial space. Generally speaking, although the construction of tombs is largely influenced by funeral conventions and rituals, tombs, they can also, as sites for lodging tomb owners in the underworld, reflect tomb owners' penchants during their lifetime. Accordingly, it is common to see that burial objects are also beloved articles of tomb owners. Thus, a glance at the underground enclosed space provides us a visual image of Song literati's deployment and collection of scholarly objects.

The Lü Clan Cemetery in Lantian (in modern Shaanxi Province), for instance, displays a rich and colorful collection of scholarly objects. Excavated mainly from 2007 to 2010, the Lü Clan Cemetery is the most complete family cemetery in the Northern Song discovered so far. According to the excavation report, 655 pieces/units of burial objects are excavated.³¹⁰ Among all the excavated objects and those reclaimed from tomb robberies, there is a broad range of stationery tools and refined articles that were most likely used in studios by elite members in the Lü family. These artifacts include inkstones (e.g., a Fine Clay inkstab [Chengni yan 澄泥硯]³¹¹), a brush rest (e.g., a pair of playing lions of white marble³¹²), paper weights (e.g., a ruler-shaped

³¹⁰ Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiuyuan 陝西省考古研究院, "Shaanxi Lantian xian Wulitou Beisong Lüshi jiazhu mudì" 陝西藍田縣五里頭北宋呂氏家族墓地, *Kaogu* 8 (2010): 46–52.

³¹¹ Zhang Yun 張蘊, "Guyan yifang" 古硯遺芳, *Shoucang jia* 9 (2014): 31. There are still clear grinding traces and ink marks remained in the inkstone, which demonstrates that its owner Lü Dagui 呂大圭 must frequently have used it in his daily life.

³¹² Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiuyuan, Shaanxi lishi bowuguan, Beijing daxue kaogu wenbo xueyuan, and Beijing daxue Zhongguo kaoguxue yanjiu zhongxin, ed., *Yishi tongdiao* 異世同調 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2013), p. 32. The usage of this object is still under discussion. Yang Zhishui confirms it as a brush rest ("Songmu chutu wenfang qiyong yu liang Song shifeng" 宋墓出土文房器用與兩宋士風, *Kaogu yu wenwu* 1 [2015]: 66); while *Jinxi qiulin* 金錫璆琳 (ed. Shaanxi lishi bowuguan [Xi'an: Sanqin chubanshe, 2013], p. 97) treats it as a curio placed in the studio.

one and a lion-shape one³¹³), a seal and a seal paste box even still contains red seal paste,³¹⁴ chess pieces made of lacquer and mussel,³¹⁵ celadon vases (e.g., a pair of vases with carved peony and banana leaf patterns from the Yaozhou Kiln³¹⁶), and ancient bronze vessels or reproduced bronzes as archaistic collections (e.g., a bronze tripod with lid in fish and tiger patterns of the Spring and Autumn Periods³¹⁷). Take one She 歙 inkstone as an example (Figure 6.1). This inkstone has attracted great attention from modern scholars because the inscription on its back provides detailed information about the tomb owner and his burial date (Figure 6.2), which reads:



Figure 6.1



Figure 6.2

On the *renshen* day of the eleventh month of the year 1111, the Gentleman for Discussion Lü Zigong, was buried. We took the She inkstone that he had previously used, and put it into his tomb. I, who is his younger cousin named Xishan, sincerely inscribed the inkstone: It is a treasure in the world, but it will no longer be used by its owner. Alas!³¹⁸

政和元年十一月壬申，承議郎呂君子功葬，以嘗所用歙石研納諸壙，從弟錫山謹銘之曰：為世之珍，用不竟於人。嗚呼！

³¹³ *Yishi tongdiao*, pp. 33, 34–37. Paper weights are mainly used to place on papers in order to prevent papers from blowing. But to be more specific, *zhenchi* 鎮尺 and *zhenzhi* 鎮紙 are different: *zhenzhi* is often in the shape of animals, while *zhenchi* is in the shape of rulers, often with a knob in the middle, and used in pairs.

³¹⁴ Zhang Yun 張蘊, Wei Feng 衛峰, Liu Sizhe 劉思哲, Zhang Xiaoli 張小莉, and Wang Jiugang 王久鋼, “Jiuquan zhixia de mingmen wangzu” 九泉之下的名門望族, *Zhongguo wenwu bao*, September 11, 2009.

³¹⁵ *Jinxi qiulin*, pp. 102–3.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 20–23.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 43–45.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 93–95.

The inscription clearly documents that the tomb with this inkstone had belonged to Lü Zhishan 呂至山, whose courtesy name is Zigong. As for the buried inkstone, we first learn from the inscription that it is one of great value. Indeed, the She inkstone, originates from She County in modern Anhui Province, is among the “Four Famous Inkstones” in the Song dynasty. Even from the picture, we can tell that its special three-legged form, smooth contour, and black color reveal its high quality. More significantly, we are told that this inkstone was “previously used” (*chang suoyong* 嘗所用) by Lü Zhishan. From Lü Xishan’s comment that the inkstone could not effectively play its role anymore, we can infer that Lü Zhishan must frequently have used it in his lifetime. Other scholarly objects from the Lü Clan Cemetery are also like this. They were cherished by their owners when alive, and therefore accompanied their masters in the underworld.

Such a collection is not a special case. Archeological excavations have discovered a considerable number of Song tombs with similar preferences.³¹⁹ Many sets of scholarly objects were unearthed, especially from tombs with epitaph inscriptions that identify the tomb owners as literati. The Southern Song tomb of Zhang Tongzhi 張同之 (1147–1196) and his wife in Jiangpu (in modern Jiangsu Province) is one example. According to his epitaph inscriptions, Zhang Tongzhi was the son of the famous official and song-lyric writer Zhang Xiaoxiang 張孝祥 (1132–1169), and he held several local official positions of low rank throughout his life.³²⁰ In Zhang Tongzhi’s chamber, a full range of stationery tools and refined articles were excavated, which include two inkstones (one Duan inkstone and one She inkstone), two inksticks (one complete and one used), one water pot with a small scoop, one pair of paper weights, one brush

³¹⁹ See, for example, Yang Zhishui, “Songmu chutu wenfang qiyong yu liang Song shifeng.”

³²⁰ See Nanjing shi bowuguan 南京市博物館, “Jiangpu Huangyue ling Nansong Zhang Tongzhi fufu mu” 江浦黃悅嶺南宋張同之夫婦墓, *Wenwu* 4 (1973): 59–63; Xin Gengru 辛更儒, “Nansong aiguo ciren Zhang Xiaoxiang zi Zhang Tongzhi shiji kaoshi” 南宋愛國詞人張孝祥子張同之事蹟考釋, *Zhongguo dianji yu wenhua* 2 (2015): 31–36. Xin’s paper argues that Zhang Tongzhi was actually the adopted son of Zhang Xiaoxiang.

rest, one vase, and one personal seal (Figure 7).³²¹ These objects are in a striking contrast with the burial objects (mainly silver tableware) in the chamber of Zhang Tongzhi's wife, Lady Zhang 章氏, and effectively decorate Zhang's burial room as a studio.



Figure 7

Members in the Lü Clan of Lantian and Zhang Tongzhi are, after all, elites. Especially the Lü Clan was a prominent gentry family in Lantian. The cemetery buried five generations of the family from the mid- to the late-Northern Song. The third generation, for example, includes Lü Dafang 呂大防 (1027–1097), the prime minister in the Yuanyou era, and his brothers Lü Dazhong 呂大忠 (ca. 1025–1100), Lü Dajun 呂大鈞 (1031–1082), and Lü Dalin 呂大臨 (1046–1092), all of whom were *jinshi* degree holders, Confucian scholars as well as epigraphers.³²² Zhang Tongzhi, though not as renowned as the Lü brothers, also served as a reputable local official. Therefore, it is not surprising that they owned a multitude of exquisite scholarly objects and were able to inter them in their tombs in order to indicate their literati identity in the afterworld.

However, this penchant for collecting of scholarly objects is not limited to scholar-officials.

³²¹ Collected in Nanjing Municipal Museum. Photo by Yunshuang Zhang.

³²² These four brothers are called “Four Lü of Lantian” (Lantian si Lü 藍田四呂) or “Four Worthies of Lantian” (Lantian si xian 藍田四賢) in later generations. On their scholarship, see Chen Junmin 陳俊民, *Lantian Lüshi yizhu jijiao* 藍田呂氏遺著輯校 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1993); Li Rubing 李如冰, *Songdai Lantian si Lü jiqi zhushu yanjiu* 宋代藍田四呂及其著述研究 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2012).

Even in tombs without epitaph inscriptions, which imply that its owner is most likely not an official, we can find sets of stationery tools. One of the examples is a Southern Song tomb in Lanxi of modern Zhejiang Province. Although there is no evidence in the tomb to verify the identity of its owner, the burial objects can at least reveal that the owner was wealthy. Among those objects, there are a set of articles that are often used in the studio, which consists of a Duan inkstone, a brush rest, a water pot, and a vase. Moreover, on the back of the Duan inkstone, two characters—“Timely Studio” (Ji zhai 及齋)—are inscribed (Figure 8).³²³



Figure 8

This is the studio name of the tomb owner. In his lifetime, he must frequently have used and cherished this inkstone in his studio, so he inscribed the studio name, which can also be used as his sobriquet, on the inkstone.³²⁴ This inscription not only indicates his possession of the inkstone, but more significantly, it establishes a close relationship among the inkstone, the studio, and the self. Such an intimate relationship among objects, the studio space and the studio owner is precisely what I will explore in this chapter. That is, how, through their literary writings, Song literati endowed certain objects with new meanings and aesthetic values when used in the studio;

³²³ Lanxi shi bowuguan 蘭溪市博物館, “Zhejiang Lanxi shi Nansong mu” 浙江蘭溪市南宋墓, *Kaogu* 7 (1991): 670–72. Chen Xing 陳星 and Zhou Juqing 周菊青, “Lanxi Feilongkou cun Nansong mu chutu wenwu” 蘭溪費壟口村南宋墓出土文物, *Dongfang bowu* 2 (2011): 15–23.

³²⁴ For the use of the studio name as one’s own sobriquet, see Chapter 3.

and how these objects in turn supported the construction of the surprisingly social private space of the studio.

I “We Have Our Own Joyful Land” 吾輩自有樂地

During the early decades of the Northern Song, when the renowned scholar Xu Xuan 徐鉉 (916–991) wrote a preface for the monograph *Four Treatises of the Studio* (*Wenfang sipu* 文房四譜)³²⁵ written by the early Song talented young scholar Su Yijian, he described Su Yijian’s daily life beyond his public duties as well as the compilation of this book as follow:

In the room where Su Yijian stays when retiring from the court, books are present. Besides writing brushes, inkstones, papers, and ink, there are no other superfluous things.³²⁶ He takes these four things are those by which study is sustained, and may not, even for a single moment, be lacking. Because of this, he explored their origins and recorded their former circumstances. He examined their changes from past to present, and appended to them compositions such as rhapsodies and eulogies. For each, he followed their respective categories, and compiled treatises for them in order. The work was well-arranged and without confusion, both refined and extensive. Although literati may have a refined understanding of these four things, how could these books possibly travel to them? I am also one who is fond of learning, and I have read this book and treasured it. Therefore I composed this essay as a preface, in order to show it to younger generations.³²⁷

退食之室，圖書在焉。筆硯紙墨，餘無長物。以為此四者為學所資，不可斯須而闕者也。由是討其根源，紀其故實，參以古今之變，繼之賦頌之作，各從其類，次而譜之，有條不紊，既精且博。士有能精此四者，載籍其焉往哉？愚亦好學者也，覽此書而珍之，故為文冠篇，以示來者。

Here, Xu Xuan first delimits a personal room enjoyed by Su Yijian in his everyday life. Although Xu Xuan, as many early Song scholars, does not explicitly call the room a *shuzhai*, by delineating it as a site filled with books for “retiring from the court” (*tuishi* 退食),³²⁸ this room

³²⁵ Here, although I translate the term *wenfang* 文房 in the book title as “the studio,” this term has a much richer meaning. I will discuss the complexity of this term below.

³²⁶ The term *zhangwu* (“superfluous things” 長物) is derived from an anecdote of Wang Gong 王恭 (d. 398); see *Shishuo xinyu jiaojian*, 1.44. For the explanation of this term, see Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1991), pp. 78–79.

³²⁷ *Wenfang sipu*, in *Congshu jicheng chubian*, p. 1.

³²⁸ The phrase *tuishi* is derived from the poem “Lamb” (“Gaoyang” 羔羊) in the *Classic of Poetry*, which reads, “They retired from the court to take meal, / They are ease and contented” 退食自公，委蛇委蛇。Throughout

indeed functions as a studio. Xu Xuan then emphasizes that in this reading room, (besides books) there were merely writing brushes, inkstones, papers, and ink, and these four things (*si zhe* 四者) were so indispensable to Su Yijian that Su decided to elaborately compile a book for them. This helps to clarify what Su Yijian's book title refers to: the *Four Treatises on wenfang* must be four essays on writing brushes, inkstones, papers, and ink, respectively. Indeed, this book, which is regarded as the earliest known monograph on scholarly objects, is composed of four sections: "Treatise on Brushes" ("Bi pu" 筆譜), "Treatise on Inkstones" ("Yan pu" 硯譜), "Treatise on Papers" ("Zhi pu" 紙譜), and "Treatise on Ink" ("Mo pu" 墨譜). Each section is further divided into four parts: (1) Introduction (*xushi* 敘事), which lists materials about the evolution of these objects; (2) Production (*zao* 造), which introduces producing methods; (3) Miscellaneous (*zashuo* 雜說), to collect anecdotes as well as allusions; and (4) Literature (*cifu* 辭賦), as a compilation of literary works about these objects.³²⁹ In this way, the phrase *wenfang* in the book title seems to refer to the four things: brushes, inkstones, papers, and ink.

However, the definition of *wenfang* here becomes complicated when we find certain variant titles of Su's book. As the entry of *Four Treatises on wenfang* in the *Annotated Catalogue of Complete Library in Four Sections* (*Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 四庫全書總目提要; hereafter *Annotated Catalogue*) points out:

Contemporaries highly valued this book, and it was even collected in the Imperial Archives. Indeed this is reasonable. The biography [of Su Yijian] in the *History of the Song* only refers to the book as *Four Treatises on wenfang*, which is the same as that in this edition [selected by Siku]. In You Mao's *Catalogue of the Book Collection in the Hall of Realization of the Initial Intention*, the book is entitled *Treatise on the Four Treasures of the Studio*. There is also *A Sequel of the Treatise on the Four Treasures of the Studio*. Examine Hong Mai's [1123–1202] "Colophon on the *Discourse on the She Inkstone*." He claims to "print Mr. Su's *Treatises on wenfang* in the Hall of Four Treasures." It is probably because of this that commoners referred to the book as Four Treasures, and accordingly the phrase was added to

history, scholars explained this couplet in various ways based on their different understanding on *tuishi*. Generally speaking, there are two main explanations on *tuishi*: one is "retiring from the court to take meal," as Zhu Xi commentates (Zhu Xi, *Shi jizhuan* 詩集傳 [Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1958], 1.11); the other is "being frugal," as Zheng Xuan points out (*Maoshi zhengyi*, 1.84).

³²⁹ There is an additional "Momentum of Writing" (*bishi* 筆勢) section in the "Treatise on Brushes."

the book title. Later, people worried that this new title was not elegant, so again they changed the title [back to the *Four Treatises on wenfang*].³³⁰

當時甚重其書，至藏於秘閣，亦有以矣。《宋史》本傳但稱《文房四譜》，與此本同。尤袤《遂初堂書目》作《文房四寶譜》，又有《續文房四寶譜》。考洪邁《欽硯說跋》，稱“揭蘇氏《文房譜》於四寶堂”，當由是而俗呼四寶，因增入書名。後來病其不雅，又改題耳。

According to this comment, as early as in the Southern Song, Su Yijian's book was circulated with another title, the *Treatise on the Four Treasures of the Studio* (*Wenfang sibao pu* 文房四寶譜), as recorded in the famous book collector You Mao's catalogue.³³¹ The editors of the *Annotated Catalogue* trace the origin of this alternative title to a publishing event recorded by Hong Mai. In examining both Hong Mai's "Colophon on the *Discourse on the She Inkstone*" ("Sheyan shuo ba" 欽硯說跋) and Hong Shi's 洪适 (1117–1184) "Colophon on the *Four Treatises on wenfang*" ("Ba Wenfang sipu" 跋文房四譜), we know that Hong Shi printed the *Four Treatises on wenfang* as well as several other treatises on inkstones in the "Hall of Four Treasures" (Sibao tang 四寶堂), and invited his younger brother Hong Mai to write a colophon.³³² Based on this, the editors of the *Annotated Catalogue* assume that it is from the Hong brothers that the book acquired its new title.

However, this assumption is easily challenged. It is hard to tell whether the hall name affects and changes the book title or the hall name is derived from the title of the book printed there, since the alternative book title is not the earliest use of the phrase *wenfang sibao* 文房四寶. The early Northern Song poet Mei Yaochen's 梅堯臣 (1002–1060) used this phrase for the first time. In one poem on papers and an inkstone, Mei Yaochen writes, "Four treasures of *wenfang* come from these two counties, / In recent times they are appreciated by you and me" 文房四寶出二郡，

³³⁰ Wei Xiaohu 魏小虎, *Siku quanshu zongmu huiding* 四庫全書總目彙訂 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2012), 115.3619.

³³¹ Hong Mai referred to the book as Mr. Su's *Treatises on wenfang*. This may also be a variant title of the book.

³³² See *QSW*, 4917.57, and *QSW*, 4739.322.

邇來賞愛君與予。³³³ Here, since *wenfang* is followed by “four treasures” (*sibao* 四寶), one may understand this term *wenfang* as “a studio space;” and accordingly *wenfang sibao* as “four treasures of the studio.” In this way, in the more frequently circulated title *wenfang sipu*, the phrase *wenfang* can also be interpreted as an abbreviation of *wenfang sibao*. This etymological connection enriches the definition of *wenfang*. That is, *wenfang* can carry both meanings of “a studio” and “objects (especially four treasures) used in the studio.”

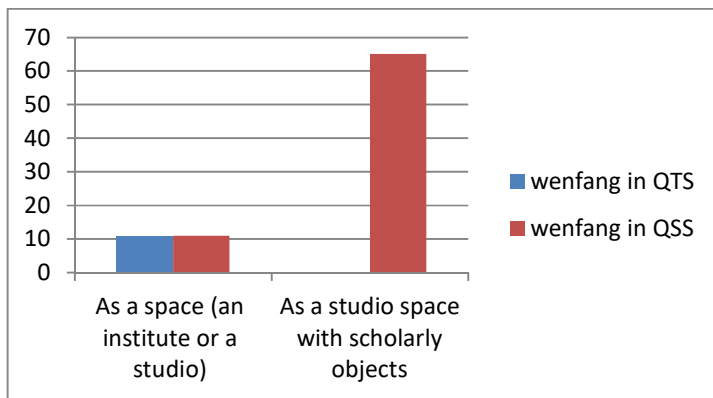


Figure 9. Occurrences of *wenfang* in *QTS* and *QSS*

Indeed, in the entry of *wenfang* in modern dictionaries, besides its much more ancient usage as “the institute for the administration of official documents,”³³⁴ the two main meanings of *wenfang* are (1) “a studio,” and (2) “objects used in the studio.”³³⁵ Nevertheless, such a juxtaposition of these two meanings somewhat ignores the chronological evolution of the

³³³ “On the Sixth Day of the Ninth Month, I Boarded the Boat and Again Harmonizing with Pan Shezhou’s Papers and the Inkstone” (“Jiuyue liuri dengzhou zaihe Pan Shezhou zhiyan” 九月六日登舟再和潘歙州紙硯), Zhu Dongrun 朱東潤, ed. and annot., *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu* 梅堯臣集編年校注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980), 25.809.

For studies on the etymology of *wenfang sibao*, see Chen Tao 陳濤, “*Wenfang sibao yuanliu kao*” “文房四寶”源流考, *Zhongyuan wenhua yanjiu* 1 (2014): 57–63. This article briefly goes through the use of *wenfang sibao* from Six Dynasties to Qing dynasty, based on the definition of *wenfang sibao* in the *Sources of Words* (*Ciyuan* 辭源). Chen traces the formal establishment of the phrase *wenfang sibao* to Han Yu’s “Biography of Mao Ying” (“Mao Ying zhuan” 毛穎傳). But in fact, there is no use of *wenfang sibao* in the “Biography of Mao Ying” at all. See also Gao Menghe 高蒙河, “*Wenfang sibao ciyuan kao*” 文房四寶辭源考, *Zhongguo wenwu bao*, April 8th, 2011. Gao also cites the entry of *Four Treatises on wenfang* in the *Annotated Catalogue*, but with an inaccurate interpretation.

³³⁴ See, e.g., *Ciyuan* (Beijing, Shangwu yinshu guan, 1997), p. 735.

³³⁵ See, e.g., *Ciyuan*, p. 735; *Hanyu dacidian* 漢語大詞典 (Shanghai: Hanyu dacidian chubanshe, 1990), p. 1525.

definitions of *wenfang*. The earliest examples of *wenfang* as “a studio” are often traced back to Tang poems. An illustration is Yuan Zhen’s poetic lines, “The studio, for a long time, has been closed, / The bookshop of classics has not been arranged” 文房長遣閉，經肆未曾鋪。In fact, all the eleven occurrences of *wenfang* in *QTS* refer to a space, either the institute in charge of documents or a studio. However, this situation subtly changes in *QSS*. As Figure 9 reveals, although 11 out of the overall 76 occurrences of *wenfang* in Song poems share the same usage as that in Tang poems, the majority is used in a slightly but significantly different way. That is, contrary to the *wenfang* in *QTS* that simply refers to a space, the *wenfang* in *QSS* is closely connected to objects used in this space. In most cases, *wenfang* appears in set phrases such as “four things of *wenfang*” (*wenfang siwu* 文房四物), “four treasures of *wenfang*,” or “four friends of *wenfang*” (*wenfang siyou* 文房四友).³³⁶ Even if *wenfang* is used alone, it only shows up in poems on scholarly objects (including poems on brushes, papers, inkstones, flowers, for example).³³⁷ This special context of the *wenfang* usage emphasizes the studio as an exclusive space for scholarly objects. Or in other words, the definition of *wenfang* contains both the spatial aspect and the material aspect of the studio. Such an ambiguity highlights the crucial status of a set of objects in regard to the studio, and more importantly, *inextricably intertwines the studio space with objects used within this space*.³³⁸

As objects play such a significant role in the studio, Song literati make great efforts to select and define the objects for their studios. The self-preface of Zhao Xigu’s *Records of the Pure Blissfulness in the Cavern Heaven* (*Dongtian qinglu ji* 洞天清祿集) provides a well-known

³³⁶ The differences among these phrases will be discussed in detail in the second section of this chapter.

³³⁷ The use of *wenfang* in *QSW* demonstrates the same tendency. Furthermore, from Southern Song through Qing dynasty, the use of *wenfang* emphasizes more and more on the aspect of objects, while separating it from its spatial connotation. For example, in Wu Zimu’s 吳自牧 *Mengliang lu* 夢梁錄 (Shanghai: Gudian wenzue chubanshe, 1956), it reads: 其士人止許帶文房及卷子，餘皆不許挾帶文集 (3.157). Here, the *wenfang* merely has the meaning of scholarly objects.

³³⁸ In view of this, in this dissertation, I directly use *wenfang*, without translation, in order to maintain the double meanings of this phrase.

assertion about the deployment of objects in the studio:³³⁹

Zhang Yanyuan of the Tang dynasty composed the *Enjoyment when Dwelling in Leisure*. At first, he recorded appliances used in the studio or pavilion, but he extended to the category of wine, minced meat, dried meat, and cooked food. Alas! This is indeed the behavior of an old woman who is in charge of trivial daily necessities of rice and salt. Who would say that the enjoyments of a gentleman are such as this? One's whole life is as fleet as a white pony flashing past a crevice.³⁴⁰ But hardships and worries often account for two thirds, while moments at leisure only account for one third. Let alone that those who understand this and are able to enjoy this life are merely one or two percents. Moreover, among the one percent of people, most regard music and beautiful sights as enjoyment. They hardly understand that we have our own joyful land.³⁴¹ As for pleasing the eyes, it essentially does not rely on beautiful sights; as for filling the ears, it originally does not rely on music.

唐張彥遠作《閒居受用》，至首載齋閣應用，而傍及醯醢脯羞之屬。噫！是乃大老姥總督米鹽細務者之爲，誰謂君子受用如斯而已乎？人生一世閒，如白駒過隙，而風雨憂愁，輒居三分之二，其閒得閒者纔一分耳。況知之而能享用者，又百之一二，於百一之中，又多以聲色爲受用。殊不知吾輩自有樂地。悅目初不在色，盈耳初不在聲。

I previously saw that senior gentlemen collected a great number of model calligraphy, famous paintings, antique zithers, and old inkstones. Indeed I approve of this. With bright windows and clean desks, everything is displayed and arranged in order. The coiled incense is set in the center. Distinguished guests gracefully stand, setting each other off nicely. Now and then I pick up exquisite calligraphic works by ancients, in order to observe the bird-snail seal script as well as majestic peaks and distant water. I gently stroke bells and tripods, and thus personally encounter the Shang and Zhou dynasties. Duan inkstones gush as cliff-streams; Burnt-Paulownia zithers resound as jade pendants.³⁴² I do not know, as for the so-called carefree enjoyment in the human life, is there anything can surpass this? As for this state, even the paradise in Langfeng Mountain or the Jasper Pool are not necessarily better.³⁴³ But people seldom know it. This is sad indeed!

嘗見前輩諸老先生，多蓄法書、名畫、古琴、舊研，良以是也。明窗淨几，羅列佈置，篆香居中，佳客玉立相映，時取古人妙蹟，以觀鳥篆蝸書、奇峰遠水，摩挲鐘鼎，親

³³⁹ For studies on *Dongtian qinglu ji*, see Nakata Yūjirō 中田勇次郎, *Bunbō seigan* 文房清玩 (Tokyo: Nigensha, 1961), pp. 105–18; Yabuchi Takayoshi 矢淵孝良, “Dōten seiroku shu ni miru Bunbō shumi (jō)” 「洞天清祿集」にみる文房趣味(上), *Kanazawa daigaku Kyoyo-bu ronshu* 25.1 (1987): 43–51; I Lo-fen 衣若芬, “Zhao Xigu *Dongtian qinglu ji tanxi*” 趙希鵠〈洞天清祿集〉探析, *Xin Song xue* 2 (2003): 410–19; Craig Clunas, “Commodities, Collectables, and Trade Goods: Some Modes of Categorizing Material Culture in Sung-Yüan Texts,” in Maxwell K. Hearn, and Judith G. Smith ed., *Arts of the Sung and Yüan* (New York: the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996), pp. 54–56.

³⁴⁰ This metaphor is from *Zhuangzi*; see *Zhuangzi jishi*, 22.746.

³⁴¹ This expression borrows from Yue Guang's well-known speech; see *Shishuo xinyu jiaojian*, 1.23.

³⁴² The *jiaotong* refers to a famous type of zither, which is called the Burnt-Paulownia zither or Burnt-End zither (*jiaowei qin* 焦尾琴). It is said that Cai Yong 蔡邕 (132–192) in the Eastern Han used burnt paulownia wood to make a zither; see *Hou Han shu*, 60.2004.

³⁴³ Both the paradise in Langfeng Mountain (Langyuan 閻苑) and Jasper Pool (Yaochi 瑤池) are dwelling places of immortals.

見商周，端研湧巖泉，焦桐鳴玉佩，不知身居人世，所謂受用清福，孰有踰此者乎？是境也，閨苑瑤池，未必是過，人鮮知之，良可悲也！

I, therefore, collected antique zithers, inkstones, antique bells and tripods, and compiled them into ten categories.³⁴⁴ I discriminated true and false, and presented it to guests who are pure in their cultivation, fond of antiquity, and beyond the dusty world. I named it *Pure Blissfulness in the Cavern Heaven*. As for those categories such as incense, tea, paper, and ink, which had been recorded in treatises without errors, here I would not repeat them, and readers should seek for them on your own. Zhao Xigu of Kaifeng composed this preface.³⁴⁵

余故會粹古琴研、古鐘鼎而次，凡十門，辯訂是否，以貽清修好古塵外之客，名曰《洞天清祿》。若香茶紙墨之屬，既譜載而亡謬誤者，茲不復贅，觀者宜自求之。開封趙希鵠序。

The book *Records of the Pure Blissfulness in the Cavern Heaven*, though including a Daoist term “Cavern Heaven” (*dongtian* 洞天) in the title, is a manual of the connoisseurship and aesthetics of scholarly objects, and clearly concentrates on literati interests in the daily life.³⁴⁶ It is not uncommon for Song literati to adopt certain Daoist terms in their writings. But rather than display the pursuit of Daoist cultivation, by means of the phrase Cavern Heaven, Zhao Xigu aims to delimit a space that is entirely separated from the dusty world. His essential purpose, after all, is to discuss how literati are able to achieve endless pleasure by the acquisition and arrangement of scholarly objects in such an enclosed space. The self-preface cited above precisely works as an outline of this constructing process.

In the opening of this preface, Zhao Xigu first draws a sharp distinction between the *shi*, or literati, in the Song and the *shi*, or aristocrats, in the Tang dynasty. The Tang example that Zhao selects is Zhang Yanyuan’s writing of the *Enjoyment when Dwelling in Leisure* (*Xianju shouyong* 閒居受用). Zhang Yanyuan is a renowned painter, calligrapher, and connoisseur of the Tang, and he is also the author of several books on the history of painting and calligraphy. One of his works is the *Records of Famous Paintings throughout History* (*Lidai minghua ji* 歷代名畫記), which is

³⁴⁴ Another circulated version of *Dongtian qinglu ji* contains eleven categories, which is due to adaptation in the Ming.

³⁴⁵ Zhao Xigu, *Dongtian qinglu ji*, in *Congshu jicheng chubian* (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1939), p. 1.

³⁴⁶ As for the possible Daoist interests revealed in the title, see, e.g., Nakata Yūjirō, *Bunbō seigan*, pp. 110–11; Craig Clunas, “Commodities, Collectables, and Trade Goods,” pp. 54–55.

regarded as the first general history of art in China. Yet, as has been demonstrated by modern scholars, it is quite possible that the *Enjoyment when Dwelling in Leisure* is a forgery attributed to Zhang Yanyuan.³⁴⁷ However, even if the book may be misattributed, it remains considerably meaningful in Zhao Xigu's narrative, since Zhao had no doubt about this authorship, and regarded this book as the evidence of the uncultivated taste held by Tang elites. Or in other words, this book precisely fits Zhao's picture of the lowbrow Tang. As Zhao clearly indicates, Zhang Yanyuan, though a celebrated scholar of the Tang, was so unrefined that he even included topics of "wine, minced meat, dried meat, and cooked food" (*xi hai fu xiu* 醢醢脯羞) in describing leisure enjoyment in the studio or pavilion. Acerbic indeed, Zhao even compares Zhang to "an old woman who is in charge of trivial daily necessities of rice and salt" 大老姥總督米鹽細務者. By the rhetorical question, "who would say that the enjoyments of a gentleman are such as this?" 誰謂君子受用如斯而已乎, Zhao once again firmly denies Zhang's tastefulness, and contrasts it to the ideal espoused by him, as well as by gentlemen (*junzi* 君子) in the Song—as he declares, "we have our own joyful land."

A similar syntactic expression of the declaration of "we have our own joyful land" can be found in a well-known anecdote recorded in the *Recent Anecdotes from the Talk of the Ages*. It is said that towards the circle of Wang Cheng 王澄 (269–312) and Huwu Fuzhi 胡毋輔之 who behaved in such a free-spirited and unrestrained fashion that they even went naked, Yue Guang laughed and commented, "In Confucianism, there is its own joyful land. Why do you behave even like this?" 名教中自有樂地，何為乃爾也。³⁴⁸ By this critique, Yue Guang showed his disapproval of unrestrained behavior, and defined his realm for enjoyment within the Confucian teachings. In a parallel to this, by using a similar structure, Zhao also clearly differentiates the refined and restrained "we" (*wobei* 我輩) from the uncultivated Tang elites, and at the same time,

³⁴⁷ See Ruan Pu 阮璞, "Zhang Yanyuan suozhuzhishu youji" 張彥遠所著之書有幾, in *Huaxue congzheng* 畫學叢證 (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 1998), p. 120.

³⁴⁸ *Shishuo xinyu jiaojian*, 1.23.

marks off a space as the “joyful land” (*ledi* 樂地) exclusively for Song literati.

How to construct this joyful land? Zhao introduces the ways in detail in the following paragraph of the preface. The space is essentially defined by the presence of scholarly objects. Zhao first traces the interest of object collection back to Song literati of earlier generations. In Zhao’s personal memory, senior gentlemen not only collected many calligraphy works, paintings, zithers, and inkstones, but also meticulously selected them. Only the famous or antique ones are worth including. Next, Zhao proposes a comprehensive as well as poetic description of his own ideal of the joyful land. The beginning phrase, “bright windows and clean desks” (*mingchuang jingji* 明窗淨几), is often used by Song literati to sketch a studio space. An early example can be found in Ouyang Xiu’s miscellany *Brush Exercises* (*Shibi* 試筆). In the entry “Studying Calligraphy as a Pleasure” (“Xueshu wei le” 學書為樂), Ouyang Xiu approvingly recalls a saying by his good friend Su Shunqin 蘇舜欽 (1008–1048), “Bright windows and clean desks, and all writing brushes, inkstones, papers, ink are extremely exquisite—this is indeed a pleasure in human life” 明窗淨几，筆硯紙墨皆極精良，亦自是人生一樂。³⁴⁹ Here, to obtain a joyful life, besides a bright and clean space, Su Shunqin also emphasizes four things: brush, inkstone, paper and ink. This echoes and at the same time alters Xu Xuan’s outline of the leisure life of Su Yijian in his preface of the *Four Treatises on wenfang*—“Besides writing brushes, inkstones, papers, and ink, there are no other superfluous things” 筆硯紙墨，餘無長物. In early Northern Song, the model elites such as Xu Xuan and Su Yijian simply paid attention to tools necessary for writing or art creation, while discarding superfluous things. By alluding to the story in the *Recent Anecdotes from the Talk of the Ages* in which Wang Gong’s insistence of possessing nothing surplus is regarded as “virtuous conduct” (*dexing* 德行), Xu Xuan’s claim that Su Yijian owned no superfluous things become a demonstration of Su’s virtue. Later, in Ouyang Xiu’s generation, although literati still mainly focused on the four basic tools, we see an emphasis on

³⁴⁹ Ouyang Xiu *quanji*, 130.1977.

the exquisiteness of these things and a comfortable environment for intellectual practices. In Zhao Xigu's depiction, however, many more objects, such as incense, artistic works, bronze vessels, and zithers, are added in the studio. These originally extra things now become indispensable for a space with joy. Or in other words, the proper arrangement of all these things determines the creation of the ideal space. Moreover, Zhao introduces the studio owner and his "distinguished guests" (*jiake* 佳客) into this space. By means of a series of actions—"picking up" (*qu* 取), "observing" (*guan* 觀), "gently stroking" (*mosuo* 摩挲), and "personally encountering" (*qinjian* 親見)—Zhao clarifies that these scholarly objects are not simple decorations of the space, rather, they have an intimate interaction with literati, and enable them to fully articulate their refinement and erudition. In this way, Zhao establishes a close relationship among literati, scholarly objects, and the studio.

As for which objects are qualified to be included in the elegant space, Zhao provides his list in the closing part of the preface. In addition to the primary grouping of incense, tea, paper, and ink that had already drawn special attention of literati and had given birth to their own monographs, Zhao adds ten further categories of objects. From the contents of the book, we know that these objects include antique zithers, antique inkstones, antique bells, tripods and sacrificial vessels, grotesque rocks, inkstone screens, brush rests, water droppers, authentic works of ancient calligraphy, ancient and modern rubbings of stone inscriptions, and ancient paintings. Precisely with the support of these objects, Song literati are able to immerse themselves in the intellectual practices of reading, writing, art creation, and connoisseurship in the studio, and thus enjoy the refined pleasures of human life.

These objects are not only introduced and discussed by treatises and manuals. In fact, it is much more common for Song literati to celebrate them in literary writings. As a song lyric on the studio has it:

Anonymous, To the Tune of "A Southern Song" 南歌子

閣兒雖不大，

Albeit the small chamber is not large,

都無半點俗。	It does not have even a trace of vulgarity.
窗兒根底數竿竹，	Right outside the window, there are several stems of bamboo,
畫展江南山景、兩三幅。	Paintings unfold mountain scenery of the south of the Yangzi River, two or three pieces in all.
彝鼎燒異香，	The sacrificial tripod burns exotic incense,
膽瓶插嫩菊。	The slender-necked vase is arranged with a delicate chrysanthemum.
翛然無事淨心目，	In a carefree and idle state, I purify my mind and eyes,
共那人人相對、弈棋局。	I am together with the chessboard that everyone likes to face. ³⁵⁰

This song lyric can be read as a different version of the same joyful land delineated by Zhao Xigu in the preface of the *Records of the Pure Blissfulness in the Cavern Heaven*. In an even more lighthearted tone, the speaker touches scholarly objects one by one, and organizes all into a delicate whole. Everything seems to be set spontaneously, but at the same time is in exactly the appropriate spot.

In lines 3 and 4, the bamboo at the window and paintings with mountain scenes match each other in a complementary way. The bamboo is natural, but when observed through the window, it resembles an ink play of bamboo with the window serving as the frame; on the other hand, paintings are artistic works, but since this one represents the landscape of the south of the Yangzi River, it displays an idealized nature. In this way, nature and art become closely intertwined. Following this, the first two lines in the second stanza arrange another harmonious scene by means of four objects: the bronze vessel and the incense, the vase and the flower. The speaker further qualifies this group of objects. It must be an antique style tripod that matches the exotic incense, and a vase with slender neck and gall shape paired with a tender and delicate chrysanthemum. Moreover, these two pairs also match each other in the sense that both provide not only visual delight but also delicate fragrance for the enclosed space. Through such a visual as well as olfactory pleasure, the lyric smoothly moves to the next line. The owner of these objects as well as the space has become relaxed and purified. Finally, the song ends with one more scholarly object—the chess. The owner may play chess by himself, or with his

³⁵⁰ Zeng Zao 曾慥 (d. 1155), *Yuefu yaci* 樂府雅詞, in *Congshu jicheng chubian*, p. 277.

understanding friend who is qualified to share all these with him.

All these descriptions of interior arrangement work as a demonstration of the opening lines of this song lyric—“Albeit the small chamber is not large, / It does not have even a trace of vulgarity” 閣兒雖不大，都無半點俗。Indeed, all the selection and qualification of objects aims to shape the chamber with purely elegant flavor. Such a space identifies the literati within it as belonging to the distinctive class of elegance, which is completely separated from the “old women-like” Tang scholars.

As for refined objects those are suitable for the studio, the lists provided by Zhao Xigu or the above song lyric indeed include the most representative ones, and can be used as a standard for studio arrangement. Yet, the list is far from complete. Literati have their preferences in selecting objects for their own studios, and moreover, are full of enthusiasm for the literary representation of these objects. Examples are like “Ten Poems in the Studio” (“Shuzhai shiyong” 書齋十詠) by Liu Zihui 劉子翬 (1101–1147).³⁵¹ Each poem of this set celebrates one object used in the studio, including a brush rest (*bijia* 筆架), scissors (*jiandao* 剪刀), an iron bell (*huantie* 喚鐵), a paper whisk (*zhifu* 紙拂), a seal (*tushu* 圖書), a lion-shaped paperweight (*yazhi shizi* 壓紙獅子), a ruler (*jiefang* 界方), a water dropper (*yanping* 硯瓶), a lamp (*dengqing* 燈檠), and a cut log for supporting the desk (*zhi'an mu* 檣案木).³⁵² Similarly, Lu You composed “Five Poems in the Nest of Books” (“Shuchao wuyong” 書巢五詠) on a water dropper (*yandi* 硯滴), a shell polisher (*yali* 研蠶), used papers (*guzhi* 故紙), a broken inkstick (*zhemo* 折墨), and an empty wine pot (*kong jiuhu* 空酒壺), respectively.³⁵³ Admittedly, poems like these belong to the subgenre of “poems on things” (*yongwu shi* 詠物詩) that had become popular much earlier than the Song dynasty. These

³⁵¹ *QSS*, 1919.21417–18.

³⁵² Following Liu Zihui's work, Liu Kezhuang also composed “Playfully Imitating Pingshan's ‘Ten Poems in the Studio,’” 戲效屏山書齋十詠, *QSS*, 3068.36608–609.

³⁵³ *Jiannan shigao jiaozhu*, 64.3645–47.

poems, nevertheless, form their own characteristics in the sense that they shape objects in a consistently refined and intellectual way. The space of the studio describes and at the same time prescribes the interpretation of these objects. Even for some daily necessities (for example, a lamp or a cut log) that are not exclusively for the studio, as soon as they are used in the studio, poems can often translate them into objects with a strong literati interest. Or we can say, there is a mutual influence between such objects and the studio space.

II “Four Treasures” (*sibao* 四寶) or “Four Friends” (*siyou* 四友) in the Studio?

It is well-known that in explaining the meaning of the sobriquet “Retired Scholar with Six Single Things” (“Liuyi jushi” 六一居士) adopted in his late years, Ouyang Xiu, in his “Biography of the Retired Scholar with Six Single Things” (“Liuyi jushi zhuan” 六一居士傳), writes:

The retired scholar replied, “In my house, I have collected ten thousand *juan* of books, and have compiled and recorded one thousand *juan* of surviving texts of bronze and stone inscriptions that date from the Three Dynasties. I have one zither, one chess set, and I often set one pot of wine.” The guest asked, “These are only five single things, so how can this be?” The retired scholar answered, “If one includes me, this old man, who grows old among these five things, how can this not be six single things?”³⁵⁴

居士曰：“吾家藏書一萬卷，集錄三代以來金石遺文一千卷，有琴一張，有棋一局，而常置酒一壺。”客曰：“是為五一爾，奈何？”居士曰：“以吾一翁，老於此五物之間，是豈不為六一乎？”

As we can see, Ouyang Xiu possessed a large collection in his house, and it can be generalized as “five single things” (*wuyi* 五一), including books, rubbings of inscriptions, a zither, a chess set, and a pot of wine. But the creative point is, through the self-appellation of Six Single Things, Ouyang Xiu includes himself among the other five things. In this way, he alters the original relationship between the owner and things that are owned to a comparatively equal relation. Yet, as “an old man” (*yi weng* 一翁), he still maintains his subjectivity—he is the subject who enjoys

³⁵⁴ Ouyang Xiu *quanji*, 44.634–35. The complete translation of this essay can be found in Ronald Egan, *The Literary Works of Ou-yang Hsiu (1007–72)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 223–24.

the surrounding of the other five things.

However, this remaining subjectivity is eliminated in Su Shi's further interpretation. In a colophon to the "Biography of the Retired Scholar with Six Single Things," Su Shi continues exploring the potential philosophical outlook in Ouyang Xiu's sobriquet. The paragraph that is closely related to the relationship between human and things reads:

The reason that things can burden me is because I possess them. Both I and things have to receive shapes among the Heaven and earth, so who is able to possess the other? Someone, nevertheless, considers himself to possess things. When he obtains them, he is delighted; as soon as he loses them, he feels sad. Now the Retired Scholar named himself Six Single Things. This means that his body equally accompanies the other five things and they become a single one. I do not know whether he possesses things, or things possess him. The Retired Scholar and things are equally not able to possess each other. Who can place gain or loss between them? Therefore I conclude: the Retired Scholar can be regarded as one who attains the Way.³⁵⁵

物之所以能累人者，以吾有之也。吾與物俱不得已而受形於天地之間，其孰能有之？而或者以為己有，得之則喜，喪之則悲。今居士自謂六一，是其身均與五物為一也。不知其有物耶，物有之也？居士與物均為不能有，其孰能置得喪於其間？故曰：居士可謂有道者也。

This turns out to be a reinterpretation of the meaning of the sobriquet of the Six Single Things. Modern scholars have made a comparison and contrast between Ouyang Xiu's text and Su Shi's colophon. I Lo-fen considers that Su Shi misinterprets the "Biography of the Retired Scholar with Six Single Things," as he adds Zhuangzi's thoughts of "equality of things" (*qiwu* 齊物) into Ouyang Xiu's text that is originally not concerned with it. From the perspective of possessiveness, Egan analyzes the different attitudes held by Ouyang Xiu and Su Shi based on these two texts, and points out the Buddhist notions of non-duality that Su Shi probably keeps in mind when writing the colophon.³⁵⁶ Indeed, it is quite possible that Buddhist or Daoist thought influenced Su Shi in writing this text. However, I would suggest that Su Shi's viewpoint towards the "human-objects" relationship represents a new way of observing things among Song literati.

³⁵⁵ Su Shi, "Shu Liuyi jushi zhuan hou," *Su Shi wenji*, 66.2048–49. The complete translation of this colophon can be found in Ronald Egan, *The Problem of Beauty*, pp. 185–86.

³⁵⁶ see I Lo-fen, "Ouyang Xiu 'Liuyi jushi zhuan' yu Su Shi 'Shu Liuyi jushi zhuan hou'" 歐陽修〈六一居士傳〉與蘇軾〈書六一居士傳後〉, in *Chibi manyou yu xi yuan yaji* 赤壁漫遊與西園雅集 (Beijing: Xianzhuang shuju, 2001), pp. 26–48; Ronald Egan, *The Problem of Beauty*, pp. 186–87.

Ouyang Xiu offers the possibility of treating the scholar and scholarly objects in an equal and intimate way; and Su Shi further elaborates on it, by undermining the bases of the relationship of possessiveness.

The colophon is not the only example to reveal Su Shi's attitude of equaling scholarly objects and the scholar. In an inkstone inscription, Su Shi writes:

In my house, there is a She inkstone. On its bottom, there is an inscription, which reads, "In the first year of Shunyi [921] of Wu, the retired gentleman Wang Shaowei inscribed, 'The virtue of pine trees is solidified from the smoke. The essence of paper mulberries is like spreading snow. The tip of the writing brush is like flying. These are the five perfections in the human realm.'" Things that it eulogized are only three. Is it because the five perfections also include the inkstone and Shaowei himself?³⁵⁷

予家有歙硯，底有歙識云：“吳順義元年，處士汪少微銘云：‘松操凝煙，楮英鋪雪。毫穎如飛，人間五絕。’”所頌者三物爾，蓋所謂硯與少微為五耶？

This passage is a double inscription. Su Shi's inscription is inspired by the earlier inscription on the inkstone made by Wang Shaowei 汪少微, who lived during the Kingdom of Wu (902–937). Although we know little about Wang Shaowei, the inscription is so refined that indeed fits his identity as a retired gentleman.³⁵⁸ The first three lines of Wang's inscription refer to the inkstick, paper, and writing brush, respectively. The opening line is basically a description of the pine soot ink, which is produced by collecting soot from the smoke of burning pinewood. Yet, such a production process is rewritten in a highly rhetorical way. It portrays the solid inkstick as the crystallization of a moral integrity that is often represented by pine trees. The next line, in depicting the paper, also starts from the raw material of paper making. The essence of paper mulberries transforms into exquisite papers, which are as purely white as the snow. Contrary to the static states of the inkstick and the paper, the writing brush in the third line is shaped so

³⁵⁷ “Shu Wang Shaowei yan” 書汪少微硯, *Su Shi wenji*, 70.2240. I am grateful to Prof. Zhang Ming for discussing this colophon with me.

³⁵⁸ There is a possibility that this Wang Shaowei was the same person as Li Shaowei 李少微, who was a famous She inkstone craftsman in the Kingdom of Wu and the Southern Tang 南唐 (937–976). It is said that this Li Shaowei was recommended to the court of the Southern Tang, and the emperor Li Jing 李璟 (r. 943–961) appointed him to be an inkstone officer (*yanguan* 硯官). See Tang Ji 唐積, *Shezhou yanpu* 歙州硯譜, in Yang Jialuo 楊家駱, ed., *Wenfang sipu* 文房四譜 (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1974).

active, which aptly highlights the primary function of brushes. Thus, without naming any referents, these lines thoroughly catch the special characteristics of these three things.

Nevertheless, the closing line is the most unexpected part of Wang's inscription. As a conclusion, Wang says, "These are the five perfections in the human realm" 人間五絕. Since previously the inscription only mentions three things, this final line leaves a riddle for later readers. It is quite possible that the fourth perfection is the She inkstone, since Wang's text was inscribed on it. But a couple of things may fit the position of the fifth perfection. It can refer to the literary composition itself, or the calligraphy of the inscription, or even some personal memory of Wang Shaowei that no one else is aware of. Also it may simply be an error.³⁵⁹ Obviously, when Su Shi read this inscription, he was confused as well, and thereupon he attempted to provide his own answer. In Su Shi's speculation, the other two perfections should be the inkstone and the person Wang Shaowei. It is hard to determine whether Su Shi's understanding is correct or not, but it is crucial to see the cognitive process that leads Su Shi to his answer. Here, in order to transform the original "three things" (*sanwu* 三物) into five, Su Shi involves one more thing and a person. That is to say, in Su Shi's eyes, the scholar, rather than possessing all other things and thus appearing superior to things, shares an equal status with these scholarly objects. His interpretation of the "five perfections" works precisely as a practice of Ouyang Xiu's perception of the "scholar-objects" relationship in the "Biography of the Retired Scholar with Six Single Things." Yet, this time, rather than using it on his own situation, Su Shi even employs this idea to make an early riddle apprehensible.

Such an equal and intimate relationship is even more intensified when the literatus and scholarly objects are both in the space of the studio. Huihong's 惠洪 (1071–1128) "Essay on Li Demao's Four Friends in the City of Books" ("Li Demao Shucheng siyou xu" 李德茂書城四友

³⁵⁹ Probably because of confusion over what is meant by the "five perfections," some later transcriptions of Wang Shaowei's inscription revised the final line to "These are the four perfections in the human realm" 人間四絕; see, for example, Wu Renchen 吳任臣 (1628–1689), *Shiguo chunqiu* 十國春秋, ed. Xu Minxia 徐敏霞 and Zhou Ying 周瑩 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 11.155.

序) fully demonstrates this point:

In the year of 1115, on my way from Taiyuan to Nanzhou, I stopped by the capital. At the night of the Lantern Festival, I lodged at my old friend Li Demao's guest house. Demao piled up classics and books in circle, and named it the "City of Books." Every day he makes a companion with his four friends of the writing brush, the inkstone, the paper, and the ink. I asked, "Your gentleman has official position at the imperial court, and are well-known among scholar officials. But as for selecting friends, are you just simply like this?"

政和五年，余自太原還南州，過都下，上元夕，宿故人李德茂之館。德茂環積墳藉，名曰“書城”。日與筆硯紙墨爲四友。余曰：“公通藉金闕，名聞縉紳，而取友乃止是乎？”

Demao laughed, saying, "In the past, the Duke of Zhou executed Guan and Cai,³⁶⁰ Zhang and Chen ended their friendship that would lead them to die for each other.³⁶¹ I could not help putting aside book scrolls and deeply sighing for them. As for affairs about the distant and the close, or gain and loss, even great sages are not able to protect their relatives. How can I, who by means of a commoner's talent rose to the field of achievement and reputation, desire to preserve friendship? My family's Ruizhi [the courtesy name of Li Bo 李渤; d. 831] understood this, therefore, he lived in mountain forests, painted portraits of Liang Hong and old Master Lai, and took them as his friends.³⁶² Taibai [the courtesy name of Li Bai], in wandering among rivers and lakes, joined the bright moon and made the roaming beyond human cares.³⁶³ But I regard Bai to have failed of extravagance, and Bo to have failed of absurdity.

德茂笑曰：“昔周公誅管、蔡，張、陳解勿頸，吾未嘗不置卷長嘆。夫疏親利害，雖大聖不能保其親。矧以衆人之器，登功名之場，而欲全交乎？吾家濬之知之，故棲遲林麓，圖梁鴻、老萊子之像爲友；太白婆娑江湖，結明月爲無情之遊。吾以爲白失之誇，而渤失之誕也。

³⁶⁰ Guan and Cai refer to Younger Uncle Xian of Guan 管叔鮮 and Younger Uncle Du of Cai 蔡叔度. Both were brothers of the Duke of Zhou. After King Wu of Zhou 周武王 (r. 1046–1043 BCE) died, when the Duke of Zhou was regent for the young King Cheng 成王 (r. 1042–1021 BCE), Guan and Cai suspected that the Duke of Zhou would usurp the throne, so they made a rebellion. As a result, the Duke of Zhou executed Guan and banished Cai. See *Shi ji*, 35.1563–65.

³⁶¹ Zhang and Chen refer to Zhang Er 張耳 (d. 202 BCE) and Chen Yu 陳餘 (d. 205 BCE) at the end of the Qin dynasty. Albeit the fact that originally Zhang and Chen were bosom friends that would have died for each other (*wenjing jiao* 勿頸交), in contending for powers and profits, they betrayed each other. Finally Zhang Er defeated and executed Chen Yu. See *Shi ji*, 89.2571–87.

³⁶² Old Master Lai and Liang Hong are said to be recluses, the former lived in the state of Chu in the Spring and Autumn Period, and the later in the Eastern Han. When Li Bo lived in seclusion with his brother in Mount Lu, he collected portraits of six ancient recluses (including Old Master Lai and Liang Hong), eulogized them, and took them as his own models; see *Xin Tang shu*, 118.4281. In the speech, "my family" (*wujia* 吾家) is used, since Li Demao shared the same family name with Li Bo and Li Bai.

³⁶³ This line echoes Li Bai's "Drinking Alone by Moonlight" ("Yuexia duzhuo" 月下獨酌); see Wang Qi 王琦 (1696–1774), annot., *Li Taibai quanji* 李太白全集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), 23.1063.

The Master of Tube City is my advantageous friend.³⁶⁴ He is upright, sincere, and erudite. Every time I talk with him, he tirelessly listens to me without being weary. Sir Yan is my virtuous friend. His *qi* is pure, and his character is gentle. He knows the white, while he keeps the black.³⁶⁵ He solidifies the principle of glue and varnish, and values the fragrance of knowledge and insight.³⁶⁶ Mr. Chu is my esteemed friend. He is sincere and pure, with no frivolousness. His insight is very clear. When I see him, I have never been able to not completely display my inner knowledge. Shi Xuzhong is my upright friend. His innate nature is vigorous, which is formed by polishing and cultivating. He is gentle and generous. He understands the key points of words but is able to keep silent. These four masters keep company with me. We spiritually commune with each other and have shared interests. It has been a long time since we forgot distinctions or the lapse of years.³⁶⁷ But today, you still ask me about this—why is this?”

管城子，吾益友也，直諒多聞，每與之語，娓娓不倦；燕卿，吾德友也，氣清而骨輕，知白而守黑，固膠漆之義，重知見之香；楮先生，吾畏友也，惻惻無華，見地明白，吾見之，未嘗不展盡底蘊；石虛中，吾端友也，天姿剛勁，琢磨以成，溫潤而有容，知言而能默。是四子從吾遊，神交道契，忘義忘年久矣。子今乃見問，何哉？”

I said, “In the past, Su Yijian assisted the worthiness of these four people, and regarded them as the ‘four treasures of the studio.’ I suspect that they are not whom Su Yijian loved. Demao does not directly call them by their names, but makes friends with them. It can be expected that together they live within the City of Books, without tiring of this.” I requested to write this down as an essay, in order to let scholar officials know that the fact of making friends with the four gentlemen originated with Demao.³⁶⁸

余曰：“蘇易簡常輔此四人之賢，為文房四寶，意非其所好也。德茂不名而友之，宜乎同居於書城之間無厭也。”請書以為序，使士大夫知有友四君子者，自德茂始。

Although the author Huihong is a monk, in his works of essays, poems and miscellanies written

³⁶⁴ The term “advantageous friend” (*yiyou* 益友) comes from *Lunyu*, 16.4: “There are three friendships which are advantageous, and three which are injurious. Friendship with the upright; friendship with the sincere; and friendship with the man of much observation—these are advantageous” 益者三友，損者三友。友直，友諒，友多聞，益矣。

³⁶⁵ The line “knowing the white, while keeping the black” 知白而守黑 comes from *Laozi*: “He who knows the white yet sustains the black will be a model for all under Heaven. He who is a model for all under Heaven never deviates from constant virtue. And always reverts to the infinite” 知其白，守其黑，為天下式。為天下式，常德不忒，復歸於無極。 See *Laozi Daodejing zhu jiaoshi*, 28.74. I use the translation by Richard John Lynn, *The Classic of the Way and Virtue*, 28.103.

³⁶⁶ The phrase “glue and varnish” (*jiaopi* 膠漆) works as a depiction of the production of ink, as glue is an indispensable ingredient in ink-making; at the same time, metaphorically, it refers to close and intimate relations as cohesive as glue and varnish.

³⁶⁷ The phrase “forgetting distinctions or the lapse of years” (*wangyi wangnian* 忘義忘年) is derived from the *Zhuangzi*; see *Zhuangzi jishi*, 2.108.

³⁶⁸ *QSW*, 3024.267–68.

to or for his literati friends, he often keeps track of the interests of Song literati.³⁶⁹ The above essay written on behalf of his old friend Li Demao is an example. As Huihong clearly indicates at the end of this essay, his prospective readers of this piece are the scholar officials (*shidafu* 士大夫).

The subjects of this essay, as the title reveals, are four friends in the “City of Books” (Shucheng 書城). Who are these friends and what is the City of Books? Huihong introduces them in the opening paragraph. It turns out that the City of Books is the name of Li Demao’s studio. In fact, from Huihong’s depiction, we are even not sure whether this City of Books is a single room or a space simply separated by books. Nevertheless, it is certain that Li managed to construct an enclosed space by means of a multitude of books. In a metaphorical way, his studio name declares that books, as walls of a city, mark off a self-contained space for him, and protect him from the outside world. Yet, in this private studio, Li was not lonely. As discussed in Chapter three, the studio owner would invite certain selected friends into his studio. Li, too, had four friends accompany him. But the difference is, his friends are actually objects, rather than human beings. The persona of Huihong thus plays the role of a challenging guest as that often appears in rhapsodies with a dialogic structure. In view of the fact that Li was a reputable scholar official and thus would not have lacked the opportunity to make friends with others, Huihong inquires the reason that Li solely invited the writing brush, the inkstone, the paper, and the ink into his studio.

Hence, in the following two paragraphs, Li explains his viewpoint on selecting friends. First, he concerns about the difficulty of “preserving friendship” (*quanjiao* 全交). Indeed, even great sages as the Duke of Zhou or talented commanders as Zhang Er and Chen Yu failed to maintain their companionship with others. Both historical stories that Li Demao takes as a warning disclose the change of interpersonal relationship when people are in the allure of self-interest.

³⁶⁹ On Huihong and his writings, see Zhou Yukai 周裕鍇, *Song seng Huihong xinglü zhushu biannian zongan* 宋僧惠洪行履著述編年總案 (Beijing: Gaodeng jiaoyu chubanshe, 2010).

Not only learning these cruel facts from reading in his studio, Li further seeks for possible solutions from books. This time, he finds two figures who shared the same family name with him and might serve as models. In view of the ruthless reality regarding friendship, this duo, Li Bo and Li Bai, chose to make companions of ancient recluses and of nature, respectively. However, Li Demao, as a Song literatus, is not satisfied with such exaggerated or unrestrained behaviors performed by these Tang elites.

He has his own elegant friends—Master of Tube City 管城子, Sir Yan 燕卿, Mr. Chu 褚先生, and Shi Xuzhong 石虛中. They are, in fact, the personified writing brush, inkstone, paper, and ink. Admittedly, such a personification of scholarly objects can be traced back to the famous pseudobiography, the “Biography of Mao Ying” (“Mao Ying zhuan” 毛穎傳) written by Han Yu.³⁷⁰ In this creative parody of historical biography, Han Yu writes an account of the whole life of a writing brush. The brush was named Mao Ying (or Fur Tip), and since the First Emperor of Qin enfeoffed him in the Tube City, he was also called Master of Tube City. He exhausted himself in serving the First Emperor as an imperial secretary. In the story, although focusing on the writing brush, Han Yu also briefly mentions the personified ink, inkstone, and paper when introducing the social relationships of Mao Ying, which reads:

Ying kept a good companionship with Chen Xuan (or Aged Dark) of Jiang, Tao Hong (or Porcelain Pool) of Hongnong, and Mr. Chu (or Mr. Paper Mulberry) of Kuaiji.³⁷¹ They recommended and invited one another. Whenever going out or staying in, they must be together. When the emperor summoned Ying, the other three people would immediately go together, without waiting for the imperial decree. The emperor never blamed them for this.³⁷²

穎與絳人陳玄、弘農陶泓及會稽褚先生友善，相推致，其出處必偕。上召穎，三人者不待詔輒俱往，上未嘗怪焉。

³⁷⁰ For analysis and full translation of the “Biography of Mao Ying,” see William H. Nienhauser, Jr., “An Allegorical Reading of Han Yü’s ‘Mao-Ying Chuan,’” *Oriens Extremus* 23.2 (1976): 153–74; James R. Hightower, “Han Yü as Humorist,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 44.1 (Jun., 1984): 5–27.

³⁷¹ Chen Xuan (or Aged Dark) of Jiang refers to the ink; Tao Hong (or Porcelain Pool) of Hongnong is the inkstone, and Mr. Chu (or Mr. Paper Mulberry) of Kuaiji is the paper. Each of these personal names is actually a description of the attribute, shape, or material of the three scholarly objects, and each place of origin attached to the person is the main tributary place of the ink, inkstone and paper, respectively, in the Tang.

³⁷² *Han Changli wenji jiaozhu*, 8.568.

Paronomasia and metaphorical description spreads all over this citation, as it does in the whole “Biography of Mao Ying.” Of course the writing brush, ink, inkstone, and paper often need to be used together in order to fulfill their functions as writing tools. But in Han Yu’s hands, this interdependent relationship is interpreted as the friendship among four people.

It is obvious that earlier parody works such as the “Biography of Mao Ying” inspire Li Demao.³⁷³ However, in Huihong’s record, Li Demao’s treatment of the four objects breaks away from these Tang precedents in at least two crucial respects. First, a deep friendship is established between Li Demao and these four personified objects. As cited above, the “Biography of Mao Ying” also touches the topic of friendship. Nonetheless, in Mao Ying’s case, the constant companionship is limited to the four objects, while the relationship between objects and their user as well as possessor is represented as that between courtiers and the emperor. Mao Ying first met the Qin emperor as a captive, and although he was favored by the emperor by virtue of his talent, the emperor became estranged from him immediately after he found that Mao Ying was too old to serve him. It is no wonder that Han Yu concludes Mao Ying’s biography by denouncing the Qin as truly “lacking in gratitude” (*shao en* 少恩). In a sharp contrast, within the City of Books dominated by Li Demao, it is Li himself who is eager to make friends with all scholarly objects with sincerity. Although he, the same as the Qin emperor, is actually the owner of the space as well as all objects, Li establishes an intimacy with these personified objects, which is based on their mutual appreciation.

The second point that differentiates Hui Hong’s essay from Han Yu’s work lies in the moralization of all personified objects. As a pioneering experiment, the “Biography of Mao Ying”

³⁷³ Li’s naming of the writing brush as Master of Tube City and the paper as Mr. Chu clearly derives from Han Yu’s work. A minor alteration is that Li Demao changes Mr. Chu 褚 to Chu 楮. The former Chu is more commonly used as a family name, while the latter one more directly reflect the raw material of papers, i.e., the paper mulberry. Li borrows the other two names for the ink (Sir Yan) and inkstone (Shi Xuzhong) from Wen Song’s 文嵩 “Biography of the Four Marquises” (“Si hou zhuan” 四侯傳), which is also a pseudobiography of the writing brush, ink, paper, and inkstone, written later than Han Yu’s work. In the “Biography of the Four Marquises,” the inkstone is named Shi Xuzhong, or Stone with an Open Mind; and the personified ink is said to be a man of Yan 燕, probably because the area of Yan was a main place for the production of ink in the Tang.

piles up many allusions related to the writing brush and is full of paronomasia. Thus, Mao Ying becomes a vehicle for Han Yu to play with his broad knowledge and creative writing skills. Although based on basic functions and physical attributes of objects as well, in the tone of Li Demao, Huihong's essay concentrates on shaping these four objects as elegant scholars with high morality. The physical attributes of each object are exclusively transformed to be the moral behaviors of these four friends. The writing brush, for instance, since it is straight in shape, always delivers the same content as its user intends to, and writes a lot, is logically considered to possess virtues of integrity, sincerity, and erudition. Thus, it exactly fits the standard of friend selection asserted by Confucius, and can be called an "advantageous friend." Moreover, as a tool to help one express and write down one's inner thoughts, the Master of Tube City also behaves as an audience attentive to its user. His tireless attitude again echoes the Confucian virtue of learning and instructing without being wearied. Puns like this are also broadly used in introductions of the other objects. In this way, the four objects are personified not only as qualified literati with high moral sentiments, but also as true friends of the person who is actually their possessor. Their friendship is based on shared ethical principles and mutual understanding.

In the ending paragraph, Huihong draws a contrast between the treatment of scholarly objects by Su Yijian and that of Li Demao. Probably because the version of Su Yijian's book that Huihong read is with the variant title *Treatise on the Four Treasures of the Studio*, Huihong incisively points out, although Su Yijian writes a monograph for these four objects, he treats them as "four treasures of the studio." It implies that Su Yijian still plays the role of a possessor as well as an appreciator of valuable objects, and he composes treatises in order to advocate the value of these treasures. As a stark contrast, what Li Demao does is "not directly calling them by their names, but making friends with them" 不名而友之. Rather than publically categorizing and introducing them as objects, Li Demao regards them as his peers, and cultivates intimate friendship with them. His studio works as the private space that is merely open to these four gentlemen. Within the studio, the "four treasures of the studio" are no longer writing tools for

literati, but are transformed into “four friends of the studio.”

Thus, as we can see, from Ouyang Xiu’s sobriquet of Retired Scholar with Six Single Things, to Su Shi’s inscription on the inkstone regarding the “five perfections,” and then to Li Demao’s “Four Friends in the City of Books,” Song literati gradually formed their own way to observe scholarly objects. Rather than regarding their possession of scholarly objects as valued collections, Song literati inclined to treat them as their most intimate friends with whom they were willing to share the studio. In this way, the studio is further constructed to be a self-contained space. In the studio, literati enjoy being surrounded by these “like-minded objects,” without being interfered by the tough outside world.

III Personified Objects

The intimate relationship among the studio owner, the studio space, and the “four friends of *wenfang*” established in the Northern Song is broadly accepted and appreciated by literati in later generations. In the Southern Song, the personification of brushes, ink, papers, and inkstones even becomes a trope frequently used in *wenfang* poems, which I define as poems that celebrate studio objects. Lu You, for instance, composed many works to delineate his “like-minded objects” in the studio. One of them reads:

“Dwelling in Leisure without Guests, What I Spend the Day with are Solely the Writing Brush, Inkstone, Paper, and Ink. I Playfully Composed this Poem in the Long Line” 閒居無客所與度日筆硯紙墨而已戲作長句

水複山重客到稀，	Stream after stream, hill after hill—guests rarely come,
文房四士獨相依。	It is the “four literati of <i>wenfang</i> ” alone whom I rely upon.
黃金那得與齊價，	How can gold match their values?
白首自應同告歸。	With gray hair, of course I should return together with them.
韞玉面凹觀墨聚，	The surface of the Hidden-Jade inkstone is concave, from which I observe the gathering of ink,
浣花理膩覺豪飛。	The pattern of the Washing-Flower paper is delicate, by which I feel the flying of the brush. ³⁷⁴

³⁷⁴ Lu You has a self-commentary on this couplet, which reads, “Hidden-Jade is the name of Zi inkstone. Washing-Flower is the name of Shu paper” 韞玉，淄硯名。浣花，蜀牋名 (*Jiannan shigao jiaozhu*, 26.1860). Zi inkstone is produced in Zichuan of modern Shandong Province. The Washing-Flower paper is a

興闌卻欲燒香睡，
閑聽松聲晝掩扉。

When the mood is down, I then desire to burn incense and have a sleep,
I idly listen to sounds of the pines, and at daytime I close the gate.³⁷⁵

As the title explicitly shows, the whole poem is a record of the personal daily life of the poet. It is simply an ordinary scene, in which the poet dwells in idleness, accompanied only by his scholarly objects. Nothing special happens. However, Lu You is excellent in translating the quotidian into something full of scholarly interests, and moreover, in this translation process, it is not hard to see his inheritance as well as the development of the viewpoint on scholarly objects held by the Northern Song literati.

Objects of the writing brush, inkstone, paper, and ink are immediately put under the spotlight in the opening couplet. Layers of streams and hills seem to cut off all communication between the poet and the outside world. But it is not so much an actual description of the location of the poet's dwelling as a hyperbole of the remoteness, aiming to highlight the seclusion of the studio. Although no visitors come, the poet is not completely alone in this enclosed space, since the scholarly objects always accompany him. In the second line, these objects become people whom the poet can rely on. It is worth noting that Lu You alternates the phrase of "four friends of *wenfang*" with "four literati of *wenfang*" (*wenfang sishi* 文房四士). By explicitly endowing objects with literati identity, Lu You takes a further step to label these four scholarly objects as his understanding friends who share the same morality as well as aesthetic interests, and to express his respect for them. The poet once again emphasizes the interdependence between these objects and the poet in the second couplet. According to him, the values of the writing brush, inkstone, paper, and ink cannot be evaluated by monetary value; rather, they are the most sincere friends of the poet, who accompany the poet even when he feels frustrated and decides to retreat from social life. Different from the first half of the poem that personifies the writing brush,

type of famous stationery paper, which is said to be designed by Xue Tao 薛濤 (ca. 768–ca. 831) in Chengdu of modern Sichuan Province.

³⁷⁵ *Jiannan shigao jiaozhu*, 26.1860.

inkstone, paper, and ink, the second half describes them more as objects. What the poet records in the third couplet is indeed a trifling scene: ink flowing into the inkstone pool, and the brush moving quickly on the paper. But Lu You seems fascinated by such daily scholarly scenes. For example, in a poem entitled “Clearing in the Autumn” (“Qiuqing” 秋晴), he also writes, “The Hidden-Jade inkstone is concave, which is good for the color of ink, / The smoothness of the Chilled-Gold stationary paper stimulates my poetic feeling” 韞玉硯凹宜墨色，冷金牋滑助詩情。³⁷⁶ Both couplets zoom in on the writing tools, and convey that these high-quality objects effectively stimulate the poet’s literary inspiration. Similar couplets are easy to find in Lu You’s poetry, which reveals that interaction with scholarly objects deeply attracts the poet and plays an indispensable role in his daily life. Finally, the ending lines echo the leisure atmosphere labeled in the poem’s title.

Although in the poem we can sense some little complaint from the poet as a frustrated old man, his affection towards the “four literati of *wenfang*” is deep and sincere. But in regard to the way of celebrating these “four literati,” this poem does not consistently treat them as people. Some other poets’ works, nevertheless, more thoroughly humanize the writing brush, inkstone, paper, and ink, as the following example shows:

Shi Mining 史彌寧 (fl. 1215), “Too Lazy to Compose Poems, I Felt that Four Friends of *wenfang* All Had Angry Faces; So I Casually Composed this” 懶不作詩覺文房四友俱有慍色謾賦³⁷⁷

<p>一毛不拔管城子， 冷眼相看石丈人。 急性陳玄楮居士， 未分皂白也生嗔。</p>	<p>Unwilling to give up even a hair—this was Master of Tube City, Slightly looking at me—this was Old Man Shi. There were quick-tempered Chen Xuan and Retired Scholar Chu, Albeit had not yet distinguished between black and white, they also got angry at me.³⁷⁸</p>
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This poem captures an intimate as well as funny moment shared by the poet and his “four friends

³⁷⁶ *Jiannan shigao jiaozhu*, 71.3960.

³⁷⁷ The *man* 謾 here is the same as *man* 漫, which means “casually” or “impromptu.”

³⁷⁸ *QSS*, 3026.36059.

of *wenfang*.” Poetic composition might be a routine cultivation of the poet. Since for a period of time the poet had not worked on it, he might feel a little ashamed and was angry at himself.

However, the poet creatively transformed this self-blame into reproaches from his writing tools. These inhuman objects are once again personified as friends of the poet, and are endowed with human feelings. The main body of this poem is thus a dramatic description of angry faces of these four friends.

The poet carefully designs diverse demeanors for these friends based on their own material properties. As Master of Tube City is the personification of the writing brush, his angry is reflected in the behavior that he was not willing to give a brush hair to the poet. Actually, the brush’s preservation of its hairs was simply a result from the fact that the poet did not use the brush for a certain time. However, the poet alters this objective fact to a subjective decision made by Master of Tube City. The phrase “unwilling to give up even a hair” (*yimao buba* 一毛不拔) is often used to depict the egoistic or stingy manner of a person, but here, it shows the discontent of Master of Tube City—he claimed that he would not generously support the poet if the poet continued being so indolent. Similarly, in the second line, the inkstone is personified as Old Man Shi, or Old Man Stone. Stone is cold in nature, especially when it is not used. But this property is now elaborated as the cold, serious, and disparaging look of Old Man Shi towards the poet. Also, the pairing of ink and paper in the second half of the poem is also a word-play of the phrase “black and white” (*zaobai* 皂白), which literally echoes the colors of ink and paper, and metaphorically means the right and wrong of an affair. In this way, these objects are playfully represented as two impetuous scholars—they followed the Master of Tube City and Old Man Shi in blaming the poet, even though they had not entirely understood the whole story.

Besides the episode itself, the jocular tone throughout the poem also contributes to the establishment of intimacy. As the title indicates, this poem is a casual and playful composition. The subgenre of “playfully-composed poetry” (*xiti shi* 戲題詩) is often written to one’s close friends, and to make jokes on them, by which the intimate relationship between the poet and his

friends can be fully revealed.³⁷⁹ Here, the four objects of *wenfang* precisely play the role of true friends in the playfully-composed poetry. They are portrayed in an unexpected way, which alters their normal images of kind companions to figures with angry faces. Such a contrast not only produces a humorous effect, but, more importantly, demonstrates that these friends of *wenfang* are so close to the poet that they are able to feel free to express their genuine feelings.

Such an unexpected way of representing *wenfang* is also employed in another poem, “Ballad of Warming Two Scholars” (“Nuanre liangsheng xing” 暖熱兩生行) by Yang Wanli. But this time, the angry writing brush and inkstone turned to be suffering from extreme cold:

<p>秃穎凍得鬚作冰， 老泓飲湯成水精。 先生定交兩書生， 兩生號寒語不能。</p> <p>先生自作饑蟲鳴， 夜檄祝融戰玄冥。 更遣紅玉十麒麟， 相與部領有腳春， 暖熱兩生出精神。 兩生炙手淚縱橫， 彊和先生仄仄平。</p>	<p>Bald Ying was so frozen that his beard became ice, Old Hong sipped hot water, but it turned into crystal. I made friends with these two scholars, But these two scholars, crying out from the cold, were unable to speak.</p> <p>I, on my own, also sounded like a hungry worm, At night I announced Zhurong to battle against Xuanming.³⁸⁰ Moreover I dispatched ten unicorns as red jades,³⁸¹ Together they commanded the footed Spring,³⁸² and warmed the two scholars till their vigor was reawakened.. The two scholars warmed their hands, shedding streaming tears, They strove to match my deflected and level tones.³⁸³</p>
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In comparison to Shi Mining’s short poem, the above work adopts the subgenre of ballad (*xing*)

³⁷⁹ For a comprehensive study of the playfully-composed poetry in the Song, see Yao Hua 姚華, “Youxi yu siwen: Songshi xiezuo zhong de youxi zitai jiqi shixue yiyi” 遊戲于斯文—宋詩寫作中的遊戲姿態及其詩學意義, Ph.D. diss., Peking University, 2015.

³⁸⁰ It is said that Zhurong is the god of fire and summer, while Xuanming is the god of water and winter.

³⁸¹ The “red jades” (*hongyu* 紅玉) refer to charcoal, and the “unicorns” (*qilin* 麒麟) are probably charcoal in the shape of unicorns. See Zhu Jian 朱諫 (1455–1541), annot., *Li shi xuanzhu* 李詩選注 (5.11b): 獸炭，以炭為獸形，如紅麒麟之類, in *Xuxiu Siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書 1305, p. 620. Yang Wanli uses these two images again in his poem “Mingfa Qingni chongxue cichuan” 明發青泥衝雪刺船, which reads: 紅玉麒麟永作灰 (*Yang Wanli ji jianjiao*, 19.943).

³⁸² The “footed spring” (*youjiao chun* 有腳春 or *youjiao yangchun* 有腳陽春) is originally a metaphor used by people to praise Song Jing 宋璟 (663–737), which means that Song Jing cared for people so much that he could warm them wherever he arrived, like the Spring. See Wang Renyu 王仁裕 (880–956), *Kaiyuan Tianbao yishi* 開元天寶遺事, ed. Zeng Yifen 曾貽芬 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006), p. 55.

³⁸³ *Yang Wanli ji jianjiao*, 27.1416.

行), thereby has much more space to elaborate on the dramatic moments shared by the poet and personified objects. The poem is in fact a record of an extremely ordinary scene: since it was bitterly cold, the poet found that his writing tools were frozen and could not be used, so he warmed them and then was able to write poems by means of them. However, Yang Wanli retells these daily life details in a highly imaginative and playful way. The affair is transformed into a process of the poet's suffering and overcoming of the difficulty for the sake of his friends of *wenfang*.

All three main characters of the poem immediately come on the stage in the opening four lines: two scholars Bald Ying and Old Hong, as well as the persona of the poet. Bald Ying, or Bald Tip of the Brush, refers to the writing brush with little hair left; Old Hong, or Old Pool, is the personified name to address an inkstone used for a long time. These two personified objects are not only represented as aged, but are further said to suffer from intolerable cold. In a consistent way of personification, the poet describes how the beard of Bald Ying had been frozen up, and how the hot water that Old Hong was drinking, which refers to the water added in the inkstone, had become ice. In fact, the water used to produce ink *should* be fresh and cool. Here, by saying that even the hot water could immediately turn to ice, the poet stresses the depth of the chill in a more dramatic way.

Therefore, in the following five lines, the poem depicts how the poet fought with the cold on behalf of his friends. The depiction is also hyperbolic, but this hyperbole is sharply different from that in lines 1–4, in the sense that the former part exaggerates about the daily as well as familiar experience, while the second part draws attention to a fantastical imagination. In stating a series of ordinary actions as lighting charcoal and making a fire, the poet even evokes the world of gods and mythical creatures. He ordered Zhurong, the god of fire, to fight against the winter god, and commanded ten unicorns, actually ten pieces of charcoal in the shape of unicorns, to support Zhurong. Finally, they succeeded in bringing warm Spring to the poet, and thus thoroughly warmed and gave new strength to Bald Ying and Old Hong. Such a magnificent effort

is absolutely for these two friends. No wonder that they shed tears of gratitude, as represented in the closing lines, although we understand that it is the melting of the ice on the writing brush and inkstone. In return, these two scholars tried their best to support the poet's literary composition; and indeed, to help the poet write down this poem just read by us. Or in other words, the writing of this poem is paralleled with the process of befriending *wenfang*.

Thus, no matter in Shi Mining's poem that the four friends of *wenfang* blamed the laziness of the poet, or in Yang Wanli's work that Bald Ying and Old Hong repaid the poet for his kindness, these non-human scholarly objects are exceptionally endowed with strong personalities, and the intimacy between the poet and these objects never changes. In these *wenfang* poems, what the poet and objects share with each other is nothing more than the experience of everyday life in the studio. However, it is this ordinariness that consolidates the true friendship, and preserves the pleasures of daily life so highly appreciated by Song literati.

IV Studio Objects in Circulation

Song literati's interaction with scholarly objects, on the one hand, is a personal experience enjoyed alone in the studio, but on the other hand, contributes, paradoxically, to the porousness of the otherwise hermetic studio space. Being enthusiastic in collecting studio objects, Song literati spend great effort exchanging, gifting, and appreciating these objects among their human friends, who share the same aesthetic values. As a result, studio objects, accompanied with literary works about them, are often moved from one studio to another, which connects these private spaces, as well as creates mutual communication among literati.

(1) Exchanging or Seizing?

In a letter to his friend Tang Xun 唐詢 (1005–1064), Cai Xiang writes (Figure 10)³⁸⁴:

³⁸⁴ Cai Xiang, *Letter to Yanyou* 致彦猷尺牘, 1064, ink on paper, 25.6 × 25 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.

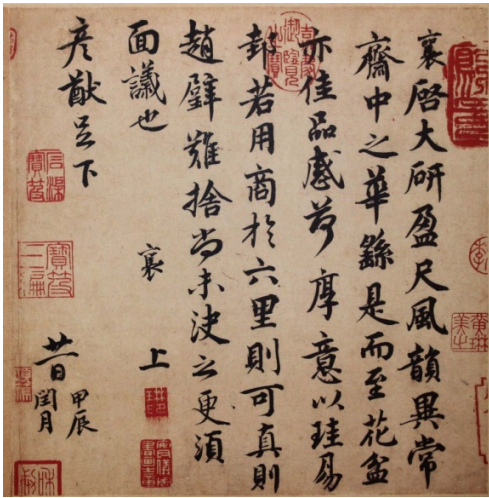


Figure 10

Xiang reports: The large inkstone comes close to one *chi* long, and its style and resonance are extraordinary. The illustriousness within my studio has been attained because of it. The flowerpot is also an excellent object. I would like to express my gratitude for your generous intentions. As for using *gui* [jade] in exchange for Gui, if you only use six square *li* of Shang and Yu, then how can it be acceptable? Indeed it is hard to give up the jade disk of Zhao. I have not yet determined this, so moreover, we should talk over this in person. Xiang presented. To you, sir, Yanyou [the courtesy name of Tang Xun]. On the twenty-first day of the intercalary fifth month in 1064.

襄啟：大研盈尺，風韻異常，齋中之華，繇是而至。花盆亦佳品，感荷厚意。以珪易邾，若用商於六里則可？真則趙璧難捨，尚未決之，更須面議也。襄上，彥猷足下。廿一日，甲辰閏月。

Both the writer and the recipient of this letter are celebrated literati. Cai Xiang, undoubtedly, had the reputation as an outstanding calligrapher, collector, and official in the Song; and Tang Xun was also known as a collector and calligrapher—it is said that he is the one who had established the reputation of the Red Silk Inkstone 紅絲石硯 in the Song. This time, these two collectors were negotiating an exchange of objects by letter. Although we do not have the previous letter by Tang Xun, from Cai Xiang's reply, we can learn that Tang must have expected to barter with Cai, and in order to show his sincerity, Tang had sent Cai an inkstone and a flowerpot. Since these two items are both elegant objects often used in the studio, it is reasonable to infer that what Tang desired from Cai's collection is also a scholarly object.

Partly as a true appreciation and partly as a polite formula, Cai highly praised the inkstone and the flowerpot in the first half of the letter. The flowerpot is “an excellent object” (*jiapin* 佳品),

and the large inkstone especially attracted Cai's attention. He even claimed that it is this extraordinary inkstone that could bring brilliance to his studio. However, after expressing the gratitude to Tang, Cai shifts his focus. The second half is full of anxiety over the proposed exchange. The change of script from regular to semi-cursive conveys that his previous calm mood in appreciating the two objects had turned into an uneasy state. Moreover, the two main allusions that Cai selected further demonstrate his increasing anxiety. Both allusions, derived from the *Records of the Grand Historian*, are about failed exchanges. The "six square *li* of Shang and Yu" 商於六里 refers to a political negotiation between the states of Qin and Chu in the Warring States period. At first, the Qin strategist Zhang Yi 張儀 (d. 310 BCE) promised to King Huai of Chu 楚懷王 (r. 328–299 BCE) that if Chu ended his alliance with the state of Qi, Qin would repay Chu six-hundred square *li* of Shang and Yu areas. But after Chu did offend Qi, Zhang Yi denied the previous deal, and claimed that what he promised was six square *li* of his own fief. King Huai of Chu got so irritated that he attacked Qin. But finally, Chu was defeated by Qin and Qi, and had to cede more land to make peace with these two states.³⁸⁵ It is obvious that by this story, Cai expressed his worry that Tang might not fulfill his promise after Cai sent him the desired object. With such a feeling of insecurity, Cai further implied his refusal of this exchange in the second allusion—"it is hard to give up the jade disk of Zhao" 趙璧難捨. It points to another incomplete barter related to the state of Qin. As King Zhao of Qin 秦昭王 (r. 306–251 BCE) coveted the jade disk owned by the state of Zhao, he sent a letter to Zhao, requesting to exchange the jade disk for fifteen cities. Everyone in the Zhao court understood that Qin would seize the jade disk without giving up the cities, but Zhao dared not decline Qin in view of the great power of Qin. Finally, as an emissary, Lin Xiangru 藺相如 of Zhao brought the jade to the Qin court. After discovering that Qin had no intention to keep his word, Lin Xiangru,

³⁸⁵ *Shi ji*, 70.2287–88.

by virtue of his courage and wit, safely sent the jade back to Zhao.³⁸⁶ Similar to the state of Zhao, Cai was also unwilling to make this exchange, and at the same time was not completely confident about Tang's promise. Thereupon, he had to postpone this exchange: as he said, he had not made the decision, and he further requested a face-to-face negotiation with Tang.

We are not sure whether Cai and Tang had the opportunity to get together to discuss this exchange, as Tang died in the tenth month of the same year. Only this letter was left, helping us reconstruct a scene of object exchange among Song literati. In this staged scene, Cai portrays Tang as the powerful and greedy Qin, while he himself is given the role of the weak and innocent Chu or Zhao. A relation of political power seems to play an important role in this exchange. However, this political discourse should not be understood literally, rather, to a large extent it is used in a playful way. Both friends, Tang and Cai, in effect play the persona of typical literati, who have a deep addiction to scholarly objects. It is only in this cultural sense that Tang can be comparable to the greedy Qin. He might play certain tricks on his understanding friends in order to enrich his collection, but this behavior is based on the shared scholarly interests among literati.

Such a persona of literati in the Song can even be seen in the entombed epitaph inscription of Tang Xun, written by another famous scholar, Liu Ban. In the inscription, Tang was evaluated as an upright and trustworthy official, with few personal desires; but at the same time, Liu Ban did not forget to portray another aspect: he “innately was addicted to calligraphy, painting, inkstone, and ink” 性嗜書畫研墨.³⁸⁷ This explains Cai Xiang's worry. He knew that this exchange might turn out to be a seizing, due to Tang's obsession with *wenfang*.

Although we do not know the result of this exchange, another anecdote recorded by Su Shi does tell us of a successful seizing:

Huang Luzhi studied my calligraphy, and then through calligraphy established a reputation during his time. Aficionados compete using exquisite papers and fine inksticks to request his

³⁸⁶ Ibid., 81.2439–41.

³⁸⁷ “Hanlin shidu xueshi jishizhong Tanggong muzhiming” 翰林侍讀學士給事中唐公墓誌銘, *QSW*, 1507.242.

calligraphy. He often carries with him an antique brocade satchel, the entire contents of which are these things. One day, he visited me. I rummaged through the satchel, and got a hold of a half-piece of Chengyan inkstick. Luzhi extremely begrudged it, saying, “You guys despise domestic chickens, but are fond of wild pheasants.” Ultimately I seized it. This inkstick [with which I am writing] is exactly this one.³⁸⁸

黃魯直學吾書，輒以書名于時，好事者爭以精紙妙墨求之，常攜古錦囊，滿中皆是物也。一日見過，探之，得承晏墨半挺。魯直甚惜之，曰：“群兒賤家雞，嗜野鷲。”遂奪之，此墨是也。

The whole piece captures a funny moment between the two bosom friends Su Shi and Huang Tingjian. The story begins with the ostentatious display by Huang Tingjian. Since Huang had earned a reputation as a great calligrapher, people competed to use the most refined scholarly objects to exchange for his calligraphic works. Rather than keep these precious objects in his studio, Huang put them in a satchel and carried them with him.

The story becomes even more amusing when Huang even carried this satchel when paying a visit to Su Shi. As an equally passionate collector, by this chance, Su Shi made a brazen seizing, and acquired a half-piece of the most valuable inkstick in the Song from Huang’s satchel.

Huang’s way of expressing his grudge is distinct: he directly quotes a line from Yu Yi 庾翼 (305–345) in the Jin dynasty. As a celebrated calligrapher, Yu Yi originally enjoyed an equal reputation with Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (303–361). But later Wang Xizhi became much more popular, and people all studied Wang. Yu Yi, who was in Jingzhou, got angry and sent a letter to the capital, complaining, “You guys despise domestic chickens, but value wild pheasants. All practice the calligraphy of Yishao [the courtesy name of Wang Xizhi]” 小兒輩厭家雞，愛野雉，皆學逸少書。³⁸⁹ The metaphors of “domestic chickens” and “wild pheasants” may be descriptions of different calligraphic styles, but at least in the Northern Song, they are often used

³⁸⁸ Su Shi, “Ji duo Luzhi mo” 記奪魯直墨, *Su Shi wenji*, 70.2226.

³⁸⁹ He Fasheng, *Jin zhongxing shu* 晉中興書, *juan 7*, in Tang Qiu 湯球 (1804–1881), ed., *Jiujia jiu Jinshu jiben* 九家舊晉書輯本, in *Congshu jicheng chubian*, p. 450.

as terms contrasting one's own family traditions with unfamiliar outside doctrines.³⁹⁰ Therefore, by means of Yu Yi's line, Huang was complaining that although Su Shi owned a large amount of treasured scholarly objects, he was still not satisfied, and seized more from other's collections. In this way, a greedy image of the collector Su Shi is well established. However, this anecdote is recorded by Su Shi, and in his narrative, Huang's seemingly reasonable complaint becomes somewhat ironic. As Su Shi points out in the opening lines of the story, it was precisely because Huang had practiced *Su Shi's* calligraphic style that he had become a famous calligrapher. Thus, from Su Shi's standpoint, he actually played the role of Yu Yi, or the "domestic chicken," and had reason to blame those who crazily sought after Huang's calligraphy while neglecting its origin. Huang must also be aware of this, and thus, his complaint against Su Shi is, in effect, no more than a private joke.

There is no doubt that Su Shi had enjoyed this joke. Now it was his turn to be ostentatious. In ending this anecdote in a jocular tone, Su Shi bluntly confessed that he had finally seized (*duo* 奪) the inkstick, and furthermore, that he had used this very stolen inkstick to write down the whole story. Thus, from Huang's showing off his scholarly objects to Su Shi, to Su Shi's appropriation, the theft is in fact a memory shared by two understanding friends.

Not every exchange, of course, ends in theft. There are also literary works that represent the successful exchange of studio objects.³⁹¹ Chao Buzhi, for example, records a finished exchange of inkstones in an inscription:

"I Exchanged My Tao Inkstone for Jia Yande's Collection of Duan Inkstone; Thereupon I Wrote an Inscription on It" 以洮研易賈彥德所藏端研因以銘之

³⁹⁰ See, for example, Su Shi uses the same allusion in his line 君家自有元和腳，莫厭家雞更問人 ("Liushi er waisheng qiu biji" 柳氏二外甥求筆跡, *Su Shi shiji*, 11.543), which expresses that it is not necessary for the nephews of Liu family to ask him about calligraphy, since the Liu family has their own calligraphic tradition from the Tang calligrapher Liu Gongquan 柳公權 (778–865).

³⁹¹ For studies on the poetry of exchange in the Song, scholars mainly focus on Su Shi and his circle, especially the cases of Su Shi's exchange of an inkstone with a bronze sword, and the set of exchange poems about the Qiu Lake rocks. See, e.g., Xiaoshan Yang, *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere*, chapter 4; Egan, *The Problem of Beauty*, chapter 4; and Zhiyi Yang, *Dialectics of Spontaneity: The Aesthetics and Ethics of Su Shi (1037–1101) in Poetry* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2015), pp. 104–16.

洮之厓， 端之穀， 匪山石， 惟水玉， 不可得兼一可足。 溫然可愛目鷓鴣， 何以易之鴨頭綠。	At the shore of Tao, in the valley of Duan, they are not only rocks from mountains, but also jades in water. As I cannot obtain both, one is enough to make me satisfied. It is gentle, lovable, with myna-bird eyes, And what did I exchange for it? A duck-head green. ³⁹²
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The long title tells us that Chao Buzhi bartered his Tao inkstone for Jia Yande's Duan inkstone. Both inkstones are ranked among the "Four Famous Inkstones" in the Song. The Tao inkstone originates from the Tao River in modern Gansu Province, and its most valuable type is called duck-head green, the color of which is the emerald green of the head of duck. The second type of inkstone mentioned here, Duan inkstone, is produced in the Duan River from modern Zhaoqing in Guangdong Province, and is well-known for its gentle and fine texture. One of the markings of Duan inkstone is the natural decoration of stone eyes on the surface. These stone eyes are often compared to eyes of animals due to their similar shapes, and the myna-bird eyes are among the most celebrated of the stone eyes. Both types of inkstone are often depicted by the analogy with jade, due to their crystalline texture.

Based on these characteristics, in Chao's inscription, lines 1 and 7 are descriptions of the exchanged Tao inkstone, and lines 2 and 6 address the Duan inkstone; while lines 3 and 4 describe a shared attribute of these two inkstones. It is worth noting that this inscription is written on the newly obtained Duan inkstone, and thus it is expected to be a celebration of that particular one. However, Chao addresses both. It indicates that although he could not own both and had to make an exchange (as line 5 says), he was still reluctant to part with the old inkstone, and would like to memorialize it in the inscription on the newly acquired one. Such reluctance can be often captured in Song literati's writings of the exchange of studio objects. After all, since Song literati establish such an intimate bond with their *wenfang*, their attachment to these objects is hard to change.

³⁹² *QSW*, 2740.40.

In some cases, studio objects can be traded for more. Once, Mi Fu even bartered an inkstone-mountain for a studio. Recorded by Mi Fu's contemporary Cai Tao 蔡條 (fl. 1127), Mi Fu possessed a precious inkstone-mountain originally owned by Li Yu, the last ruler of the Southern Tang. It was in the shape of thirty-six peaks, with a cavity in the center used to grind the ink. The exchange story happens when Mi Fu moved to Danyang (modern Zhenjiang):

Later, when Old Mi returned to Danyang, he considered to look for a house, but for a long time it had not been accomplished.³⁹³ While at the same time, the younger brother of the scholar Su Zhonggong, who was also the grandson of Caiweng [the courtesy name of Su Shunyuan 蘇舜元; 1006–1054], was known as an aficionado. Su owned a property with an ancient grave adjacent to the Yangzi River right underneath the Ganlu Temple. It was a densely wooded area and had been perhaps the dwelling of people in the Jin or Tang dynasty. At that time, Old Mi desired to acquire a house, and Su coveted the inkstone-mountain. Therefore, Vice Director Wang Yanzhao [the courtesy name of Wang Hanzhi 王漢之; 1054–1123] and his brother climbed Beigu Mountain with Mi and Su, and both acted as intermediaries on behalf of them. Su and Mi finally made the exchange. What Mi later named the Studio of Oceans and Mountains was exactly this one. The inkstone-mountain became part of the collection of Su, but before long, it was demanded by the imperial palace.³⁹⁴

後米老之歸丹陽也，念將卜宅，久勿就。而蘇仲恭學士之弟者，才翁孫也，號稱好事。有甘露寺下泣江一古墓，多群木，蓋晉、唐人所居。時米老欲得宅，而蘇覬得研山。於是王彥昭侍郎兄弟與登北固，共為之和會，蘇、米竟相易。米後號“海岳菴”者是也。研山藏蘇氏，未幾，索入九禁。

The original ownership as well as the final attribution of the inkstone-mountain is another story about the fate of imperial collections, but here, we just focus on the trade between literati.

Different from anecdotes of appropriating or exchanging discussed above, this time, an inkstone-mountain is exchanged for a studio, which later becomes well known as the Studio of Oceans and Mountains.

Mi's inkstone-mountain is of course a treasure, not only because it is highly valued by the famous imperial collector Li Yu, but also due to its distinct shape of thirty-six peaks, with each

³⁹³ Here, I translate *zhai* 宅 literally as “a house,” but in this context, it indeed refers to “a studio.” At that time, Mi already possessed a family residence in Danyang. In Peter Sturman's translation of this passage, he directly translates the *zhai* as “a studio” (Peter Sturman, *Mi Fu: Style and the Art of Calligraphy in Northern Song China* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997], p. 223).

³⁹⁴ Cai Tao, *Tieweishan congtan* 鐵圍山叢談 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 5.96. For discussions of this anecdote, See Peter Sturman, “Mi Youren and the Inherited Literati Tradition: Dimensions of Ink-play,” Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1989, pp. 312–13; and Peter Sturman, *Mi Fu: Style and the Art of Calligraphy in Northern Song China*, p. 1.

one in the size of a finger. At the same time, the piece of property of Su is indeed perfect for the construction of a studio. Its location, adjacent to the Yangzi River and on the Beigu Mountain, guarantees a wide and beautiful view.

Facing these, both Mi and Su found their desired objects. As Cai Tao concisely describes, Mi “desired” (*yu* 欲) the property, and Su “coveted” (*ji* 覲) the inkstone-mountain. Thereupon, an exchange was inevitably arranged. The trade was conducted in a formal fashion; there were even intermediaries involved in it.

But at the same time, this exchange is also full of literati interests. Both sides of the barter are scholars, and even the intermediaries are reputable contemporary literati. More importantly, throughout this barter, money is unmentioned; rather, it only concerns the exchange between a beloved scholarly object and a studio space in which such an object is normally placed. Here, from the perspective of enthusiastic scholars, the inkstone-mountain and the studio share the same value. Or we can say, the studio object, as a microcosm of the studio, and the studio, as a macrocosm of the object, are naturally correlated. This again demonstrates the complicated implications of the term *wenfang*, which refers to both the studio space and objects within the space; and furthermore, displays one of the ways to construct a studio space; that is, by means of the circulation of studio objects.

(2) Gifts for the Studio

A man named Yang Shi 楊适 once composed a poem, which reads:

尖頭奴有五兄弟，	The pointed-headed servant has five brothers,
十八公生四客卿。	Gentleman the Eighteenth gave birth to four guest ministers.
過我書齋無一事，	They visit my studio, with nothing to do,
似應終日待陶泓。	as if waiting out the days for Tao Hong, the Porcelain Pool. ³⁹⁵

Based on the figurative language used in *wenfang* poetry, which I have analyzed in the third section of this chapter, we can see that the above poem must be related to personified objects in the studio. The specific circumstance in which Yang Shi wrote this poem is recorded as follows:

³⁹⁵ QSS, 1803.20083.

Qian Cigong granted four cakes of ink and five individual writing brushes to Shike [the courtesy name of Yang Shi] as gifts. Yang said in jest, “How can I get an inkstone as well?” Cigong answered, “It is not hard. I just need a single poem.” Yang thereupon composed a quatrain as follows.³⁹⁶

錢次公以墨四丸、筆五枚贈時可，楊戲曰：“安得硯乎？”次公曰：“不難，須一詩。”楊乃作一絕云云。

It turns out that the above work is a jocular poem on gift-giving, or more specifically, on the demand for more gifts after receiving gifts. Yang Shi, in receiving the inksticks and writing brushes from Qian Cigong, further asked for an inkstone. Qian requested a poem from Yang Shi to meet his demand. Hence, the above poem was composed.

The first couplet is a vivid depiction of the gifts that Yang received. The “pointed-headed servant” (*jiantou nu* 尖頭奴) alludes to the biography of Gu Bi 古弼 in the Northern Wei dynasty. According to the *History of the Wei* (*Wei shu* 魏書), Emperor Mingyuan 明元帝 (r. 409–423) appreciated Gu Bi’s intelligent and upright personality, so he granted the name of “Bi” 筆 (brush) to him, which analogized the straight and useful attribute of brushes to Gu.³⁹⁷ As Gu’s head was sharp-pointed, the succeed Emperor Taiwu 太武帝 (r. 423–452) nicknamed Gu “Tip of the Brush” (*bitou* 筆頭). However, when the emperor went imperial hunting and commanded Gu to assign fine horses to riders, Gu refused in order to maintain the military strength of the state. The emperor thus addressed Gu as the “pointed-headed servant” in his fury. But of course, the emperor finally realized his mistake, and praised Gu as a treasure of the state.³⁹⁸ Therefore, in later generations, the “pointed-headed servant” is used as an alternative name of the writing brush. Parallel to this amusing name, “Gentleman the Eighteenth” (*shiba gong* 十八公) in the second line is a nickname of the pine tree, which comes from the three parts after dissecting the Chinese character *song* 松 (pine tree).

³⁹⁶ *QSS*, 1803.20084.

³⁹⁷ Later, the emperor further changed Gu’s name to Bi 弼 (assistance).

³⁹⁸ *Wei shu*, 28.689–93.

Not only borrowing these names to personify the brush and pine tree, the poet further establishes family ties between these two and the received gifts. In this way, the five pieces of writing brushes transform into five brothers of the “pointed-headed servant,” and the four pills of ink cakes become four sons of “Gentleman the Eighteenth.” The former, as a construction of fraternity, is straightforward since both sides belong to the same category; while the later parenthood is more creative, as it implies the production of the inkstick, in which ink is collected from burning pinewood. Besides endowing all the gifts with family relations respectively, the poet further builds a close connection between brushes and inksticks. The title employed by the poet to address inksticks provides a crucial hint. Using “Guest Minister” (*keqing* 客卿) as a nickname for ink is derived from the famous Han scholar Yang Xiong’s “Rhapsody on the Tall Poplars Palace” (“Changyang fu” 長楊賦). In framing an interlocution within the rhapsody, Yang Xiong sets Plume Grove (Hanlin 翰林) as the host, and Sir Ink (Zimo 子墨) as the guest minister. The main debate between the host and the guest minister is on the reasonableness of imperial hunting.³⁹⁹ It is worth noting that the role of the guest minister represents the opposition to excessive imperial hunting, which directly echoes the view held by Gu Bi. Accordingly, similar political opinions connect Sir Ink and the “pointed-headed servant.” Or in other words, the personified brushes and inksticks share the same upright and intelligent characters, and readers can thus imagine that they must be good companions when being presented to Yang’s studio.

The poet, then, portrays a dramatic scene in the second half of the quatrain. According to him, the brushes and inksticks got along well, but their gathering was far from complete with the absence of another constant companion, Tao Hong (the inkstone). In Han Yu’s “Biography of Mao Ying,” we have already learnt that “whenever going out or staying in, they (brush, ink, inkstone, and paper) must be together” 出處必偕. It is the same in this poem. Every day in the studio, the brushes and inksticks were waiting for Tao Hong. It seems that only with the coming

³⁹⁹ David R. Knechtges, trans., *Wen Xuan, or Selections of Refined Literature*, Vol. 2 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 137–51.

of Tao Hong, were these personified objects able to accomplish certain achievements. In this way, from the perspectives of the received gifts, the poet skillfully demonstrates the necessity for him to gain another gift. Indeed, it can be inferred that in the end, by means of this poem, Yang Shi succeeded in getting an inkstone from Qian Cigong.

In fact, compared to barter, the gift-giving of studio objects like this is more frequently represented in Song literature, and implies a closer relationship between the giver and the recipient. An example is Liu Zai's 劉宰 (1166–1239) "Inscription on the Five Objects of *wenfang*" ("Wenfang wuwu ming" 文房五物銘), which begins with a short preface, and then the main text of the inscription:

My Chamber of Obtainment had just been constructed. Registrar Zhang sent me a writing brush, an inkstick, an inkstone, a sandalwood ruler-shaped paper weight, a crystal brush rest as gifts. I replied in jest.⁴⁰⁰

得軒初成，張簿送筆、墨、硯、檀香壓尺、水晶筆架，戲答。

It is flat and deep. It gives full play of the vigor of the ink but without competing with the ink. I, by means of these, know that it is from the old mine of Duan River.⁴⁰¹

平而泓，盡墨之銳而不與墨爭，吾是以知爲端溪之舊坑也。

It is curved but vigorous. With the cap off, its hair becomes neater. I, by means of these, learn that it is Mao Ying from the Imperial Secretariat.

圓而勁，免冠而髮逾整，吾是以知爲中書之毛穎也。

Crystallizing blue mist, it becomes darker and darker. I, again, by means of these, know that Tinggui does not pass away, and that his domestic discipline has been transmitted.⁴⁰²

凝青煙，玄之又玄，吾又以知廷珪之不死，家法之有傳也。

It is straight and level, with yellow color inside and interconnected textile. When my clouds and mist drop on the paper, it allows the margins to be pacified, as the guardian of the great

⁴⁰⁰ In this translation, I treat each object as singular, but it is also possible that each type contains more than one, especially for the ruler-shaped paper weights, which are often found in pairs.

⁴⁰¹ The quality of raw stones from "old mines" (*jiukeng* 舊坑) is considered to be much better than that from new mines.

⁴⁰² The phrase "becoming darker and darker" 玄之又玄 is from *Laozi*; see *Laozi Daodejing zhu jiaoshi*, 1.2.

Li Tinggui is the most famous ink maker in the Southern Tang. His inkstick, which was called the "Tinggui inkstick," was known for its jade-like firmness and fine texture, and was highly valued among Song literati.

wall. Isn't it Master Tan who guards the Western River?⁴⁰³

直而砥，黃中而通理，使吾雲煙落紙，而邊隅帖然若長城之衛者，非守西河之檀子歟？

On a snow cliff, with icy foundation, [peaks] stand ranged, without inclining. They allow my President of Secretariat, sometimes with his friends of glue and varnish, to rest in leisure among them, without the danger of falling down. If you ask who is hosting this? It is the immortal who inhales the wind and sips the dew.⁴⁰⁴

雪崖冰趾，離立而不倚，使吾中書君時與其膠漆之友高枕其間而不躓，問誰主者，則吸風飲露之仙子也。

Alas! The Chamber of Obtainment is so small, and how is it able to possess all these? It is because the Master of Gardenia Cottage, who perhaps sympathized with the decline of the literary vitality of my studio, gave me these five objects as gifts in order to support and inspire vitality.⁴⁰⁵

猗歟！得軒藂爾，何以有此？蓋樞室主人憐其文氣之衰，贈此五者以扶持而振起之也。

As the preface clearly indicates, Liu Zai's inscription is composed to express appreciation for Registrar Zhang's gifts for Liu's newly-constructed studio, the "Chamber of Obtainment" (Dexuan 得軒). The meaning of this studio name seems to be vague, but from another short essay "Inscribing on the Plaque of the Chamber of Obtainment" ("Ti Dexuan bian" 題得軒扁) written around the same time by Liu Zai, we can learn that this studio name is actually derived from a couplet in the seventh poem of Tao Yuanming's series of "Drinking Wine" ("Yinjiu" 飲酒), which reads, "I whistled jauntily below the eastern eaves of the veranda, / For the moment I

⁴⁰³ The phrase "clouds and mist drop on the paper" 雲煙落紙 comes from Du Fu, "Yinzhong baxian ge" 飲中八仙歌, which reads: 脫帽露頂王公前，揮毫落紙如雲煙 (*Dushi xiangzhu*, 2.84).

The Western River 西河 may refer to Xihe Commandery. The military leader Wu Qi 吳起 (440–381 BCE) was appointed the Commandery Governor of Xihe when he served the state of Wei. His governing there made neighboring states seek for peace with Wei; see *Shi ji*, 65.2166–67. Master Tan 檀子 is a minister from the State of Qi, who guarded the Southern City, and made the Qi border settled; see *Shi ji*, 46.1891.

⁴⁰⁴ The phrase "standing ranged" (*lili* 離立) is a description of the gesture that several objects stand ranged. Since brush rests are often in the shape of mountain peaks, it is very likely that the subjects of *lili* in this sentence are peaks. But another way to understand this sentence is to take "icy foundation" (*bingzhi* 冰趾) as the subject of *lili*. *Zhi* 趾 normally denotes toe, foot, or sometime, leg. So it is also possible that the author compares the peaks to legs or feet.

⁴⁰⁵ *QSW*, 6847.160. There is a self-commentary under Zhishi 樞室: "Zhishi is the self-sobriquet of Zhang" 張自號.

obtained the meaning of my life” 嘯傲東軒下，聊復得此生。⁴⁰⁶ In the poem, Tao Yuanming realizes the true meaning of life when behaving in a self-confident and unrestrained demeanor. And indeed, as the description in “Inscribing on the Plaque of the Chamber of Obtainment” conveys, Liu Zai completely borrows such an attitude of self-satisfaction and self-confidence into his own studio. Although in Tao Yuanming’s poem, a *xuan* 軒 just refers to eaves of a veranda, or simply a veranda, which is far from the *xuan*, or the studio, in Liu Zai’s writings, this does not prevent Liu from inheriting the mental outlook of Tao for his newly-built studio.

At the same time, material preparation is also necessary in the construction of a studio. The “Inscription on the Five Objects of *wenfang*” precisely records such a process. The set of writing brush, inkstick, inkstone, paper weight, and brush rest are indeed primary implements for a studio. More significantly, these five objects are not randomly gathered; rather, they are gifts sent from another studio, the “Gardenia Cottage” (Zhi shi 梘室) owned by a Registrar Zhang 張. Although we know little about this Zhang, even just based on the above inscription, it can be concluded that Zhang and Liu are good companions, since the jocular tone throughout the text (“replying in jest” [*xida* 戲答]) is mostly seen in interactions between friends.

Following the preface that introduces the background of writing this inscription, the next five lines provide vivid descriptions of the five gifts of *wenfang*. The structure is patently clear, as each line focuses on a single object. Creatively, Liu frames these lines like riddles. In each line, he begins with a series of characteristics and functions, without the appearance of the depicted object; and only then, does he disclose that these refer to one of the scholarly objects that Zhang presented to him. The specific ways that Liu describes each object include tropes that are frequently used in the literature about *wenfang*, such as personification, pun, metaphor, and allusion. For example, in depicting the brush rest in the fifth line, based on its crystal texture, Liu not only compares it to snow and ice, but also personifies it as an elegant immortal. Such an

⁴⁰⁶ *Tao Yuanming ji*, 3.90.

image of an immortal who “inhales the wind and sips the dew” 吸風飲露 further reminds readers of the immortal portrayed in the *Zhuangzi*, who dwells in the Guye 姑射 Mountain, only drinks wind and dew, without eating any of the five grains.⁴⁰⁷ However, the immortal residing in Liu’s studio is distinguished from *Zhuangzi*’s in the sense that he always actively associates with others, rather than separating himself from worldly relationships. Liu portrays that he carefully lodges the President of Secretariat and the president’s bosom friend. Of course, it is also a pun to actually describe the state that the brush rest holds the brush that has ink on it, to avoid the brush-in-use smearing other things. In this way, the immortal, or the brush rest, is characterized as being refined but warm-hearted as well. The other four objects are also shaped in a similar manner. All of them have distinctive characteristics, and at the same time fulfill their duties diligently.

After celebrating these five objects, the ending of the inscription further emphasizes the theme of giving gifts. As for the action of giving objects of *wenfang* as presents, Liu not only treats this as an emblem of friendship between Zhang and himself, but more significantly, he frames the gift as a crucial step in the completion of the construction of his studio. With responsibility for inspiring the “literary vitality” (*wenqi* 文氣) of the Chamber of Obtainment, these objects carry the blessing and expectation from the Gardenia Cottage. In other words, these objects of *wenfang* are solid support from one studio to construct another studio. They connect these two originally private spaces by means of friendship and shared interests.

Another form of gift-giving popular among Song literati is called “moistening the brush” (*runbi* 潤筆), a euphemistic expression of remuneration, referring to the pay for a piece of writing or art creation. Admittedly, this act of “moistening the brush” is not an invention of the Song dynasty. The phrase *runbi* can be found as early as in the *History of the Sui* (*Sui shu* 隋書),

⁴⁰⁷ See *Zhuangzi jishi*, 1.28.

while the phenomenon starts even earlier.⁴⁰⁸ It includes both official and non-official types, and the payment can be either in cash or with objects. Among these various forms, the remuneration among Song literati is particularly related to our discussion, since in reward for the literary composition, calligraphy, or painting created by friends, Song literati often present a number of studio objects to their friends. Instead of monetary payment, these gifts of studio objects highlight the elegance shared by literati. As Ouyang Xiu's record of his own experience in sending remuneration to Cai Xiang shows,

Cai Junmo, on behalf of me, had copied out my “Preface to *Colophons on Collected Records of the Past*,” and inscribed it on stone. Its brushwork was especially refined and vigorous, and it was treasured by the age. I used a set of things such as the weasel-fur writing brush, green-patina brush rest, large and small dragon caked tea, and spring water from Hui Mountain to moisten the brush.⁴⁰⁹ Junmo laughed loudly, considering them extremely elegant and not vulgar at all. About a month later, there was someone who sent me a case of incense cakes of Qingquan [Clear Spring]. Junmo heard about it and sighed, saying, “The incense cakes came too late, which makes the remuneration that I received particularly lacking this single fine thing.” This was also laughable. Qingquan is a place name; the incense cake is a sort of charcoal.⁴¹⁰ It can be used as incense. The fire from one cake would not burn out for a whole day.⁴¹¹

蔡君謨既爲余書《集古錄目序》刻石，其字尤精勁，爲世所珍。余以鼠鬚栗尾筆、銅綠筆格、大小龍茶、惠山泉等物爲潤筆，君謨大笑，以爲太清而不俗。後月餘，有人遺余以清泉香餅一篋者，君謨聞之，歎曰：“香餅來遲，使我潤筆獨無此一種佳物。”茲又可笑也。清泉，地名；香餅，石炭也。用以焚香，一餅之火，可終日不滅。

⁴⁰⁸ See *Sui shu*, 38.1137. For a general introduction on the tradition of *runbi*, see Zhu Guohua 朱國華 and Fan Jinghua 范靜擘, “Runbi kaolun” 潤筆考論, *Dongnan wenhua* 114.4 (1996): 116–21. On *runbi* in the Song, see Wang Zhaopeng 王兆鵬, “Tan Songdai de runbi” 談宋代的潤筆, *Songdai wenhua yanjiu* 16 (2009): 701–12.

⁴⁰⁹ On the *shuxu liwei bi* 鼠鬚栗尾筆, it is hard to determine whether the brush hair is made of mouse, weasel, or squirrel.

The “dragon caked tea” (*longcha* 龍茶) is a superb tea originating in the Northern Song, which was used as tribute tea. Cai Xiang actually plays a crucial role in promoting the reputation of the dragon caked tea; See Ouyang Xiu, *Guitian lu*, in *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 127.1931.

Hui Mountain is in Wuxi of modern Jiangsu Province. It is said that in the Tang, Lu Yu 陸羽 (733–804), the Sage of Tea, ranked the spring from Hui Mountain as the second-best spring under Heaven.

⁴¹⁰ In the later generation of Ouyang and Cai, Chao Chongzhi 晁沖之 also points out the characteristics of this incense cake in a poem “He sixiong Qingquan xiangbingzi” 和四兄清泉香餅子, the first couplet of which reads: 清絕端因柏子香，風流特可付文房 (*QSS*, 1230.13902). On this incense cake, see also Wu Xiaoyu 吳曉煜, “Cong Ouyang Xiu de runbi xiangmeibing tanqi” 從歐陽修的潤筆香煤餅談起, *Meitan jingji yanjiu* 11 (2001): 55.

⁴¹¹ Ouyang Xiu, *Guitian lu*, in *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 127.1934.

The *Collected Records of the Past* (*Jigu lu* 集古錄) is a collection of rubbings of stone and bronze inscriptions by Ouyang Xiu. But not only collected a broad range of rubbings from the Zhou dynasty to the Tang and Five Dynasties periods, more significantly, Ouyang Xiu composed colophons for several hundred pieces of his collection to explore both the aesthetic and historical values of these rubbings.⁴¹² As an outline of these colophons, Ouyang Xiu also wrote a “Preface to *Colophons on Collected Records of the Past*” (“*Jigu lu mu xu*” 集古錄目序),⁴¹³ and it is precisely this preface that he invited Cai Xiang, who was his good friend as well as the celebrated calligrapher, to copy out. The aim of this invitation for art creation is clearly expressed in Ouyang’s requesting letter to Cai in 1062—Ouyang expected that Cai’s outstanding calligraphy put in the opening of his compilation would help his work be long preserved in future generations. Indeed, as Ouyang states at the beginning of the above note, Cai’s copy of the preface was so excellent that “it was treasured by the age” 爲世所珍. In other words, with its circulation, the calligraphic work fulfills Ouyang’s original expectation of attracting public attention, and therefore enhancing the reputation of the collection.

Although Ouyang was concerned about the influence of his work in the public realm, his scholarly pursuit revealed in the *Collected Records of the Past* is far away from the common interest in the world. In later generations, by means of this work, Ouyang is considered to be the one who opened the field of epigraphy in the Song, and had a multitude of followers. However, at his own time, Ouyang positioned his project as something largely distinguished from popular taste. As what Ouyang says in the requesting letter to Cai, “I, in private, considered again: my fondness goes sharply different from the commonplace. So I alone took pains to collect things discarded by the common people, yet for fear that I was not doing enough. This was also laughable” 竊復自念，好嗜與俗異馳，乃獨區區收拾世人之所棄者，惟恐不及，是又可笑

⁴¹² For a detailed and in-depth study on Ouyang Xiu’s *Collected Records of the Past*, see Ronald Egan, *The Problem of Beauty*, chapter 1.

⁴¹³ *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 42.599–600.

也。⁴¹⁴ Here, “things discarded by the common people” 世人之所棄者 directly refer to the collection and study of rubbings. But rather than defend himself for being different from the taste in the common world, Ouyang was proud of his distinctive pursuit. The self-mockery (“This was also laughable” 是又可笑也) implies that the subject is confident in or even proud of his behavior.

We can also catch such a gesture of mockery in the remuneration sent from Ouyang to Cai. To express appreciation for Cai’s calligraphy, Ouyang deliberately selected a range of studio objects for Cai, which included a weasel-fur writing brush, a green-patina brush rest, large and small dragon caked tea, and the Hui Mountain spring. We can imagine that by means of these objects, in his studio, Cai was able to write with a rare brush, and sometimes put the brush on an archaistic brush rest, enjoying delicate tea usually used for tribute, which was brewed with the second-best spring water in the world. All of these are hard to evaluate in cash; and to use Cai’s words, they were “extremely elegant and not vulgar at all” 太清而不俗. Even Cai himself “laughed loudly” (*daxiao* 大笑) towards them. This laughter does not simply express the joy of receiving these gifts, but also his approval to Ouyang’s refinement, as well as self-mockery at their shared purely elegant pursuit that seems incompatible with the common world. A similar mockery in this note is given from Ouyang’s perspective, when they talk about the incense cakes of Qingquan. As Ouyang specially introduces the naming and characteristics of these incense cakes at the end of this note, it implies that they may not be popular incense used at that time. In hearing that Ouyang received a case of rare incense, Cai regretted that his remuneration missed such refined objects. Cai’s desire for the incense leads to Ouyang’s comment that “this was also laughable” 茲又可笑也, which, again, serves as a mockery of their shared addiction to refined and extraordinary objects not broadly accepted by the common mass.

No matter the writing brush and brush rest, or tea and incense cake, these are Ouyang’s

⁴¹⁴ “Yu Cai Junmo qiushu ‘Jigu lu mu xu’ shu” 與蔡君謨求書集古錄目序書, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 70.1022–23. The main body of this letter is translated and discussed by Ronald Egan, *The Problem of Beauty*, pp. 20–21.

beloved objects in his own studio. His willingness to send them to Cai as gifts not only acts as an expression to show gratitude, but more crucially, comes from his understanding of Cai's interests. He was sure that Cai was able to enjoy and treasure these objects exactly as he had.

We can also understand the act of sending gifts as a special form of exchange—an exchange between objects and literary composition or art creation, since among Song literati, giving gifts is often accompanied with the recipient's repaying them with a poem, an essay, or an artistic work. Gōyama Kuwamu 合山究 defines literary writings like these into a sub-genre “poetry associated with gifts,” and discusses how they reflect the elegance pursued in the social life of Song literati.⁴¹⁵ But here, I examine this sub-genre from another aspect, that is, how these circulated gifts, as well as the accompanied writings, connect primarily private studios into a social network. Compared to other gifts, objects of *wenfang*, as we discussed in the second section of this chapter, had a truly intimate relation with their owner. Therefore, when these objects treasured originally in one studio are sent to another studio as presents, they represent a sharing of common taste, intimate feelings, and private experiences between the giver and the recipient. These objects in effect partially make private studios open to each other, and by means of this, display and enhance the close relationship and mutual understanding between studio owners.

(3) Connoisseurship in *Wenfang*

Another common way to share studio objects among literati is through connoisseurship. Not only admire the collection of studio objects on one's own, literati also generously invite his friends to appreciate it together. Just as Zhao Xigu depicts in his *Records of the Pure Blissfulness in the Cavern Heaven*, which is discussed at the beginning of this chapter, in enjoying studio objects, “distinguished guests gracefully standing” 佳客玉立 also plays an indispensable role in studio life. In this way, the original personal collection is open to a selected group of friends,

⁴¹⁵ Gōyama Kuwamu, “Zōtōhin ni kansuru shi ni arawareta Sōdai bunjin no shumiteki kōyū seikatsu” 贈答品に関する詩にあらわれた宋代文人の趣味的交遊生活, *Chūgoku bungaku ronsō* 2 (1971): 23–47. This topic is also mentioned in Stuart Sargent, “Huang T'ing-Chien's 'Incense of Awareness': Poems of Exchange, Poems of Enlightenment,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 121.1 (Jan.–Mar., 2001): 60–71.

waits for their evaluations, and by means of which gains certain publicity.

Such a scene of connoisseurship is frequently represented in Song literary writings. In Yang Wanli's long poem "Colophon on the Authentic Work of Gentleman Ouyang's 'Preface to Colophons on Collected Records of the Past' Collected by Wang Shunbo [the courtesy name of Wang Houzhi]" ("Ba Wang Shunbo suocang Ou Gong 'Jigu lu xu' zhenji" 跋王順伯所藏歐公集古錄序真蹟),⁴¹⁶ for instance, Yang Wanli sets himself as an onlooker, and witnesses the process of calligraphy appreciation among three other scholars—Wang Houzhi 王厚之 (1131–1204), You Mao, and Shen Kui 沈揆 (*jinshi* 1160):

遂初欣遇兩詩伯，	Suichu and Xinyu are two leaders of the poetry world，
臨川先生一禪客。	Master Linchuan is a single Chan amateur. ⁴¹⁷
三人情好元不疎，	The affection among these three people are primarily not aloof，
祇是相逢逢不得。	But only as for meeting, indeed they cannot meet.
渠有貞觀碑，	He owns a stele from Zhenguan era，
儂有永和詞。	I possess the lyric of Yonghe era.
真贗爭到底，	Between authenticity and forgery, they dispute thoroughly，
未說妍與蚩。	Yet they have not mentioned beauty or ugliness.
珊瑚擊得如粉碎，	The coral was smashed like powders, ⁴¹⁸
趙璧博城翻手悔。	The jade disk of Zhao was to exchange cities, but one went back on his word as quickly as turning the palm.
不似三家鬪斷碑，	But both cannot compare to the state that these three people fight for fragmentary steles，
夜半戰酣莫先退。	At midnight when their battle is in the extreme, nobody is willing to retreat first.
皇朝愛碑首歐陽，	In our contemporary dynasty, as for those who treasured steles，
集古萬卷六一堂。	Ouyang must be the first，
	He collected records of the past for ten thousand <i>juan</i> , in his Hall of Six Single Things.
玄珪漆玉堆墨寶，	Dark jade tablet and lacquered jade made treasured pieces of calligraphy piled, ⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁶ The "Preface to *Collected Records of the Past*" 集古錄序 is a variant title of "Preface to *Colophons on Collected Records of the Past*" 集古錄目序. For example, in the *Sibu congkan* version of *Ouyang wenzhong gongji*, Ouyang's requesting letter to Cai is under the title "Yu Cai Junmo qiushu 'Jigu lu xu' shu" 與蔡君謨求書集古錄序書.

⁴¹⁷ Suichu 遂初 is the sobriquet of You Mao; Xinyu 欣遇 is the sobriquet of Shen Kui; and Linchuan 臨川 is the sobriquet of Wang Houzhi.

⁴¹⁸ This alludes to competition between Shi Chong and Wang Kai; see *Shishuo xinyu jiaojian*, 30.8.

⁴¹⁹ The "dark jade tablet" (*xuanguai* 玄珪) refers to inksticks, as the shape of one type of inksticks is similar to that of jade tablet.

黟霜黑水塗緇裳。	Inky frost and dark water smeared the black robe.
臨川無端汲古手，	Linchuan is a person drawing from the past, never with an end,
席卷歐家都奄有。	He rolled up things in the Ouyang family like a mat and occupied all.
岫山科斗不要論，	It is not necessary to mention the stele in tadpole script at Gou Peak,
嶧山野火不經焚。	On Yi Mountain, prairie fire had not burned through. ⁴²⁰
尤家沈家喙如鐵，	The mouths of You and Shen were like iron,
未放臨川第一勳。	They had not easily granted the first-class merit to Linchuan.
不知臨川何許得尤物，	They did not understand how Linchuan was able to obtain this rare object,
集古序篇出真筆。	This Preface to <i>Colophons on Collected Records of the Past</i> indeed comes from authentic brushwork.
遂初心妬口不言，	Suichu was jealous in his mind, but did not speak it out,
君看跋語猶悵然。	You can see from his colophon that he was still disappointed. ⁴²¹

The three main characters portrayed in this poem—You Mao, Shen Kui, and Wang Houzhi—are all reputable officials as well as famous collectors in the Southern Song. You Mao constructed a studio named the “Hall of Realization of Initial Intention” (Suichu tang 遂初堂), which was well-known for its extensive collection of books and inscriptions. Wang Houzhi was even more addicted to collecting rubbings of inscriptions, based on which he compiled the *Records on Bronze and Stone in the Returning Studio* (*Fuzhai jinshi lu* 復齋金石錄). Although the book is not extant nowadays, even the title itself reflects its inheritance from Ouyang Xiu’s *Collected Records of the Past*. As their contemporary, the celebrated official and poet Zhou Bida comments, “As for the gentlemen of the court who are fond of collecting inscriptions of bronze and stone and moreover are erudite, nobody can compare to Shen Yuqing [the courtesy name of Shen Kui], You Yanzhi [the courtesy name of You Mao], and Wang Shunbo. I often consult them” 朝士喜藏

⁴²⁰ The “stele in tadpole script at Gou Peak” (*Goushan kedou* 岫山科斗) is mentioned in Han Yu’s poem “Goulou Peak” (“Goulou shan” 岫嶼山); see Qian Zhonglian, ed. and annot., *Han Changli shi xinian jishi* 韓昌黎詩繫年集釋 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1984), 3.284. Gou Peak, or Goulou Peak, is located in Heng Mountains of modern Hu’nan Province. The tadpole script is one type of seal script. Its stroke shape is similar to tadpole. It is said that this stele at Gou Peak is a relic of the legendary sage king Yu. But Song literati had already doubted its authenticity. Ouyang did not mention it in his *Colophons on Collected Records of the Past*. But Ouyang indeed recorded the stele in Yi Mountain; see entries of “Qin Yishan keshi” 秦嶧山刻石, “Qin Taishan keshi” 秦泰山刻石, and “Zou Yishan keshi” 鄒嶧山刻石, *Jigu lu bawei*, in *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 134.2083–85.

⁴²¹ *Yang Wanli ji jianjiao*, 24.1215.

金石刻且殫見洽聞者，莫如沈虞卿、尤延之、王順伯，予每咨問焉。⁴²² In fact, Yang Wanli's self-commentary in this poem also introduces, these three characters “are all fond of collecting stele inscriptions, and showing off to each other” 皆喜收碑刻，各自誇尚. Yang's poem is precisely a vivid and humorous display of their addiction to calligraphy collection, and furthermore, their eagerness to show off through connoisseurship.

This time, it is Wang Houzhi who newly acquired the authentic work of Ouyang Xiu's “Preface to *Colophons on Collected Records of the Past*,” and thereupon invited his friends to enjoy and inscribe on it. But Yang's poem does not immediately start from this particular gathering. Rather, the first half of the poem (lines 1–12) outlines the normal state during the activity of connoisseurship among You, Shen, and Wang. Taking this as the background, the second half (lines 13–26) then zooms in to the scene of appreciating Ouyang Xiu's calligraphic work.

The opening lines directly put the three main characters on the stage. Just as most Song literati held multiple identities of official, scholar, and poet, these three figures were also considered as poets or Chan amateur. But here, Yang Wanli does not aim to introduce their achievements in poetry or Chan practice. Rather, his emphasis is on the second couplet. That is, these figures had great affection when they were dealing with other interests, such as poetry or religious cultivation; however, there was a single issue that could definitely change their harmonious relationship. What is this particular issue? Yang provides the answer in lines 5–8. These four lines are amply highlighted in the whole poem through its distinctive form. Different from the seven-syllable lines used in most parts of the poem, these two couplets are in lines of five syllables. This defamiliarization leads readers to ponder over and have a deep impression on these lines. Moreover, the language here changes to the style of music-bureau songs. The pronouns as *qu* 渠 or *nong* 儂 can be frequently seen in folk songs, especially in dialogic stanzas

⁴²² Zhou Bida, “Ti ‘Xiuxi tie’” 題修禊帖, Yu Song 俞松 (fl. 1244), *Lanting xukao* 蘭亭續考, in *Zhibuzu zhai congshu* 知不足齋叢書, 1.13b.

of love songs. *Qu* is a second pronoun, while *nong*, in most cases refers to first person, but can also be used as second or third person pronoun. Hence, these words help to produce the effect of multiple voices in one poem. By using them, Yang humorously represents the fierce competition when these three figures were boasting about their collections to each other. Instead of enjoying the aesthetic beauty of these calligraphic works, they concentrated on showing off their own valued objects, and furthermore, harshly questioned the authenticity of others' collections.

Such a stanza in jocular tone seems still not to be able to fully show the intensity of the contest among these figures, so Yang continues elaborating on it in the following four lines. Two famous historical stories regarding competitions for display are selected first. One is about the ostentation of coral trees between Shi Chong 石崇 (249–300) and Wang Kai 王愷 in the Western Jin. When Wang Kai received a priceless coral tree more than two *chi* in height from his nephew, Emperor Wu (r. 265–290), he showed it off to Shi Chong. But Shi smashed it with an iron *ruyi* scepter. Wang believed that Shi was envious of his treasure, and got extremely angry. However, in saying that he would repay it, Shi asked his attendants to bring out his own coral trees. Among them, there were six or seven trees as tall as three or four *chi*; those similar to Wang's were numerous. The other anecdote is on the severe struggle for the invaluable jade disk of Zhao between the states of Qin and Zhao. These two stories are of course typical examples of vying for precious objects. However, by using “not comparing to” (*busi* 不似) as a transition, Yang puts the connoisseurship activity among these three figures to an even more drastic level. To enhance the atmosphere of fierceness, Yang further employs metaphors of battle to describe this artistic activity. Accordingly, the normally elegant appreciation of steles becomes “a battle in the extreme” (*zhanhan* 戰酣). Although we know that they were actually examining rubbings of “fragmentary steles” (*duanbei* 斷碑) that were too antique to be undamaged, in Yang's rendering, it seems that these steles became broken precisely because these figures were “fighting” (*dou* 鬪) too intensely, just as the coral tree was struck in contest, or the jade disk was almost smashed by Lin Xiangru in the Qin court.

In such a context of the connoisseurship practice among You, Shen, and Wang, Yang turns to focus on a specific case in the second half of the poem—their examination of Ouyang Xiu’s “Preface to *Colophons on Collected Records of the Past*” owned by Wang. Lines 13–16 generalize the basic background about Ouyang’s achievement in the field of epigraphy, which reminds readers of the self-statement by Ouyang in his “Biography of the Retired Scholar with Six Single Things.” His fondness for rubbings and his diligence in collecting them determined the completion of *Collected Records of the Past* and the writing of colophons on it. From line 16 to 17, time flies to the moment about one hundred years later. Lines 17–20 then introduce the rediscovery of Ouyang’s preface to the colophons by another epigraphy enthusiast, Wang Houzhi. These lines, on the one hand, highlight Wang’s penchant for collecting rubbings. As “a person drawing from the past” (*jigu shou* 汲古手), Wang did not allow himself to leave out any antiques. Facing the collection of Ouyang, he even “rolled up them like a mat” (*xijuan* 席卷). On the other hand, this stanza also implies the authenticity of the preface. Since it directly came from the Ouyang family, it should be more credible.

Despite this, You and Shen, as they always did, strongly questioned the authenticity of the work. The whole poem ends with You and Shen’s challenge and judgment regarding the work. These two figures’ attitudes also undergo a gradual change. In the beginning (lines 21–22), at the first sight of Ouyang’s preface showed by Wang, You and Shen immediately began to question it with their “mouths like iron” 喙如鐵. It was almost like a reflex, the aim of which was to prevent Wang from achieving the highest merit of collecting. However, after careful examination, You and Shen failed to find any defects in the work, and had to admit the authenticity of the preface. But still, the embedded prose-like line (“They did not understand how Linchuan was able to obtain this rare object” 不知臨川何許得尤物), which stands out in the poem, expresses You and Shen’s disappointment and reluctance to accept the fact. Finally, as a normal practice during connoisseurship, they needed to make their inscriptions on the work. You, at this moment, was still envious of Wang’s extraordinary gain. Even from his colophon, one can observe that he

remained dismayed.

Up to now, Yang Wanli has depicted a full process of connoisseurship. These appreciated objects, including the “Preface to *Colophons on Collected Records of the Past*,” are no doubt foci throughout the activity of connoisseurship, but more significantly, they also serve as connecting points among studio spaces. From a chronological perspective, these objects must be collected and cherished in one’s studio in the past; as time passes, they enter another studio and are again highly appreciated by the new studio owner. The handing down of these objects is in fact a cultural inheritance from the past to the present. Ouyang’s preface is a typical example in this sense. At the time when Ouyang collected one thousand *juan* of rubbings in his studio, and wrote colophons as well as the preface for them, he must expect his writings to be passed down to later generations. His act of inviting Cai Xiang to copy out the preface also had this aim. About a hundred years later, Ouyang’s preface became one of the treasures in Wang’s studio. As Zhu Xi claimed when he was also invited by Wang to enjoy Ouyang’s preface:

As for collecting and recording bronze and stone inscriptions, originally this practice did not exist in ancient times. Perhaps it began with Ouyang, the Duke Wenzhong [the posthumous name of Ouyang Xiu]. Now Shunbo is fond of antiquities without satiety, which is even stronger than what Ouyang did. And he further obtained this authentic work of Ouyang’s preface. This was not accidental.”⁴²³

集錄金石，於古初無，蓋自歐陽文忠公始。今順伯嗜古無厭，又有甚於公之所爲。而復得公此序真蹟藏之，其不偶然矣。

Indeed, Wang’s gain of Ouyang’s authentic work is not completely by accident, in the sense that he shared the same interest with Ouyang, so he was enthusiastic about searching for objects that carried on similar intellectual pursuits. On the other hand, synchronically, these studio objects grant rare opportunities for scholars to come into one’s personal studio. In virtue of connoisseurship, literati are able to develop an intimate conversation about studio objects in each other’s studio, without being restrained by any outside social order. In this way, studio objects construct a double connection among studios, which includes the interaction between studios in

⁴²³ Zhu Xi, “Ti Ougong ‘Jinshi lu xu’ zhenji” 題歐公金石錄序真蹟, *QSW*, 5626.14.

the past and that in the present, as well as the communication between studios of the same period.

Chapter Five: Constructing Nature and Culture In and Out of the Studio

In this last chapter, I will analyze the attributes of the studio by going beyond the studio, in terms of its relationship with another distinctive space. As Mark Edward Lewis asserts, “It is the relations between things, relations expressed by such oppositions as inside/outside, center/periphery, or superior/inferior, that defines space.”⁴²⁴ The space of the studio needs to be defined by other related spaces, for instance, by the natural space. Thus, I will show first how, in Song literary and pictorial representations, the studio, as a cultural space, interacts with its natural surroundings; and second, how the nature-surrounded studio differentiates itself from the hermitage.

I Framed Nature, Framed Culture

In 1071, Sima Guang moved to Luoyang to enact a self-imposed retirement in resistance to the New Policies reforms led by Wang Anshi. Two years later, he constructed the “Garden of Solitary Enjoyment” (Dule yuan 獨樂園), and composed a well-known account for it. In 1077, when Su Shi was at Xuzhou, he celebrated this garden in his poem “Sima Junshi’s [the courtesy name of Sima Guang] Garden of Solitary Enjoyment” (“Sima Junshi Dule yuan” 司馬君實獨樂園), the opening of which reads,

青山在屋上，	Green hills are above the cottage,
流水在屋下。	Flowing water is beneath the cottage.
中有五畝園，	There is a five- <i>mu</i> garden, ⁴²⁵
花竹秀而野。	Flowers and bamboo are elegant yet wild.
花香襲杖屨，	The fragrance of flowers invades the cane and shoes,
竹色侵杯罌。	The color of bamboo intrudes on the wine cup.
樽酒樂餘春，	With a cup of wine, one enjoys the lingering spring,

⁴²⁴ Mark Edward Lewis, *The Construction of Space in Early China* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2006), p. 1.

⁴²⁵ The “five-*mu* garden” (*Wumu yuan* 五畝園) derives from the opening lines of Bai Juyi’s “By the Pond” (“Chishang pian” 池上篇), which reads, “There are houses of ten *mu*, / and a garden of five *mu*” 十畝之宅，五畝之園 (*Bai Juyi ji jianjiao*, 69.3706). Later, it is used as a set phrase to refer to a small garden.

棋局消長夏。 By the chess game, one savors the long summer.⁴²⁶

It is worth noting that Su Shi had not visited the garden when he wrote this poem. In a letter to Sima Guang, he wrote, “For a long time I have not read your new writings. Suddenly I received the ‘Account of the Garden of Solitary Enjoyment,’ and I chanted it and ruminated on it incessantly. Then, overrating my own ability, I composed this poem, just for a smile” 久不見公新文，忽領《獨樂園記》，誦味不已，輒不自揆，作一詩，聊發一笑耳。⁴²⁷ Partly because Su Shi was inspired by Sima Guang’s account of the garden and wrote the poem drawing on imagination, his depiction of the garden is sketch-like. However, such an outline succinctly points to the key features of garden scenery: as the third and fourth lines summarize, in the garden, the plants possess characteristics of both “elegance” (*xiu* 秀) and “wilderness” (*ye* 野). These two notions are seemingly contradictory, as the wild emphasizes natural attributes, excluding the processes of human cultivation and caring; the elegant, in contrast, is a result of human operations and intellectual activity. The difference between *xiu* and *ye*, in other words, is a manifestation of the distinction between culture and nature.

Yet, Su Shi integrates these two opposing notions in his overall description of the gardenscape, indicating that a garden acts as a mediating space between natural forces and cultural activities. Flowers and bamboo, of course, are natural, but as soon as they are planted in the man-made garden, inevitably they are cultivated by intellectual and aesthetic activities.

Other lines in Su Shi’s poem also illustrate this process of mediation with slightly different focal points. The first couplet immediately introduces the landscape (green hills and flowing water) as the aesthetic setting of the cottage, which locates the wilderness into part of human activities. The third and fourth couplets further delineate interactions between the natural and human activities from two orientations. Sometimes flowers and bamboo eagerly approach the cane, shoes, and wine cup, while sometimes the wine cup and the chess game play active roles in

⁴²⁶ *Su Shi shiji*, 15.732.

⁴²⁷ *Su Shi wenji*, 50.1441.

humans' enjoyment of seasonal changes. It is hard to decide whether nature or culture dominates; rather, they complement each other by their interplay. Hills, water, and plants that are originally *ye* are cultivated to become *xiu*, and at the same time, aesthetic activities become to a certain extent naturalized.

Later, Song literati appreciated and frequently adopted this combination of *xiu* and *ye* proposed by Su Shi. They directly named a large number of halls, pavilions, and gardens “Elegant-Yet-Wild” (Xiuye 秀野), to highlight that such spaces are constructed on the border between nature and culture.⁴²⁸ Examples include the poem “Elegant-Yet-Wild” in “Nine Poems on Lin Heshu’s [the courtesy name of Lin Dazhong 林大中 (1131–1208)] Mountain Garden” (“Lin Heshu shanyuan jiuyong” 林和叔山園九詠) by Jiang Teli 姜特立 (b. 1125):

坡仙獨樂賦新詩，	The Immortal Po, for the Garden of Solitary Enjoyment, composed a new poem,
秀野於公兩得之。	As for the elegant and the wild, the Duke achieved both.
山卉名花同一園，	Mountain plants and famous flowers were together within a single enclosed garden,
調元妙手本無私。	The ingenious hands that harmonized the vitality fundamentally treat things unbiased. ⁴²⁹

Although the poem is a celebration of Lin Dazhong’s garden, the poet perceives the garden through the lens of Su Shi’s representation of the Garden of Solitary Enjoyment. He borrows the phrase “elegant-yet-wild” directly from Su Shi to capture the characteristics of Lin’s garden, and claims that the garden owner (Sima Guang or Lin Dazhong) has been able to contain both the elegant and the wild within one space. Indeed, Su Shi’s phrase becomes more striking here given that the subject of the poem is a mountain garden. Compared with Sima Guang’s urban garden, the mountain garden is closer to nature; yet it is still able to mediate between the wild and the elegant. As the second couplet conveys, in this single garden, wildflowers (which are natural)

⁴²⁸ See, for example, Yuan Xie 袁燮 (1144–1224), “Xiuye yuan ji” 秀野園記 (*QSW*, 6377.242–43); and Zhang Kan 張侃, “Xiuye ji” 秀野記 (*QSW*, 6944.167–68). Although there are certain cases previous to Su Shi’s poem that use *xiu* and *ye* together, later examples often explicitly specify that the naming of the hall or garden as Xiuye was after Su Shi’s poem.

⁴²⁹ *QSS*, 2144.24176.

and “famous flowers” (which are tended and improved by human artistic activities) coexist, and moreover, are intertwined and harmonized.⁴³⁰

Thus, the use of the descriptive phrase “elegant-yet-wild” points precisely to an interaction between nature and culture. Admittedly, this interaction can be examined in poems written as early as the mid-Tang era. Xiaoshan Yang, in discussing mid-Tang poets’ construction of the garden as a hermitage in the city, explores how the process of “naturalizing the garden” occurs by means of two major forms of control. First, by planting and pruning the garden, the owner is able to borrow scenery, and thus to make the gardenscape more natural; second, certain fissures (doors, windows, wall openings, and ponds) work as frames for the view of natural scenery. In this manner, Yang points out a reciprocal process whereby “nature was artificialized” in the garden, at the same time as “the garden was naturalized.”⁴³¹

However, this process can be much more complicated if we take into consideration the space of the studio. As represented in Song literature, the studio, as a cultural space, is often surrounded by scenic beauty. Studios located in mountains or gardens, of course, converse with the natural landscape; and even though most studio owners lack material conditions to construct their studios in mountains or gardens, their urban studios are often, at least, accompanied by a small yard with selected plants or a pond. Accordingly, if we observe the interplay between nature and culture in the interaction between the studio and not only its immediate surroundings but also the distant landscape, we will find that this interplay recurs infinitely, rather than functioning simply as the reciprocal process argued by Yang. In literary writings, this interplay is represented as the *mise-en-abyme*, through which nature and culture are continuously framed, transformed, and intertwined. Thus, in the first part of this chapter, I will analyze how Song

⁴³⁰ Of course, both Su Shi’s “Sima Junshi’s Garden of Solitary Enjoyment” and Jiang Teli’s “Elegant-Yet-Wild” not only convey the relationship between nature and culture, but also imply moral and political declaration. As for the political message in Su Shi’s poem, see Xiaoshan Yang, *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere*, pp. 236–39; and Ma Dongyao, *Wenhua shiyu zhong de beisong xifeng shitan* 文化視域中的北宋熙豐詩壇 (Xi’an: Shaanxi renmin jiaoyu chubanshe, 2006), pp. 61–62.

⁴³¹ Xiaoshan Yang, *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere*, pp. 4–5.

literati construct nature and culture in and out of the studio space. From the studio to studio-centered scenery, there must be a border between nature and culture; however, this border lacks stability, which marks the difference, while at the same time containing dynamic continuity.

(1) Studio-Centered Scenery

Su Shi's contemporary Wang Zhifang 王直方 (1069–1109) once commented on the poem "Sima Junshi's Garden of Solitary Enjoyment," saying,

Dongpo composed the poem on the Garden of Solitary Enjoyment on behalf of the Duke of Wen. In just the opening four lines, he already expresses the idea fully. These lines read, "Green hills are above the cottage, / Flowing water is beneath the cottage. / There is a five-*mu* garden, / Flowers and bamboo are elegant yet wild." This can be directly painted.⁴³²

東坡為溫公作獨樂園詩，只從頭四句，便已都說盡。云“青山在屋上，流水在屋下。中有五畝園，花木秀而野。”此便可以圖畫。

Indeed, since its construction, the Garden of Solitary Enjoyment had often been commemorated in pictorial form.⁴³³ An anonymous handscroll, *Sima Guang's Garden of Solitary Enjoyment* 畫司馬光獨樂園圖 (Figure 11), traditionally dated to the Song dynasty, can serve as an illustration of Wang Zhifang's comment.⁴³⁴

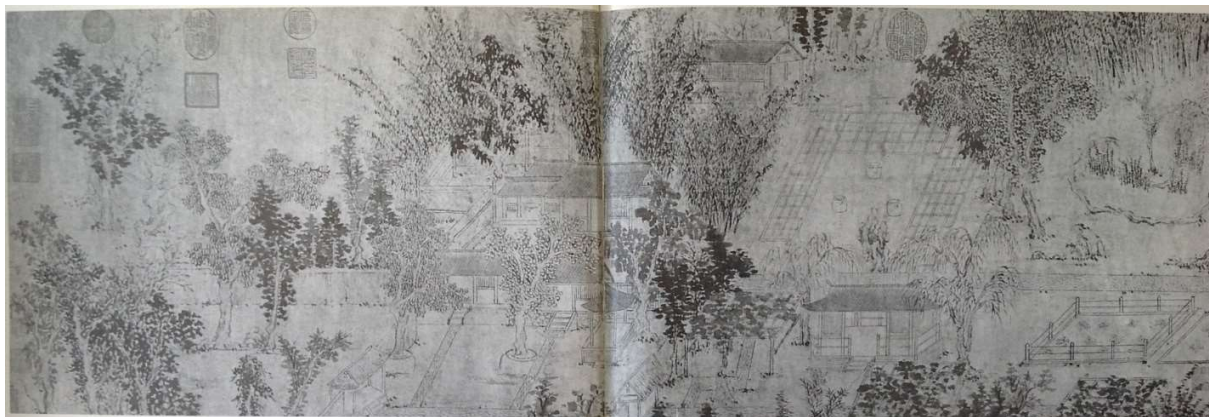


Figure 11

⁴³² Wang Zhifang, *Wang Zhifang shihua* 王直方詩話, in Guo Shaoyu 郭紹虞, *Song Shihua jiyi* 宋詩話輯佚 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), p. 15.

⁴³³ The most renowned extant paintings of the Garden of Solitary Enjoyment are *Dule Yuan tu* 獨樂園圖 by Qiu Ying 仇英 (ca. 1498–1552) and Wen Zhengming 文徵明 (1470–1559). Besides these extant paintings, from Song poems and essays, we know that there must be a couple of paintings with the same subject from the Song dynasty.

⁴³⁴ Anonymous, *Sima Guang's Garden of Solitary Enjoyment*, handscroll, ink on paper, 34.3 × 102.7 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.

Although the painting is far from a visually faithful rendering of Sima Guang's account and poems describing his Garden of Solitary Enjoyment, in it we can precisely discern the integration of *xiu* and *ye*. The painting can be generally divided into three parts horizontally. The middle part is composed mainly of several buildings. The central building, surrounded by various trees, is identified as Sima Guang's studio, the Hall for Reading Books. The left part of the painting is occupied mostly by trees; and the right part, including pergolas, a pavilion, plots of herbs, a rock, a marsh, and a bamboo grove, in composition loosely follows Sima Guang's own description of the sites in his garden. The left and right parts of the painting are seemingly in contrast, as the left displays a more natural scene, while the right depicts many traces of intervention by human activities. On the right, all the flower beds and herb nurseries are arranged in an orderly fashion; the marsh is designed in a special shape, forming an enclosed site with the bamboo grove; and a fantastic rock stands right beside a pavilion. Even the left part of the painting, however, is not a completely natural scene. Rather, nature is constrained by the dwarf wall that connects the central studio to the left side of the garden. Moreover, another fantastic rock, standing in the grove and decorated by banana leaves, further echoes the cultural participation suggested in the depiction of the right side of the garden, and at the same time, labels the left side with the characteristic of *xiu*. Thus, from this painting, we can observe, first, that the studio is represented as an indispensable part of the garden, or more precisely, as the center of the garden; and second, that the "natural" scenery here is more or less denaturalized, and therefore, the boundary between nature and culture becomes blurred.

This prominent status of the studio within a garden and the theme of the cultural treatment of nature are introduced in much more detail in Sima Guang's "Account of the Garden of Solitary Enjoyment," written in 1073 at the time the garden was constructed. Scholars have often focused on the opening and ending paragraphs of this account, in order to explore the tension between

shared-enjoyment and self-enjoyment implied by the name of the garden.⁴³⁵ Here, however, I will focus on the middle part of Sima Guang's account, which provides a comprehensive record of the construction of the garden:

In 1071, the Impractical Oldster [the self-chosen sobriquet of Sima Guang] began to set up house at Luoyang. In 1073, he purchased land totaling twenty *mu* at the northern gate of the Ward of Respecting the Worthy, and took it as the garden. In the center of the garden, he constructed a hall, in which he collected more than five thousand volumes of books, which he named the "Hall for Reading Books." To the south of the hall, there was a house. He directed a stream to flow northward, and made it pass under the house. In the center of the house, he made a marsh, which was three *chi* in both width and depth. He separated the stream into five branches. They all poured into the marsh, which looked like a tiger's paw. From the north of the marsh, the water flowed underground and then came out from the north stairs. It poured down to the courtyard, which looked like an elephant's trunk. From there, the water was divided into two channels, surrounded the four corners of the courtyard, converged at the northwest corner, and flowed out. He named this the "Chamber for Playing with Water."

熙寧四年，迂叟始家洛。六年，買田二十畝於尊賢坊北關，以爲園，其中爲堂，聚書出五千卷，命之曰“讀書堂”。堂南有屋一區，引水北流，貫宇下。中央爲沼，方深各三尺，疏水爲五，派注沼中，若虎爪。自沼北伏流出北階，懸注庭下，若象鼻。自是分爲二渠，繞庭四隅，會於西北而出，命之曰“弄水軒”。

To the north of the hall, he made a marsh, in the middle of which there was an island. On the island, he planted bamboo. Its arrangement was as circular as a penannular jade ring, the periphery of which was three *zhang*. He held and bound the tops of the bamboo, to make the whole as a fisherman's hut. He named it the "Fishing Hut." North of the marsh lay a room of six pillars in length. He thickened its walls and thatch, to make it resist the burning sun. He opened the door towards the east, and along both the south and north he set windows to let in cool breezes. In front and back of this room, he planted a lot of beautiful bamboo. He considered this a site for escaping the summer heat, and named it the "Studio for Planting Bamboo." To the east of the marsh, he cultivated a field into one hundred twenty pieces, on which he planted various herbs. By identifying their names and features, he labeled them. To the north of this field, he planted bamboo in an arrangement as square as a chess board and one *zhang* long. He bent the tops of the bamboo, making them overlap each other and thus forming a cottage. He also planted bamboo in front of this, arranging them on two sides to make a corridor. The path was covered entirely by climbing herbs, and on its four sides, he planted woody herbs to create a fence. This he named the "Plot for Picking Herbs."

堂北爲沼，中央有島，島上植竹。圓若玉玦，圍三丈，攬結其杪，如漁人之廬，命之曰“釣魚庵”。沼北橫屋六楹，厚其墉茨，以禦烈日，開戶東出，南北列軒牖以延涼颺，前後多植美竹，爲清暑之所，命之曰“種竹齋”。沼東治地爲百有二十畦，雜蒔艸藥，辨其名物而揭之。畦北植竹，方若碁局，徑一丈，屈其杪，交相掩以爲屋。植竹於其前，夾道如步廊，皆以蔓藥覆之，四周植木藥爲藩援，命之曰“采藥圃”。

To the south of the plot he constructed six railings. Herbaceous peonies, tree peonies, and

⁴³⁵ Discussions on the middle part of the account can be found in Xiaoshan Yang, *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere*, pp. 228–29; and Ronald Egan, *The Problem of Beauty*, pp. 147–49.

mixed flowers each occupied two of them. For each variety he planted only two specimens, just so as to be able to recognize their names as well as their appearances. Therefore he did not request too many. To the north of the railings, he made a pavilion which he named the “Pavilion for Watering Flowers.” The city of Luoyang is not far from mountains, but since the forest and scrubland are dense, often the mountains cannot be seen. So in the garden he built a terrace on which he constructed a cottage, from which one could gaze at Mount Wan’an, Mount Huanyuan, and even Mount Taishi. He named this the “Terrace for Viewing Mountains.”

圃南爲六欄，芍藥、牡丹、雜花，各居其二，每種止植兩本，識其名狀而已，不求多也。欄北爲亭，命之曰“澆花亭”。洛城距山不遠，而林薄茂密，常若不得見，乃於園中築臺，構屋其上，以望萬安、轅轅，至於太室，命之曰“見山臺”。

Up until this point, Sima Guang introduces all seven sites in his garden and discussed the design, scenic features, function, and naming of each.⁴³⁶ He then goes on to describe his daily life among these sites:

The Impractical Oldster, in his daily life, stays most of the time in the hall reading books. Above he models himself on the sages; below he befriends all the worthies. He examines the origins of benevolence and righteousness, and explores the beginnings of ritual and music. From the time before everything had achieved its form, to the scope beyond the infinity of going forth in all directions, the principles of phenomena all gather before his eyes. What worries him is that his learning has not reached the extreme. What else does he need to seek from others, or to rely on from the outside? When his mind is exhausted and his body is tired, he then casts a fishing rod to catch fishes, or holds his robe to pick herbs, or digs a channel to provide water for the flowers, or grasps an ax to split bamboo, or washes away the heat and rinses his hands, or climbs to the heights to look as far as his eyes can see. He ambles freely and lingers there, only going along with his whims.⁴³⁷

迂叟平日多處堂中讀書，上師聖人，下友群賢，窺仁義之原，探禮樂之緒。自未始有形之前，暨四達無窮之外，事物之理，舉集目前。所病者學之未至，夫又何求於人，何待於外哉！志倦體疲，則投竿取魚，執衽采藥，決渠灌花，操斧剖竹，濯熱盥手，臨高縱目，逍遙相羊，唯意所適。

Reading such a thorough depiction, readers may imagine the garden as a grand one. In fact, as Li Gefei 李格非 (ca. 1045–ca. 1105) records in his renowned *Account of the Famous Gardens in Luoyang* (*Luoyang mingyuan ji* 洛陽名園記) around 1095, “the garden was humble and small,

⁴³⁶ On the meaning of each site in the garden and the significance of these names, see Robert E. Harrist, “Site Names and Their Meaning in the Garden of Solitary Enjoyment,” *Journal of Garden History* 13:4 (1993): 199–212.

⁴³⁷ *Sima Wenzheng gong chuanjia ji*, p. 876. Full translations of this account can be found in Osvald Sirén, *Gardens of China* (New York: Ronald Press Company, 1949), pp. 77–78; and Alison Hardie, trans., *The Craft of Gardens* (New York: Better Link Press, 2012), Appendix, pp. 122–23. In my translation, I have consulted the translation by Hardie.

and could not be compared with other gardens” 園卑小，不可與它園班。⁴³⁸ However, despite its modest scale, the Garden of Solitary Enjoyment crystallizes the characteristics of studio-centered scenery.

Sima Guang introduces his design of the seven sites in his garden, starting in order from the center of the garden (i.e., the studio, or the Hall for Reading Books) to its surroundings (i.e., the other six sites). As the reconstruction of the layout (Figure 12)⁴³⁹ based on the account illustrates, the studio is the core of the whole garden, while the other six sites are juxtaposed to complement the core site.

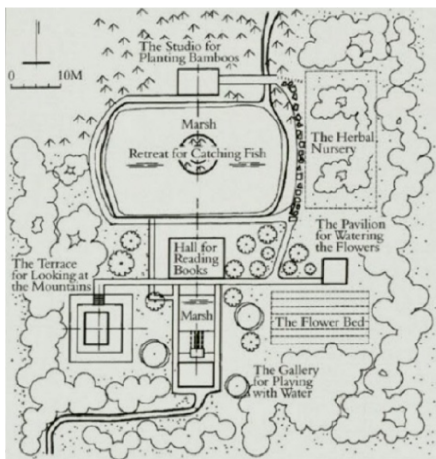


Figure 12

If we consider even just the last paragraph quoted above, it is not hard to see that the studio has absolute priority over all other sites in the garden. In his retirement Sima Guang spent most of his time in the studio. Only in this way was he able to communicate with the “sages and worthies,” delve into the essence of human society and the universe, and finally achieve insights into the principles of myriad phenomena. Thus it is not surprising that Sima Guang asks rhetorically “what else does he need to seek from others, or to rely on from the outside.” For Sima Guang, in other words, the studio functions as a self-contained space.

On the other hand, the studio owner still needs certain auxiliary spaces. When he wearied of studying, he left the studio to relax among the other sites in his garden. The series of activities

⁴³⁸ Li Gefei, *Luoyang mingyuan ji* (Beijing: Wenxue guji kanyinshe, 1955), p. 11.

⁴³⁹ Alison Hardie, trans., *The Craft of Gardens*, Appendix, p. 122.

that Sima Guang lists at the end of the paragraphs quoted above correspond directly to the six sites he designed and modified from nature. How did he cultivate the natural scenery to become part of his intellectual life, and shape the gardenscape to integrate natural forces and cultural manipulation? Sima Guang answers this question in the above paragraphs.

Unlike the painting *Garden of Solitary Enjoyment*, which depicts no human figure, the above quotation reflects many traces of human participation. The Impractical Oldster, as the persona of Sima Guang, claims to imitate nature. Bamboo groves, herbs, flowers, and even flowing water and mountains all became parts of the garden. However, this is far from enough. Nature needs to be refined by cultural transformation. By means of craftsmanship, horticultural practices, and scholarly pursuits, the Impractical Oldster eagerly incorporated the wild into the elegant. For instance, the scene described as “Green hills are above the cottage, / Flowing water is beneath the cottage,” though at first glance appearing to describe a spontaneous natural scene, is actually a construction of human labor. The watercourse was directed to flow into the garden and under the buildings, and the view of the mountains was borrowed from a great distance by means of the terrace Sima Guang constructed. Also, in Sima Guang’s description of each scenic site, his frequent use of the phrases “looking like” (*ruo* 若) or “as if” (*ru* 如) reflects his passion for manipulating nature. His ingenious treatments of the bamboo, for example, transform this plant into something reflecting scholarly pursuits. The bamboo on the island was arranged in the shape of a “penannular jade ring,” and the bamboo beside the herbal plot, in parallel, was designed to resemble a chess board. The tops of bamboo were further bound together to form a tentlike space. This space he then compared to a fisherman’s hut, which carries the implication of seclusion enjoyed by literati in their leisure pursuits. Accordingly, the so-called Fishing Hut was not a building at all; rather, it was crafted from plants. The selection of herbs and flowers also contributes to the shift from nature to culture. The Impractical Oldster not only carefully selected and ordered the species of plants, but also “by identifying their names and features, he labeled them” 辨其名物而揭之 or “recognized their names as well as their appearances” 識其名狀.

Through these activities of naming and labeling, he paid much more attention to the scholarly interests these plants embodied than their aesthetic values. More specifically, here he put into practice the Confucian ideal on plant names—“broadly recognizing the names of birds, beasts, and plants” 多識於鳥獸草木之名.⁴⁴⁰ While Confucius encouraged his disciples to acquaint themselves with these names from the *Classic of Poetry*, Sima Guang further studied them with natural samples.

In this sense, Sima Guang’s cultivation of nature can be considered to complement his scholarly pursuits in the Hall for Reading Books. It is an alternative way to observe the “principles of phenomena” (*shiwu zhi li* 事物之理), which he achieved mainly by reading in his studio. In other words, here the studio-centered scenery, which is modified as constrained nature, assists in the fulfillment of the intellectual function of the studio space.

(2) Writing the Water and Plants

The cultivated studio-centered scenery, however, is still considered natural by Sima Guang to some extent. In replying to a letter, regarding the scenery in the Garden of Solitary Enjoyment Sima Guang is reported to have stated, “When grasses hamper walking, then I weed them out; when trees bother the cap, then I cut them. As for all others, I let them follow their natural statuses. Together we exist between heaven and earth, and so we, respectively, desire to follow the natural endowment” 草妨步則薙之，木礙冠則芟之，其他任其自然，相與同生天地間，亦各欲遂其生耳。⁴⁴¹ Here, it seems that Sima Guang ignores the fact of his own application of horticultural methods and his scholarly interests in the plants as indicated in his “Account of the Garden of Solitary Enjoyment.” In fact, however, the passage reveals the multiple layers of nature in Sima Guang’s mind. For him, if cultural engagement can harmonize with natural endowment, the natural status of plants is maintained. However, in his literary representation of nature—or we may say, this *de facto* denaturalized nature—Sima Guang often frames nature

⁴⁴⁰ *Lunyu yizhu*, 17.9. Ronald Egan has paid attention to this point; see Egan, *The Problem of Beauty*, p. 149.

⁴⁴¹ *Daoshan qinghua* 道山清話, in *Baichuan xuehai*, ce 11, p. 15.

with cultural images. For instance, when he composed “Seven Poems on the Garden of Solitary Enjoyment” (“Dule yuan qiyong” 獨樂園七詠) to celebrate the seven sites in his garden, Sima Guang focused on ancient worthies and intellectual activities inspired by these sites, giving little space to scenic beauty. One example reads as follows:

吾愛杜牧之，	I admire Du Muzhi, ⁴⁴²
氣調本高逸。	His manner was fundamentally lofty and refined.
結亭侵水際，	He constructed a pavilion that approached the waterside,
揮弄消永日。	Splashing and playing with the water, he idled away the whole day.
洗硯可抄詩，	One can wash the inkstone in it, which allows one to transcribe poems,
泛觴宜促膝。	One can float wine cups on it, which is suitable for an intimate talk when sitting side by side.
莫取濯冠纓，	Don't take the water to wash cap-strings,
紅塵汙清質。	Red dust defiles its pure nature. ⁴⁴³

This poem was written for the Chamber for Playing with Water, which was located directly to the south of the Hall for Reading Books. It could be a poem as elaborating the beauty of the pond and streams that flowed through the chamber. Yet few lines depict the water itself. As part of the studio-centered scenery, the water as well as the chamber is framed through a series of cultural elements.

The first half of the poem directly connects the Chamber for Playing with Water with the one constructed more than two hundred years earlier by the Tang poet Du Mu. In his position as Prefect of Chizhou (in modern Anhui Province), Du Mu constructed a Pavilion for Playing with Water in the suburban area of Chizhou and composed several poems to celebrate the natural landscape there.⁴⁴⁴ However, in his rewriting of Du Mu's appreciation of this landscape, Sima Guang dismisses all the aesthetic images of nature in Du Mu's poems, selecting a single action—playing with water—to represent Du Mu's refined manner. Further, he conceives of three specific activities that Du Mu, or he himself, may perform when playing with water, but none of these

⁴⁴² Muzhi 牧之 is the courtesy name of Du Mu.

⁴⁴³ *Sima Wenzheng gong chuanjia ji*, p. 33.

⁴⁴⁴ See, for example, Du Mu, “Chizhou qingxi” 池州清溪 (*Du Mu ji xianian jiaozhu*, 3.391–92), “Ti Chizhou Nongshui ting” 題池州弄水亭 (1.142), and “Chunmo ti Chizhou Nongshui ting” 春末題池州弄水亭 (3.363).

three activities is specifically mentioned in Du Mu’s writings. The first two activities—washing the inkstone and floating wine cups—can be traced back to Wang Xizhi in the Jin Dynasty, who washed his inkstone in a pond after practicing calligraphy, and floated wine cups on a stream during the gathering at Lanting. Both activities Sima Guang borrows as typical symbols of intellectual elegance. In the closing couplet, however, the third water-related activity is one of which Sima Guang disapproves. The activity of washing cap-strings alludes to “The Fisherman” (“Yufu” 漁父) from the “Lyrics of Chu.”⁴⁴⁵ As a metaphor for behaving in compliance with the world, the fisherman’s song claims that he would rinse his cap-strings when the water of Canglang was clean, whereas he would wash his feet when the water was dirty. But here, Sima Guang wittily reverses the original meaning. He forbids this washing for fear that the world’s “red dust” on strings would pollute the water. Sima Guang’s device changes the comparatively passive attitude of the fisherman to an active choice, which protects the pure water from any secular interference.

In this way, Sima Guang represents the water through a double lens. He not only observes the water through the eyes of ancient scholars, but also selects the most typical cultural images to recast the natural. Song literati shared this tendency to culturally manipulate the studio-centered scenery, though in various ways. Even earlier than Sima Guang, facing a similarly small pond in front of his studio, Ouyang Xiu perceives it from a different perspective:

“Account of Fish Keeping” 養魚記

In front of the veranda under the eaves, there was an open ground, which was four or five square *zhang*. It directly faced the Hall of Criticizing the Wrong as Wrong. Slender bamboo surrounded it and brightened one another. The ground had not been cultivated with any plants. So I dug it to be a pond. It was neither square nor round—I just followed its land contours. I neither built its sidewall with bricks nor rammed it down—I preserved its natural status. I wielded a spade in order to dredge it; I drew water from a well in order to fill it. It was so profound and boundless. It was so clear and limpid. With a gentle breeze, it waved. When there were no waves, it pacified. As for stars and the moon, their light all came down to it. When I had a rest beside it, I hid my body in the tip of a hair. When I followed ripples and walked along its bank, vaguely I developed the thought of rivers and lakes of a thousand *li*.

⁴⁴⁵ Hong Xingzu 洪興祖 (1090–1155), *Chuci buzhu* 楚辭補注, ed. Bai Huawen 白化文, Xu Denan 許德楠, Li Ruluan 李如鸞, and Fang Jin 方進 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 7.179–81.

This was sufficient for me to relieve my worries and to divert myself from loneliness.

折簷之前有隙地，方四五丈，直對非非堂，修竹環繞蔭映，未嘗植物，因洿以為池。不方不圓，任其地形；不甃不築，全其自然。縱鍤以浚之，汲井以盈之。湛乎汪洋，晶乎清明，微風而波，無波而平，若星若月，精彩下入。予偃息其上，潛形於毫芒；循漪沿岸，渺然有江湖千里之想。斯足以舒憂隘而娛窮獨也。

Then I requested from the fisherman's net and bought tens of fishes. The servant boy raised them in the pond. The servant boy considered that for this small amount of water, it was impossible to enlarge its capacity, so he let the small fishes live but threw away the big ones. I felt this was strange and asked him to explain. He just replied to me giving the above reason. Alas! Wasn't the servant boy too stupid and ignorant! I saw that the huge fishes were dried on the side of the pond, without getting their proper places, whereas the school of small fishes was playing in the shallow and narrow place, as if they were self-contained there. I was moved by this and composed the "Account of Fish Keeping."⁴⁴⁶

乃求漁者之罟，市數十魚，童子養之乎其中。童子以為斗斛之水不能廣其容，蓋活其小者而棄其大者。怪而問之，且以是對。嗟乎！其童子無乃囿昏而無識矣乎！予觀巨魚枯涸在旁不得其所，而群小魚遊戲乎淺狹之間，有若自足焉，感之而作養魚記。

In the opening of this account, Ouyang Xiu clearly points out that this fishing pond was situated right in front of his studio, the Hall of Criticizing the Wrong as Wrong. We have discussed the naming of this studio in Chapter 3. Ouyang Xiu constructed his studio around 1032 when he obtained his first official position in Luoyang. He "set up a desk and a couch, and on the bookshelf put several hundred volumes of books" 設一几一榻，架書數百卷. As he states in the "Account of the Hall of Criticizing the Wrong as Wrong," he "spent the entire day, from dawn to dark, in this chamber" 朝夕居其中. Now, in the account quoted above, Ouyang Xiu walked outside and took a look at the studio-centered scenery.

It happened that outside the studio was only an open ground surrounded by bamboo, and therefore Ouyang Xiu decided to construct a pond there. It is worth noting that in the first paragraph, Ouyang employs a set of phrases to define this man-made pond as a natural one, similar to what Sima Guang expresses when facing his gardenscape. The "natural status" (*ziran* 自然) is achieved through construction methods. Ouyang claims that, rather than deliberately designing the pond, he merely followed the physical contours of the land to decide the shape of

⁴⁴⁶ Ouyang Xiu *quanji*, 64.937.

the pond, and avoided any further design such as brickwork or ramming. But after a couple of sentences describing this natural status, Ouyang soon imaginatively changes the small pond into the “rivers and lakes” (*jianghu* 江湖) of a thousand *li*. As the “rivers and lakes” imagery is often a metaphor for an expansive area that is far away from the central government and enables people to enjoy a carefree life, the analogy between the pond and the “rivers and lakes” is thus not simply a change of scale, but also a process of endowing the pond with cultural significance. Therefore, the pond becomes an ideal place of relaxation and comfort for Ouyang himself.

But Ouyang does not stop at employing the commonly used “rivers and lakes” metaphor. A sharp transition divides the two halves of this account. In the second half, the elaborately constructed “natural status” of the pond is further denaturalized and reframed from an intellectual perspective. With the servant boy’s intervention—keeping small fishes in the pond and discarding the big ones—Ouyang, instead of lyrically depicting the pleasures of having a fish pond, understands the fishing pond in a rational way. On the one hand, the pond becomes a medium for social satire. The “huge fishes” (*juyu* 巨魚) can be understood as an analogy for talented people, whereas the “school of small fishes” (*qun xiaoyu* 群小魚) becomes the group of common or even petty people. Accordingly, the servant boy’s selection of fishes is a reflection of the unfair treatment of people in society: the talented are not valued, yet the common are allowed to fully enjoy themselves. Here, it is reasonable to say that Ouyang also compares himself to a big fish, who is not placed in the proper position, with his abilities unrecognized.

On the other hand, the account can also be read as self-mockery. Observing small fishes playing in the tiny pond stirs Ouyang to reconsider his own situation. Thereupon, the carefree enjoyment he celebrates in the first half of the account becomes questionable. Is Ouyang as well a small fish who feels self-satisfied in the pond, without high aspirations? This question is unanswered, but it indeed provides another dimension for looking at the pond. The fishing pond is enriched with multiple layers of intellectual concerns.

Not only is the studio-centered scenery cultivated, but in turn, cultural activities can also be

conveyed by Song literati through the view of the studio-centered scenery. For instance, a well-known quatrain by Zhu Xi reads:

半畝方塘一鑑開，	A half- <i>mu</i> square pond opened like a mirror,
天光雲影共徘徊。	Brightness of the sky and shadow of clouds, both wander.
問渠那得清如許？	I ask, how can it be clear like this?
爲有源頭活水來。	It is because from its source the living water comes. ⁴⁴⁷

On the surface, this poem shares the pond theme with those written by Sima Guang and Ouyang Xiu. A small pond is as clear as a mirror, reflecting the sky and clouds in movement. The poet wonders how the pond water can be so clear. He finally finds the reason: an inexhaustible source of the water continuously replenishes the pond, guaranteeing its purity.

However, the poem is about more than a pond. Rather, as Zhu Xi's wrote to his disciple Xu Sheng 許升 (d. 1185), this poem in fact talks about the process of learning and cultivation.⁴⁴⁸ As its circulated title "Feelings While Reading" ("Guanshu yougan" 觀書有感) suggests, the poem is inspired by the practice of reading. In this sense, the pond is a metaphor for the mind. The mind can maintain its clearness only when there is flowing water constantly coming from its source, that is, knowledge acquired from reading. Thus, although the main text does not mention reading, the poem indeed works as a vivid illustration of the experience of reading.

As we can see, the imagery of the small pond allows visualization of an indefinable feeling arising from intellectual practice, making it much more explicit. This process, of course, is closely related to the way of observing phenomena (*guanwu* 觀物) in the teaching of Neo-Confucianism. But at the same time, it can be understood in terms of the connection between the studio and studio-centered scenery. Cultural activities mainly performed in the studio are represented as naturalized in some manner through the surrounding scenery.

Sometimes the studio and its immediate surroundings are even more intertwined in literary

⁴⁴⁷ Guo Qi 郭齊, ed. and annot., *Zhu Xi shici biannian jianzhu* 朱熹詩詞編年箋注 (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 2000), 2.178.

⁴⁴⁸ Zhu Xi, "Da Xu Shunzhi" 答許順之, *QSW*, 5507.55. This letter is the earliest extant source of the poem.

representation. The following poem, “Book Chamber” (“Shu xuan” 書軒), by Su Shi is a case in point:

雨昏石硯寒雲色，	Rain darkens the inkstone, with the color of cold clouds,
風動牙籤亂葉聲。	Wind stirs ivory book tags, with the sound of tangles of leaves.
庭下已生書帶草，	In the courtyard, the book-ribbon grass has grown,
使君疑是鄭康成。	I suspect, you, the governor, are Zheng Kangcheng. ⁴⁴⁹

This quatrain is actually a companion piece to a poem with the same title by Wen Tong, Su Shi’s close friend. As the Prefect of Yangzhou (in modern Shaanxi Province), Wen Tong constructed or renovated 30 sites in Yangzhou and composed a poem for each site. The studio named Book Chamber is among them. Wen Tong’s original poem on it reads as follows:

清泉繞庭除，	Clear spring surrounds the courtyard,
綠篠映軒檻。	Green and small bamboo brightens the balustrade.
坐此何可爲，	Sitting here, what am I able to do?
惟宜弄鉛槧。	It is only suited for playing with the lead pencil and wooden tablet. ⁴⁵⁰

This poem is clearly divided into two parts. The first couplet depicts the outside of the studio. A clear spring and green bamboo encircle the studio and provide it with a secluded environment. The second couplet points straightforwardly to the activity performed inside the studio. The studio, it asserts, is only good for intellectual practices such as writing. Wen Tong structures the poem to emphasize the separation of the studio and its surrounding scenery. There is little communication between the cultural and the natural.

Su Shi’s companion piece, conversely, blurs the boundary between natural images and cultural images. In the opening couplet, Su Shi immediately invites both the natural (the rain and wind) and the cultural (the inkstone and the book tags) to the stage. The rain and wind outside the studio directly affect scholarly objects within the studio, respectively. As a result, a “color of cold

⁴⁴⁹ “He Wen Yuke Yangchuan yuanchi sanshi shou: Shuxuan” 和文與可洋川園池三十首·書軒, *Su Shi shiji*, 14.668. Some versions use Yangzhou 洋州 instead of Yangchuan; see *Su Shi shiji*, 14.706, n. 11. Yangchuan is an alternative name for Yangzhou. Kangcheng 康成 is the courtesy name of Zheng Xuan.

⁴⁵⁰ “Shouju yuanchi zati sanshi shou: Shuxuan” 守居園池雜題三十首·書軒, *QSS*, 445.5416. The “lead pencil and wooden tablet” (*qianqian* 鉛槧) are writing tools; see Ge Hong, *Xijing zaji* 西京雜記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), 3.16. This phrase is later used to refer to the practice of writing.

clouds” (*hanyun se* 寒雲色) arises. We are not sure whether this color is the inkstone’s reflection of dark rain clouds in the sky or a metaphor for the surface color of the inkstone in the shroud of rain. It may even imply both. In the same vein, the “sound of tangles of leaves” (*luanye sheng* 亂葉聲) in the second line may refer to the rustle of leaves in the courtyard, or it may metaphorically describe the sound of book tags swaying in the wind, or both. In fact, we do not need to decide the specific referents of these two phrases; such ambiguity fully reflects the interplay between natural scenery and typical studio objects.

In a different way, a similar interplay is depicted in the second couplet. The view of the poet stops first at the grass in the yard. However, the grass is not a common type. Although Su Shi had not yet visited the studio when he composed this poem, he imagines the grass as “book-ribbon grass” (*shudai cao* 書帶草). Such a name connects the plant with the great Confucian scholar Zheng Xuan from the Eastern Han. It is said that when Zheng Xuan lived and taught at Mount Buqi, a special grass grew at the foot of the mountain. The blade of the grass was more than one *chi* in length, and the grass was extremely firm and tensile. The local people called it the “Book-Ribbon of Kangcheng” (*Kangcheng shudai* 康成書帶).⁴⁵¹ This name compares the long grass to the ribbon used to make books, and therefore endows the natural image with scholarly interest. Hence, by inserting this anecdote into the last two lines, Su Shi not only praises Wen Tong for his learning, which he suggests is as profound as that of Zheng Xuan, but more importantly, he wittily bridges the studio-centered scenery and the academic function of the studio.

A similar use of the book-ribbon grass image can be found in a poem by Yang Wanli, the middle part of which reads:

讀書臺北卯金刀，	To the north of the Terrace for Reading Books, there is a Mr.
	Liu, ⁴⁵²

⁴⁵¹ *Hou Han shu*, 112.3475.

⁴⁵² The *mao* 卯, *jin* 金, and *dao* 刀 compose the character *liu* 劉, which is the family name of the studio owner.

齋前不種李與桃。
滿階只種書帶草，
黃金非寶書爲寶。
郎君玉樹臨風前，
咀嚼青竹夜不眠。

In front of his studio, he does not plant plum or peach trees.
Throughout the steps, he only grows the book-ribbon grass,
Gold is no treasure, it is books that are treasure.
He, as a jade tree, stands in the wind,⁴⁵³
He ruminates on the green bamboo, even without sleeping at
night.⁴⁵⁴

According to the poet, Mr. Liu, the subject of the poem, selects only the book-ribbon grass to decorate his studio, excluding all other plants. This particular grass acts as a medium for connecting the scenery outside and the books inside. To further obscure the boundary between the natural and the cultural, the last two lines employ a set of natural images to represent the reading scene. First, the poet compares the studio owner to a jade tree standing in the wind. The image is both an allusion and a vivid expression casting the person as a natural object. Next, the poet shapes the studio owner's immersion in reading as the action of eating bamboo, as the natural "green bamboo" (*qingzhu* 青竹) can also be a metonym for books.

In short, natural images and cultural images can be smoothly intertwined in literary representations of the studio. The natural affects and, moreover, recasts the cultural, while at the same time the cultural constantly frames and defines the natural with an intellectual interest.

(3) Through the Studio Window

Song literati often further framed cultivated nature through the studio window. Such a tendency is often explicit in pictorial materials. Several Song album leaves, depicting a studio located in seasonal scenery, capture the moment when the studio owner's eyes fall leisurely on the natural scene through the window. For instance, in Liu Songnian's 劉松年 (ca. 1155–1218) *Reading the Book of Changes by the Autumn Window* 秋窗讀易圖 (Figure 13),⁴⁵⁵ we see a scholar sitting at his writing desk in front of the studio window. On the desk are books, some in

⁴⁵³ This line borrows from Du Fu's "Song of Eight Drinking Immortals" ("Yinzhong baxian ge" 飲中八仙歌), which reads, "He is gleaming, like a jade tree standing in the wind" 皎如玉樹臨風前 (*Du shi xiangzhu*, 2.83). It is used to describe the manner of Cui Zongzhi 崔宗之.

⁴⁵⁴ "Ti Anfu Liu Yuqing Minzhai" 題安福劉虞卿敏齋, *Yang Wanli ji jianjiao*, 41.2156.

⁴⁵⁵ Liu Songnian, *Reading Changes by the Autumn Window*, album leaf, ink and color on silk, 25.7 × 26 cm. Liaoning Provincial Museum.

piles and one open, as well as a tripod-shaped incense burner. But the painting, instead of portraying the scholar reading, catches the occasion when his eyes are temporarily drawn from his books to the outside. The outside scenery includes mountains and flowing water in the distance as well as, around the studio, green pines, red maples, and rocks. Another album leaf, *Reading in the Willow Hall* 柳堂讀書圖 (Figure 14),⁴⁵⁶ is similarly composed but the scene outside the window constitutes a greater portion of the image. The studio window allows the scholar to enjoy the multilayered scenery, from the grove on the opposite bank, a distant body of water, to willows, pines, and rocks inside the garden fence.



Figure 13



Figure 14

In literary writings, Song literati were also interested in employing this particular view of the window to observe the studio-centered scenery. Zheng Gangzhong 鄭剛中 (1088–1154) conveyed this interest in his poem “Summer Day in the Studio” (“Shuzhai xiari” 書齋夏日):

五月困暑濕，
眾謂如蒸炊。
惟我坐幽堂，
心志適所怡。
開窗面西山，
野水平清池。

The fifth month troubles people with heat and humidity,
The masses thought that it was like steaming or cooking.
It was only me, who sat in a secluded hall,
My mind followed what it pleased.
Opening the window, I faced western mountains,
Wild water became calm in the clear pond.

⁴⁵⁶ Anonymous, *Reading in the Willow Hall*, album leaf, ink and color on silk, 22.5 × 24.4 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.

菱荷間蒲葦，
秀色相因依。
幽禽蔭嘉木，
水鳥時翻飛。
文書任討探，
風靜香如絲。
此殆有至樂，
難令俗子知。

Water caltrops and lotuses alternated with cattails and reeds,
Their elegant beauty reflected on each other.
Quiet birds were under the shade of beautiful trees,
Waterfowl flew up and down from time to time.
Books were explored at will,
The wind was so gentle, with fragrance like strands of silk.
This of course carries the ultimate pleasure,
It is hard to make commoners understand.⁴⁵⁷

The overall leisurely atmosphere of this poem is similar to that of the two album leaves. It also centers on a scholar sitting idly in the studio and exquisitely captures the seasonal scenery through the framework of the studio window. Yet, unlike the paintings discussed above, this literary work represents the framed scenery directly from the viewpoint of the persona of the poet who is sitting by the window at that moment.

The opening four lines attract the reader's attention to the "secluded hall" (*youtang* 幽堂), which refers to the studio, and establish a contrast between "the masses" (*zhong* 眾) and the poet ("I," or *wo* 我). While the masses are tortured by summer heat, the poet enjoys self-satisfaction in his personal studio. The following six lines explain why the studio is so comfortable: "opening the window" (*kaichuang* 開窗) brings cool temperatures and splendid scenery inside the studio. By virtue of opening the window, the landscape (both distant vistas and immediate surroundings), is completely framed and thus becomes integrated into the studio-centered scenery. Even the "wild water" (*yeshui* 野水) is denaturalized to become part of the pond, and accompanies the other "elegant beauty" (*xiuse* 秀色) to decorate the studio. Such an angle to appreciate the scenery can also be found in other poems by Zheng Gangzhong. In a poem celebrating plum blossoms, Zheng structures the opening couplet as follows:

古園深處讀書窗，
窗外疏梅破臘芳。

In the ancient garden's depths, there was a window for reading,
Outside the window, sparse plum blossoms became fragrant at the
end of the year.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁷ *QSS*, 1692.19046.

⁴⁵⁸ "Yi mei" 憶梅, *QSS*, 1696.19094.

Zheng, again, takes advantage of the framework of the window. Instead of depicting the flowers directly, he needs to first go back to his studio and sit by the window, that is, to select the best viewing point. Only then does he begin the aesthetic enjoyment.

After depicting the studio window as an indispensable medium for the poet's appreciation of scenery, the next two lines of "Summer Day in the Studio" further connect the inside and outside of the window. When reading at leisure, the studio owner can feel gentle breezes coming through the window, and appreciate pleasant natural smells from outside. Finally, the closing lines of the poem first indicate that the common masses find it difficult to understand the pleasure the studio provides, echoing the contrast between commoners and the studio owner set in the opening lines. Moreover, use of the term "ultimate pleasure" reminds readers of Ouyang Xiu's famous claim in regard to the studio—"The ultimate pleasure under Heaven, / is being at the writing desk all day."⁴⁵⁹ By means of this double echo, the poet situates his own studio in the larger context of the enjoyment of the studio space shared by Song literati. At the same time, besides the focus on the inside of the studio (especially the writing desk) in Ouyang Xiu's statement, here the poet adds the window as another crucial element of the studio. Admittedly, as Xiaoshan Yang points out, the use of windows as a scenic frame for the view of mountains can be traced back to Xie Lingyun, and especially to Xie Tiao's well-known line, "Distant peaks spread out in the window" 窗中列遠岫, and became popular in mid- and late-Tang poetry.⁴⁶⁰ This tendency continued in Song literature. Yet, the studio window in particular does not receive great attention until the Song dynasty. As reflected in Zheng Gangzhong's work, the studio window is not merely a frame for distant vistas; rather, by framing and incorporating both the wild and the elegant into an even more cultivated studio-centered scenery, the window acts as a complement to the intellectual pleasure that Song literati pursue in the studio.

Thus, in literary representation, Song literati often make full use of this special significance of

⁴⁵⁹ On the discussion of "ultimate pleasure" in the studio, see Chapter 2.

⁴⁶⁰ Xiaoshan Yang, *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere*, pp. 61–65.

the studio window, and converse with the out-of-window in a scholarly way. Here I use two quatrains as examples, both with the subject of “the studio window at night.” The first one reads as follows:

Zeng Ji 曾幾 (1084–1166), “After Snow, Playfully Inscribed on the Moon Window” 雪後月窗戲題

青女翻空一笑開，	The Bluegreen Maid was flying in the sky, with an open smile, ⁴⁶¹
天花散盡更徘徊。	Heavenly flowers were completely scattered, but still lingering.
嫦娥相與有瓜葛，	Chang E had close relationship with her, ⁴⁶²
也向讀書窗下來。	She, too, came down to the window for reading. ⁴⁶³

As the title summarizes, the poem must be a playfully composed work depicting the clear weather after a snowfall. However, as the poet observes the natural world through “the window for reading” (*dushu chuang* 讀書窗), strikingly, he also reshapes the whole night scene in a coded language acquired from reading.

First, to describe the scene of “after snow,” the poet introduces the “Bluegreen Maid” (Qing Nü 青女) to the stage. As the *Huainanzi* notes, “The Bluegreen Maid then comes out, to make frost and snow fall down” 青女乃出，以降霜雪. Inspired but not confined by this concise statement, the poet imagines actions and facial expressions for the Bluegreen Maid. The falling of snow becomes the result of the goddess’s playing in the sky and scattering of heavenly flowers. The flowers, as a metaphor for snow, further relate the Bluegreen Maid to the heavenly goddess in the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*. According to the sutra, the disposal of the flowers is a symbol of one’s ideal status of detachment. The poet, however, expresses his enjoyment of the lingering flowers, revealing his enthusiasm for all phenomena of the mundane world. Indeed, he enjoys not only the snowfall but also the moonlight pouring through his studio window after the snow. This time, he imagines that the moonlight came with Chang E, the goddess of the moon also

⁴⁶¹ Qing Nü 青女 is the mythological goddess of snow and frost; see *Huainanzi jishi*, 3.231.

⁴⁶² Chang E 嫦娥 is the mythological goddess of the moon; see *Huainanzi jishi*, 6.501–2.

⁴⁶³ *QSS*, 1659.18588.

recorded in the *Huainanzi*. The window-framed scenery, therefore, is transformed into an episode portraying an elegant gathering between goddesses and the studio owner.

Thus the whole poem, although it directly mentions the moon and the snow only briefly, delineates vividly the beauty of the newly cleared sky. For the poet, books form the repertoire of languages by which we can perceive nature. Thus, when the poet momentarily fixes his eyes outside the window, he is still inclined to employ reading sources to describe the out-of-window.

Song literati not only regarded the studio window as a medium for communicating with the scenery outside the studio, they also liked to frame nature into a picturesque view by means of the window. Also on the theme of a moonlit window at night, Huang Geng 黃庚 wrote:

“The Night Window” 夜窗

香篆煙銷夜已闌，	With smoke of coiled incense dissipating, the night was near the end,
硯池冰結漏聲寒。	The inkstone pond was frozen, the sound of the water-clock cold.
梅花懸影書窗上，	Plum blossoms suspended their shadows on the studio window,
應待詩人帶月看。	They must wait for the poet to view them with the moon. ⁴⁶⁴

The scene is a cold and lonely winter night. This atmosphere is fully set in the first couplet. Both the dissipating of the incense fragrance and the dripping sound of the water-clock imply the passage of time and the desolate feeling of the poet, from olfactory or aural aspects, respectively. The late winter night is so cold that even the water-filled depression on the inkstone has frozen. And of course, there is no means and little inspiration to write a poem.

However, the mood changes sharply when the poet's eyes are drawn to the studio window, in the second couplet. Under the moonlight, plum trees outside the studio cast shadows on the window paper. From the poet's view inside the studio, the window becomes the frame for a painting of plum blossoms in moonlight. This framed scene is replete with the tastes of the literati and with poetic reverie, as it is easy to remind readers of one of the most well-known couplets on plum blossoms in the Song era:

⁴⁶⁴ *QSS*, 3638.43614.

疏影橫斜水清淺， 暗香浮動月黃昏。	Sparse shadows, crossing and slanting, were on the water, which was clear and shallow, Hidden fragrance, floating and drifting, was in the moonlight, which was hazy and dim. ⁴⁶⁵
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Rather than straightforwardly describing the appearance of flowers, the above couplet by Lin Bu focuses on the fragrance of plum blossoms and their reflection in water. Moreover, as Lin Bu specifies, the shadows must be sparse, and the scent must be subtle, qualities that distinguish the plum blossoms from all other flamboyant flowers. The pure and misty atmosphere in which the poet locates the plum blossoms adds to their ethereal beauty. Song literati broadly acknowledged these two lines as the ideal literary appreciation of plum blossoms. Returning, then, to the second couplet of “The Night Window,” we find that the studio window precisely supports, and even strengthens, the ideal set by Lin Bu. The window paper not only showcases the flowers’ shadows, but also adds a hazy effect. The window-framed scenery is thus so elegant that it dissolves the desolate state expressed in the first half of the poem.

In this manner, the studio window provides a framework that enables visualization of the intellectual transformation of nature. Nevertheless, the interaction between culture and nature does not stop here. Song literati had a penchant not only for viewing flowers outside the window, but also for arranging them inside the studio. Yang Zhishui has observed that in the studio of Song poets the flower vase becomes an important decoration, indicating elegance.⁴⁶⁶ As a section of *Reading the Book of Changes by the Cold Window* 寒窗讀易圖 (Figure 15) reveals, although there was snow-covered landscape outside, the scholar, sitting by the studio window reading the book, did not forget to put a branch of plum blossoms in a vase on his writing desk.⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁶⁵ Lin Bu, “Shanyuan xiaomei” 山園小梅, *QSS*, 106.1218.

⁴⁶⁶ Yang Zhishui, “Songdai huaping” 宋代花瓶, in *Zhongzhao cailan*, p. 43.

⁴⁶⁷ Anonymous, *Reading Changes by the Cold Window*, album leaf, ink and color on silk, 26.3 × 24.5 cm. Shanghai Duoyun xuan. Yang Zhishui precisely captures the characteristics of this section, namely that all other objects on the writing desk have been omitted by the arrangement of the giant rock, whereas only the book and the vase are shown; see *Zhongzhao cailan*, p. 45.

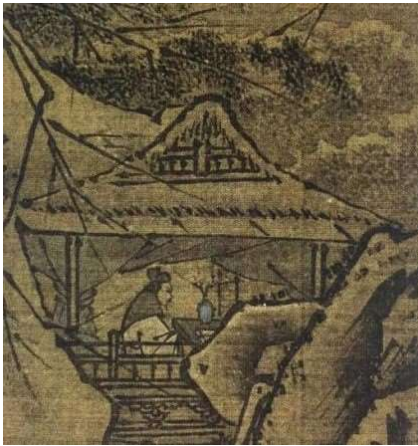


Figure 15

Chao Gongsu's poem "On Plum Blossoms in a Bronze Vase" ("Yong tongping zhong mei" 詠銅餅中梅) represents a very similar scene in literal fashion and explains the implication of the vase of flowers:

<p>折得寒香日暮歸， 銅餅添水養橫枝。 書窗一夜月初滿， 卻似小溪清淺時。</p>	<p>Picking the chill scent, at dusk I returned, In a bronze vase, I added water to nourish the crossing branch. By the studio window, at one night, the moon had just become full, It was exactly like the moment that the small stream was clear and shallow.⁴⁶⁸</p>
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The poem tells the process of appreciating a vase of plum blossoms in the studio. Between dusk and moonrise, the poet first brings a fragrant branch of plum blossoms from outside into his studio (line 1), then he arranges the branch in a bronze vase (line 2), and finally, he enjoys it as he reposes by the studio window (lines 3–4).

In the first couplet, from "picking" (*zhe* 折) to "nourishing" (*yang* 養), the poet explicitly outlines his tending of the branch. By means of human intervention, natural growth is cultivated. What, then, is the implication of this cultivated nature? The second couplet interprets it metaphorically. The moment the vase of flowers is set by the moonlit studio window is the same moment when the plum tree was beside a clear and shallow stream. At first glance, it seems that the poet compares man-made nature with a natural setting, and thus is able to claim the verisimilitude of his design. Yet, the phrase "the small stream is clear and shallow" (*xiaoxi qingqian* 小溪清淺)—accompanied by mentions of the "chill scent" (*hanxiang* 寒香), the

⁴⁶⁸ QSS, 2004.22448.

“crossing branch” (*hengzhi* 橫枝), and the moon (*yue* 月)—is in fact another direct echo of Lin Bu’s renowned couplet on plum blossoms. Hence, by making this comparison, the poet elevates his vase of flowers to the idealized status of plum blossoms shared by Song literati. In so doing he successfully transforms the originally natural image into an emblem of literati elegance.

By way of conclusion, I will discuss one more poem, which provides a dramatic contrast between flowers inside and outside the studio:

Zheng Gangzhong, “Before the Festival of Pure Brightness, Wind and Rain Have Lasted for Twenty Days. Outside the City, Among Peach and Plum Flowers, There Was Nothing Left. In My Studio, There Is a Vase of Briar Roses, Which I Have Placed for a Very Long Time. It Is Probably Because It Cannot Be Reached by Wind and Rain. On Behalf of It, I Composed a Five-Syllable Poem” 清明前風雨兼旬城外桃李無在者書室中有酴醾一罇置之甚久蓋風雨所不及也爲賦五韻

素質吐孤芳，	Pure nature bears blossom of unique flowers,
柔條敷瘦綠。	Tender branches grow light green.
誰將刻楮手，	Who, by the hands of carving a mulberry leaf,
作此數蕤玉。	made these several clusters of jade? ⁴⁶⁹
園林煙雨多，	In the garden, there was much misty rain,
百卉飛蕪蕪。	All flowers were sent fluttering.
小室偶深靜，	The small room happened to be serene and quiet,
花意猶清淑。	The flowers’ manner remains pure and lovely.
置之硯席間，	I place them near my inkstone and mat,
鼻觀常芬馥。	When smelling them, I always enjoy the aroma. ⁴⁷⁰

The long title and the main text of the poem contrast flowers in different circumstances. First, outside the city flowers have been completely destroyed by excessive wind and rain. Closer to the studio, flowers in the garden also fade and fall, although there the wind and rain are comparatively weaker. The briar rose, however, which the poet brought into the studio and put in a vase, was sheltered from bad weather and thus continues to flourish. Moreover, as the poet stresses in the closing part of the poem, he placed these protected flowers among his studio objects, indicating an intimate relationship between the poet and the flowers.

The opening two lines offer a close-up portrayal of the flowers in the vase. A series of

⁴⁶⁹ This is an allusion to *Liezi*; see *Liezi jishi*, 8.243–44. See also *Han Feizi jijie*, 7.165–66.

⁴⁷⁰ *QSS*, 1697.19118.

adjectives—“pure” (*su* 素), “unique” (*gu* 孤), “tender” (*rou* 柔), and “light” (*shou* 瘦)—outlines the delicate and lovely charm of the branch of briar rose. Yet, in alluding in the following lines to the carving of a mulberry leaf, the poet tells us that these seemingly natural features are actually a result of the tending of the flowers. According to the *Liezi* 列子, in the state of Song, a person once spent three years carving a piece of jade into the shape of a mulberry leaf for his lord. The man-made leaf was so lifelike that it could not be distinguished from real mulberry leaves if intermingled with them. In the original text, this behavior is regarded as improper, because it replaces the truth of nature with an artificial simulacrum. However, in Zheng Gangzhong’s poem this attitude is reversed. The poet views the artistry positively, enjoying this bit of cultivated nature with little anxiety. Furthermore, in contrast to the flowers outside, which are natural yet vulnerable, the ingeniously crafted briar rose in the studio is demonstrated to bloom much better. To put it differently, the poem establishes a parallel between the flowers’ changing locations (from the suburb to the garden, then to the studio) and the progression of the flowers to become more cultivated and better protected.

The process of *mise-en-abyme* is mirrored here. From the landscape outside, to the studio-centered scenery, and finally, to the inside of the studio, multiple “natures” are represented in the works of Song literati. Surrounding the studio space, the natural is framed by cultural elements; following this, the framed nature is still considered as another layer of nature, and is further recast into cultural subject. This interaction is constantly performed by means of the construction of studio-centered scenery, the literary interpretation of natural images, and the framework of the studio window. At the end, it is projected on a single vase of flowers in the studio. The wild is finally transformed into a miniaturized elegance.

II “Crossing the River” (*jichuan* 濟川), or “Going to the Five Lakes” (*wuhu qu* 五湖去)?

Nature, though elaborately cultivated, is easily understood as the perfect environment for reclusion. Accordingly, a studio with beautiful scenery surrounding it, as depicted in the album

leaves of *Reading the Book of Changes by the Autumn Window* or *Reading in the Willow Hall*, faces the danger of being misunderstood as a reclusive space for retreat from the mundane world. Indeed, from their writings, we can see that Song literati were aware of this tension, and took pains to differentiate their scholarly studios from reclusive spaces. How did Song literati define the potentially reclusive space as instead a cultural space for the pursuit of scholarly interests and Confucian social engagement? I will answer this question by using the boat-shaped studio and boat-named studio as examples, since the imbedded image of the boat leaves these studios even easier to be associated with the motif of reclusion.

The boat-shaped or boat-named studio refers to a studio constructed in the shape or after the name of a boat. Although it is not used on water, by virtue of the boat metaphor, Song literati drew a close analogy between a studio and a real boat. Hence, they compared the natural landscape surrounding a studio to the views along a river on which a boat is drifting. The question arises of how to understand this analogy. One of the first to explore this imagery was Ouyang Xiu, who constructed a “Painted Pleasure-Boat Studio” (Huafang zhai 畫舫齋) and composed an account to explain its implications in 1043. Ouyang Xiu begins the account by describing the layout of his studio:

Three months after I arrived at Huazhou [in modern Henan Province], by taking the eastern-wing rooms of the government offices, I constructed a dwelling for resting leisurely, and named it the “Painted Pleasure-Boat Studio.” The studio was one room in width, and seven rooms in depth. The rooms were connected by means of doorways. For anyone who came into my room, it was like entering a boat. As for the depths of the warm rooms, I opened holes above for lighting. As for the spaciousness and brightness of the unwalled rooms, I set up railings on both sides for sitting on or leaning against. Anyone who took a rest in my studio found it to be like resting on a boat. Huge, steep rocks and beautiful flowering plants, as well as fine trees, were arranged under the eaves of both sides, which made me feel as if I were floating in the middle of a river, with mutual reflection of mountains on the left and forests on the right. All the scenery was lovely. Because of this, I named the studio after a boat.

予至滑之三月，即其署東偏之室，治為燕私之居，而名曰畫舫齋。齋廣一室，其深七室，以戶相通，凡入予室者，如入乎舟中。其溫室之奧，則穴其上以為明；其虛室之疏以達，則闌檻其兩旁以為坐立之倚。凡偃休於吾齋者，又如偃休乎舟中。山石嵒峯，佳花美木之植列於兩簷之外，又似泛乎中流，而左山右林之相映，皆可愛者。故因以舟名焉。

The opening lines should be familiar to the reader. As with several studios discussed in previous chapters, this studio was also converted from government offices, and served as a private space within the public sphere. However, unlike other regular studios, this one was constructed in the shape of a boat. The long and narrow space, divided rooms, and the railings on both sides all resembled the interior of a pleasure boat. Moreover, it was important to design the studio-centered scenery in imitation of the views one observes traveling down a river. Accordingly, rocks and plants on each side of the studio stand in for the mountains and forests that one might enjoy floating down river in a boat.

Not only is the boat-shaped, boat-named studio creatively constructed, Ouyang eagerly seeks potential implications to the boat imagery. He first borrows an idea from the *Book of Changes*:

When the image in the *Book of Changes* talks about being in danger and encountering difficulties, it definitely indicates “crossing the river.”⁴⁷¹ This perhaps reveals that the boat is an object used for relieving danger and difficulties, rather than for living at ease. Now I constructed a studio within government offices, for the purpose of resting at ease, yet I named it after a boat. Isn’t that perverse?

《周易》之象，至於履險蹈難，必曰涉川。蓋舟之為物，所以濟險難，而非安居之用也。今予治齋於署，以為燕安，而反以舟名之，豈不戾哉！

In the face of suffering, the judgment of the *Book of Changes*, as well as the commentary on the judgment, is often to suggest, “It would be fitting to cross the great river” 利涉大川. Taking a boat to cross a river is therefore an image for overcoming difficulties. However, Ouyang soon realizes the contradiction in using such an image to name a studio for leisure. Therefore, he sets aside this idea, and considers other possible interpretations in the following paragraphs. In recalling his own endless traveling by boat, resulting from his frequent changes of official positions, Ouyang proposes that a boat is in effect a vehicle for pursuing fame and wealth. Only merchants who are greedy for profit and officials who have no choice travel frequently by boat, and face life-threatening danger. Thus, for Ouyang, naming the studio after such a boat would serve only as a reminder of his difficult days of traveling. Of course, this is far removed from his

⁴⁷¹ See, for example, Hexagram 59, “Scatters” (“Huan” 渙), and Hexagram 61, “Inner Trust” (“Zhongfu” 中孚).

expectation of the studio. Once again, Ouyang challenges his own point of view, and offers another alternative:

But I heard that among people in ancient times, there were ones who escaped from the mundane world, fled to the faraway rivers and lakes, and all their lives they were not willing to return. They must have found something enjoyable. If one does not run the risks associated with pursuing profit, nor has one been convicted of a crime and has no choice, but rather if accompanied by a favorable wind and gentle waves one is able to be loftily on the pillow and mat, sailing a thousand *li* in a single day, then is boat travel not enjoyable? But indeed I have no time to do that. Since the *fang* refers to a boat for carefree pleasure, I tentatively named my studio for it. How can one say that it is not suited?⁴⁷²

然予聞古之人，有逃世遠去江湖之上，終身而不肯反者，其必有所樂也。苟非冒利於險，有罪而不得已，使順風恬波，傲然枕席之上，一日而千里，則舟之行豈不樂哉！顧予誠有所未暇，而舫者宴嬉之舟也，姑以名予齋，奚曰不宜？

As a boat on rivers and lakes is a traditional symbol of reclusive status, Ouyang reasonably interprets the boat-shaped, boat-named studio with natural views as a space for seclusion. Boat travel immerses one in peaceful nature and helps one withdraw from society. This is pleasant, yet as Ouyang explicitly indicates—“indeed I have no time to do that” 予誠有所未暇—denying the desirability of framing his studio as a hermit’s boat. So far, Ouyang has called into question all three possible interpretations of the boat-shaped, boat-named studio.⁴⁷³ Finally, he suggests a tentative conclusion: he is only borrowing the meaning of “carefree pleasure” (*yanxi* 宴嬉) from the pleasure boat, and therefore defines his studio as a space for pleasure, which is separate from the pursuits of either seclusion or reputation.

However, from Ouyang’s tone, we can sense that this is a fourth way to understand the studio rather than a settled conclusion. Ouyang is still exploring. In fact, this “Account of the Painted Pleasure-Boat Studio” (“Huafang zhai ji” 畫舫齋記) helped inspire the widespread subsequent fascination with the boat-shaped or boat-named studio in the Song era. Written a little later than

⁴⁷² “Huafang zhai ji,” *Ouyang Xiu quanji*, 39.568–69. In my translation, I have consulted the translation by Ronald Egan, *The Literary Works of Ou-yang Hsiu (1007–72)*, pp. 211–12. I am grateful to Prof. Ronald Egan and Prof. Jeehee Hong for reminding me of this important account.

⁴⁷³ Ronald Egan has pointed out that one of the techniques Ouyang Xiu uses in his prose is that “he talks around and around his subject, building up layer after layer of meaning”; see *The Literary Works of Ou-yang Hsiu (1007–72)*, p. 43.

Ouyang's account, Qin Guan's 秦觀 (1049–1100) poem "The Light-Boat Studio" ("Ting zhai" 艇齋) continues probing the implications of the boat imagery:

Preface

I, from the proofreader in the Academy, was appointed to the vice prefect of Qiantang. I encountered and made friends with the gentleman Ding Yanliang [the courtesy name of Ding Xia 丁俠] in the government office of Chenliu. Gentleman Ding Yanliang was young and talented. He even did not take a rest in reading aloud poems and essays. Frequently he delivered outstanding speeches. I deeply regretted meeting him so late. Upon departure, he urged me to compose a poem for his Light-Boat Studio. Therefore, I sent him a poem.

序

予以典校史領俸錢塘，邂逅得友丁君彥良於陳留官舍。丁君彥良年少氣雋，誦詩文響不絕，動有過人語，深恨得之晚也。臨分以艇齋詩速予賦，為寄題一篇。

平生樂漁釣，	All my life I have been fond of fishing,
放浪江湖間。	I am unrestrained on the rivers and lakes.
兀兀寄幽艇，	Being tranquil, I lodge in a secluded boat,
不憂浪如山。	I am not worried about waves that are like mountains.
聞君城郭居，	I heard that you live in the city,
左右群書環。	On your left and on your right, all sorts of books surround you.
有齋亦名艇，	You possess a studio also named Light-Boat,
何時許追攀？	When will you allow me to accompany?
釣古不釣今，	You fish the past rather than the present,
所得孔與顏。	What you obtain are Confucius and Yan Hui.
不然如爾祖，	Otherwise you may be like your ancestor,
跨鶴出雲寰。	He rode the crane and went beyond the clouds. ⁴⁷⁴

This poem was composed at the request of Qin Guan's friend Ding Xia. Both the preface and the poem show that Qin had not visited Ding Xia's Light-Boat Studio when he wrote about it. In other words, the poem is an imagining of the studio. As Gaston Bachelard points out in discussing the function of a house, "Past, present and future give the house different dynamisms, which often interfere, at times opposing, at others, stimulating one another."⁴⁷⁵ Qin's imagining of the Light-Boat Studio also derives from the legendary past of Ding Lingwei, from Qin's own experience, as well as from Ding Xia's naming and description of the studio, all of which endow the space with different or even contrasting meanings.

⁴⁷⁴ Xu Peijun 徐培均, ed. and annot., *Huaihai ji jianzhu* 淮海集箋注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1994), 5.192.

⁴⁷⁵ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, p. 6.

On the one hand, Qin proposes the possibility of interpreting Ding Xia’s studio as a reclusive space. First, inspired by the name of the studio, Qin recalls his own memories of carefree times spent on a secluded boat. Second, based on Ding Xia’s family name, it is not hard for Qin to draw a direct connection between Ding Xia and the renowned Daoist immortal Ding Lingwei in the Han dynasty, who is said to have retreated to the mountains to learn the Way and to have been able to transform himself into a crane.⁴⁷⁶ On the other hand, however, Qin realizes that what Ding Xia’s was pursuing in his use of this studio was actually quite different from his own understanding. Although Ding Xia named his studio “Light Boat” (Ting 艇), his renderings of the studio diverged greatly from that of a reclusive space. Not only did he fill the studio with books of all sorts, he also aimed to study Confucian teachings while “fishing” on this “boat.” Hence, beyond the common implication of “fishing” (*yudiao* 漁釣) on a boat as a reclusive activity, the poem suggests another interpretation—the poet’s approval and admiration of Confucian teachings. The studio, though named after a boat, has the potential to be reframed as an intellectual space for self-cultivation and mental enjoyment in daily life. In this sense, Qin’s work in effect revises as well as simplifies Ouyang’s multiple proposed interpretations of the boat-shaped, boat-named studio into dual choices.

Clarifying even further these binary opposites, Huihong in his poem “Inscribing on Instructor Wang’s Light-Boat Studio” (“Ti Wang jiaoshou Ting zhai” 題王教授艇齋) clearly juxtaposes these two interpretive dimensions:

宴居端若寄虛舟，	Living leisurely is indeed like lodging in an empty boat, ⁴⁷⁷
三峽詞源日倒流。	A flood of words from the Three Gorges flows backwards day by day. ⁴⁷⁸
慣與衣冠游泮水，	You are accustomed to traveling with scholars along the

⁴⁷⁶ Wang Shaoying, ed. and annot., *Soushen houji*, 1.1.

⁴⁷⁷ The “empty boat” (*xuzhou* 虛舟) is a famous image in the *Zhuangzi*. I will explain it in detail later in the discussion of Zhang Shi’s “Inscription for the Empty-Boat Studio.”

⁴⁷⁸ This line borrows directly from Du Fu’s “Drunken Song” (“Zuige xing” 醉歌行), which reads, “A flood of words makes water of the Three Gorges flow backwards” 詞源倒流三峽水 (*Du shi xiangzhu*, 3.241). Du Fu uses this hyperbolic expression to praise his nephew’s outstanding literary talent.

坐看圖史認瀛洲。 胸中耿耿觀瀾術， 物外悠悠涉世謀。 莫謂縱橫止容膝， 濟川林葉此中求。	semicircular water, ⁴⁷⁹ Sometimes you read books and histories to identify Yingzhou. ⁴⁸⁰ In your dedicated mind, you have the art of observing waves, ⁴⁸¹ Beyond things, you keep aloof from the strategy for experiencing the world. Don't say that the size of the studio only fits knees, Crossing the river, and enjoying woods and leaves, within it you can achieve both. ⁴⁸²
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The last line of this poem succinctly points out the double values that one can pursue from a boat-shaped or boat-named studio: (1) to work to benefit the state; and (2) to live as a reclusive. First, the phrase “crossing the river” (*jichuan* 濟川) comes from the chapter “The Charge to Yue” (“Yue ming” 說命) of the *Book of Documents*. When the king of the Shang appointed Fu Yue 傅說 as the prime minister, “he charged him, saying, ‘Morning and evening present your instructions to aid my virtue. Suppose me a weapon of steel;—I will use you for a whetstone. Suppose me crossing a great stream;—I will use you for a boat with its oars’” 命之曰：“朝夕納誨，以輔台德。若金，用汝作礪；若濟巨川，用汝作舟楫。”⁴⁸³ Therefore, the phrase “crossing the river” came to mean supporting and assisting the emperor. The phrase “woods and leaves” (*linye* 林葉), conversely, commonly alludes to living in reclusion. Thus, the last line can be paraphrased as, “Governing the state and being a hermit: one can achieve both within the studio.”

As to how to achieve both in the studio, the poem suggests an answer in a series of fragments: lines 1, 4, and 6 can be classified as “woods and leaves,” whereas lines 2, 3, and 5 belong to the

⁴⁷⁹ The *panshui* 泮水 is the semicircular body of water in front of the academy in ancient times. Later it is also used as a metonym for the academy or school.

⁴⁸⁰ Yingzhou 瀛洲 is one of the legendary divine mountains.

⁴⁸¹ The phrase *guanlan shu* 觀瀾術 comes from *Mengzi*; see *Mengzi yizhu*, 13.24: “There is an art to observing water. One must observe its waves” 觀水有術，必觀其瀾。

⁴⁸² *QSS*, 1339.15258.

⁴⁸³ *Shangshu yizhu*, p. 170. I use the translation by James Legge, *The Chinese Classics* (Taipei: SMC Publishing INC., 1991), vol. 3, pp. 251–52.

theme of “crossing the river.” In the Light-Boat Studio, the owner is able not only to enjoy a retreat by sitting leisurely (line 1), imagining divine mountains (line 4), and spending time away from the dusty world (line 6) but also to engage in literary creation (line 2), attend scholarly gatherings (line 3), and study Confucian teachings (line 5). The studio thus works as a medium to enable its owner to have it both ways.

Another work written by Huihong, the “Account of the Pleasure-Boat Studio” (“Fang zhai ji” 舫齋記), offers a more detailed debate about how to define this newly popularized studio space. This account was written for Huihong’s old friend Li Defu 李德孚, who was “well-talented and good at literary writings” 有美才，善屬文. It begins with an explanation of the origin of Li’s studio name, which reads:

[Li Defu] took the official position in Jinling. To the east of the government offices, he opened up a building for the purpose of reading books. The building linked several rooms, and the doorways were connected. Watching it from east to west was just like being in a boat. Therefore, he named it the “Pleasure-Boat Studio.”

官之金陵，即官舍之東，闢室以觀書。其室連數楹而戶相重，東西而視，如在船中。乃以舫齋名之。

Very similar to Ouyang Xiu’s Painted Pleasure-Boat Studio, this studio was part of the government offices where Li Defu worked, and its name was also inspired by the shape of the studio. But its basic function is specified as a separate space for book reading. Following Ouyang Xiu, Huihong still feels the need to justify the studio name combining a pair of opposing concepts (a boat and the studio of a literatus). In the persona of a guest, the poet raises the question of how to deal with this tension:

A guest then came. He looked at the inscribed plaque, raised and questioned it, saying, “Should I regard you as a recluse? But your loyal and righteous manner and your ambition to pursue achievement as well as reputation are shown in your speech. Yet, should I consider you not a recluse? But your interests in mountains and water and the distinctiveness of your hobby are different from your peers.”

有客聿至，視其榜，揭而疑之，曰：“以子為隱者耶？則忠義之色，功名之志，見施為語言。以子為非隱者耶？則山水之意，嗜好之異，與儕輩不侔。”

In a subsequent long paragraph, the conversation continues between the guest and the studio

owner, elaborating this question, but the main idea has already been pointed out in the above quotation. Was this studio a reclusive space or a nonreclusive space, although it seemed to fit neither? In response to this:

Defu faced upward and laughed, and bowing his head replied, “It is not the case that I am relieving worries. I just consider loyalty, trustworthiness, filial piety, and fraternity as the misty water; and regard the attitude of accepting the circumstances with good will as the boat. In the past, Ping Yi obtained it and therefore was able to roam the great river; and the fisherman left among reeds after talking. I personally admire them. The case is like this, and that’s all.”⁴⁸⁴

德孚仰而笑，俯而應曰：“吾非放愁也，但吾以忠信孝友為煙波，隨所遇而安之為舟舫。昔馮夷得之以遊大川，漁父語已緣葦而去，意竊慕之，如是而已矣。”

Li Defu’s reply includes two allusions to the *Zhuangzi*. Both concentrate on the idea of attaining the Way. Ping Yi, in the chapter “The Great Ancestral Teacher” (“Da zongshi” 大宗師), is mentioned in order to demonstrate the attribute of the Way: “It may be transmitted but cannot be received. It may be apprehended but cannot be seen” 可傳而不可受，可得而不可見。⁴⁸⁵ The second figure, the fisherman, appears in the chapter “An Old Fisherman” (“Yufu” 漁父), which records a conversation between a fisherman and Confucius. When Confucius appeared frustrated because his teachings were not accepted by the kings, the fisherman, although he respected Confucius’s teachings, criticized him, saying, “But now, instead of cultivating your own person, you seek to cultivate others. Is this not paying attention to externals?” 今不修之身而求之人，不亦外乎？⁴⁸⁶ That is, the fisherman suggested to Confucius that he earnestly cultivate himself in order to escape entanglements. Of course, both stories can be interpreted in multiple ways, but Li Defu clarifies his own interpretation by using the “misty water” (*yanbo* 煙波) and “boat” (*zhoufang* 舟舫) metaphors. He borrows only the suggestions of carefree, peaceful, and self-improved attitudes from these *Zhuangzi* stories related to the boat. But after all, this boat is

⁴⁸⁴ QSW, 3022.234–35.

⁴⁸⁵ *Zhuangzi jishi*, 6.246. I use the translation by Victor H. Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 6.55.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.1031. I use the translation by Victor H. Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 31.321.

floating on the broad water of Confucian notions of loyalty, trustworthiness, filial piety, and fraternity. To put it differently, by constructing a studio in the shape of a boat, the studio owner adopts the implications of seclusion associated with a boat, but he seldom entirely indulges the idea of reclusion; instead, he regards the boat-studio as a vehicle to better cultivate himself to become a literatus.

Probably because Dehong is a monk-poet, he still represents a scholar's studio in a fairly neutral way. In literati's own representations of a boat-shaped or boat-named studio, however, a deep anxiety about the tension between reclusion and the responsibilities of the literati is more fully conveyed. For instance:

Deng Su 鄧肅 (1091–1132), “The Pleasure-Boat Studio” 舫齋

寓形天宇間，	We are granted human form in the universe,
一枝慎所處。	A single branch on which one stays needs to be carefully selected.
到眼無溪山，	When I looked around, there was no creek or mountains,
堆胸自塵土。	What piled up in my heart was of course dust.
陳子作舫齋，	Master Chen constructed the Pleasure-Boat Studio,
端能世外趣。	Indeed he was able to enjoy interests beyond the world.
笑傲風波境，	He proudly wandered in the realm of wind and waves,
恬無風波慮。	But it was so peaceful that there was no worry of wind and waves.
循本魚可觀，	He kept his original nature, and so fishes could be observed, ⁴⁸⁷
灰心鷗自舞。	His mind was like dead ashes, and so gulls danced by themselves.
風景雖可人，	Although the landscape is so satisfying,
公乎聊四顧。	The master is looking all around.
紛紛逐末流，	One after another, people are following the decadent trend,
誰援沉迷苦？	Who can rescue the confused from suffering?
吾事在濟川，	Our duty is to cross the river,
慎勿五湖去。	Please take care not to go to the five lakes. ⁴⁸⁸

This long poem can be divided into three parts. The opening four lines first make a general statement about the importance of one's dwelling and its surrounding environment. The lack of natural beauty (e.g., the creek and mountains) around a house largely prevents one from purifying the mind. Taking this into consideration, in the next three couplets, the poet introduces

⁴⁸⁷ This alludes to the debate on the happiness of fish, between Zhuangzi and Huizi. See *Zhuangzi jishi*, 17.606–7.

⁴⁸⁸ *QSS*, 1777.19725.

Master Chen's construction of the Pleasure-Boat Studio. Since this studio was designed in the shape of a boat, it included attractive scenery that could be compared to the gentle breezes and waves enjoyed in a real boat, while avoiding the dangers of stormy winds and waves that a real boat might also encounter. Moreover, by referring to fish and gulls (images alluding to the reclusive lifestyle), the poet further stresses that the natural surroundings of the studio provide peace of mind to the studio owner. The studio allows Master Chen to return to his original simple life, maintain a detached attitude, and therefore enjoy a relaxed life apart from the dusty world.

However, the couplet, "Although the landscape is so satisfying, / The master is looking all around," marks a crucial transition in the poem. The master did not keep his eyes fixed on the beauty around his studio; rather, he looked back, to the world, and worried about people who were suffering there. The closing lines, then, whether paraphrasing the master's intention or reflecting the poet's expectation for the master, make a firm declaration. The phrase "crossing the river" used in Huihong's "Inscribing on Instructor Wang's Light-Boat Studio" appears again. Unlike Huihong's treatment, however, which regards both "crossing the river" and "enjoying woods and leaves" as acceptable alternatives, this time the phrase suggests the only choice that one should make. The phrase contrasts sharply with "going to the five lakes" (*wuhu qu* 五湖去). The image of the "five lakes" alludes to the story of the minister Fan Li 范蠡 in the state of Yue during the Spring and Autumn Period. According to *Guoyu* 國語, after supporting Goujian 勾踐, the king of Yue, to defeat the state of Wu, Fan Li retreated to the five lakes on a skiff.⁴⁸⁹ The "five lakes" thus usually refers to the withdrawal from the social world. Then, by using the phrase "please take care not to do" (*shenwu* 慎勿) before "going to the five lakes," Deng Su resolutely claims his/the master's choice—regarding the boat-shaped or boat-named studio as a nourishing space for the fulfillment of the literati duty to contribute to the state, rather than as the studio owner's hermitage.

⁴⁸⁹ Xu Yuangao 徐元誥, ed. and annot., *Guoyu jijie* 國語集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2002), 21.588–89.

Such a tension even becomes a trope in poetry. For example, the “five lakes” appear again in the poem “Inscribing on One’s Pleasure-Boat Studio” (“Ti ren Fang zhai” 題人舫齋) by Cao Xun 曹勛 (ca. 1098–1174), in opposition to the “four seas” (*sihai* 四海) this time:

君家作屋擬虛舟， 想見低窗事事幽。 竹幹巧同檣影直， 簾波寒並水光浮。 五湖煙月應無意， 四海風塵計少留。 掛旆天山端有待， 要憑巨楫濟橫流。	You constructed a house in imitation of an empty boat, I can imagine that by the low window, everything is secluded. Bamboo poles are just as straight as the shadow of masts, Cold curtain waves float together with the shimmer of water. To the misty moon on the five lakes, you should not pay attention, In windy dust of the four seas, you would like to stay. To display the banner on the Tian mountains, there is indeed something to depend on, By means of giant oars, you will cross the inundation. ⁴⁹⁰
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Indeed, the structure of this poem is similar to Deng Su’s “The Pleasure-Boat Studio.” The first half describes the quiet and peaceful studio space. The analogies between bamboo poles and masts, as well as between the curtain and the water, well reveal the characteristics of the decor of a boat-shaped studio. The question then turns to how to understand such a secluded space.

Accordingly, the second half of the poem defines its significance. The reclusive implications of the “five lakes” have been examined above. The contrary concept of the “four seas” derives from lines by Fu Xuan 傅玄 (217–278) which read, “A boy faces door and gate, / Comes down on earth with a natural birthright. / His manly heart burns for the four seas, / Ten thousand leagues he yearns for windy dust” 男兒當門戶，墮地自生神。雄心志四海，萬里望風塵。⁴⁹¹ As we can see, throwing oneself to the “windy dust” of the four seas expresses the ambition to devote oneself to society. Hence, by accepting the windy dust of the four seas while neglecting the beauty of the five lakes, Cao Xun leads the reader to consider the Pleasure-Boat Studio as a space for self-cultivation with the aim to pacify the whole world. This point is further confirmed by the ending couplet, which, again, defines the boat shape of the studio as the embodiment of

⁴⁹⁰ QSS, 1888.21126.

⁴⁹¹ “Yuzhang xing kuxiang pian” 豫章行苦相篇. I use the translation by Anne Birrell, in John Minford and Joseph S.M. Lau, ed., *Classical Chinese Literature: An Anthology of Translations*, vol. I, *From Antiquity to the Tang Dynasty* (New York and Hong Kong: Columbia University Press and Hong Kong University Press, 2000), pp. 432–33.

the “crossing the river” metaphor.

Besides the trope discussed above, sometimes a literatus makes a more uncompromising statement. As the following “Inscription for the Skiff Studio” (“Ling zhai ming” 舫齋銘) shows, the author Wang Zhuo 王灼 (1081–ca. 1160) interprets every single part of a boat in the framework of Confucian teachings:

The *ling* refers to a small boat. My younger brother Dechong’s studio looks like a boat, so I named it after a skiff. The inscription reads:

舫，小舟屋也。族弟德充書室如舟，某以命之。銘曰：

As for riding a boat on land, the boat would lose its reliability. Thus, in dealing with affairs, all would go wrong. Who can tell that this room, in the shape of a skiff, is very proper to stay in? Filial piety and fraternity are the mast, loyalty and trustworthiness are the sail, cultural splendor is the barge pole, study of Confucian classics is the rudder. Therefore, the skiff can pass the Yellow River, float on the Yangzi River, and enter the sea. When it rides on the long wind and smashes the ten thousand *li* waves, it would be fitting to cross, with no disaster.⁴⁹²

盪舟於陸，物有失據，理事皆左。孰云此室，具體則舫，居之甚妥。孝友爲樞，忠信爲帆，文章爲篙，經術爲柁。遂逾于河，浮于江，入於海，乘長風，破萬里浪，將利涉而無禍。

Wang Zhuo first tells us that he named the studio in terms of its physical shape. However, this is far from enough. He is eager to establish a symbolic significance for this seemingly strange boat-on-land. Hence, he creates a series of analogies between the boat shape and Confucian morality. Each crucial part that can control the course of a boat, such as the mast or rudder, he compares to a key Confucian value in human behavior. Thus, the boat shape embodies the value system for self-cultivation of the literati. Based on this prerequisite, in the second half of the inscription, Wang indicates that the boat is ready for sailing. He borrows the ambitious claim asserted by Zong Que 宗慤 (d. 465) in the Southern Dynasties (“I expect to ride on the long wind and smashes the ten thousand *li* waves” 願乘長風破萬里浪⁴⁹³), which manifests the further duty of this boat as a vehicle for accomplishing worldly achievements. In the closing line, Wang quotes

⁴⁹² *QSW*, 4227.75.

⁴⁹³ *Song shu* 宋書, 76.1971.

“it would be fitting to cross the great river” from the *Book of Changes* to summarize the implications of the Skiff Studio. The lines remind us of Ouyang Xiu’s use of the same concept in his “Account of the Painted Pleasure-Boat Studio.” But here, Wang does not emphasize the boat’s function of relieving danger, as Ouyang does; rather, he believes that this skiff guarantees one’s contributions to society and a smooth career, since one is able to fully cultivate the self within it.

With a similar purpose, Zhang Shi 張栻 (1133–1180) even more straightforwardly excludes the possible reclusive implications of the boat-shaped or boat-named studio. In the preface to his “Inscription for the Empty-Boat Studio” (“Xuzhou zhai ming” 虛舟齋銘) for Zhan Tiren 詹體仁 (1143–1206), Zhang Shi writes,

Zhan Tiren opened up a studio in the side room, and requested me to name it. Since it was empty and long, I inscribed it as “Empty Boat.” On another day, Tiren told me, “The discourse of Zhuangzi is Daoist and deviant. I don’t want to adopt it. While in the ‘Inner Trust’ chapter of the *Book of Changes*, it says, ‘It is fitting to cross the great river, for in riding atop wood there is the emptiness of the boat.’⁴⁹⁴ Based on this, I will comprehend the studio name.” I admired his prudent consideration, and so I further composed this inscription on behalf of him.⁴⁹⁵

詹體仁闢齋於便坐，屬予名，以其虛且長也，則題之曰“虛舟”。他日體仁謂予曰：“漆園之說道而離，吾無取焉耳。在《易》之《中孚》‘利涉大川，乘木舟虛。’將於是焉體之。”予歎其善思也，則又為之銘。

Like Wang Zhuo, Zhang Shi seems to propose the name Empty Boat (Xuzhou 虛舟) simply based on the shape of the new studio. Nevertheless, since the “empty boat” is such a well-known image in the *Zhuangzi*,⁴⁹⁶ Zhang Shi’s naming inevitably inspires others to understand the studio from a Daoist perspective. As Eugene Eoyang precisely summarizes, the *Zhuangzi* uses the “empty boat” in two ways. One is in the chapter “The Tree on the Mountain” (“Shanmu” 山木). By discussing the different attitudes towards boat-with-somebody and boat-with-nobody, it aims

⁴⁹⁴ *Zhouyi yizhu*, 61.216. I use the translation by Richard John Lynn, *The Classic of Changes*, pp. 523–24.

⁴⁹⁵ *QSW*, 5743.430–31.

⁴⁹⁶ The image of an empty boat also appears in Huihong’s “Inscribing on Instructor Wang’s Light-Boat Studio” and Cao Xun’s “Inscribing on One’s Pleasure-Boat Studio” discussed earlier in this chapter.

to demonstrate the significance of emptying oneself to avoid harm. The other is from the chapter “Lie Yukou” (列禦寇), which uses a similar metaphor to argue the superior status of a man with no ability, in contrast to the wise man.⁴⁹⁷ Both reflect typical Daoist ideas; and for precisely this reason, Zhan Tiren felt uncomfortable with this studio name. Instead of changing the name, however, he found a creative way to reestablish the purpose of his studio: He located the image of the empty boat in the context of the Confucian classic of the *Book of Changes*, rather than the Daoist text *Zhuangzi*. Once again we see the idea that “it is fitting to cross the great river.” But to directly relate this concept to the empty boat, this time, Zhan focuses on the lines from the chapter “Inner Trust,” which is generally considered a statement of the importance of trustworthiness. In doing so, Zhan disassociates the ideology of emptiness or uselessness from the studio, and thus effectively distinguishes the scholarly studio from a hermitage.

Although this clarification of the implications of the name is recorded in the voice of Zhan Tiren, the author Zhang Shi, as a prominent Daoxue figure, must also be aware of the ambiguity the name implies. In fact, his naming of Empty Boat rhetorically allows him to make his final point—a forceful advocacy of the values of Neo-Confucianism.⁴⁹⁸ Indeed, in the main text of the inscription, Zhang Shi elaborates on the studio name by stressing that emptying one’s mind is the way to acquire the principle and achieve success, rendered completely in the language of Neo-Confucianism.

In summary, on the one hand, the boat-shaped or boat-named studio, by means of its natural surroundings, enables literati to maintain a secluded and peaceful atmosphere in their daily lives, which helps them to fully articulate their refinement and erudition, and thus to be labeled as the distinctive class of elegance. On the other hand, to avoid being recognized as recluses in their studios, as discussed above, literati express and relieve their anxiety regarding this space through

⁴⁹⁷ Eugene Eoyang, “The Solitary Boat: Images of Self in Chinese Nature Poetry,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 32.4 (Aug., 1973): 605–10. See also Ge Xiaoyin, “‘Duwang’ he ‘xuzhou’” “獨往”和“虛舟”, *Wenxue yichan* 5 (2009): 4–11.

⁴⁹⁸ I thank Prof. Michael Fuller for pointing out the rhetorical mediation between the use of Daoist terms and the expression of Confucian ideas in this essay.

their literary writings. One way they find to reduce the anxiety is to draw a direct connection between the enjoyment of elegant life in the private studio and the intention to contribute in the public sphere. The use of the trope “crossing the river” (in contrast with “going to the five lakes”) is just one example. The “river” on which the boat-shaped studio is rhetorically floating is not the “rivers and lakes” conceived as a retreat from the world; more often the literati shape this river as the waterway of Confucian tradition. From Ouyang Xiu’s account to Zhang Shi’s inscription, we can see that the attention to the natural landscape surrounding the studio is much weakened. Instead, self-cultivation and its ultimate goal of fulfillment of social responsibility are gradually highlighted. This feature of the boat-shaped or boat-named studio can be extended to the studio space in general. That is, Song literati utilize the idea of studio-centered nature to create a relaxed and elegant atmosphere, but the reclusive implications of this idea must be more or less evaded.

Conclusion: Leaving the Studio

The preceding chapters have examined the studio as the singular space for Song literati to enjoy ultimate pleasure and attain self-cultivation. The studio was indeed a self-contained space; nevertheless, as the Confucian classic *Great Learning* indicates, a literatus should not stop at cultivating the self; rather, self-cultivation functions as the basis for “administering the state.” Thus, by way of conclusion, it is crucial to investigate how the private studio interacts with the political arena outside the studio.

Let us begin this exploration by once again entering Sima Guang’s studio:

“Hall for Reading Books” 讀書堂

吾愛董仲舒， 窮經守幽獨。	I admire Dong Zhongshu, He exhaustively dug into the classics and remained in isolation and loneliness.
所居雖有園， 三年不遊目。	Although his dwelling had a garden, For three years he never let his eyes roam.
邪說遠去耳， 聖言飽充腹。	Heresies were thus far away from his ears, Sage words fully filled his stomach.
發策登漢庭， 百家始消伏。	Responding to imperial inquiries, he ascended to the court of the Han, Only after this, were the hundred schools eliminated. ⁴⁹⁹

This poem is from the “Seven Poems on the Garden of Solitary Enjoyment” by Sima Guang, each of which associates a prominent ancient figure with a site in the garden.⁵⁰⁰ This time, to associate with his studio, the core of the garden, Sima Guang selects the great Confucian scholar Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (ca. 179–ca. 104 BCE) of the Western Han.

In the first half of the poem, Sima Guang imagines the great efforts Dong Zhongshu made in studying. He sketches Dong’s status as isolated and lonely, exerting himself in the examination of Confucian classics. Dong concentrated so hard on his studies, he did not even glance at his garden for three years. Consequently, as the second half of the poem shows, Dong equipped

⁴⁹⁹ *Sima Wenzheng gong chuanjia ji*, p. 33.

⁵⁰⁰ I discuss the features of this poem series by analyzing the poem “Chamber for Playing with Water” in Chapter 5.

himself with “sage words” (*shengyan* 聖言), that is, with the Confucian teachings. As a result of these efforts, the Han emperor appointed him to an important position, and he succeeded in establishing Confucian teachings as orthodoxy and ensuring that doctrines of all other schools of thoughts were subsequently labeled heresies.

In fact, this poetic description of Dong’s career is a rewriting of the biography of Dong Zhongshu in the *History of the Former Han*. The opening of this biography portrays Dong as an extremely dedicated scholar, reading as follows:

In his youth, [Dong Zhongshu] studied the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. During the reign of Emperor Xiaojing [r. 157–141 BCE], he was an Erudite. Lowering the curtain, he taught and read. His disciples transmitted what he taught to one another according to seniority, so some of his disciples never met him in person. For about three years he did not peep into his garden—his concentration was to this extent. As for his demeanor and manner, he practiced nothing if it was not according to ritual. Scholars all respected him as their teacher. After Emperor Wu ascended the throne, the emperor elevated worthy, excellent, and learned scholars, more than one hundred in total. Zhongshu, as a worthy and excellent scholar, responded to the imperial inquiries from the emperor.⁵⁰¹

少治春秋，孝景時為博士。下帷講誦，弟子傳以久次相授業，或莫見其面。蓋三年不窺園，其精如此。進退容止，非禮不行，學士皆師尊之。武帝即位，舉賢良文學之士前後百數，而仲舒以賢良對策焉。

Following this, the *History of the Former Han* records all three imperial inquiries and Dong’s long essays as his answers to Emperor Wu. It is in these essays that Dong proposed to establish the official authority of Confucian thoughts while at the same time to abolish various other schools. After Dong submitted these responses, the emperor appointed him minister of Jiangdu, to assist the King of Jiangdu.⁵⁰²

Sima Guang’s rewriting of this biographical record of Dong Zhongshu, however, wittily tailors Dong’s early career into a poem on the studio. He first creatively constructs a studio-like space for Dong. The *History of the Former Han* makes no explicit mention of a studio; rather, Dong studied in an academy-like site. Although junior students might not get the chance to meet him, Dong indeed spent time teaching his senior disciples. In the poem, however, Sima Guang

⁵⁰¹ *Han shu*, 56.2495.

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*, 56.2495–523.

excludes all social connections for Dong and shapes him entirely as a scholar in solitude. Dong's unconcern over his garden is thus not only evidence of his "concentration" (*jing* 精) on studying, but also a highlight of the unique status of the studio. As discussed in Chapter 2, the studio is a self-contained space such that it enables its owner to fully enjoy and cultivate himself, with little desire to interact with the outside world.

In this way, the first half of the "Hall for Reading Books" transfers Dong, a figure from the remote Han dynasty, into a space (the studio) that was not treasured prior to the Song era, and depicts Dong's self-sufficiency there. Nevertheless, as preceding chapters of this dissertation have demonstrated, the studio space is never wholly private. In the poem, Sima Guang suggests another dimension of the porousness of the studio—a connection between the studio and the imperial court. A causal relationship is implied between the two halves of the poem; Dong's "isolation and loneliness" (*youdu* 幽獨) in the studio are presented as the reason he becomes able to "ascend to the court" (*dengting* 登庭).

Of course, this association does not exist in Dong's biography, but is suggested by Sima Guang based on his understanding of the significance of the studio. Admittedly, just as Dong refuses to even peep into his garden, Sima Guang, in his "Account of the Garden of Solitary Enjoyment," also claims that he passes his time in solitude in the Hall for Reading Books, seeking nothing from the outside. Yet, he does not stay inside merely for the sake of staying inside. Rather, the time he spends in solitude in the studio yields self-improvement, and allows the literatus to make full use of his abilities and ultimately to contribute to the state.

In this sense, Sima Guang's poem expresses his expectations of himself more than celebrating an ancient figure. Sima Guang composed this poem at the beginning of his retirement at Luoyang, which lasted a decade and a half. To show his opposition to the New Policies reforms, Sima Guang retreated into his studio. Having no opportunity to exert influence in politics, he shifted his attention to examining and reestablishing the orthodoxy of the Confucian teachings and moral system, and to compiling the grand historical work *Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of*

Governance (*Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑒). Just as he depicted Dong Zhongshu's intellectual accomplishments in the studio as Dong's means of preparing one day to impact the court, Sima Guang also expected to return one day from his studio to the centers of political activity. Indeed, the poem is prophetic. When Emperor Shenzong, supporter of the reforms, passed away, the Grand Empress Dowager Gao (1032–1093) at once called Sima Guang back to the capital and appointed him prime minister. Even more efficiently than Dong, Sima Guang resolutely abolished what he considered “heresies” (*xieshuo* 邪說) (namely, the New Policies).

Thus, by reframing Dong Zhongshu's success in terms of a shifting of spaces from the studio to the court, Sima Guang endows the studio with a practical concern. Written around the same period, Chao Buzhi's “Account of the Studio of Dormancy” (“Qianzhai ji” 潛齋記), in a more theoretical and systematic way, further establishes the studio as space nourishing political activism. The opening of this account reads:

The width of the Studio of Dormancy is less than one *zhang*; its height is the same. Its back is towards the sun while it faces the shade, so it is apart from warmth but tends towards coldness. The two wings of this room shade from the outside. Old trees conceal its front, and small bamboos cluster round its right. So the room is dim and shadowy, and the sun cannot shine in it. It is just like the place where hibernating insects and crouched animals lie dormant [*qian*], and the name of “dormancy” [*qian*] is chosen because of this.

潛室之廣無丈，其高如之，背陽而面陰，違溫而趨寒，高室雙翼外蔭，老木翳其前，小竹叢其右，朦朧晦曖，光景不曜，蓋若蟄蟲伏獸之所潛焉，而潛之名所為得也。⁵⁰³

To elucidate the naming of his studio, Chao Buzhi begins by depicting its architectural form. The studio is not only very small, it is also dim and cold because its physical orientation and geographic surroundings isolate it from direct sunlight. As it is similar to the place where animals hibernate, Chao names it the “Studio of Dormancy” (Qian zhai 潛齋).

Yet, this naming reflects far more than architecture. If the studio is compared to an animal's hibernating place, then the studio owner is analogized to an animal in hibernation, who hides in the dark and remains inactive. Solitude of this kind, traditionally associated with an eremitic

⁵⁰³ The phrase *gaoshi* 高室 (“the lofty room”) contradicts the description of the studio as a very tiny room, so here I follow the version in *Gujin shiwen leiju* 古今事文類聚, which uses *qishi* 其室 (“this room”) instead.

lifestyle, make one question the studio owner's aspirations—How can a literatus, who ought to serve the society, claim to be reclusive?

Chao thus structures the main body of this account as a debate between the studio owner and a guest. The guest harshly criticizes the studio owner's pursuit of dormancy:

A guest who visited me said, "Nowadays, the lord is brilliant and the ministers are excellent; the government is harmonious and common people are satisfied. In the court there are phoenixes, while in the field there are no wolves. This can be called an age that is well governed. You are twenty years old and six *chi* tall. Yet, when abroad, you are unable to hold the war drum to lead an army of a million. You are unable to, carrying the bow of Crow's Cry on your left and the sword from Mount Kunwu on your right, with angry shout, recapture Mount Qilian to the north or enslave Ling and Xia to the west.⁵⁰⁴ When in the country, you are unable to use your opinion to assist the imperial council or to be in the rank to join the Hall of the Purple Myrtle. You are unable to rectify your demeanor or adjust your countenance to consolidate various officers; you are unable to hold papers or grasp writing brushes to order the four seas. Now, in turn, remaining silent, you hide your body and keep your trace far away [from society]. By means of 'obstinacy,' you settled your mind; by means of 'dormancy,' you named your room. Are you not going against the norms or behaving perversely?"

客過予者曰：“方今主聖臣良，政恬俗康，朝有鸞鷟，野無豺狼，可謂有道之世矣。吾子生二十，長六尺，出不能提桴鼓以動百萬之師，左烏號之弓，右昆吾之劍，暗鳴吒叱，北收祁連，西虜靈夏；入不能陪黃閣之末議，聯紫微之別班，正容端色，以齊肅百吏，操紙握管，以號令四海。今反幽幽默默，逃形遠跡，以頑處心，以潛名室，豈非所謂倒行而逆施者邪？”

First, the guest positions in a broader social context the factors that determine how a person should choose a career. The present age, he states, is well governed (*youdao zhi shi* 有道之世), with a peaceful and enlightened sovereign. In such an age, one is responsible to make great contributions to the state, rather than obstinately hiding oneself. The guest's assertion is orthodox, embodying the key principle of the Confucian school that "if all under Heaven is well governed, then one shows himself; if it is ill governed, then one conceals himself" 天下有道則見，無道則隱。⁵⁰⁵ Based on this criterion, the guest chastises the studio owner for his refusal either to

⁵⁰⁴ "The bow of Crow's Cry" (*wuhao zhi gong* 烏號之弓) is said to be the Yellow Emperor's bow; see *Shi ji*, 12.468, and 28.1394. It is later used to refer to good and strong bows. "The sword from Mount Kunwu" (*Kunwu zhi jian* 昆吾之劍) refers to treasured swords; see *Liezi jishi*, 5.189.

⁵⁰⁵ *Lunyu yizhu*, 8.13.

undertake military exploits or to serve in civil office, and concludes that the studio owner's behaviors—living reclusively and labeling where he stays as *qian*, or dormancy—are perverse.

To respond to the guest's challenge, Chao Buzhi, in the persona of the host of the studio, declares as follows:

I was surprised and startled, then relieved, and I laughed, saying, “Indeed it is! The lord is brilliant and the ministers are excellent—this makes my dormancy a behavior that is content with my lot. The government is harmonious and the common people are satisfied—this makes my dormancy a behavior that benefits from peace. In the court there are phoenixes, while in the field there are no wolves—this makes my dormancy a behavior that is of course an enjoyment. Yet, because of this, you in turn blamed me for my obstinacy. Perhaps you have not yet thought about those!

予瞿然而驚，舍然而笑，曰：“有是哉。主聖臣良，此吾潛之所為甘乎分者也；政恬俗康，此吾潛之所為幸乎安也；朝有鸞、野無豺狼，此吾潛之所為有殆乎享也。而反以是而疑我頑，其亦未之思耶！”

Please allow me to talk about ‘dormancy’ [*qian*] to you. The *Classic of Changes* says, ‘Thunder in the Earth: this constitutes the image of *Fu* [Return].’⁵⁰⁶ This is the dormancy of Heaven and Earth, while at the same time warm air has already moved from the yellow spring. ‘The inch worm contracts in order to try to stretch itself out, and dragons and snakes hibernate in order to preserve their lives.’⁵⁰⁷ This is the dormancy of insects and animals, allowing the small ones to stretch out and the big ones to preserve themselves. Therefore, those that are unable to be still become unable to move; those that are unable to stop become unable to go. In this case, in what way do I go against the norms or behave perversely? In the past, Hui and Xian hid behind the Way, and in so doing they concealed themselves but became more illustrious day by day;⁵⁰⁸ Huang and Qi hid behind their reputations, and in so doing they were silent but gradually became prominent. I am dormant in dormancy, by means of which I intend to become non-dormant.” The guest bent down to go out of the studio. Then I wrote down this conversation on the wall.⁵⁰⁹

請為客言‘潛’：《易》曰‘雷在地中，復’，此天地之潛也，而陽氣已動乎黃泉矣。‘尺蠖之屈，以求伸也；龍蛇之蟄，以存身也’，此蟲獸之潛也。而小者獲信，大者獲存矣。故不能靜者不能動，不能處者不能出。然則奚行之倒而施之逆耶？昔者回、憲潛於道，故闇然而日彰；黃、綺潛於聲，故默然而浸揚。潛乎潛，將以為不潛者矣。”客俛而出，因記其語於壁。

⁵⁰⁶ *Zhouyi yizhu*, 24.87. I use the translation by Richard John Lynn, *The Classic of Changes*, p. 286.

⁵⁰⁷ *Zhouyi yizhu*, *xici xia zhuan* 繫辭下傳, p. 261. I use the translation by Richard John Lynn, *The Classic of Changes*, p. 81. In *Zhouyi*, it reads, 尺蠖之屈，以求信也. Meaning “stretching out,” *shen* 伸 and *xin* 信 are often interchangeable.

⁵⁰⁸ The phrase *anran er rizhang* 闇然而日彰 (“concealing themselves but becoming more illustrious day by day”) is from the *Doctrine of the Mean*; see *Liji zhengyi*, 53.1461. In *Liji*, it reads, 闇然而日章. Meaning “becoming illustrious,” *zhang* 彰 and *zhang* 章 are often interchangeable.

⁵⁰⁹ *QSW*, 2739.28–29.

Unlike the host-guest disputes that appear frequently in the genres of account or rhapsody, wherein the host completely refutes his guest's opinion, here the studio owner agrees with his guest's proposal. He agrees that a person's career choice should take into account the condition of the state. For the studio owner, the contemporary government is indeed discerning, and precisely that reason provides the prerequisite and justification for his enjoyment of *qian*. However, the point that he diverges from his guest is his interpretation of the character *qian*. To clarify his usage of *qian*, the studio owner searches for evidence from both canonical texts and historical resonance. He refers first to the *Classic of Changes*, quoting two lines describing the *qian* of Heaven and Earth and of living creatures, respectively. The first quotation is from the commentary on the images of Hexagram 24 "Return" ("Fu"), which reads, "Thunder in the Earth: this constitutes the image of *Fu* [Return]. In the same way, the former kings closed the border passes on the occasion of the winter solstice, and neither did merchants and travelers move nor sovereigns go out to inspect domains" 雷在地中，復；先王以至日閉關，商旅不行，后不省方。⁵¹⁰ Both natural phenomena and social behaviors that represent the image of "return" are quiescent, on the surface. But more crucially, as Richard John Lynn points out, "*Fu* (Return) signifies a *temporary* halt to activist government"⁵¹¹; all these phenomena represent a *temporary* return to stillness, with the aim of becoming active and dynamic again. Next he quotes, similarly, from the "Commentary on the Appended Phrases" ("Xici zhuan" 繫辭傳), also demonstrating that the status of *qian*—for example, the contraction of the inch worm and the hibernation of dragons and snakes—is actually a way to gather momentum for future advancement and success.

There are also ancient models who practiced this philosophy of *qian* suggested in the *Classic of Changes*. The first duo that Chao Buzhi selects, Yan Hui and Yuan Xian 原憲 (b. 515 BCE),

⁵¹⁰ *Zhouyi yizhu*, 24.87. I use the translation by Richard John Lynn, *The Classic of Changes*, p. 286. As for how the Hexagram "Return" establishes a relationship between self-cultivation and the action of "return," see Chapter 2.

⁵¹¹ Richard John Lynn, *The Classic of Changes*, p. 291n5.

were reputable disciples of Confucius. Confucius praised Yan Hui highly for dwelling pleasantly in a narrow alley with only a single bamboo-cup of rice to eat and a gourd-dish of water to drink.⁵¹² Likewise, Yuan Xian, though living in abject poverty, enjoyed passing time in his tiny, run-down house, sitting composedly and playing the zither.⁵¹³ Hidden away from society as they were, however, these men were able to carry their learning into practice and became more and more well known.

The second duo includes Huang and Qi, referring to Xia Huang gong 夏黃公 and Qili Ji 綺里季. Both of these men belonged to the so-called “Four Whiteheads of Mount Shang” (“Shangshan sihao” 商山四皓) of the Western Han. This selection by Chao is somewhat problematic, as the Four Whiteheads are usually regarded as four recluses. However, in using them as models of *qian*, Chao does not treat them in the traditional way. Rather, Chao emphasizes their concealment from the outside world as the precondition for their political influence. Indeed, according to the *Records of the Grand Historian*, the main achievement of the Four Whiteheads was their support for the crown prince. When the founding emperor of the Western Han desired to replace the crown prince with another son of his favorite concubine, the Four Whiteheads’ behaviors—leaving Mount Shang and acting as loyal followers of the crown prince—were key in leading the emperor eventually to give up on changing the heir apparent, thereby maintaining the stability of the newly founded Han empire.⁵¹⁴

Using all these examples, Chao explicates his understanding of *qian*. Dormancy in this view is absolutely not the same as reclusion, but represents a status enabling self-nourishment. To use Chao’s own words, being “dormant in dormancy, by means of which I intend to become non-dormant” 潛乎潛，將以為不潛者矣. Inactivity serves as the means to explore the potential for future activity. Therefore, hiding in a studio named “Dormancy” signals his aim at future

⁵¹² See *Lunyu yizhu*, 6.11.

⁵¹³ See *Zhuangzi jishi*, 28.975–77.

⁵¹⁴ *Shi ji*, 55.2045–47.

exposure. Chao, in fact, utilizes this studio name in the Confucian tradition as a metaphor for preparation for public service and political activism. He expects that one day, by means of his achievements in the studio, he will become capable of making remarkable contributions to the state, like those suggested by the guest.

Inspired by this sense of duty, Song literati often use the trope of “leaving the studio” in literary writings to highlight their desire to benefit the public world. One example by Zeng Ji 曾幾 (1085–1166) reads:

“Inscribed on Xu Zili’s Studio of Self-Enlightenment when Zili Commenced His Official Travel to Jiangyin as the Commander” 題徐子禮自覺齋時子禮為江陰抱麾之行

徐子長吟復短吟，
奇書窗下日幽尋。

誰知密密深深地，
參得明明了了心。
千里澄江空更闊，
中秋素月古猶今。

使君胸次端如許，
願以餘光照所臨。

Master Xu chanted long and chanted short,
It was masterpieces that he, by the window, explored in seclusion
every day.

Who knows that at this serene and enclosed place,
he was able to comprehend and acquire a clear and pure mind.
The clear river of one thousand *li* is open and spacious,
The bright moon in Mid-Autumn remains the same from past to
present.

Your breadth of mind is indeed like this,
I expect that you, by means of the abundant light, will shine over
where you go.⁵¹⁵

The “Studio of Self-Enlightenment” (Zijue zhai 自覺齋) was owned by Xu Chan 徐葢 (d. 1170), whose courtesy name is Zili. In 1165, Xu Chan was appointed Prefect of the Military Prefecture of Jiangyin (in modern Jiangsu Province). As the title reveals, Zeng Ji composed this studio poem as Xu Chan was leaving to take up his new official post. Thus this poem can also be seen as belonging to the subgenre of “farewell poetry” (*songbie shi* 送別詩). It is then worth noting that how Zeng Ji transforms a farewell scene into a poem on the studio. Rather than expressing the emotions associated with separation, as we commonly see in farewell poems, the poet frames the departure around the change of spaces, the move from the studio to the prefecture.

⁵¹⁵ QSS, 1656.18554.

We have become familiar with the studio scene depicted in the first half of the poem. Like many of the studio poems discussed in Chapter 2, this poem highlights the moment when the studio owner cloisters himself in his private studio. The studio is a “serene and enclosed place” (*mimi shenshen di* 密密深深地), guaranteeing its owner a space to read and chant in privacy, as a way to cultivate his inner mind. The studio name of Self-Enlightenment is also a direct reflection of the primary function of this space.

The poem, however, does not stop here. The second half immediately invokes a different, even seemingly unrelated, scene. The *chengjiang* 澄江, or clear river, first spatially unfolds a vast landscape; moreover, it may not be a coincidence that the *chengjiang* is also an alias of Jiangyin, where Xu Chan would serve as governor. Hence, via the fifth line, the poem shifts our attention from the enclosed studio to the world outside, from the personal space to the public space for which Xu would become responsible. Parallel to the clear river, the bright moon in the next line may also be read as part of the sweeping scenery. Yet, when reading this line together with the last couplet, we know that the image is, more importantly, a metaphor for Xu’s mind. With his pure mind, Xu concentrates on how his actions may benefit the region where he would govern, just as the bright moon shines over the earth.

This comparison of the mind to the moon also closely connects the two halves of the poem. Like Sima Guang’s “Hall for Reading Books,” which implies a causal relationship between studying in the studio and ascending to the court, this time, Zeng Ji suggests that the time Xu spend in the studio will be essential in his eventual efforts to benefit the prefecture. It is the studio life that enlightens the mind, enabling it to become as “clear and pure” (*mingming liaoliao* 明明了了) as the moon, and that will thereby enable the studio owner to leave the studio and further enlighten the outside world.

In this sense, the trope of “leaving the studio” works as both an acknowledgment of the studio as the singular space for self-cultivation and as evidence for the literati’s aspirations for state administration. The trope thus establishes a causal connection between private life in the studio

and public service in the political domain. The self-enlightenment achieved in the studio is not the final goal, but more crucially, acts as the seedbed for assuming social responsibility.

Indeed, Song literati, whether in official positions or not, believed they ought to fulfill their social responsibilities. Therefore, when literati live in the self-contained studio, this status is inevitably coupled with anxiety about the legitimacy of personal pleasure and of leisure activities. As a means to justify these private enjoyments, a claim of “leaving the studio” in studio poems and accounts is of great use.

Such a claim once again demonstrates how the studio in literary representation becomes a stage for display. In preceding chapters, we have scrutinized how the represented studio works as a means for self- and social identifications—how acts such as “inviting into the studio,” “naming the studio,” and “exchanging studio objects,” celebrated in literary works, display the self-image of the studio owner in social context. Here, declaring that one is “leaving the studio” further stages the studio owner as a player in the political arena. “Leaving the studio” reveals the key feature of the studio space—the porousness of the privacy—from a different perspective. This “porous privacy” constructs as well as confines literati activities that take place in the studio, and thus shapes the studio as the distinctive medium for the representation of literati’s everyday practices and intellectual pursuits. In this way, the studio becomes the epitome of literati culture.

The studio, as a significant space of literary and cultural production, evolved beyond the Song era. When it came to the late imperial China, the physical studio became remarkably popular in society; and in literature and art, that the studio was more frequently represented. While elites such as the literati continued to take the studio as a trope to symbolize an elegant taste, merchants and clerks began to lay claim to this space as well. The studio was not represented as a habitat exclusively for the literati; rather, it became a space that could be possessed by people in various ranks and be used as a conventional symbol of the personality or desired images of the studio owner. Because of this, the studio was further refined and was even fixed in a limited range of styles, in order to be used as a token of elegance. For instance, in his famous *Eight*

Treatises on the Nurturing of Life (Zunsheng Bajian 遵生八箋), Gao Lian 高濂 (1573–1620)

composed the “Master Gao’s Essay on the Studio” (“Gaozi shuzhai shuo” 高子書齋說) to illustrate the requirements for studio design in great detail, which even includes the exact positions for certain studio objects, and the detailed list of books that *should* be put on the bookshelf. Yet on the other hand, in late imperial literature, one finds that the studio was also often utilized as the setting for devious schemes and even erotic activities, especially in novels and drama. This new use of the studio space, of course, deviated from the elegance of the studio established by Song literati, while at the same time it once again highlighted the porous privacy of this space. Those underground activities became possible due to the private nature of the studio, but after all, they were observed through the outsiders’ peeping through window holes or cracks, that is, another reflection of the permeability of the studio.

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