Issues of Authenticity in Chinese Painting

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Issues of Authenticity in Chinese Painting

Issues of Authenticity in Chinese Painting

Edited by Judith G. Smith and Wen C. Fong

Department of Asian Art
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

This volume is published on the occasion of the international symposium "Issues of Authenticity in Chinese Painting" held on December 11, 1999, at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The symposium was organized in conjunction with the exhibition *The Artist as Collector: Masterpieces of Chinese Painting from the C.C. Wang Family Collection,* on view at the Metropolitan Museum from September 3, 1999 to January 9, 2000.

The exhibition and catalogue are made possible with the support of the Tang Fund.

The symposium and accompanying publication are made possible by the Tang Fund. Additional support is provided by The B.Y. Lam Foundation.

Copyright © 1999 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any manner without written permission from the publisher except in the context of reviews.
Published by The Metropolitan Museum of Art ISBN 0-87099-928-1
Library of Congress Catalogue Number 99-52662

Book design, composition, and production by Joseph Cho and Stefanie Lew, Binocular, New York
Printed and bound in Canada by Friesens; Glossary typeset by Birdtrack Press, New Haven, Connecticut

Cover illustration Attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), *Riverbank*. Detail. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Ex. Coll.: C.C. Wang Family. Promised Gift of the Oscar L. Tang Family.

Photographs of *Riverbank* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art) in this publication are by Malcolm Varon. Photographs of *Dense Forests and Layered Peaks* (British Museum, London) are by Bruce Schwarz, The Photograph Studio, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Contents

7
Foreword
Judith G. Smith and Wen C. Fong

10
Contributors

11
Chronology

13
The Case Against *Riverbank:* An Indictment in Fourteen Counts
James Cahill

65
Notes on the Recent History of *Riverbank*
Hironobu Kohara

81
Riverbank: A Recent Effort in a Long Tradition
Sherman Lee

85
On Paintings Attributed to Dong Yuan
Qi Gong

95
A Comparative Physical Analysis of *Riverbank* and Two Zhang Daqian Forgeries
Maxwell K. Hearn

115
Positioning *Riverbank*
Shih Shou-chien

149
The Referee Must Have a Rule Book: Modern Rules for an Ancient Art
Jerome Silbergeld

171
A Tall Pine and Daoist Immortal: An Examination of a Painting Attributed to Chen Hongshou
Wan-go Weng

189
Du Jin's *Enjoying Antiquities:* A Problem in Connoisseurship
Stephen Little

221
An Early Ming Example of Multiples: Two Versions of *Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden*
Maxwell K. Hearn

259
Riverbank: From Connoisseurship to Art History
Wen C. Fong

293
Connoisseurship: Seeing and Believing
Robert E. Harrist, Jr.

311
Glossary

317
Photograph Credits

Foreword

Few issues in Chinese art and art history arouse the passions of scholars and the public as readily as debates about authenticity, especially when the work under scrutiny is as critically important as *Riverbank*, a painting we attribute to the tenth-century landscape master Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s). If either of these claims — that it is a product of the tenth century and is by the hand of Dong Yuan — is correct, *Riverbank* will call for the rewriting of early Chinese painting history. To support our belief in the veracity of the painting, The Metropolitan Museum of Art has recently published the book *Along the Riverbank*,[1] a study of the documentation and the style of *Riverbank* that seeks to place the painting in its historical context. The present symposium, "Issues of Authenticity in Chinese Painting," has been organized in order to give a thorough airing to the dissenting opinions about *Riverbank* held by some leading scholars in the field and to examine the methods by which scholars analyze and interpret Chinese paintings.

In a review of the state of the field in 1987, Jerome Silbergeld noted: "For all the disagreement that remains, one can see growing agreement during the past three decades about dates for major paintings and on periodized sequences of paintings, even though such agreement is perhaps more difficult than disagreement to perceive and document."[2] The notion of period style, as evidenced by the papers presented during the afternoon session of the symposium, is as important for the study of Ming paintings as it is for that of early Song paintings. To quote Heinrich Wölfflin, "Every artist finds certain visual possibilities before him,

1. Maxwell K. Hearn and Wen C. Fong, *Along the Riverbank: Chinese Paintings from the C.C. Wang Family Collection* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999).

2. Jerome Silbergeld, "Chinese Painting Studies in the West: A State-of-the-Field Article," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 46, no. 4 (November 1987), p. 854.

to which he is bound. Not everything is possible at all times."[3] The dating of early Chinese paintings proceeds in a circular fashion: individual works are dated according to our conception of a period style, which in turn must be expanded and refined on the basis of specific paintings. As more key monuments are placed one by one into their proper stylistic and historical contexts, individual works become evidence for documenting other attributed works.

While the attribution of *Riverbank* to Dong Yuan may never be proven (there is, in fact, no way to authenticate the signature on the painting), it is important for us to recognize that, based on physical as well as stylistic analysis, the painting cannot be a work of the twentieth century nor the creation of the renowned modern forger of ancient Chinese paintings Zhang Daqian (1899–1983). If we cannot all agree that *Riverbank* is a work of the tenth century, we must then find a logical and acceptable date for its production.

The publication of this volume, *Issues of Authenticity in Chinese Painting*, a record of the papers prepared for the symposium, would not have been possible without the commitment and collaborative work of many people. First among them are the authors, who, in their thoughtful examination of the challenging issues of authenticity and problems of connoisseurship, have helped to advance significantly the study of Chinese painting. We wish to acknowledge with gratitude all of these distinguished scholars for their contribution to this important undertaking, and their patient and timely response to our inquiries. We especially thank Richard M. Barnhart both for his early (1983) thorough analysis of *Riverbank*[4] and for delivering the opening remarks at the afternoon session of the symposium.

In preparing the symposium papers for publication, we benefited substantially from the assistance of Elizabeth Powers and Raymond Furse, both exceptionally able editors whose insightful comments and painstaking proofreading of the manuscripts were invaluable. Thanks also go to Yiguo Zhang, research associate in the Metropolitan Museum's Department of Asian Art, for preparing the Chinese glossary; Nina Sweet, administrative assistant, and Neela Chatterjee, intern, Department of Asian Art, for their help in administering the project; Angela Darling for typing the edited papers; and David W. Goodrich of Birdtrack Press for typesetting the Chinese glossary. The existence of this volume is in no small measure due to the combined effort and expertise of Joseph Cho and Stefanie Lew of Binocular, who are responsible for the elegant design and careful production of the book. We are indebted to them not only for their artful integration of images and words, but also for their high standards of professionalism in managing a demanding production schedule.

The task of organizing the symposium was executed with great efficiency by members of the Asian Art department and the Education staff of the Museum. For their tireless efforts and cheerful assistance in

3. Heinrich Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History*, trans. M.D. Hottinger (New York: Dover Publications, 1932), p. 11.

4. Richard M. Barnhart, *Along the Border of Heaven: Sung and Yüan Paintings from the C.C. Wang Family Collection* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1983), pp. 30–38.

handling an endless number of details, we would especially like to thank Denise Vargas, associate for administration in the Asian Art department, and our colleagues Deborah Krohn and Elizabeth Hammer-Munemura in the Education department.

The efforts of all those mentioned above would have been to no avail without the generous support of the Tang Fund, which provided funding for the symposium and the accompanying publication, and The B.Y. Lam Foundation, which provided additional funds for the project. Without their generosity, the symposium would never have been convened and this scholarly record would not have come to light.

Judith G. Smith
Administrator and Special Assistant
to the Consultative Chairman
Department of Asian Art

Wen C. Fong
Consultative Chairman
Department of Asian Art

Contributors to the Symposium

Richard M. Barnhart
The John M. Schiff Professor of the History of Art, Yale University
Opening Remarks, Afternoon Session

James Cahill
Professor Emeritus, History of Art, University of California, Berkeley

Wen C. Fong
Consultative Chairman and Douglas Dillon Curator of Chinese Painting, Department of Asian Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Professor Emeritus, Princeton University

Robert E. Harrist, Jr.
Associate Professor, Department of Art History and Archaeology, Columbia University
Discussant, Afternoon Session

Maxwell K. Hearn
Curator, Department of Asian Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Hironobu Kohara
Professor Emeritus, Nara University

Sherman Lee
Director (retired), The Cleveland Museum of Art; Adjunct Professor (retired), University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Stephen Little
Pritzker Curator of Asian Art, The Art Institute of Chicago

Qi Gong
Professor, Beijing Normal University

Shih Shou-chien
Professor, Graduate Institute of Art History, National Taiwan University; Research Fellow, Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, Taiwan

Jerome Silbergeld
Professor of Art History, University of Washington
Discussant, Morning Session

Wan-go Weng
Independent scholar

Chronology of Dynastic China

Xia Dynasty (unconfirmed)	ca. 2100–ca. 1600 B C
Shang Dynasty	ca. 1600–ca. 1100 B C
Zhou Dynasty	ca. 1100–256 B C
Western Zhou	ca. 1100– 771 B C
Eastern Zhou	770–256 B C
Spring and Autumn Period	770–481 B C
Warring States Period	481–221 B C
Qin Dynasty	221–206 B C
Han Dynasty	206 B C–A D 220
Western (Former) Han	206 B C–A D 9
Wang Mang Interregnum	9–23
Eastern (Later) Han	25–220
Six Dynasties	220–589
Three Kingdoms	220–265
Western Jin Dynasty	265–317
Southern Dynasties	317–589
Northern Dynasties	386–581
Sui Dynasty	581–618
Tang Dynasty	618–907
Five Dynasties	907–60
Liao Dynasty	916–1125
Song Dynasty	960–1279
Northern Song	960–1127
Southern Song	1127–1279
Jin Dynasty	1115–1234
Yuan Dynasty	1272–1368
Ming Dynasty	1368–1644
Qing Dynasty	1644–1911

James
Cahill

The Case Against *Riverbank:* An Indictment in Fourteen Counts

The form of this essay was dictated by its subject and aim, namely, to show that *Riverbank* (fig. 1) is a modern fabrication produced by the painter and collector-dealer Zhang Daqian (1899–1983). The arguments to be brought against the authenticity of *Riverbank* are numerous, but are too diverse to fall easily into a continuous scholarly discourse, and I have not attempted that here. Some of those arguments also depend on observations first made by others, all of whom have authorized me to report their views. The contributions of Professor Hironobu Kohara, in particular, to this study merit more than casual mention; in fact, it could almost be considered a collaboration between the two of us. Kohara was, I believe, the first to argue in print against the authenticity of *Riverbank*.[1]

Until recently, I maintained only that *Riverbank* must be a recent fabrication, *probably* by Zhang; now, having spent much more time with the painting and with the literature and arguments that have accumulated around it, I am even more certain about Zhang's authorship. I make this claim in full awareness that the question of Zhang's authorship is the most contentious point about the work, and that the thrust of much of the writing that has appeared in defense of *Riverbank* is to prove that Zhang could not possibly have painted it, for reasons of style, quality, or chronology, and so to leave the way open for accepting it as a tenth-century work attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), a court painter of the Southern Tang kingdom. Those who argue for *Riverbank* as an authentically tenth-century product say that we do not have enough safely datable tenth-century paintings to rule out any new contender for that period. I would reply

Opposite Detail, fig. 1: Attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), *Riverbank*. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 87 × 42 ⅞ in. (221 × 109 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Ex. Coll.: C.C. Wang Family. Promised Gift of the Oscar L. Tang Family

that we do have, and we can. Another argument in defense of *Riverbank* as an early painting is to say: But the painting doesn't *look* like Zhang Daqian's forgeries or like a modern painting. Zhang would have been happy to hear this, since it is exactly the response he hoped and worked for. Indeed, no single Zhang forgery looks like another,[2] and all of them do their best not to look like modern paintings. The works I will cite here in comparison with *Riverbank* do not, for the most part, look like that painting either, in any simple sense. But some of them, made by Zhang Daqian both under his own name and as forgeries, will be shown to have distinctive features in common with *Riverbank* even when they are in different styles. Moreover, these distinctive features, I believe, are not found in genuinely early Chinese landscape paintings.

Those who recognize *Riverbank* as a forgery by Zhang Daqian, and who point to serious representational flaws in the work, acknowledge that it is the masterwork among his forgeries and stands very high in his œuvre as a whole. Although virtually every element in *Riverbank* can be found in his other paintings, whether done under his own name or as forgeries, nowhere else does Zhang combine these particular elements into such an impressive and imposing whole. While in other fabrications he employed one or another established brush manner (*cunfa*), it was his brilliant move in *Riverbank* to avoid distinguishable brushstrokes altogether in the earth areas, instead brushing on the ink smoothly for a dramatic effect of light and shadow. Those trained in the Chinese mode of brushwork connoisseurship will immediately, and somewhat unconsciously, associate this stylistic feature with an early date, prior to the development of texture-stroke systems. This aspect of *Riverbank*, along with the dynamic energies generated in its composition (by means that are anachronistic but no less effective), its avoidance of the unnatural patterning (such as "folded" hillsides) seen in most of Zhang's other forgeries of early paintings, and the sheer quantity of entertaining detail (trees, figures, architecture), constitutes the complex of qualities that persuades many viewers, especially those steeped in the Chinese tradition of connoisseurship, to say that Zhang Daqian could not possibly have painted it. However, the correct response, I believe, is not: "This is too good to be by Zhang Daqian," but rather: "This is an exceptionally fine Zhang Daqian, perhaps his finest," which is to give him the credit he deserves.

As highly versatile as Zhang Daqian was, he could not altogether avoid incorporating traits of his own twentieth-century style into his forgeries. These traits can be recognized, and serve to distinguish the forgeries from tenth-century landscapes. Zhang, skillful and clever as he was, made mistakes in *Riverbank* that can be detected and that together rule out an early date for the painting. In the indictment that follows, the first eight counts are the crucial ones, the only ones that really count from an art-historical point of view. They concern the style of *Riverbank*, in itself and in comparison with other paintings, both old and recent.

Figure 1 Attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), *Riverbank*. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 87 × 42 ⅞ in. (221 × 109 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Ex. Coll.: C.C. Wang Family. Promised Gift of the Oscar L. Tang Family

A basic assumption underlying all these counts is that in painting style, not everything is possible at any given time.

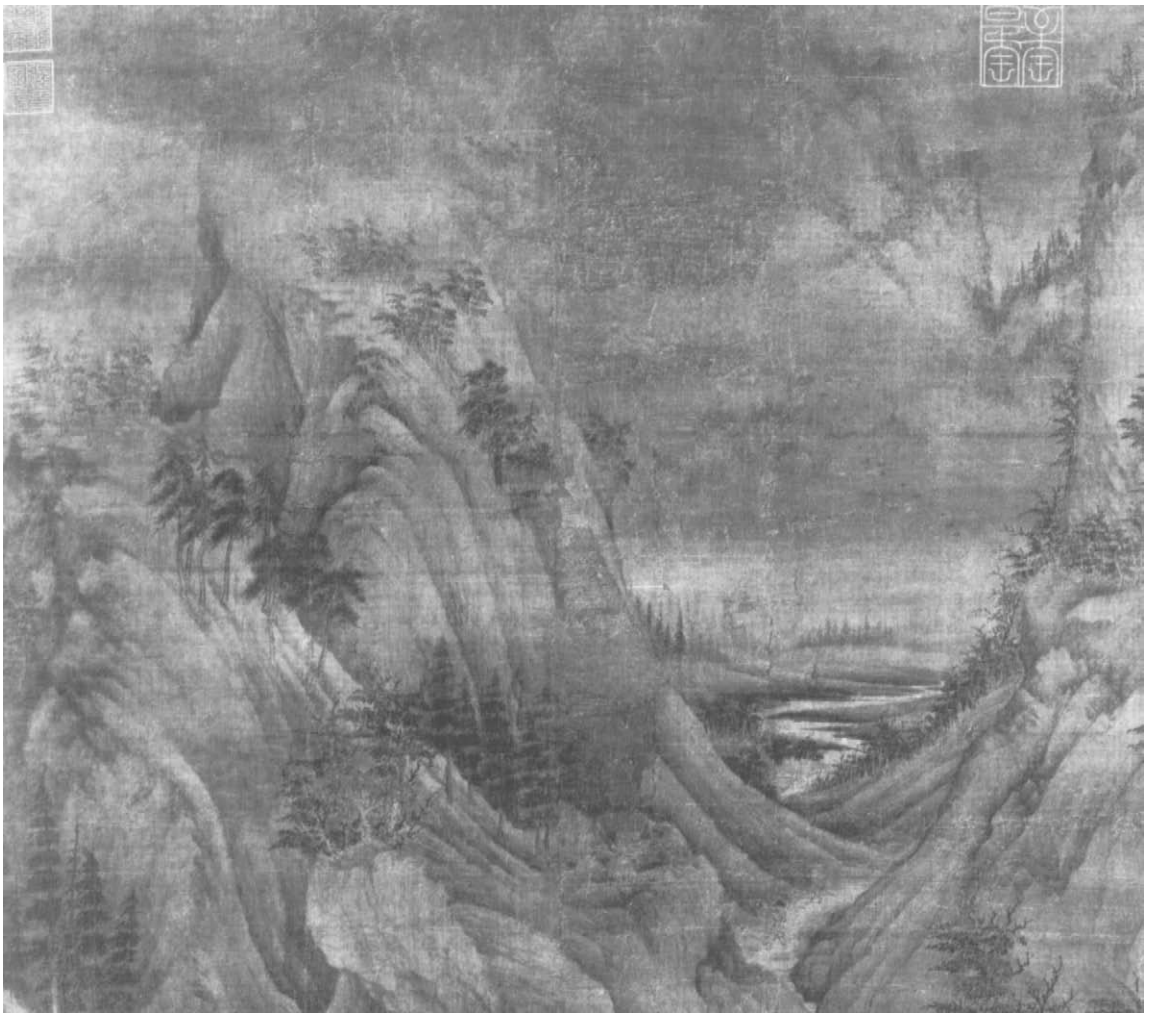
Count 1. *Riverbank* cannot be convincingly fitted into tenth-century Chinese landscape painting as we know it from reliable works of the period.

In order to persuade anyone of this, I would have to present, with slides, a lengthy analysis of a succession of paintings, including real tenth-century works as well as copies, imitations, school works, and spurious attributions.[3] I have done this in courses given at Berkeley, Chicago, and Princeton, and hope that most sharp-eyed students who sat through the slide lectures will respond to *Riverbank* with appropriate skepticism. But it is obviously impossible to do anything of the kind here.

Let me begin simply by drawing your attention to a single feature: the upper part of *Riverbank* (fig. 2) is completely anachronistic, aside from being sloppily executed, as if it were unfinished or finished off quickly. In tenth-century landscape painting, mist or fog, when present at all, is restricted to small areas. Nowhere can one see fog spreading so extensively that the tops of mountains disappear altogether or (as here, in the upper right) hover ambiguously in the far distance with no indication of how they continue below. Tree groups in this upper area are placed in otherwise empty space so as to indicate an upward continuation of the mountain slope, and vague configurations suggestive of the "alum-stone" (*fantou*) lumpy tops seen on hills in landscapes of the Dong Yuan-Juran (active ca. 960–95) school appear here and there. This whole area is essentially unreadable, and not because of damage or repainting. Perhaps Zhang meant it to be read as the murkiness of a rainstorm, but it is nonetheless anachronistic.

So many features of the painting point to later periods that one can properly term *Riverbank* a pastiche. Kohara remarks that it "has no date, no time to which it can be attributed." He draws the conclusion that "a no-time painting means a contemporary piece," adding that the technique is one that could only have been done by Zhang Daqian.[4]

Richard Vinograd makes similar observations, ending: "Over the whole painting there hangs an air of suggestive obscurity, along with scattered hints of early styles that allow the viewer to fill in mental images of ill-understood early landscape styles, while failing ultimately to really render the basic qualities that would qualify it as an early landscape. I would suggest that it is a relatively recent pastiche."[5] Those who adopt a fallback position—the work may not really be by Dong Yuan, but at the very least dates to the Northern Song (960–1127) or Yuan (1272–1368)—face this difficulty: *Riverbank* is not consistently in *any* period style.



Count 2. *Riverbank* has serious, indeed fatal, structural flaws and is filled with representational inconsistencies.

This aspect of *Riverbank* has been recognized by many viewers who try to read it as a coherent picture — in the way one reads genuinely early Chinese landscape paintings — and find they cannot.[6] As an example of *Riverbank*'s inconsistencies, note how the river winding out of the distance in the upper part of the painting turns all but imperceptibly into a road with people walking on it (fig. 2). It is all very well to point out

Figure 2 Detail, fig. 1: Attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), *Riverbank*

that, if one looks very closely, the river and road do not really connect, and that there are even two thatched houses situated where they come together. The fact remains that they are *visually* continuous; if they were not, this anomaly would not be read in this way by the many people who have spotted it. A good early artist would not have permitted such visual confusion. But in Zhang Daqian's landscapes, as this and other instances will show, rivers and roads winding out of the deep distance often exhibit this kind of ambiguity.

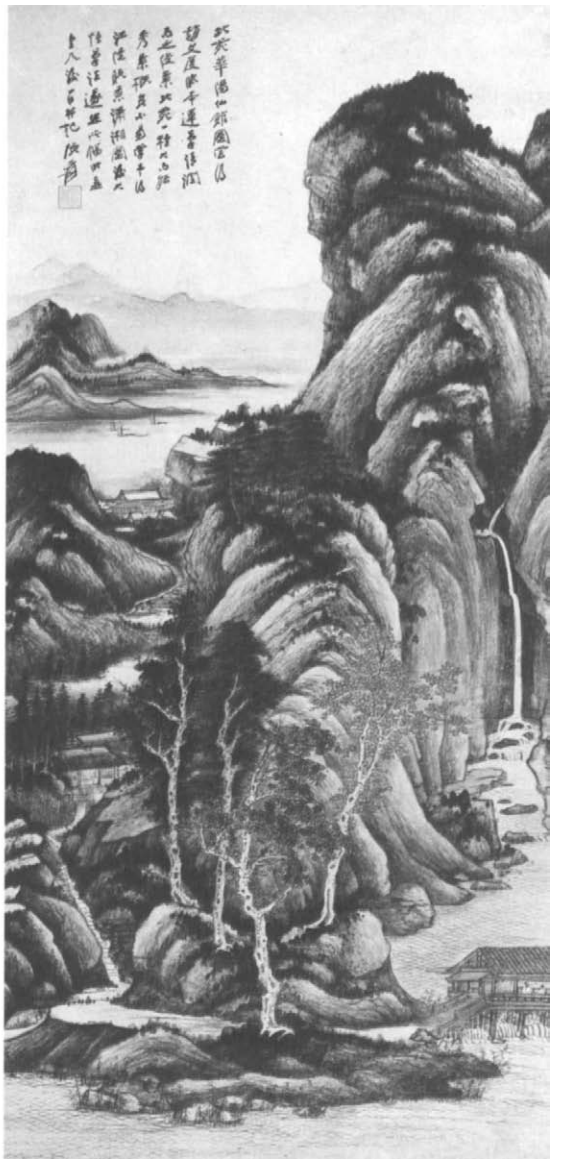
Count 3. In characteristic features, *Riverbank* agrees with Zhang Daqian's signed works, especially those from the late 1940s.

In the late 1940s Zhang Daqian was experimenting with a compositional type featuring a towering bluff on one side and a long recession to a high horizon on the other. In *The Wei River* (fig. 3), painted in 1948, the recession is marked with numerous winding and zigzagging streaks or shapes of white, which can be read—sometimes clearly, often not—as roads, rivers, or the flat tops of hillocks and plateaus. In another of Zhang's paintings from 1948, *Mount Qingcheng*,[7] this ambiguity is confounded as light streaks appear and disappear, cross and divide. A landscape from 1949 (fig. 4) follows the same general scheme, but now there appears in the tall bluff a concavity with a waterfall set in it. The earth masses exhibit more of a directional thrust, and a row of mixed tree types, including two crossed pines, stretches across the foreground. In *Immortals' Dwellings at Huayang* (fig. 5), a work also dating from 1949, for which Zhang claims in his inscription a Dong Yuan model as copied by the late-Ming master Zhao Zuo (ca. 1570–after 1633), the waterfall is set in a dark cleft and pours over a three-stepped base before spreading out into the foreground, where the water's surface is covered with a fishnet pattern. Built out over the water is a house with figures inside. All these features, along with the tree furthest right in the foreground group, with bunched leaves and an elongated trunk that curves strangely in its lower part, agree with *Riverbank*. At the left, a building marks the juncture of river and road—not confusable here as the river is broad and the road narrow.

Fu Shen, in his 1991 catalogue for an exhibition of Zhang Daqian's works, states that Zhang "believed that in this work he became the equal of Dong Yuan."[8] A reasonable next step, we might surmise, was to *paint* a Dong Yuan, using this same basic compositional scheme and incorporating many of the same features we observe in these 1948–49 works.

In spite of Zhang's claim of a Dong Yuan model, however, this compositional type has no true precedent among extant early paintings. The closest to it, noted also by Fu Shen, is a landscape in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, ascribed to Dong Yuan and titled *Summer Mountains Before Rain* (fig. 6). Fu dates

Figure 3 Zhang Daqian (1899–1983), *The Wei River*, dated 1948. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper. Collection unknown



the painting to the late Ming dynasty (1368–1644); in my 1980 *Index of Early Chinese Painters and Paintings*, I describe it simply as an "interesting Ming work in Dong Yuan's tradition."[9] It may well have inspired Zhang Daqian, but it is far too late to serve as an early and supportive parallel for the composition of *Riverbank*.

Figure 4 Zhang Daqian (1899–1983), *Landscape in the Manner of Wang Meng*, dated 1949. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 45 ⅜ × 21 ¾ in. (116 × 55.5 cm). Collection unknown

Figure 5 Zhang Daqian (1899–1983), *Immortals' Dwellings at Huayang*, dated 1949. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 58 ¼ × 28 in. (148 × 71 cm). Chang Hsu Wen-po Collection, Taipei

Figure 6 Attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), *Summer Mountains Before Rain*. Hanging scroll, ink and light color on silk, 61 × 29 ⅜ in. (155 × 74.5 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

Count 4. *Riverbank* matches Zhang Daqian's other forgeries in prominent features unparalleled in reliably early paintings.

We may begin with a landscape clearly related to works by Zhang Daqian from the late 1940s, done under his own name, that were introduced above. It bears an inscription written in the style of the Northern Song emperor Huizong (r. 1101–25) that proclaims the painting to be Dong Yuan's *Myriad Trees and Strange Peaks*.[10] The picture is obviously by Zhang, who did another version of the same work under his own name. It features the same winding streaks of white, to be read as paths and streams, seen in Zhang's works of the late 1940s, and may date to that period.

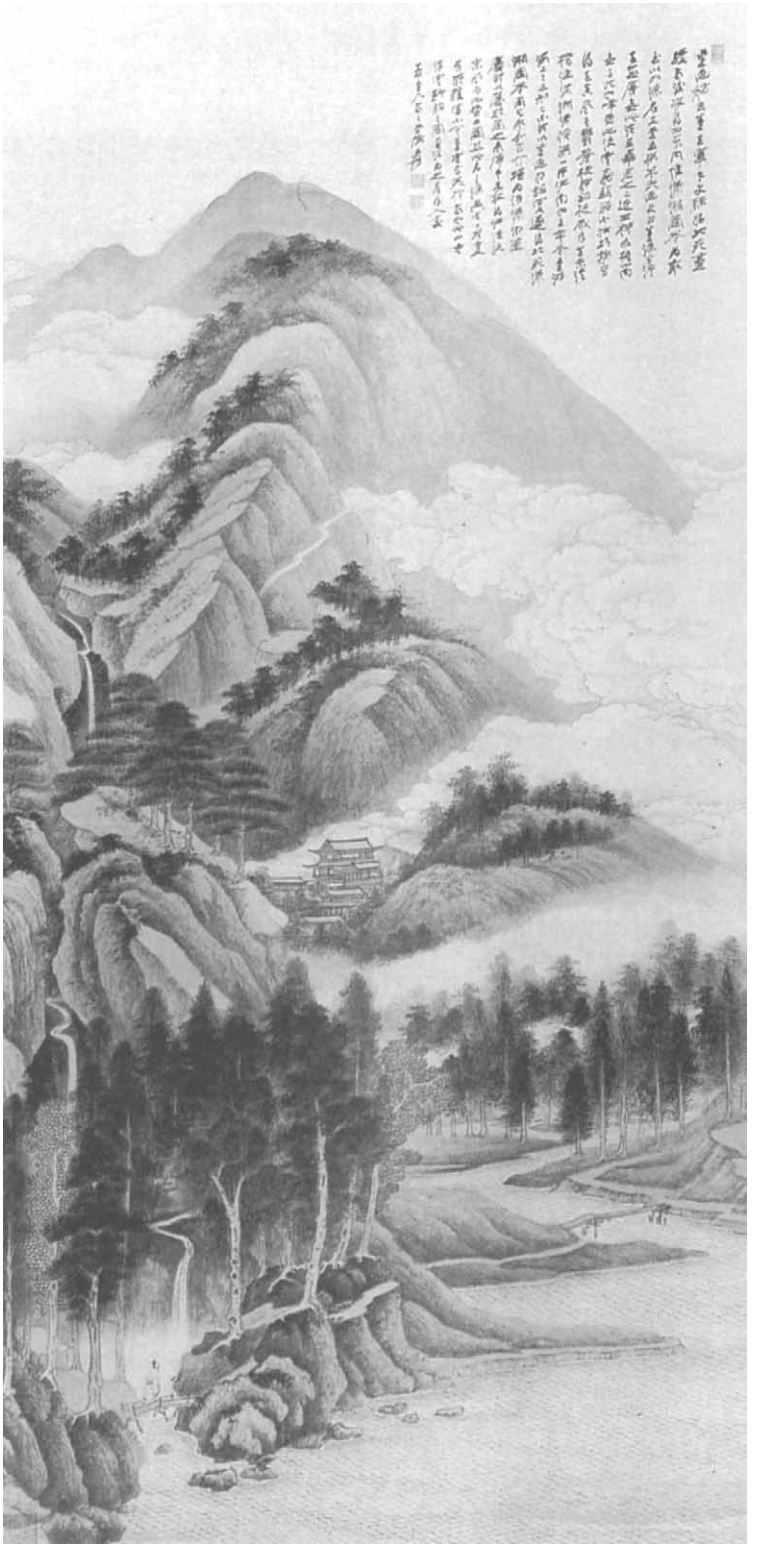
More interesting and perhaps of a somewhat later date is Zhang's forgery of *Temples among Streams and Hills* (fig. 7), a painting attributed to the late-tenth-century artist Juran, which was once owned by the Hong Kong collector J.D. Chen (Chen Rentao), who published it in 1955.[11] It is apparently based on a Ming work in the Juran manner (although attributed to Dong Yuan) in the collection of the Freer Gallery of Art (fig. 8), but since that picture was unpublished in Zhang's lifetime, it is unclear how he could have known it. Zhang's copy is furnished with seals of Emperor Huizong, the *siyin* half-seal (an inventory seal of the early-Ming imperial collection, used in the period 1374–84), and seals of the early Qing-dynasty (1644–1911) collector Wang Shimin (1592–1680). It differs from its model in two notable ways: the blurry brushwork, a feature of Zhang's style discussed below, and the top of the hill, which, unlike in the model, has no distinct crest but simply disappears into the dark silk. Why Zhang allowed this to happen is a mystery; it is, as we have seen, also a feature of *Riverbank*, and one found nowhere in early Chinese painting.

A clue to understanding this curious feature of Zhang's forgeries may be recognized in another of the works done under his own name from the late 1940s, *Mountain Temple and Drifting Clouds in the Manner of Dong Yuan* (fig. 9), painted in 1947. Here, he employs a compositional device favored, and probably invented, by the late-Ming painter and critic Dong Qichang (1555–1636), creating dynamic energies in the construction of an ascending mountainside, with the heavily modeled forms pushing this way and that, thrust answered by counterthrust, and then containing them (barely) with a simple, flattening contour line at the top.[12] Deleting even this inconclusive ending (an easy move) would leave the mountaintop unbounded, as in Zhang's forgery of the Juran *Temples among Streams and Hills*, discussed above, and in *Riverbank*. In its dynamic build-up of the mountainside, *Mountain Temple* is strikingly similar to *Riverbank*, and features the same slanting and serrated flat plateaus and the same rows of trees diminishing upward in size and clarity. These forms are conspicuous also in other of Zhang's "early" forgeries, such as the composition

Figure 7 Zhang Daqian (1899–1983), forgery of Juran (active ca. 960–95), *Temples among Streams and Hills*. Hanging scroll, ink and light color on silk, 77 × 38 in. (195.6 × 96.5 cm). Formerly J.D. Chen Collection, Hong Kong

Figure 8 Attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), *Landscape*. Hanging scroll, ink on silk, 68 ¾ × 37 ¾ in. (174.6 × 95.9 cm). Courtesy of Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., Gift of Charles Lang Freer

Cahill
The
Case
Against
Riverbank



ascribed to both Liu Daoshi (active late 10th century; fig. 20) and Guan Tong (active ca. 907–23; fig. 23). One may even feel that here Zhang has given himself away by using so blatantly the materials of his "early" forgeries in a picture done under his own name — materials that, to emphasize the point once more, are not to be seen in truly early landscape paintings. In his long inscription on *Mountain Temple*, Zhang writes that he painted it by "consulting" three works by Dong Yuan in his own collection.[13] Two years later, in the inscription on *Immortals' Dwellings* (fig. 5), he would write that he had at last mastered Dong Yuan's style. What he had really mastered in the course of producing this impressive series of landscapes was not so much Dong Yuan's style as a system of forms and compositional devices (making up an artist's "brush method," in the traditional and inadequate Chinese term) that would serve as a repertory for his forgeries of tenth-century masters.

A spurious Juran handscroll titled *Myriad Ravines* (fig. 10), which was sold at auction in 1987, is another of Zhang's pastiches, filled with antique-looking inventions that again fail to come together into a coherent picture.[14] Its imagery includes the now-familiar river winding out of an ambiguous distance, widening and narrowing arbitrarily, crossed and paralleled by roads; the zigzagging, flat-topped bluffs, here elongated into bizarre forms; a profusion and diversity of trees; soft, blurry dotting; and, near the end, the steep slope with rows of trees that swoops dramatically upward — and disappears. The scroll could have been a kind of warm-up for *Riverbank*, Zhang's masterwork in the genre, in which these motifs are handled with considerably more finesse.

A hanging scroll in the same style, *Dense Groves and Layered Peaks* (fig. 11), in the Liu Haisu Art Gallery, Shanghai, also ascribed to Juran and purporting to be from the Xuanhe collection of Emperor Huizong (with the appropriate seals and title), must have been done by Zhang around the same time.[15] (We should eventually be able to work out a chronology by style for Zhang Daqian's Dong Yuan-Juran forgeries within which these two paintings, for instance, would belong to a particular period.) It bears an authenticating inscription by the collector Wu Hufan (1894–1968), who saw the painting in 1951. The scenery it presents, like that of the handscroll *Myriad Ravines*, is highly mannered and unnatural; but since there was no agreement on how a Juran painting should look, the forger had considerable latitude.

Wind on the River, a handscroll once attributed to the Northern Song master Yan Wengui (active ca. 970–1030) that sold at auction in March 1999, is another work that has many features in common with *Riverbank* — the profusion of windblown trees of diverse types scattered throughout the composition, the fishnet pattern on the water, the zigzag mesa, and the mysterious lighting — not to speak of the familiar array of impressive "old" seals.[16]

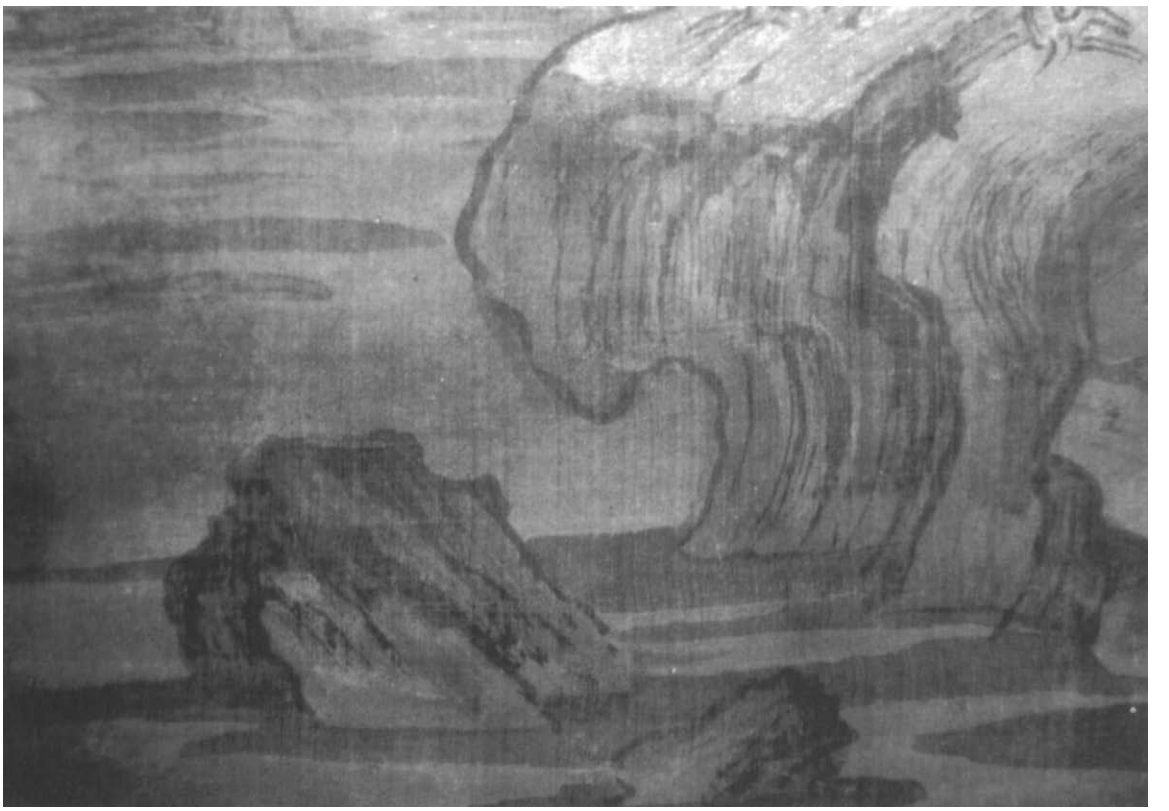
Figure 9 Zhang Daqian (1899–1983), *Mountain Temple and Drifting Clouds in the Manner of Dong Yuan*, dated 1947. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper. Collection unknown

Count 5. Tenth-century brushwork is distinct and form-defining; *Riverbank*'s is not.

Some supporters of *Riverbank* contend that its brushwork confirms its authenticity as a tenth-century work. This contention is odd in view of the fact that there is in a sense no brushwork in most areas of the painting representing earth surfaces — that is, no traces of the brush having been put down and moved so as to leave distinct brushstrokes. Instead, the ink is rubbed onto the silk smoothly, without separate and visible strokes. In this, of course, it departs fundamentally from the systems of brushwork commonly seen in early Chinese landscape painting, where the brushstrokes, even when they seem strange and sloppy (as in *Wintry Groves and Layered Banks*, ascribed to Dong Yuan, in the Kurokawa Institute of Ancient Cultures [Shih, fig. 7][17]) or overlap and interweave (as in *The Xiao and Xiang Rivers*, also attributed to Dong Yuan, in the

Figure 10 (above) Zhang Daqian (1899–1983), forgery of *Myriad Ravines*, attributed to Juran (active ca. 960–95). Handscroll, ink on silk, 16 ¾ × 96 ¾ in. (42.5 × 245.7 cm). Private collection, Japan

Figure 11 (opposite) Attributed to Juran (active ca. 960–95), *Dense Groves and Layered Peaks*. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk. Liu Haisu Art Gallery, Shanghai

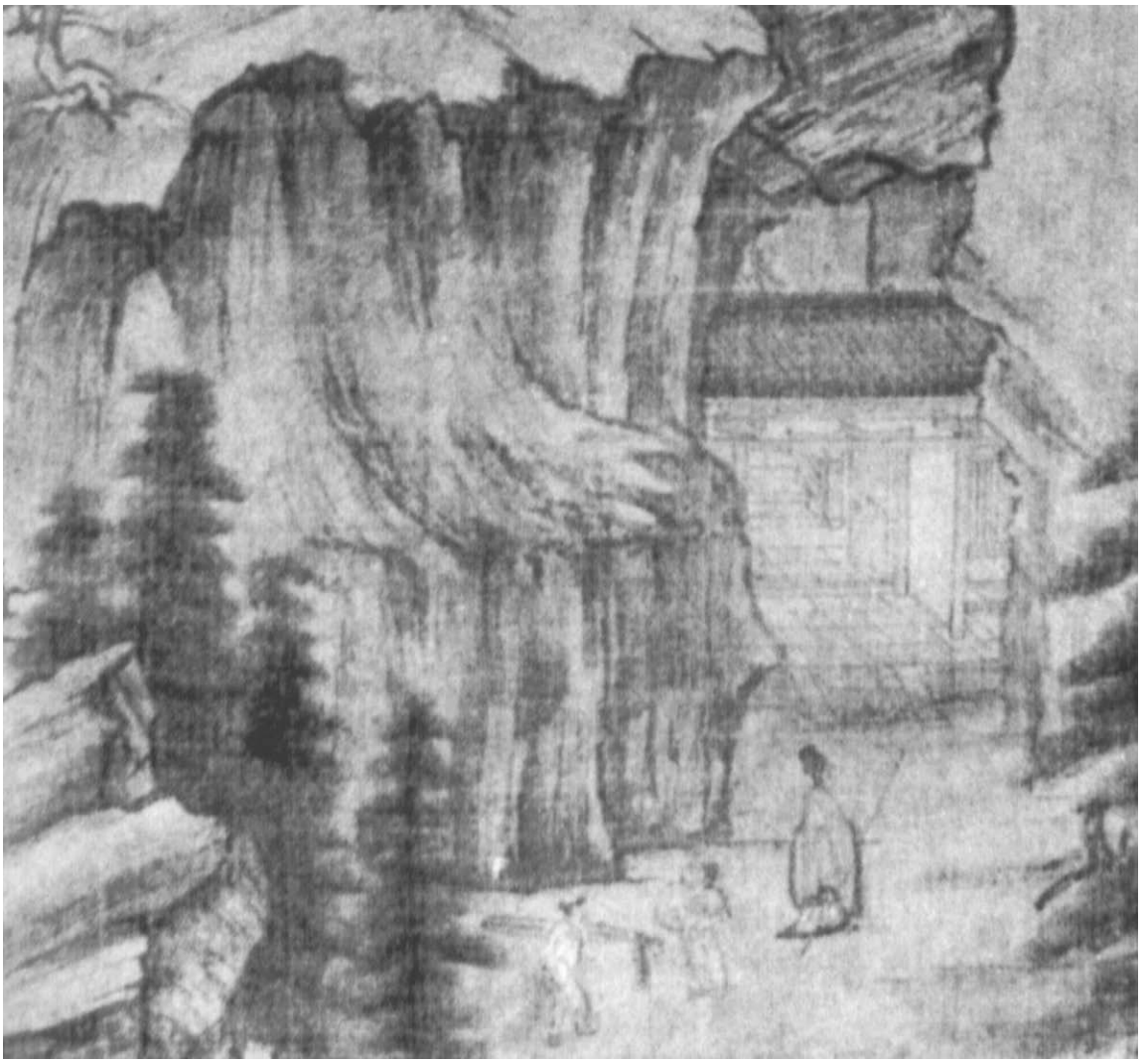


Palace Museum, Beijing [Shih, fig. 15][18]), still read as distinct strokes. Needless to say, these two paintings, along with others attributed to the artist, are themselves problematic both in their dating and in their relationship to Dong Yuan, so that for *Riverbank* not to look like them is certainly not a count against it.

The argument has been made that the brush technique in *Riverbank* represents a stage in the history of Chinese landscape painting before texture-stroke systems were developed, and that in this respect *Riverbank* agrees with two generally accepted tenth-century paintings, *A Chess Party in the Mountains* (figs. 12, 13; Shih, fig. 4), by an unidentified artist, from a Liao dynasty (916–1125) tomb at Yemaotai,[19] and *The Lofty Scholar Liang Boluan* (fig. 14; Fong, fig. 3), by Wei Xian (active ca. 960–75). But a study of details of these works betrays important differences.

In the Liao tomb painting (fig. 12) the earth masses are powerfully sculpted by brushstrokes that have the double function of shading, as they are applied densely or thinly to render light and shadow, and texturing, imparting tactility and earthiness. Moreover, while they are not uniformly distinct, the brushstrokes

Figure 12 Unidentified artist (10th century), *A Chess Party in the Mountains,* ca. 940–85, from a tomb at Yemaotai. Detail. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 41 7/8 × 25 5/8 in. (106.5 × 65 cm). Liaoning Provincial Museum



tend to be linear, as if made by a dragged brush, and direct the movement of the viewer's eye over the curving surfaces, thus enhancing the three-dimensionality of the forms. The result is a landscape in which spaces are strongly hollowed out, enclosed by convincingly rendered concavities in the earth masses (fig. 13). We see a similar effect achieved in a well-known landscape painting on a lute plectrum guard, in the Shōsō-in Treasury, Nara.[20] The same is true in Wei Xian's *Lofty Scholar* (fig. 14), where the ink is brushed onto the earth masses so as to render light and shadow and tactility, as well as direction—in this case,

Figure 13 Unidentified artist (10th century), *A Chess Party in the Mountains*, ca. 940–85, from a tomb at Yemaotai. Detail. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 41 ⅞ × 25 ⅝ in. (106.5 × 65 cm). Liaoning Provincial Museum

mostly upward for an effect of height. Again, the masses are sculpted in a readable way. (In an attempt to describe their plastic readability, I have sometimes said that the visual information provided by such earth masses in early paintings would suffice for recreating them in modeling clay, at least, the sides of them facing the viewer.) The application of ink on the foreground rocks is somewhat looser than in the upper area, but is still done in dabs and flecks, or in some places as directional streaks. There is no real ambiguity.

Let us compare *Riverbank* (fig. 15), where the almost strokeless rubbing of ink onto the silk produces an undifferentiated texturing and a light-and-shadow modeling so inconsistent as to make both the forms themselves and their interrelationships unreadable in some places. This is not a deliberate and expressive manipulation of geological forms and their lighting, as in Guo Xi's (ca. 1000–ca. 1090) *Early Spring* (Fong, fig. 14); it is the outcome of a lack of full control, and results in an effect of arbitrariness. Often we cannot

Figure 14 Wei Xian (active ca. 960–75), *The Lofty Scholar Liang Boluan.* Detail. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 53 × 20 ⅝ in. (134.5 × 52.5 cm). Palace Museum, Beijing

be sure whether one form is in front of another or behind it. For example, if we try to read the middle-ground conglomerate of earth masses and what are presumably rocks, we are continually frustrated.

We find a comparable blurriness not in any early painting but in the British Museum's *Dense Forests and Layered Peaks* (fig. 16; Fong, fig. 18), now recognized as a Zhang Daqian forgery of a work by Juran. It is in a different style from *Riverbank*, but the application of ink is similar, with large and small brushstrokes merging with rubbed-on ink into an atmospheric obscurity. The same kind of brushwork, more visible when on paper, can be seen in *Retreat in the Yayi Mountains after Wang Meng*, a signed 1954 work by Zhang Daqian.[21] The silk ground of the British Museum picture and *Riverbank* increases the blurriness. A representational problem caused by this "strokeless" application of ink is that forms, unless clearly bounded, tend to merge confusingly with surrounding areas, as can be seen in the lower part of the British Museum paint-

Figure 15 Detail, fig. 1: Attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), *Riverbank*

ing where the trees merge with the hillside behind. This confused merging of forms is what prevents us from making out the top of the thrusting bluff that terminates so indecisively the middle-ground landmass of *Riverbank* (fig. 17): it is not set off visually from the equally confused area meant to appear behind it. It is because of such merging, in fact, that there are so many places in this part of the painting where we are not even sure what we are supposed to be looking at.

Richard Barnhart has likened the rendering of earth forms without contours in *Riverbank* to that in Zhao Gan's (active ca. 960–75) handscroll *First Snow along the River* (Shih, fig. 8), in the National Palace Museum, Taipei.[22] This comparison strikes me as unfortunate, since *Riverbank* comes off so badly in this respect against the Zhao Gan work, in which the forms are consistently distinct, never blurring or fusing ambiguously as they do in *Riverbank*.

Figure 16 Zhang Daqian (1899–1983), formerly attributed to Juran (active ca. 960–95). *Dense Forests and Layered Peaks*, ca. 1951. Detail. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 72 ¾ × 29 in. (184.7 × 73.8 cm). British Museum, London

Count 6. The method of composing with animated landforms belongs to a much later period.

While one can find landforms that function dynamically in early Chinese landscape compositions, there are none quite like those in *Riverbank*, which lunge diagonally and are countered by masses lunging in the opposite direction. The artist, I submit, was very familiar with this compositional method as it had been developed by Dong Qichang and his followers, and used it, perhaps unconsciously, in this inappropriate context.

Juxtaposing *Riverbank* with Dong Qichang's landscape painting *A River in Chu* (fig. 18), we observe that in certain respects the two works have more in common with one another than either has with any genuine tenth-century landscape. Besides the domination of both compositions by pointed, volumetrically

Figure 17 Detail, fig. 1: Attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), *Riverbank*

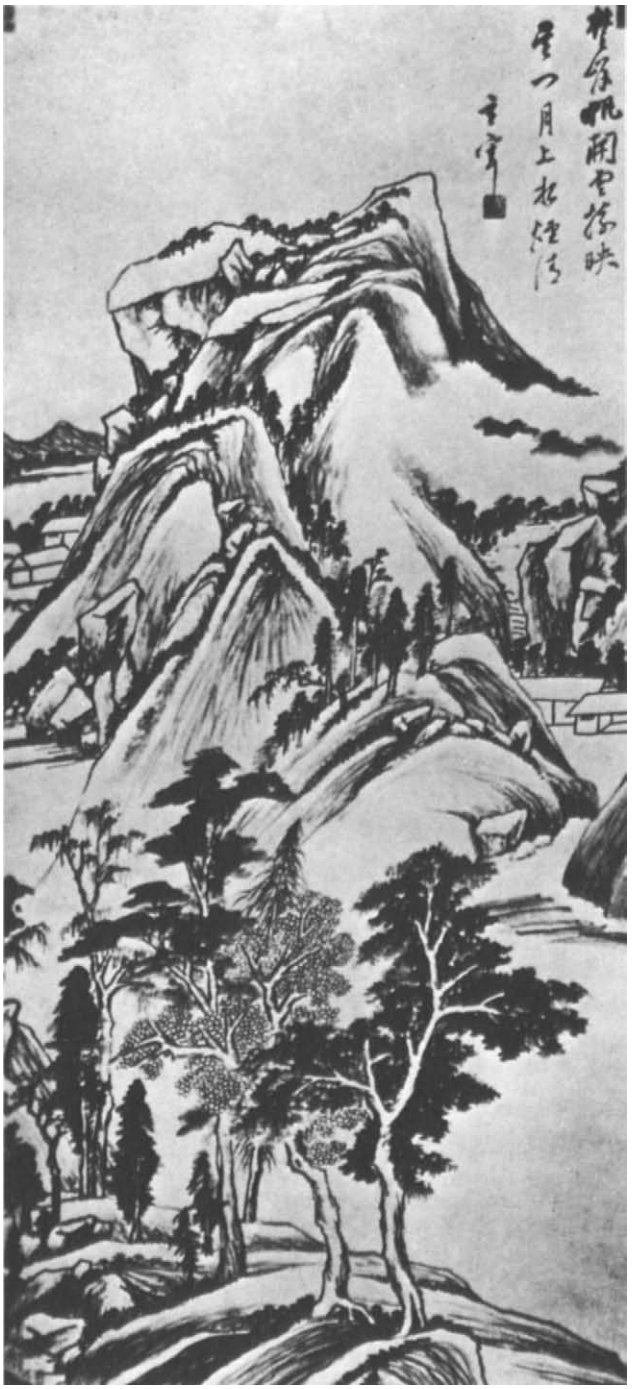


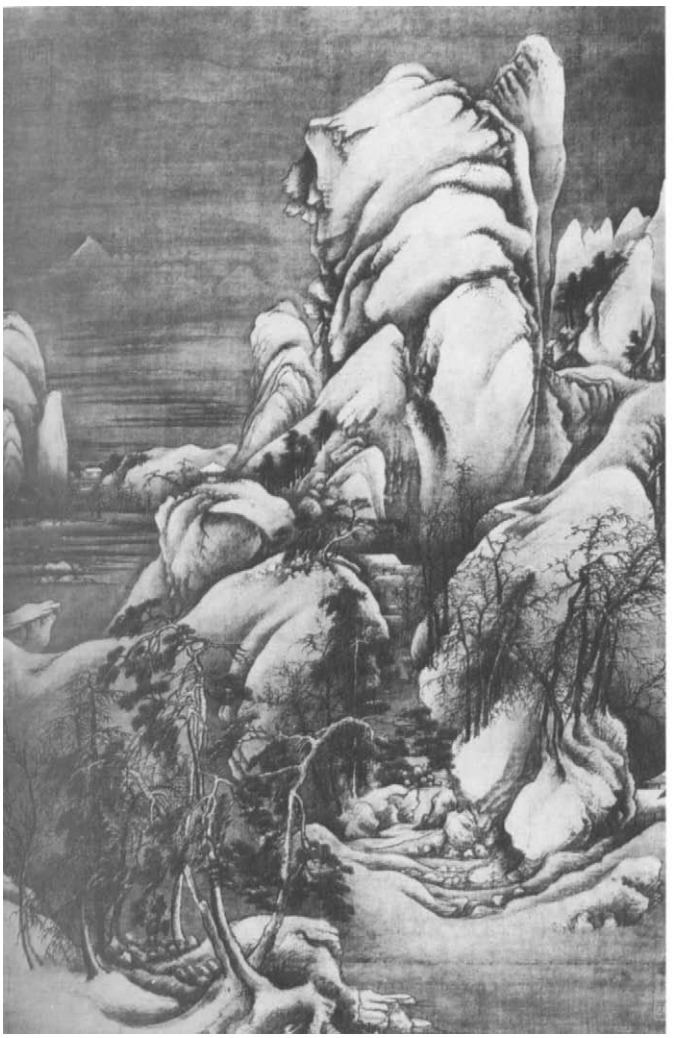
Figure 18 Dong Qichang (1555–1636), *A River in Chu.* Hanging scroll, ink on paper. Formerly Zhang Congyu Collection

rendered earth masses that engage in vigorous diagonal thrusts and counterthrusts, in both paintings small, blocky masses are placed at the feet of slopes, and trees of strikingly varied types are lined up in the foreground. (The foreground trees in *Riverbank* are meant to recall those in Dong Yuan's *Wintry Groves and Layered Banks*, but the passages are actually quite dissimilar.) Dong Qichang was, to be sure, in part inspired by paintings he took to represent antique styles, such as the handscroll *Clearing after Snowfall* ascribed to the eighth-century master Wang Wei (701–761).[23] But judging from the extant versions (for example, the copy in the Ogawa Collection, Kyoto), that composition is late in date and cannot be taken to represent early practice.

The overly strenuous, muscular forms in *Riverbank* must be distinguished from the diagonally pushing rock and earth masses seen in some early landscapes, such as those in the rocky background of *Shaka, the Historical Buddha, Preaching on Vulture Peak* (Hokke Mandara; fig. 19), perhaps ninth century in date, in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Here, the dynamic forms are limited to a particular area of the composition, and are not expanded to become an organizing principle for the whole. Zhang Daqian's fondness for over-animated compositions based on diagonally disposed masses is seen in others of his forgeries, such as

Figure 19 Unidentified artist (8th century), *Shaka, the Historical Buddha, Preaching on Vulture Peak*. Detail. Hanging scroll, ink, color, and gold on hemp, 42 ⅛ × 56 ½ in. (107 × 143.5 cm). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Bigelow Collection. Gift of William Sturgis Bigelow, 11.6120. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Reproduced with permission. ©1999 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. All Rights Reserved.

Figure 20 Attributed to Liu Daoshi (active late 10th century), *Clear Morning over Lakes and Mountains*. Hanging scroll, ink and light color on silk, 85 ½ × 34 ½ in. (217.2 × 87.6 cm). C.C. Wang Family Collection



Clear Morning over Lakes and Mountains (fig. 20), attributed to Liu Daoshi, and (the same composition) *Drinking and Singing at the Foot of a Precipitous Mountain* (fig. 23), ascribed to Guan Tong, as well as in another would-be Dong Yuan, a handscroll titled *Waiting for the Ferry in Summer*, in the National Palace Museum, Taipei,[24] one of Zhang's clumsier and least convincing productions.

The heavy shadowing in the ravines and crevices that separate the earth masses in *Riverbank*, enhancing the overall dramatic effect of the composition, is used to the same effect in a landscape by the early-Qing artist Wang Hui (1632–1717; fig. 21), falsely attributed to Xu Daoning (ca. 970–ca. 1051/52). Nothing

Figure 21 Wang Hui (1632–1717), *Winter Landscape*, formerly attributed to Xu Daoning (ca. 970–ca. 1051/52). Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 47 ¾ × 32 in. (121.3 × 81.3 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

Figure 22 Attributed to Juran (active ca. 960–95), *Xiao Yi Seizing the Lanting Manuscript*. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 56 ¾ × 23 ½ in. (144.1 × 59.6 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

of the kind can be found in early landscapes; the lighting in Guo Xi's *Early Spring*, for instance, is very different. Zhang Daqian could not resist dramatizing, making his "early" pictures more visually exciting than they properly should be. And *Riverbank* is indeed exciting in this way. It is as if a Cézanne landscape were dropped in among a group of Claude Lorrains: to a twentieth-century viewer, it would stand out as far more stimulating than its companions.

Returning to the quieter world of genuinely early Chinese landscape, consider the Song-period work in the Juran manner, *Xiao Yi Seizing the Lanting Manuscript* (fig. 22). We can argue about the date—I have put it as late as the Southern Song (1127–1279)—but the landscape forms, while they belong distinctively to the Juran manner, are stable and earthy; the trees diminish convincingly and do not attempt to exhaust the entire repertory of tree types; the whole composition is undramatic, clearly readable, and—exactly because it does not lay claim to being the *Mona Lisa* of Chinese paintings—deeply satisfying.

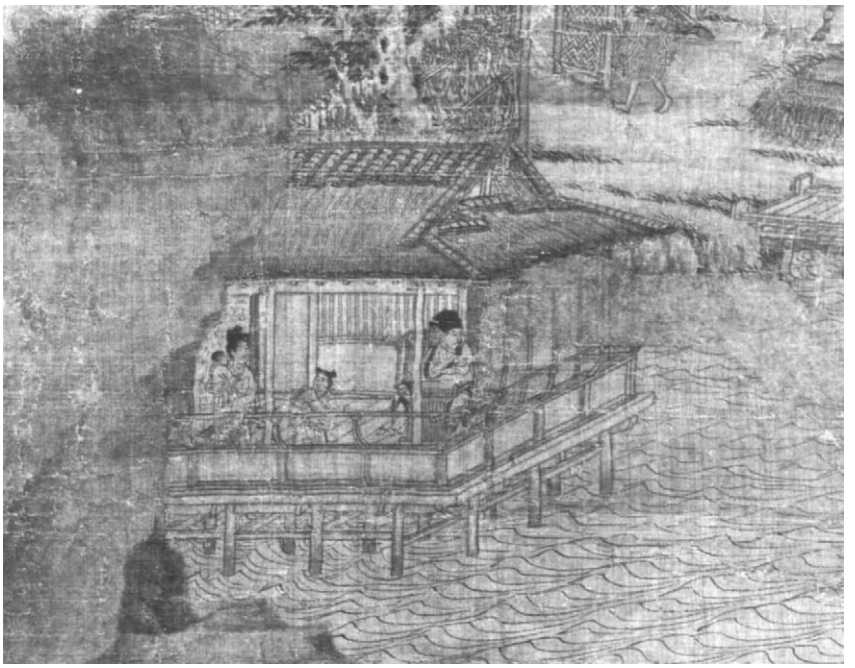
Count 7. The lighting in *Riverbank* is too dramatic and sophisticated.

The dramatic quality of *Riverbank* extends beyond its composition and animated forms to its sophisticated lighting. This lighting is another aspect of the work that causes many viewers, on first seeing *Riverbank*, to find it so visually stimulating. But here, again, the artist reveals his own time, unintentionally. The drama is achieved not only through pronounced contrasts of light and dark on the forms (often with transitions that are too sudden), but also by the creation of areas of unexplained luminosity in the picture. The lighting is not naturalistic, but rather gives the effect of an unnatural glow, as though the forms themselves were radiating light. This is what so strikingly distinguishes Zhang Daqian's forgery of Juran's *Dense Forests and Layered Peaks* (fig. 16; Fong, fig. 18) in the British Museum from the Shanghai Museum picture that is its model (Fong, fig. 17), an old work in traditional style, however one may date it. One sees the same lighting effect in another recognized Zhang forgery, *Drinking and Singing at the Foot of a Precipitous Mountain* (fig. 23), a painting formerly attributed to Guan Tong in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in which the cliffs flanking a dark ravine are suddenly and strangely sunlit, and in the previously mentioned handscroll *Wind on the River*, attributed to Yan Wengui.

This treatment of light is no less striking in Zhang's forgeries of figure painting, as seen, for example, in his *Laozi Passing the Barrier* (fig. 24), ascribed to an unidentified artist of the Tang period (618–907). The painting, as I pointed out in a 1991 symposium on Zhang Daqian, is based on a wood-block print in a Japanese picture book of 1818.[25] In all these paintings, Zhang was playing to a widespread belief, which is not

Figure 23 Zhang Daqian (1899–1983), formerly attributed to Guan Tong (active ca. 907–23), *Drinking and Singing at the Foot of a Precipitous Mountain.* Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 86 × 36 ¼ in. (218.2 × 90.2 cm). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Keith McLeod Fund 57.194. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Reproduced with permission. ©1999 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. All Rights Reserved.

Figure 24 Attributed to an unidentified Tang-dynasty (618–907) artist, *Laozi Passing the Barrier.* Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 44 ¼ × 23 ½ in. (112.3 × 59.7 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei



without basis, that early Chinese artists sometimes used illusionistic lighting effects of a kind that all but disappear after the early Song. Also to be pointed out in this connection is the area of *Riverbank* (fig. 2) that one initially reads as the sky, which is oddly lit at the bottom and darker above. One's first impression that this may be intended as a rendering of evening light gives way to a realization that this area is not really meant as sky, since the tops of distant mountains hover ambiguously above, with the real sky further up and similarly lightened at the bottom to set off the trees. Are we then to read the lower band of light as fog? The question is wrong, since it implies a consistent representational intent that is belied throughout the work.

Count 8. The family scene and the abundance of figures in *Riverbank* would be out of place in an early monumental landscape.

According to Hironobu Kohara's observation, which is consistent with my own, nowhere in Song or earlier landscape painting—that is, independent landscape as distinct from narrative or some other pictorial type in which landscape is the setting—can one find a scene like the one in *Riverbank* (fig. 25) showing the "lofty scholar" accompanied by his wife and two children. Moreover, this group of figures is only part of a

Figure 25 Detail, fig. 1: Attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), *Riverbank*

rich quasi-narrative complex involving ten other figures, which has been well described elsewhere by Richard Barnhart and Maxwell Hearn.[26] While figure groups of this kind have a place in such genre works as Zhao Gan's *First Snow along the River*, a pictorial disquisition on the lives of fishermen for which the landscape serves as the setting, they do not, judging from extant examples, belong in monumental landscape paintings, in which the landscape itself is the central subject and the figures are small and conventional. The representation of figures in Wei Xian's *Lofty Scholar* (Fong, fig. 3) does not provide a good parallel, because it consists only of husband and wife, and also because they belong to a specific subject, an exemplary anecdote (*gushi*) about a Han-period "lofty scholar" whose devoted wife when serving her husband's meals always raised the tray above her eyebrows, so that she would not breathe on his food.

Zhang Daqian, by contrast, likes to populate his landscapes with narrativelike figure groupings in pictures that have no specific subjects. In the "Liu Daoshi" work (fig. 26), a scholar reclines in his lakeside pavilion, his book beside him, while a traveler crosses a bridge behind, a boy draws water below, and another scholar and his servant emerge from a ravine at right. Farther up, on the left, a farewell scene takes place outside a retired scholar's house. The painting that Zhang Daqian took to be a great work by Dong Yuan (or, more likely, that Zhang himself created), *Along the Riverbank at Dusk*, in the National Palace Museum,

Figure 26 Detail, fig. 20: Attributed to Liu Daoshi (active late 10th century), *Clear Morning over Lakes and Mountains*

Taipei,[27] is overinhabited in just this way, a feature that convinces me even more of Zhang's likely authorship. In any case, the work is obviously too late to serve as an early precedent for *Riverbank*. And finally, the forgery attributed to Juran, *Dense Groves and Layered Peaks* (fig. 27), is similarly overpopulated, to the point where its status as an image of reclusion is severely compromised. Zhang Daqian apparently lacked the restraint that prevented early landscapists from enlivening their pictures with a profusion of active, attention-drawing figures.

On a more subjective note but still related to Zhang's introduction of quasi-narrative groups into his pictures is the self-conscious look of the scholar-gentlemen he depicts; the people in his pictures refuse to settle back and serve simply as staffage, subordinate elements in the landscape. One of the differences between the British Museum's *Dense Forests and Layered Peaks* (fig. 16), Zhang's forgery of a Juran work, and its older model in the Shanghai Museum (Fong, fig. 17) is that whereas the man in the Shanghai version is self-contained, exhibiting a proper Chinese decorum, his counterpart in the British Museum picture leans moodily toward the water, gazing over his shoulder, as if warding off the unease generated by his vibrant,

Figure 27 Detail, fig. 11: Attributed to Juran (active ca. 960–95), *Dense Groves and Layered Peaks*

indistinct surroundings. The scholar in *Riverbank* (fig. 25) is closer to the British Museum image. As Hearn writes, he "serenely faces the storm — a vivid metaphor for the political chaos sweeping across the land at the time." [28] The problem, at least to my eye, is that he does not simply express his serenity, he also dramatizes and projects it. Those familiar with Zhang Daqian's acknowledged works know how the central figures in his landscapes, besides frequently looking like the artist himself, express more self-awareness than do those in early paintings.

Count 9. The signature on *Riverbank* is suspect for several reasons.

A number of writers on *Riverbank* have raised questions about the painting's signature, specifically, whether it is a later addition to a truly old painting, and whether there is not something dubious about the title that accompanies Dong Yuan's name. Since in considering the painting to be a modern forgery, I obviously take the signature to be one as well, the only question that remains is whether Zhang Daqian (or whoever wrote it) made mistakes in writing style or content that cast further suspicion on the painting. Because I am not an expert in calligraphy, however, I will only report the views of others, and not attempt to contribute to the arguments.

The signature, located on the lower left edge and partly cut off, is generally taken to read: "*Hou-* (or *Bei-*) *Yuan Fushi chen Dong Yuan hua.*" The title, *Hou-* (or *Bei-*) *Yuan Fushi* (Deputy Commissioner of the Inner [or North] Garden), which precedes Dong's name, is discussed at length by Daniel Bryant, a specialist in Chinese language and history at the University of Victoria. He reaches no firm conclusion about the title's meaning or reliability, but notes its appearance on *Riverbank*, commenting that if the signature is genuine, it settles the question of Dong's official position, but if it is doubtful, "and such things always are, then it may be rendered additionally so by the possibility that the official title is wrong."[29] He quotes Suzuki Kei, a leading Japanese authority now retired from teaching at Tokyo University, as being "troubled by the discrepancy between the low status of the position in the palace garden administration" and the high status assumed for Dong Yuan by the eleventh-century writer Guo Ruoxu, in whose entry on the artist this title first appears.[30] Kohara goes further, pointing out that although there is no evidence for the meaning that the title had in the Southern Tang state under which Dong Yuan served, the section on official titles in *Songshi* (History of the Song Dynasty) identifies the position as that of a minor functionary, with "the same duties as that of a eunuch," definitely not an honorable status. It is impossible, Kohara believes, that Dong Yuan would have used this title with his signature, and he speculates, "I think Zhang [Daqian] got this

knowledge from Guo Ruoxu's book, but could not check the role of the title beyond the officer's name."[31] Kohara also points out that the presence of the word *chen* (your subject), written in smaller characters and set above and to the right of the signature, follows court practice in the Qing period. It is also true, however, that *chen* sometimes accompanies signatures on Song paintings; for example, it is on the handscroll *River View in Winter*, in the Palace Museum, Beijing, by Liang Shimin (active early 12th century), who served under Emperor Huizong, and reportedly on the handscroll *Pasturing Horses, after Wei Yan*, in the same collection, by Li Gonglin (ca. 1041–1106), as well as on some works of Southern Song court artists, such as Ma Yuan (active ca. 1190–1225), Xia Gui (active ca. 1195–1230), and Ma Lin (ca. 1180–after 1256).[32] Thus it is not impossible, only very unusual, that the term would appear on a tenth-century painting.

In his 1989 article on the handscroll *The Three Worthies of Wu* (Hearn, "Comparative Physical Analysis," fig. 5) in the Freer Gallery of Art, Fu Shen discusses the calligraphic style of the signatures and inscriptions on Zhang Daqian's forgeries, finding them (as others have) to be apparently from a single hand, even when the works on which they appear span centuries.[33] The style, Fu writes, is intended to look like pre-Song writing (Wen Fong considers the *Riverbank* signature to be in the style of the eighth-century calligrapher Yan Zhenqing [709–785][34]), but it is in fact "a single personal style," which in some respects resembles Zhang's own. The writing on Zhang's forgeries is sometimes said to have been done by Zhang's third wife, Yang Wanjun, but Fu Shen believes it is by Zhang himself. Kohara observes that the calligraphy of the *Riverbank* signature is close to the writing on the British Museum painting *Dense Forests and Layered Peaks*.

Count 10. The seals on *Riverbank* appear not to match those on more acceptable works.

For me, this is not a major count. I have never believed that matching seals on a painting with others that are considered to be reliable is an effective way of determining authenticity or, in itself, very useful as evidence one way or the other.[35] For reasons still mysterious, seals often fail to match on what otherwise appear to be genuine works (the seals of such Ming masters as Shen Zhou [1427–1509] and Wen Zhengming [1470–1559] are well-known examples), while modern methods of photoengraving can reportedly produce exact replicas of old seals on copperplate, which can then be used to impress "authentic" seals on a forgery.[36] Nevertheless, since the collectors' seals on *Riverbank* have been cited as evidence in support of the painting's authenticity, they must be considered here, if only briefly.

The argument that the seal impressions on *Riverbank* correspond to reliable examples and strongly support the authenticity—or at least the antiquity—of the painting was made by Kathleen Yang in her

1998 article "In Support of *The Riverbank*."[37] In a brief response to that article, published in a later issue of the same magazine, Steven P. Gaskin wrote, "The seals she [Kathleen Yang] shows us are actually a rather damning bit of evidence, since there are sufficient differences between the ones on the painting and the 'authentic' examples shown that we must seriously suspect they are later additions."[38] In a subsequent letter to me, Gaskin elaborated on these observations: "The seal with the biggest differences is the *Keshi Jingzhong* seal in [Yang's] figures 4a and 4b. Note particularly the lower two characters. Also, in figure 3 vs. 3a, there's no way those are the same two gourds."[39] The distinctions he makes between these seal impressions appear to my eye to be accurate. More than individual matches or mismatches, however, what arouses suspicion is the impressive panoply of old seals, some of which (including the *siyin* half-seal) appear regularly on Zhang's other forgeries and follow the same pattern of distribution over the centuries, especially in the Song-Yuan period (see Count 13 below).[40]

Count 11. There is no secure, identifiable reference to *Riverbank* in any old catalogue or other text.

Both Richard Barnhart[41] and Wen Fong[42] attempt to identify *Riverbank* with a painting mentioned by the thirteenth-century scholar Zhou Mi (1232–1298) in his *Yunyan guoyan lu* (Record of What Was Seen as Clouds and Mists) as a work he saw in the collection of Prince Zhao Yuqin (late 13th century). But, as Ankeney Weitz points out in her study of Zhou Mi's book, in a section on modern "misuses" of that book by collectors eager to match paintings they own with those recorded in it, the identification is "somewhat suspect" (an understatement!) since "according to Zhou Mi's text this painting should have been a 'short handscroll,' not a larger hanging scroll."[43] As she also notes, Barnhart himself had rejected the identification earlier because of this discrepancy,[44] but in his 1983 book, *Along the Border of Heaven: Sung and Yüan Paintings from the C.C. Wang Family Collection*, changed his mind. Like the owner of *Riverbank*, C.C. Wang, he accepted the identification on the basis of the presence of seals of Jia Sidao (1213–1275) and Zhao Yuqin. Weitz comments, "In my opinion, these collectors' seals could be reproductions. Further, the presence of the seals of Zhang Daqian, a master forger, should raise at least some doubts about the scroll's purported provenance."[45]

If *Riverbank* had come down to us lacking seals or inscriptions indicating that it was known to important writers and collectors — as, for instance, seems to be the case with the Shanghai Museum's *Bamboo, Old Trees, and Rock*, attributed to the tenth-century painter Xu Xi (active 943–75)[46] — its absence from old catalogues and record books would be easier to understand. However, the seals on *Riverbank* indicate that

during the period from the late Song to the early Ming, the work passed through the hands of prominent owners. It is hard to believe, then, that it would not have been noticed by major collectors of later times and recorded and commented on as one of the notable relics (*mingji*) of Chinese painting. In the seventeenth century, when surviving early masterworks were increasingly being identified and written about, and in the eighteenth century, when many early landscape paintings had passed into the imperial collection and examples were rarely to be seen outside that collection, *Riverbank* should have enjoyed fame as a major signed work by a much sought-after master. But it somehow escaped the notice of Dong Qichang and all the collectors and connoisseurs who followed him, until it was published in 1956 by Zhang Daqian and in 1957 by Xie Zhiliu (1910–1997).

Count 12. There is no painting from the Yuan period or later that appears to be based on *Riverbank*.

Suffice it to say that to my eye none of the works cited by Wen Fong in the recently published exhibition catalogue *Along the Riverbank: Chinese Paintings from the C.C. Wang Family Collection* as compositionally similar to *Riverbank* are clearly related to the painting.[47] Once more, if the painting was known to both the Yuan-dynasty scholar Zhou Mi and his friend Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322) and others of the period, why is the composition, so far as one can see, unreflected in Yuan painting?

In his essay in *Along the Riverbank*, Fong introduces Wang Meng's (ca. 1308–1385) *Dwelling in Seclusion in Summer Mountains* (Shih, fig. 25), dated 1354, and then writes that *Riverbank* "was of course Wang's model."[48] To my eye there is not much resemblance between the two paintings. A relationship between *Riverbank* and the "half-landscape" ascribed to Dong Yuan in the Ogawa Collection in Kyoto, *Travelers amid Streams and Mountains* (Qi, fig. 4), is suggested by both Wen Fong[49] and C.C. Wang, who describes the two paintings as "very close."[50] But again, I fail to see the "close" resemblance. Moreover, the Ogawa picture has its own problems of dating and origin and can therefore scarcely serve as firm support for another problematic work.

Count 13. *Riverbank* is an example of the "too good to be true" phenomenon.

When the "paper trail" of signature, seals, and purported correspondence to records in old books is as full and distinguished as it is in the case of *Riverbank* and when the work comes from the collection of Zhang

Daqian without any clearly traceable earlier history, there is reason enough for deep suspicion, since Zhang's other forgeries reveal how adept and painstaking he was in laying such paper trails. The audience toward whom his forgeries were addressed consisted of collectors and connoisseurs who delighted in identifying seals, scanning catalogues, and piecing together histories for paintings. That process can of course support valid judgments of authenticity, but it can also equally result in misjudgments that give the collector a false sense of security. The skilled forger understands too well the psychology of those who might be called upon to "authenticate" such works — Zhang himself often served in this capacity for collectors — and constructs the strings of "evidence" they will follow with growing excitement and satisfaction. The recent articles by Kathleen Yang and Ding Xiyuan, former deputy director of the Shanghai Art Museum,[51] exemplify this process of following the trail, in which each "clue" to the purported history of the painting is noted, and no doubts about such clues are expressed.

A corresponding match of "planting" and "finding" obtains in matters of style, where the deceiver's familiarity with old paintings allows him to lay out the set of stylistic traits and motifs that will be mirrored in the exercises of connoisseurship performed by the deceived. What the forger cannot do is combine all these traits and motifs into a convincingly early picture that holds together. Zhang offers in his *Riverbank* pastiche what Vinograd, as noted earlier, calls "scattered hints of early styles," and those who believe in the painting take pleasure in identifying the sources of these allusions. (Once again, the writings of Ding Xiyuan and Kathleen Yang can be offered as examples.) The same process is repeated when some supporter of a forgery recognizes and identifies places where the forger has incorporated features described in early texts as characteristic of the purported artist. Ding Xiyuan, for instance, cites Mi Fu's (1052–1107) statement that "Dong Yuan's mountain peaks are not skillful"[52] to explain away the anomalous treatment of peaks in *Riverbank*. This painting, the argument goes, matches this description and is therefore more likely to be a genuine Dong Yuan. The methodological weakness of trying to turn words back into images they describe should be self-evident.

Count 14. An Alternative Recent History for *Riverbank*

The now-famous letter from the painter Xu Beihong (1895–1953)[53] and the set of circumstances and "evidence" associated with the story that has accumulated around it are generally held to support the authenticity of *Riverbank*, or at least lessen or eliminate the likelihood that it was painted by Zhang Daqian, by proving that the painting existed in 1938, before Zhang began his career as a forger of pre-Song paintings.[54]

How can this same body of evidence be regarded as a count against the work? As Kohara puts it, the letter is "the important authority for those who believe in *Riverbank* and a big obstacle for the people who deny it." How can that obstacle be overcome? The answer turns out to be simple: by showing that the "evidence" itself is clearly a concoction full of anomalies and contradictions, of a kind that no genuinely old and honest painting would need. Moreover, besides the stylistic and other evidence offered above, the pattern of Zhang's involvement with the painting and with the "recent history" invented for it tends to confirm his authorship.

As anyone will know who is addicted, as I am, to literate and sophisticated thrillers by writers such as Thomas Perry, there is an intricate process by which an identity can be skillfully constructed for someone who wishes to disappear and then appear again as a different person. A similarly intricate process, carried out by a skilled fabricator, one intimately acquainted with the history and collecting of Chinese paintings, can provide an identity for a painting that is intended to appear as if it has emerged out of the dim, mostly unrecoverable past with a believable provenance and history. Modern fabrications can be made to match up with early records;[55] seals that can be read and identified only with difficulty can place a work in old and prestigious collections, which can in turn be linked with references in catalogues and other writings. Consider, for instance, these examples from among Zhang Daqian's forgeries: the "Guan Tong" in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (fig. 23), mounted and boxed so as to make us believe that it came from the storehouse (*kura*) of some old Japanese family where it has been kept for centuries; the "Liang Kai" *Sleeping Gibbon* in the Honolulu Academy of Arts, bearing a title purportedly written by a famous thirteenth-century scholar and an inscription by a modern collector claiming that it was bought by his grandfather in 1892;[56] the "Han Gan" *Horses and Groom* in the Musée Cernuschi, Paris, accompanied by an inscription written by Pu Ru (Pu Xinyu; 1896–1963), a member of the Manchu imperial family, stating that it was found in a cave at Dunhuang in 1900 and subsequently remounted in Japan.[57] I would suggest that the so-called history and provenance of *Riverbank* should be seen as another notable product of this kind of project—a construction to be admired in itself, but not to be believed.

My concern here, however, is not with the "early" history of *Riverbank*—its transmission since its purported date of production in the tenth century—but rather with the "recent" history, which I believe to be no less a fabrication than the early history and the painting itself. The "official" account of *Riverbank*'s recent history that we are asked to believe, and the evidence for that account, are laid out in two articles by Ding Xiyuan[58] and outlined in both Wen Fong's essay in the exhibition catalogue *Along the Riverbank*[59] and in Kathleen Yang's article on *Riverbank*. According to this official account, Xu Beihong acquired the work

in 1938, in Yangshuo, Guangxi Province. Later that year, Zhang Daqian saw the painting when he visited Xu in Guilin and was "so enamored of it" that Xu allowed him to take it to Sichuan "to research and authenticate it."[60] Xu Beihong described these events briefly in a letter written shortly afterward to a Mr. Sun (see Kohara, fig. 5). Some years later—in 1944, according to an inscription by Xu Beihong discussed below—Xu agreed to give up *Riverbank* in exchange for a painting by Jin Nong (1687–1763) owned by Zhang. *Riverbank* remained in Zhang's possession until it was acquired in about 1968 by C.C. Wang in exchange for twelve paintings by later artists.

Let me present an alternative account of *Riverbank*'s recent history, and my reasons for preferring it. It is a neat account in that it requires the complicity of only a few people: Zhang Daqian himself, Xu Beihong, the scholar-painter Xie Zhiliu, and possibly Ding Xiyuan (in addition to others on Zhang's team who assisted in making and aging the painting, forging the seals, and so forth). In this account, Zhang Daqian, having produced *Riverbank* in the late 1940s or early 1950s as one of his series of forgeries of antique paintings, enlists the help of Xu Beihong in constructing a "recent history" for the painting.[61] Xu agrees, solving for Zhang what a recently published newspaper article involving twentieth-century European art has referred to as "the forger's biggest problem," namely, a "painting's last owner"—since it is easier to attribute ownership to earlier people who are dead.[62] Zhang needed a living "last owner," and for this occasion found him in Xu Beihong. It was Hironobu Kohara who first suggested to me that the transaction between Zhang and Xu was a "complicated swindle on old paintings," Zhang's "well-worn device, repeated many times."[63]

As to why Xu would consent, we could speculate that some material consideration may have been involved, but this need not have been the case, since Xu, who had known Zhang Daqian for years (Zhang had been hired by Xu to teach at Nanjing University from 1934 to 1936), could have done it purely out of old friendship. But we can also counter the question by asking: why did other prominent collectors and connoisseurs agree to help Zhang Daqian by providing provenances and recent histories for his modern fabrications? These include Wu Hufan, for the "Wu Wei" handscroll *The Iron Flute* in the Shanghai Museum[64] and, along with Ye Gongchuo (1881–1968), the "Liang Kai" *Sleeping Gibbon* in the Honolulu Academy of Arts; Pu Ru, for another version of the *Sleeping Gibbon*,[65] the "Han Gan" *Horses and Groom* in the Musée Cernuschi, Paris,[66] *The Three Worthies of Wu* in the Freer Gallery,[67] and quite a few others. Wu Hufan's inscription on the *Sleeping Gibbon* claims that the work was purchased in Hangzhou in 1892 by his famous grandfather Wu Dacheng (1835–1902), whose (forged) seal appears on the painting—another obliging attempt, like that of Xu Beihong for *Riverbank*, to establish a recent history for the work that would eliminate the possibility of Zhang's authorship.[68] Pu Ru reportedly wrote colophons for Zhang's forgeries with-

out ever seeing the works; Zhang would send him a request, with the wording he wanted, and Pu would write out and sign an inscription, which was later mounted with the painting.[69] *Along the Riverbank at Dusk*, a painting once attributed to Dong Yuan that was owned by Zhang and is probably another of Zhang's forgeries, is accompanied by inscriptions by Wu Hufan, Xie Zhiliu, Pu Ru, and the famous older Shanghai collector Pang Yuanji (1864–1949).[70] Surely these people were too sharp-eyed to believe in the paintings they were "authenticating." C.C. Wang once told me (in another context) that members of this group commonly did such things to "help each other out," lending their names to spurious works to make them more believable. The device was effective, since foreign collectors and museum curators in the 1950s still accepted too easily the cultural authority of famous Chinese connoisseurs. In a letter written to me in 1958, Gustav Ecke, then curator of Asian Art at the Honolulu Academy of Arts, assured me, in response to my doubting of his recently acquired "Liang Kai" *Sleeping Gibbon*, that its authenticity was secure, since it "has a good pedigree, back to Southern Song, acknowledged long ago already, before Zhang Daqian's heyday, by George Yeh's uncle [Ye Gongchuo], then one of the best connoisseurs of the old school." It is clear from the well-documented record that if Xu Beihong did indeed assist Zhang Daqian in constructing a recent history for *Riverbank*, as I believe he did, he was doing only what appears to have been a common practice at the time, one not even considered especially reprehensible.

Continuing our alternative account: Zhang and Xu discuss how best to establish the earlier existence of *Riverbank*, and work out a chronology that fits their known movements and circumstances. Xu writes the letter, purportedly sent from Singapore in late 1938 or early 1939 to a Chinese friend usually identified as a Mr. Sun, telling about his acquisition of the "Dong Yuan" work and about Zhang Daqian's borrowing it "to research and authenticate it."[71] The events in this account could have happened: Xu and Zhang did see each other in Guilin in the autumn of 1938, and Xu left China for Hong Kong and later Singapore in November of that year.[72] The story in the letter about Zhang's taking *Riverbank* away at this time to "study it" was necessary to explain why the painting dropped out of sight for some years—why, in other words, Xu did not show it proudly to others, write about it, and make it known, as he did with his beloved *Eighty-seven Immortals* (Kohara, fig. 3), a long handscroll depicting a procession of figures that in Xu's opinion was the work of a Tang artist, for which he composed a jubilant colophon soon after acquiring it.[73]

In the "official" account of *Riverbank*'s history as related by Ding Xiyuan, Xu acquires *Riverbank* in the autumn of 1938, allows Zhang to take it away, and then, as if in compensation for that loss, finds and purchases *Eighty-seven Immortals* in Hong Kong a few months later.[74] Yet even here we encounter something dubious: it is clear from other evidence that Xu had acquired *Eighty-seven Immortals* in the spring of the

previous year, 1937,[75] not in 1938. He bought it (with money and his own paintings for trade) from an unidentified German woman who is said to have been the daughter of a long-time resident of China whose collection of paintings she inherited. Xu went through four boxes of her holdings, and with great excitement discovered and purchased *Eighty-seven Immortals*. It is somewhat mysterious that whereas Xu provides a detailed story of this acquisition, in his colophon and elsewhere, neither he nor anyone else gives any clue about the source or circumstances of his acquisition of *Riverbank*, a painting he himself called "perhaps the preeminent Dong Yuan under heaven."[76] Even the information that he acquired the painting in Yangshuo, Guangxi, comes from Xie Zhiliu, as recounted to Ding Xiyuan. So far as Xu himself is concerned, *Riverbank* entered his possession as if out of nowhere, was quickly spirited away by Zhang Daqian, and, it would seem, lingered in Xu's memory only long enough for him to describe the event in a single letter written several months later and in a colophon for another painting written long afterward.[77]

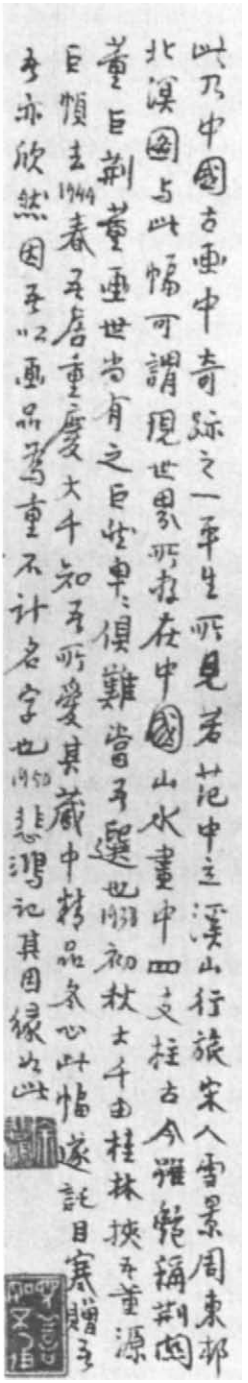
The question of what happened between 1938, when Xu Beihong is said to have written his letter, and *Riverbank*'s "reappearance" constitutes the first of the gaping holes in the official account. Because nothing at all happens, for a dozen years or more. There is no record of Xu's mentioning the painting to anyone or writing about it again until 1950—and even that date is uncertain, since it appears in Xu's own inscription, on a Jin Nong landscape, discussed below. Nor does Zhang Daqian, so far as we know, show it to anyone or write about it during these years. *Riverbank* needed to disappear for some years, at least until the late 1940s or early 1950s, when, I believe, it was in fact being made—and, as we shall see, even for some years after that.

C.C. Wang himself offers a variant account of *Riverbank*'s history, which, if reliable, would clear up everyone's doubts on the matter. To the question put to him in a series of unpublished interviews with Joan Stanley-Baker in the 1970s, "Could the signature be a work of Zhang Daqian?" he responded:

> *No, I saw the work before Zhang Daqian bought it. I saw it when Xu Beihong bought it from a German. It was an exchange. Xu Beihong exchanged works with the German (a merchant or official) in Shanghai, and I remember he got two works. One is this Dong Yuan, the other a handscroll on silk, [it] was called* Bashiqi shenxian [Eighty-seven Immortals]. *I think it was an adaptation [by] a Southern Song artist of the Wu Zongyuan scroll in my collection. Later Zhang Daqian for some reason bought it from Xu Beihong. Later I bought it from Zhang Daqian.*[78]

But C.C. Wang, good connoisseur though he is, misremembers on just about every point. Xu Beihong, according to Xie Zhiliu's account, acquired *Riverbank* in Yangshuo, not in Shanghai. Xu cannot have bought it from the German (a woman, not a man) from whom, according to the official account, he

Cahill
The
Case
Against
Riverbank



acquired not *Riverbank* but the *Eighty-seven Immortals*, a transaction that took place some time after he had met with Zhang Daqian in Guilin and let Zhang take away *Riverbank*.[79] (And if we accept 1937 as the true year of Xu's acquisition of *Eighty-seven Immortals*, the gap becomes even greater, since Xu wrote that he acquired *Riverbank* in 1938.) Finally, C.C. Wang cannot have seen *Riverbank* in Xu's possession in Shanghai before Zhang "bought it," because, even in the official version, Xu never *had* the painting in Shanghai.

So, to continue the alternative (and, I think, more plausible) account, Xu Beihong plants his letter somewhere — in the official account, the letter is said to now be in an unidentified private collection in Japan, and is accessible only in the 1988 Taipei Fine Arts Museum catalogue reproduction[80] and in a photograph provided by (who else?) Ding Xiyuan[81] — and at the same time, informs others of its existence and whereabouts so that it will be rediscovered when the proper moment arrives. Xu's confidants must have included Xie Zhiliu, well known to be Zhang Daqian's disciple and close friend. It would appear that Xie entrusted Ding Xiyuan with the information and charged him with the responsibility of transmitting it. Ding, who reports a conversation with Xie Zhiliu in June 1996,[82] shortly before Xie's death in 1997, does indeed publish the letter again (it had appeared in the Taipei Fine Arts Museum exhibition and catalogue ten years earlier) at the suitable moment, along with a lengthy account of the whole fabricated history. By that time, Xu Beihong, Zhang Daqian, and Xie Zhiliu had all departed this world, leaving only Ding to carry out the plan and to say, with Ishmael, that he alone survives to tell the tale.

Another very shaky episode in the fabricated history of *Riverbank* is Xu Beihong's fascination with a Jin Nong landscape painting, *Returning by Boat in a Rainstorm* (fig. 28), and his willingness to accept it in exchange for *Riverbank*. This, too, we learn from Ding Xiyuan, as personally related to him by Xie Zhiliu, and also, in a shorter version, from Xu's widow Liao Jingwen, who mentions the exchange of the two works in the English version of her preface to the 1991 volume of reproductions of old paintings in Xu's collection, in which the Jin Nong is reproduced.[83] Xu apparently could not rest, however, with having the story and its crucial 1938 beginning recorded only in his letter and in the memories of friends. He had to get it all written down once more, and did so in the inscription he wrote in 1950 (or dated to that year) on the Jin Nong painting (fig. 29). Roughly translated, it reads:

> *This is one of the rarest works in Chinese painting. In my lifetime I've seen Fan Zhongli* [*Kuan*]*'s* Traveling among Streams and Mountains, *the anonymous Song-period* Snow Scene [?], *Zhou Dongcun* [*Chen*]*'s* North Sea [*now in The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City*], *and this painting — they can be called the four pillars of extant Chinese landscape painting in all the world. The four* [*Five Dynasties*] *masters Jing* [*Hao*], *Guan* [*Tong*], *Dong* [*Yuan*], *and Ju*[*ran*] *are much praised in the world.*

Figure 28 Attributed to Jin Nong (1687–1764), *Returning by Boat in a Rainstorm*, in the style of Ma Hezhi, dated 1760. Hanging scroll, ink on paper. Xu Beihong Memorial Museum, Beijing

Figure 29 Inscription by Xu Beihong (1895–1953), dated 1950, on *Returning by Boat in a Rainstorm*, dated 1760, attributed to Jin Nong (1687–1763). Hanging scroll, ink on paper. Xu Beihong Memorial Museum, Beijing

> *Works by Jing and Dong can still be found today; those by Juran are hard to find. They all would be difficult for me to choose.* [?] *In July 1938* [*Zhang*] *Daqian took away with him from Guilin my large Dong Yuan painting. In the spring of 1944, when I was living in Chongqing, Daqian, knowing that I especially loved this unusual Jin Nong painting in his collection, asked* [*Zhang*] *Muhan to bring it to me* [*in exchange*]. *I was very happy, because it is the quality of the painting that I value, not the name* [*of the artist*].
>
> *1950,* [*Xu*] *Beihong records the circumstances in this way.*[84]

Instead of supporting or corroborating the evidence of his letter, this inscription, by being so excessive and unnatural, calls it seriously into question. Xu Beihong, like other collectors, often wrote inscriptions on the mountings of paintings he owned, expressing his enthusiasm for them and recording information about them. Here, he begins and ends with extravagant praise for Jin Nong's landscape, ranking it (absurdly) with the Fan Kuan and two other paintings as the four great originals among extant Chinese landscapes. He makes the claim that he values the quality of a painting more than the name of the artist; an extraordinary Jin Nong, he implies, is worth as much to him as a large, genuine Dong Yuan, even one that he had earlier, in his letter, called "perhaps the preeminent Dong Yuan under heaven."

In his other inscriptions on paintings in his collection, Xu Beihong sometimes related where and how the work came into his possession, but only briefly. For example, on a landscape by Huang Daozhou, he wrote, "I bought this in the Beijing market in the spring of 1951"; on a Chen Hongshou (1599–1652) figure painting, "I got this in Chengdu in 1948"; and on an anonymous Ming scroll, *Imperial Consort*, "I acquired this in Guilin."[85] In the case of the Jin Nong, he might have, following the same pattern, written simply that he had acquired it in 1944 in Chongqing in a trade, and left it at that. Instead, he went on to provide quite superfluous information, irrelevant to the painting itself: the identity of the person from whom he got the painting (Zhang Daqian), what he gave up for it (the Dong Yuan), and, what seems the most strange, where and when (Guilin in 1938!) the other party (Zhang) first saw the painting he received in exchange. What seems obvious is that Xu was planting his story once more to "corroborate" the rest and to try to make the exchange seem plausible — as it decidedly is not, on the face of it. Kohara believes that the Jin Nong is itself a Zhang Daqian forgery, and it may be. (I saw it years ago, and did not doubt it.[86]) The question of authorship is not crucial to my argument; in any case, the picture is certainly a modest work, especially in relation to *Riverbank*. Liao Jingwen writes of the exchange, "Because of the fact that paintings by Dong Yuan ... were hard to find and also because of the big size of that landscape, it cost [i.e., was worth] over ten thousand times more than the piece by Jin Nong in terms of money." We are supposed to believe, as

Liao Jingwen did and as Ding Xiyuan argues,[87] that the story portrays Xu rising admirably above material concerns. But, as Kohara remarked to me, "Xu Beihong was not stupid," and stupid he would have to have been to agree to such a trade.

We should note that Xu's account, which states that Zhang Daqian asked his younger half-brother Zhang Muhan to bring the Jin Nong to him in Chongqing in the spring of 1944, does not agree with Xie Zhiliu's account as told to Ding Xiyuan, in which Xie himself served as the go-between. Since it is unlikely that either Xu or Xie would have a lapse of memory about such a momentous event, it would appear that they simply failed to coordinate their stories.

Zhang Daqian, then, "acquired" *Riverbank* in 1944. Even after this, however, he did not, as one might expect, present his new acquisition proudly to the world. If a genuinely old painting of this size and complexity, bearing the signature of a major master, had fallen into his hands at this time, he would have trumpeted its importance, proclaimed it the find of the century, and enlisted his friends to write colophons for it. None of these happened. Zhang is mysteriously—and as regards the official account, fatally—silent about the painting in the years that follow; it is as if the work did not exist. And for some of those years, it truly did not, because he had not yet created it. But his silence about it continues even after the painting must have come into existence. In 1947 he writes in a colophon, "I now own three Dong Yuans," but does not include *Riverbank* among them. In 1949 he names two others in his collection as works that permitted him to "understand [Dong Yuan's] brush method," but again, *Riverbank* is not one of them.[88] Fu Shen acknowledges that Zhang seems never to have made a copy of the painting or even discussed it.[89] And when, in 1955, Zhang published the first volume of his *Dafengtang mingji* (*Taifūdō meiseki*), with reproductions of the most important old paintings in his collection, *Riverbank* is again absent.[90] Instead, Dong Yuan is represented there by the far less interesting and, in fact, quite pedestrian *Along the Riverbank at Dusk* (Qi, p. 84), at best a Ming painting and at worst another of Zhang's fakes. *Riverbank* is included at last, without commentary, in the fourth volume of *Dafengtang*, published in 1956.[91]

The explanation for all this silence that supporters of the painting offer is that Zhang "did not recognize the importance of *Riverbank*."[92] This explanation is clearly inconsistent with Xu Beihong's statement in his letter that in 1938 Zhang was "so enamored of it that he insisted on taking it with him"; it is also inconsistent with the estimates of the painting made by Xu Beihong, and later by Xie Zhiliu (discussed below). How could Zhang be so determined to acquire *Riverbank* and then set so little store by it? The truth of the matter, I submit, is that he knew perfectly well that the sudden appearance of another previously unseen "ancient masterpiece" in his hands would be greeted with deep suspicion, as indeed it should be. He had

already introduced another would-be Dong Yuan, *Along the Riverbank at Dusk*, which is probably one of his own fabrications, with great fanfare and a story about how he had seen it in 1938, dreamed of it for years, and finally acquired it for a huge price in 1945.[93] Newspaper accounts hailed the event and the unprecedented price paid; five major connoisseurs wrote colophons for the painting to accompany two by Zhang himself. Zhang could not pull the same trick again without arousing suspicion; he needed another stratagem.

So, after publishing *Riverbank* once with no commentary in 1956, Zhang allows his good friend Xie Zhiliu to introduce the painting properly to the world, while he, Zhang, remains in the background. In 1957 Xie proceeds to reproduce *Riverbank* in the company of a group of prestigious early paintings, in his *Tang Wudai Song Yuan mingji* (Famous Paintings Surviving from the Tang, Five Dynasties, Song, and Yuan), with an accompanying text extolling the work's importance. Later, in 1979, he would write of *Riverbank* as representing Dong Yuan's "original appearance," that is, his early style, while the better-known *The Xiao and Xiang Rivers* (Shih, fig. 15), and two other handscrolls ascribed to Dong Yuan, *Summer Mountains* in the Shanghai Museum and *Awaiting the Ferry at the Foot of Summer Mountains* (Qi, fig. 3) in the Liaoning Museum,[94] are said to belong to Dong Yuan's "transformed style from a later period."[95] Still later, in 1989, along with relating yet again the story of Zhang Daqian's acquisition of the painting in the exchange with Xu Beihong, Xie would add a "middle period" for Dong, represented by *Residents of the Capital City* (Qi, fig. 1) in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, a picture now usually dated to the Yuan period.[96] Connoisseurship and promotion have become inextricably intertwined. Ding Xiyuan in turn continues the promotional project, heaping extravagant praise on *Riverbank* in his 1998 articles and listing all the ways in which it can be seen as conforming to old descriptions of Dong Yuan's paintings.

* * *

The alternative account of *Riverbank*'s recent history set forth above, much of it built as hypothesis around available information and records, will doubtless need correction at some points. My argument is that in its broad outlines this account is far more believable than the official version. It seems safe to predict, on the other hand, that the official version also remains open-ended, subject to augmentation. In response to challenges like this one, someone will likely come forth who claims to have seen *Riverbank* while it was still in Xu Beihong's hands, or another document will be produced that appears to support the painting's existence in 1938. I can only suggest that while we must keep an open mind, any such evidence should be looked at very critically. The record of fabrication for both the painting and its history is too long and too intricate

to be easily laid to rest. But laid to rest it must be, in the end, if we are to remove this interloper from our histories of early Chinese landscape painting.

Finally, I want to draw attention to the cumulative weight of all the above. It should be enough to say that none of these counts, in my view, can legitimately be brought against any genuine tenth-century Chinese painting, while all of them can be brought against *Riverbank*. The conclusion to be drawn seems inescapable.

1. In the pamphlet that he, as series editor, wrote to accompany the second volume of *Bunjinga suihen*, titled *Tō Gen, Kyozen* (Dong Yuan, Juran) (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1977), Kohara noted a number of stylistic anomalies in the picture and offered the view that it could not be as old as the Song period; see *Chūgoku nanshūga nōto* (Notes on Chinese Literati Painting) 6, pp. 10–11. The principal text for that volume was by Richard Barnhart, who included *Riverbank* among the works reproduced (pl. 3).

2. As an index of Zhang's stylistic versatility, consider that Fu Shen lists thirty-one artists, from the late Song through the Qing period, whose works Zhang forged in his "first period," the 1920s and 30s, *before* he began making his "early" forgeries. See Fu Shen, *Challenging the Past: The Paintings of Chang Dai-chien*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1991), p. 37.

3. Works that I consider representative of tenth-century landscape style include the following: *The Lofty Scholar Liang Boluan* (reproduced in the present essay as fig. 14), by Wei Xian (active ca. 960–75); the anonymous *A Chess Party in the Mountains* (figs. 12, 13), from a Liao-dynasty tomb; Zhao Gan's (active ca. 960–75) *First Snow along the River*, in the National Palace Museum, Taipei (see n. 22 below), and, less securely datable to that period but in my opinion indicative of pre-Song style, the handscroll attributed to Dong Yuan titled *The Xiao and Xiang Rivers*, in the Palace Museum, Beijing (see n. 18 below), and *Travelers at the Mountain Pass*, attributed to Guan Tong (active ca. 907–23), and *Layered Peaks and Dense Forests*, attributed to Juran (active ca. 960–95), both in the National Palace Museum, Taipei. The last two paintings are reproduced in Wen C. Fong, James C.Y. Watt, et al., *Possessing the Past: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and National Palace Museum, 1996), pls. 57, 58. Others could be added, still more problematic. Archaeological evidence from recent finds can also now be added, notably the ink-monochrome landscape paintings on the walls of the tomb of Wang Chuzhi, dated 924. See Hebei Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Baoding Municipal Office of Cultural Relics, *Wudai Wang Chuzhi mu* (The Five Dynasties Tomb of Wang Chuzhi) (Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House, 1998), pls. 14, 18, 19, 20.

4. Personal correspondence, January 10, 1998.

5. In an essay written as part of a doctoral connoisseurship examination, February 27, 1976. It should be added that Vinograd has recently studied the actual painting and found no reason to change his views.

6. Since Sherman Lee has addressed this issue in the present volume (see Lee, "*Riverbank:* A Recent Effort in a Long

Tradition"), I will comment on it only briefly here.

7. See Kao Ling-mei, ed., *Chang Dai-chien's Paintings* (Hong Kong: The East Society, 1967), pl. 20.

8. Fu Shen, *Challenging the Past*, p. 182.

9. James Cahill, *An Index of Early Chinese Painters and Paintings: T'ang, Sung, and Yüan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), p. 48.

10. The whereabouts of this painting are unknown. Zhang Daqian's "copy" of this painting, dated 1967, is reproduced in Fu Shen, "Shang Kunlun xun heyuan: Daqian yu Dong Yuan" (Climbing Mount Kunlun to Find the River's Source: [Zhang] Daqian and Dong Yuan), in *Proceedings of the International Conference on the Poetry, Calligraphy, and Painting of Chang Dai-chien and P'u Hsin-yu,* Taipei, June, 1993 (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1994), fig. 30.

11. J.D. Chen (Chen Rentao), *Zhongguohua tan di Nanzong sanzu* (The Three Patriarchs of the Southern School of Chinese Painting) (Hong Kong: The Union Syndicate, 1955), p. 17, pl. 4.

12. A good example of a Dong Qichang painting in which this compositional device is used is *Autumn Landscape*, now in The Asian Art Museum of San Francisco; see James Cahill, *Chinese Painting* (Geneva: Skira, 1960), p. 150.

13. See n. 88 below.

14. Sotheby's New York, "Fine Chinese Paintings," June 2, 1987, no. 2; reportedly purchased by a Japanese buyer for $250,000. It bears the usual impressive set of seals and colophons, and is said to be recorded in Li Zuoxian, *Shuhua jianying* (Shadows of Connoisseurship for Calligraphy and Painting), 1871. It was published earlier as a reproduction album (n.p., n.d.), along with a "Huizong" handscroll bought by Zhang Daqian from the Fujii Yūrinkan, Kyoto, in about 1955; see n. 90 below. Copies of both reproduction albums are in the C.V. Starr Library, Columbia University, 6175 7123f and 6175 3923f.

15. *Liu Haisu meishuguan cangpin* (Collection of Liu Haisu Art Gallery: Chinese Paintings and Calligraphic Works throughout the Dynasties) (Shanghai: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1996), no. 2.

16. *Fine Chinese Ceramics, Paintings, and Works of Art*, sale cat., Christie's New York, March 22, 1999, no. 187.

17. See Maxwell K. Hearn and Wen C. Fong, *Along the Riverbank: Chinese Paintings from the C.C. Wang Family Collection* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999), fig. 5.

18. Ibid., fig. 6.

19. Yang Renkai, *Yemaotai diqi hao Liao mu chutu guhua kao* (A Study of the Old Paintings Unearthed from Liao Tomb no. 7 at Yemaotai) (Shanghai: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1984). The observations made below about the Liao tomb painting generally apply as well to another important archaeological find that similarly provides reliable evidence for tenth-century landscape style, the wall paintings in the tomb of Wang Chuzhi, dated 924 (see n. 3 above). In these, too, linear brushstrokes in ink are applied parallel to the contours of earth masses, both to shade and to shape the forms.

20. See Hearn and Fong, *Along the Riverbank*, fig. 11a.

21. See Fu Shen, *Challenging the Past*, no. 49. Zhang had earlier, in 1940, painted the same composition, even blurrier; see *Fine Modern and Contemporary Chinese Paintings*, sale cat., Christie's, Hong Kong, April 27, 1997, no. 290.

22. Richard M. Barnhart, *Along the Border of Heaven: Sung and Yüan Paintings from the C.C. Wang Family Collection* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1983), pp. 33–34; fig. 4.

23. For the version of this painting in the Ogawa Collection, Kyoto, see Wen Fong, "*Rivers and Mountains After Snow* (*Chiang-shan hsüeh-chi*). Attributed to Wang Wei (A D 699–759)," *Archives of Asian Art* 30 (1976–77), pp. 6–33.

24. See *Dafengtang yiseng mingji tezhan tulu* (Special Exhibition of Famous Paintings Presented by Zhang Daqian), exh. cat. (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1983), pl. 5.

25. My talk, "Chang Dai-chien's Forgeries of Old Master Paintings," was presented at the symposium "Chang Dai-chien and His Art," held at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., on November 22, 1991. The picture that served as the source for Zhang's painting is found in Tanke Gessen, *Ressen zusan* (Pictures of

[Daoist] Immortals) (preface dated 1780; printed in 1818). Zhang probably acquired a copy of this book during his stay in Kyoto in 1917–19.

26. Barnhart, *Along the Border of Heaven*, pp. 33–34; Maxwell K. Hearn, "The Changing Face of Narrative in Early Chinese Painting: Three Milestones from the Metropolitan Museum," *Orientations* 28, no. 11 (December 1997), pp. 26–27; and Hearn and Fong, *Along the Riverbank*, pp. 76–77.

27. See Hearn and Fong, *Along the Riverbank*, fig. 39.

28. Hearn, "The Changing Face of Narrative in Early Chinese Painting," p. 26.

29. Daniel Bryant, "Patriarchs in Waiting: The Early History of the Tung-Chü School," *Monumenta Serica* 41 (1993), pp. 29–88; Appendix A, "Tung Yüan and the Northern Gardens," pp. 79–82; and p. 37, n. 13, for the comment quoted here.

30. Ibid, p. 37, n. 13; Alexander C. Soper, *Kuo Jo-hsü's* Experiences in Painting (T'u-hua chien-wen chih): *An Eleventh Century History of Chinese Painting Together with the Chinese Text in Facsimile* (Washington, D.C.: American Council of Learned Societies, 1951), p. 61.

31. Personal correspondence, June 3, 1999.

32. According to Nie Chongzheng, in "Tan Qingdai 'chenzi kuan' huihua" (On Paintings Signed with the Character *chen*), in *Gongting yishu di guanghui* (The Glories of Court Art) (Taipei: Dongdadu shu gongsi, 1996), pp. 29–35.

33. Fu Shen, "Chang Dai-chien's The Three Worthies of Wu and His Practice of Forging Ancient Art," *Orientations* 20, no. 9 (September 1989), pp. 61–62.

34. Hearn and Fong, *Along the Riverbank*, p. 21.

35. I do not mean to belittle the valuable studies by Richard Barnhart and others of cases in which a whole complex of seals, such as those of Emperor Huizong, on a painting can be matched with the style of mounting, catalogue entries, and other evidence.

36. On Zhang Daqian's use of this technique, see Fu Shen, *Challenging the Past*, p. 38.

37. Kathleen Yang, "In support of *The Riverbank*," *Orientations* 29, no. 7 (July/August 1998), pp. 36–42.

38. Steven P. Gaskin, "Letter to the Editor," *Orientations* 29, no. 10 (November 1998), p. 75.

39. Personal correspondence, May 21, 1999.

40. This may be the place to add what must remain for now a "non-count," an observation that I cannot support with hard evidence or even claim to have subjected to prolonged, systematic study. When examined closely, the silk on which *Riverbank* is painted is shown to be broken in a rectilinear pattern of small squares and rectangles, as it is in certain other Zhang Daqian forgeries, such as the Freer Gallery's *The Three Worthies of Wu*. (Fu Shen discusses this forgery at length in his article "Chang Dai-chien's The Three Worthies of Wu.") That is, the silk appears to have somehow been rent — or folded and beaten? — to break the fibers, and then laid flat again. This pattern is apparent throughout the painting. In two similar cases, the *Three Worthies of Wu* and a spurious Dunhuang painting submitted to the Freer Gallery for purchase in about 1957, a contradiction was observed by Takashi Sugiura, then scroll mounter for the Freer. He noted that although the silk was fragmented and abraded, the individual threads were still strong and pliant, not decomposed from age as they ordinarily would be in a truly old painting. I suspect, but cannot now say for certain, that the same might be found to be true of *Riverbank*.

41. Barnhart, *Along the Border of Heaven*, p. 37.

42. Hearn and Fong, *Along the Riverbank*, p. 30.

43. Ankeney Weitz, "Collecting and Connoisseurship in Early Yuan China: Zhou Mi's *Yunyan guoyan lu*" (Ph.D. diss., University of Kansas, 1994), pp. 263, 553, the latter in the section titled "Works whose possible relationship to the YYGYL [*Yunyan guoyan lu*] appears to be unfounded." For the passage from Zhou Mi's book in which a Dong Yuan *Riverbank* is listed among paintings owned by the collector Zhao Yuqin, see p. 296; for the information, which appears at the end of the list, that the paintings listed were all short handscrolls, with "large ones not in this set," see p. 307.

44. Richard M. Barnhart, *Marriage of the Lord of the River*, Artibus Asiae

Supplementum 27 (Ascona, Switzerland: Artibus Asiae, 1970), p. 39.

45. Weitz, "Collecting and Connoisseurship," p. 553. On p. 296, n. 190, Weitz again expresses her skepticism about the identification: "In my opinion, the reproduction of collectors' seals was not a difficult task for a master forger like Chang Dai-chien, the previous owner of the scroll."

46. See Xie Zhiliu, ed., *Tang Wudai Song Yuan mingji* (Famous Paintings Surviving from the Tang, Five Dynasties, Song, and Yuan) (Shanghai: Gudian wenxue chubanshe, 1957), pl. 3.

47. Hearn and Fong, *Along the Riverbank*, pp. 3–46.

48. Ibid., p. 46; for Wang Meng's painting, see fig. 30.

49. See ibid., p. 43; the painting in the Ogawa Collection is reproduced in fig. 36.

50. In a series of unpublished interviews with Joan Stanley-Baker in the 1970s.

51. Ding Xiyuan, "Tianxia diyi Dong Beiyuan; zai du '*Xi'an tu*'" (The Premier Dong Yuan under Heaven: A Further Reading of *Riverbank*), *Gugong wenwu yuekan* (National Palace Museum Monthly of Chinese Art), no. 189 (December 1998), pp. 114–30.

52. Ibid., p. 117 ff; for the discussion of mountain peaks, see p. 122.

53. Published in Ding Xiyuan, "Du '*Xi'an tu*'" (Concerning *Riverbank*), *Gugong wenwu yuekan*, no. 179 (February 1998), pp. 101–107.

54. According to Fu Shen's periodization of Zhang Daqian's career as forger; see Fu Shen, *Challenging the Past*, p. 37. Professor Fu Xinian, however, recounted in an interview with me in Beijing in July 1999 that Zhang borrowed a handscroll ascribed to Juran from his father around 1937 or 1938, shortly before Zhang left Beijing, and used it as the basis for a forgery, *Evening Over Streams and Hills*, a scroll later owned by the collector J.D. Chen; the painting is illustrated in J.D. Chen, *Zhongguo huatan di Nanzong sanzu*, pl. 5 a-f.

55. A second version of the *Five Oxen* scroll ascribed to Han Huang (723–787), now in the Ohara Museum, Kurashiki, is a good example. A seventeenth-century Chinese catalogue suggests that the scroll existed in two early versions; Zhang Daqian created the missing second version. See Yoshiho Yonezawa, in *Suiboku bijutsu taikei I: Hakubyō kara suibokuga e no hatten* (The Development from Line Drawing to Ink Painting) (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1975), color pl. 1, pl. 46; the original in the Palace Museum, Beijing, is reproduced in pl. 47.

56. This painting, which is discussed further below, is illustrated in Fu Shen, *Challenging the Past*, no. 12.

57. Vadime Elisseeff, "Une peinture retrouvée," *Ars Asiatiques* 5 (1958), pp. 221–27. The inscription by Pu Ru outlining the fictional "recent history" of the painting, translated in Elisseeff's article, is dated 1955. At the end of his article, Elisseeff lists the eminent sinologues and art historians who supported the (extremely expensive) purchase: Paul Demieville, Kanda Kiichiro, Gustav Ecke, Max Loehr, Jan Fontein, Peter Swann, and Suzuki Kei.

Another example brought to my attention by Hironobu Kohara is the "Dong Yuan" *Autumn Mountains with Travelers*, a forgery by Zhang Daqian, formerly in the collection of J.D. Chen (see Chen, *Zhongguo huatan di Nanzong sanzu*, pl. 1); the inscription on the painting's box, dated 1954 and signed "Naitō Seisen," an invented Japanese scholar, claims that the painting was in Japan in the early twentieth century. Kohara discusses this fabrication in his "Gisaku no kisetsu: 1950 nendai no Cho Taisen" (The Season of Making Forgeries: Zhang Daqian in the 1950s), *Nara Daigaku bunkazai gakuhō* (Nara University Cultural Properties Report), no. 13 (1995), pp. 28–30.

58. Ding Xiyuan, "Du '*Xi'an tu*'" and "Tianxia diyi Dong Beiyuan; zai du '*Xi'an tu*.'"

59. Hearn and Fong, *Along the Riverbank*, pp. 46–47.

60. Ibid., p. 46.

61. The fact that Zhang had left China by the 1950s and that Xu was still on the mainland would not have seriously hampered their communication, as there was a lively intercourse among Chinese inside and outside China during these years. Zhang, for instance, was selling old paintings to Chinese museums during this period.

62. John Bevan, quoted in Peter Landesman, "A 20th-Century Master Scam,"

New York Times Magazine (July 18, 1999), p. 36. The skills of the con-artist John Drewe in creating spurious provenances for paintings and drawings represented as works by notable twentieth-century masters has interesting parallels with Zhang Daqian's similar achievements. However, apart from the important difference that he was both forger and creator of provenance, Zhang was a far less sinister and much more likeable figure, whose transgressions can almost be forgiven for their brilliance and playfulness.

63. Personal correspondence, April 11, 1999.

64. See James Cahill, *Parting at the Shore: Chinese Painting of the Early and Middle Ming Dynasty, 1368–1580* (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1978), fig. 48. When I published it, I accepted the painting as a genuine Wu Wei, and only later, after seeing the original, became convinced that it is a forgery by Zhang Daqian.

65. Both versions of the painting are reproduced in Fu Shen, *Challenging the Past*, nos. 11, 12.

66. See n. 57 above.

67. See n. 69 below.

68. See Fu Shen, *Challenging the Past*, no. 12.

69. See Fu Shen, "Chang Dai-chien's The Three Worthies of Wu," pp. 62–63; for Pu's inscription on the Freer *Three Worthies of Wu*, see fig. 2 and translation on p. 59; for his inscription on the Honolulu "Liang Kai," see Fu Shen *Challenging the Past*, no. 11.

70. See *Dafengtang yiseng mingji tezhan tulu* (Special Exhibition of Famous Paintings Presented [to the National Palace Museum, Taipei] by Dafengtang [Zhang Daqian]) (Taipei: National Palace Museum, Taipei, 1983), pl. 4; pp. 79–81. I have wavered in my opinion of this work between considering it simply a late imitation (more in the style of the Yuan painter Zhao Mengfu than Dong Yuan) acquired by Zhang and seeing it as another of Zhang's own forgeries, but I am inclined now to the latter view. In some of its features, especially the trees, it is close to another probable fake by Zhang, the "Zhao Mengfu" *Dragon King Worshipping the Buddha*, in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; see J.D. Chen, *Zhongguo huatan di Nanzong sanzu*, pl. 3, and Wu Tung, *Tales from the Land of Dragons: 1,000 Years of Chinese Paintings* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1997), no. 142, p. 229. Professor Fu Xinian has told me that Chinese connoisseurs mostly recognize *Along the Riverbank at Dusk* as a Zhang forgery; interview, Beijing, July 1999.

71. See Ding Xiyuan, "Du '*Xi'an tu*,'" pp. 102–103, which has a reference to the reproduction of the letter in the catalogue *Zhongguo Bali: Caoqi liu fa Zhongguo huajia huazhan* (China and Paris: Seven Chinese Painters Who Studied in France, 1918–1960) (Taipei: Taipei Fine Arts Museum, 1988). The caption in that catalogue dates the letter to 1934; Ding says it was sent in 1938. The letter itself contains no date, but Judy Andrews informs me that circumstances mentioned in the letter support the 1938 dating. There are other problematic aspects of the letter, which are currently being investigated by both Hironobu Kohara and Judy Andrews. I am grateful to them for informing me of their findings and suspicions—both believe that the letter itself may be a forgery by Zhang Daqian—but I cannot deal with these problems at length here. The recipient of the letter now seems most likely to be not Sun Duoci, but Zhang Shanzi (1882–1940), Zhang Daqian's older brother. This letter and another, also in the Taipei exhibition, were reportedly acquired from Xu Beihong's former wife, Jiang Biwei, by the Taipei dealer Henry Ch'iu of Kuo Hua T'ang, who still owns them. The question of how the letter could have passed from Zhang Shanzi to Jiang Biwei is only one of the many problems it presents.

72. See Xu Boyang and Jin Shan, eds., *Xu Beihong nianpu* (Chronology of Xu Beihong) (Taipei: Yishujia chubanshe, 1991), pp. 207–208.

73. See Xu Boyang and Jin Shan, eds., *Xu Beihong yishu wenji* (Xu Beihong's Writings on Art) (Taipei: Yishujia chubanshe, 1987), vol. 2, pp. 353–55. For an illustration of the painting, see *Xu Beihong canghua xuanji* (Selections from Xu Beihong's Painting Collection) (Tianjin: Renmin shuhua chubanshe, 1991), no. 2.

74. Ding Xiyuan, "Du '*Xi'an tu*,'" p. 103, bottom.

75. Xu's colophon to the painting is dated July 1937; both Zhang Daqian and Xie Zhiliu, in their colophons written in 1948, state that they saw the work in Nanjing "twelve years ago." Kohara's research has produced additional evidence for this discrepancy, including *nianpu* for both Xu Beihong and Zhang Daqian that record Xu's purchase of the scroll in the spring of 1937. He believes that this discrepancy is part of an attempt to associate Xu's purported acquisition of *Riverbank* with that of *Eighty-seven Immortals*. I will leave it for Kohara to present this argument, in his own version of the "recent history."

76. In Xu Beihong's letter as recorded in Ding Xiyuan, "Du '*Xi'an tu*,'" p. 102.

77. See n. 84 below.

78. Joan Stanley-Baker's interviews with C.C. Wang, on the subject of brushwork in Chinese painting, were widely circulated in typescript. I am grateful to Carl Nagin for reminding me of the passage quoted here, and for other help in preparing this paper.

79. Ding Xiyuan, "Du '*Xi'an tu*,'" p. 103, bottom, also mentions the story that *Riverbank* was purchased from the German woman, but comments that it is "not firm" and notes the chronological disparity.

80. See n. 71 above.

81. See Hearn and Fong, *Along the Riverbank*, p. 46; fig. 40.

82. Ding Xiyuan, "Du '*Xi'an tu*,'" pp. 101–102.

83. *Xu Beihong canghua xuanji*, pl. 83. I should add that there seems to be no reason to doubt Liao Jingwen's belief in the story, as her husband must have told it to her, and he inscribed it on the Jin Nong painting. She need not, that is, have been party to the deception, having met Xu only in 1942 and married him in 1946.

84. Xu's inscription is quoted in Ding Xiyuan, "Du '*Xi'an tu*,'" p. 103; it can also be read in the reproduction of the Jin Nong painting in *Xu Beihong canghua xuanji*.

85. *Xu Beihong canghua xuanji*, pls. 49, 52, 61.

86. In 1981 Liao Jingwen kindly showed me a selection of her late husband's collection, then stored at the Palace Museum (the Xu Beihong Memorial Hall was not yet built). The Jin Nong was among them. I felt no suspicion of it then, writing of it in my notes as a "subtle, very original and beautiful painting."

87. Ding Xiyuan, "Du '*Xi'an tu*,'" p. 103, bottom.

88. Zhang lists the three "Dong Yuan" paintings in his collection in the inscription on his *Mountain Temple and Drifting Clouds in the Manner of Dong Yuan* of 1947 (see fig. 9 in the present essay); the inscription on his 1949 *Immortals' Dwellings at Huayang* (see fig. 5) names two Dong Yuan works. Zhang finally includes *Riverbank* in a list of ten "genuine Dong Yuans" in an inscription written in 1967; see Fu Shen, "Shang Kunlun xun heyuan: Daqian yu Dong Yuan," pp. 18–19. As Fu Shen notes there and elsewhere, Zhang was highly inconsistent in his listings of surviving works by Dong Yuan that he had seen. In inscriptions on his paintings from the 1940s, he claims to be copying a number of Dong Yuan works that are otherwise unknown, either as extant paintings or recorded in written records. Presumably he was laying the ground for producing the "originals" of these compositions, and generally obfuscating the problems of Dong's extant œuvre to make space for his fabrications. Fu Shen's article assembles these references while studiously ignoring their implications for Zhang as a forger, even though Fu had in his earlier writings recognized this aspect of Zhang's productivity.

89. Hearn and Fong, *Along the Riverbank*, pp. 48, 51.

90. As it happened, I was in Kyoto in 1954–55 as a Fulbright student, met Zhang (with whom I could converse in Japanese), and was able to see some of the paintings he had brought for photographing by the publisher Benridō. We also looked at paintings in other collections together, sometimes through the introduction of Shūjirō Shimada. On one notable occasion, at the Fujii Yūrinkan, we were joined by Osvald Sirén, and Zhang recorded the gathering, with all our names, in a colophon to a "Huizong" handscroll, which, I now believe, he was in the process of purchasing from the Fujii Yūrinkan (see n. 14 above).

91. Worth noting in this connection are two often-repeated myths, which Zhang

himself appears to have spread: that he never put his own collector's seals on his forgeries, and that he did not reproduce any of his forgeries in his *Dafengtang* catalogue; see Fu Shen, *Challenging the Past*, p. 41. Each of these assertions can be easily disproved, I believe, by a number of examples.

92. See, for example, Hearn and Fong, *Along the Riverbank*, pp. 47–48.

93. As related in his colophon to the work; see *Dafengtang yiseng mingji tezhan tulu*, p. 12. Fu Shen translates and discusses Zhang's colophon in *Challenging the Past*, pp. 186–88; Zhang's 1950 copy of the work is illustrated as pl. 41.

94. For an illustration of *The Xiao and Xiang Rivers*, see n. 18 above. *Summer Mountains* and *Awaiting the Ferry* are reproduced in Barnhart, *Marriage of the Lord of the River*, figs. 3, 4.

95. Xie Zhiliu, in *Jianyu zagao* (Shanghai: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1979), pp. 80–81, "The Ink Painting School of Dong Yuan of Southern Tang and *The Riverbank*." This book is said by Zheng Zhong to be Xie's "final word on connoisseurship"; see Zheng Zhong, *Xie Zhiliu xinian lu*, p. 155. See also Xie Zhiliu, in *Zhongguo minghua jianshang cidian* (Dictionary of the Connoisseurship of Chinese Painting) (Shanghai, 1993), as cited by Ding Xiyuan tu, "Du *'Xi'an tu,'*" p. 106, bottom. Ding notes, in contrast to this opinion, that the title used with the "signature" on *Riverbank* and the painting's mature style argue against its being an early work of the artist.

96. Zheng Zhong, *Xie Zhiliu xinian lu* (Shanghai: Xinhua shudian, 1991), p. 255, reporting a conversation he had with Xie on December 31, 1989. For the painting, see National Palace Museum, *Gugong minghua sanbaizhong* (Three Hundred Masterpieces of Chinese Painting in the Palace Museum) (Taichung: National Palace Museum, 1959), pl. 42.

初曰最傾心已託大千西求祖鞈
兄為我設法不以西簡之便盤
兄為我先求之初之通信要
為新加坡總領事館轉
能得老谷此卷初即無所求矣
平生為好所累可云極笑一笑
心緒雖少但尚見雄昔作畫一
兩月來寧得不少

初 [illegible]又及

祖鞈兄及
秋君女士相兄請為致意

Hironobu
Kohara

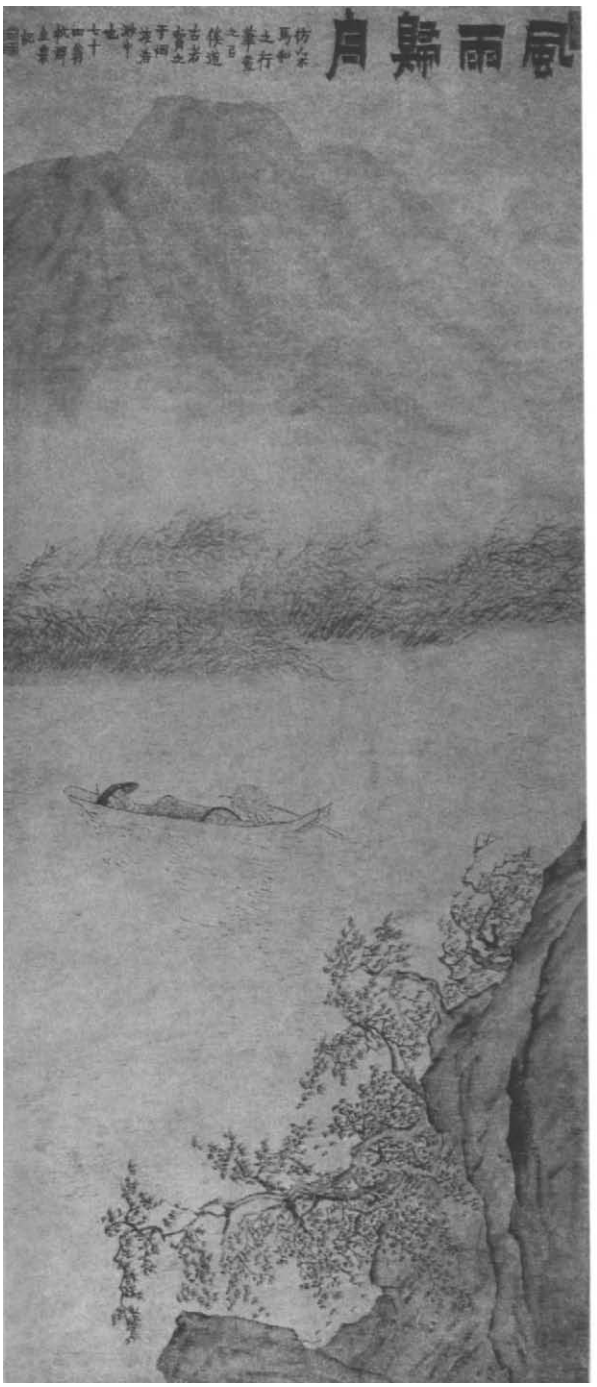
Notes on the Recent History of *Riverbank*

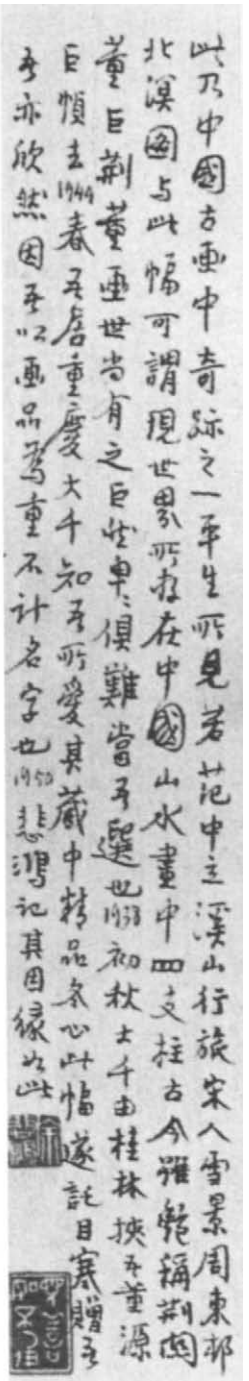
Note One: *Riverbank*'s absence from a 1944 exhibition of paintings from the collection of Zhang Daqian. In March 1944 an exhibition entitled *Old Paintings and Calligraphic Works from the Zhang Daqian Collection* was held at the Sichuan Artists' Association in Chengdu, Sichuan Province.[1] One hundred seventy works dating from the Tang (618–907), Song (960–1279), Yuan (1272–1368), Ming (1368–1644), and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties were displayed in two rotations. A list of the works in the first rotation included such paintings as *Emperor Minhuang Listening to Music*, by an unidentified artist in the Song Academy style, now in the National Palace Museum, Taipei;[2] *Landscape*, by Juran (active ca. 960–95); *A Pair of Gibbons*, by Yi Yuanji (died ca. 1064); Li Jie's (ca. 1124–after 1191) *Fisherman's Lodge at Mount Xisai*, formerly attributed to Wang Shen (ca. 1036–after 1104), now in The Metropolitan Museum of Art;[3] and *Returning by Boat in a Rainstorm* (fig. 1), attributed to Jin Nong (1687–1763), now in the Xu Beihong Memorial Museum.

The complete list of works exhibited, however, does not include *Riverbank*, a striking painting and reputedly "perhaps the preeminent Dong Yuan under heaven,"[4] which was allegedly acquired by the modern painter and collector-dealer Zhang Daqian (1899–1983) from Xu Beihong (1895–1953) in the summer of 1938. Since, as we are now given to believe, it was the oldest and most important work in Zhang's collection, *Riverbank* should have been prominently featured in the exhibition list, and it would be ludicrous to impute its absence simply to careless recording. In other words, the absence of the painting from the list and the exhibition implies that *Riverbank* did not yet exist in March 1944.

Opposite Detail, fig. 5: Letter purportedly written by Xu Beihong (1895–1953) to Zhang Shanzi (1882–1940), 1938 or 1939. Private collection, Japan

Kohara
The
Recent
History
of
Riverbank





Note Two: The "exchange" of *Riverbank* for the Jin Nong painting. In April 1944, one month after the opening of the Sichuan exhibition, Zhang Daqian, so it is alleged, entrusted his half-brother, Zhang Muhan, with delivering Jin Nong's painting *Returning by Boat in a Rainstorm* to Xu Beihong, who was then in Chongqing. Six years had passed since Zhang Daqian had supposedly received *Riverbank* from Xu Beihong—and this delivery of *Returning by Boat*, an exchange for that painting, came suspiciously late. Also suspicious is the fact that Zhang Muhan's visit and the exchange of the painting are not recorded in *The Life of Xu Beihong: A Memoir* (*Xu Beihong yisheng: Wode huiyi*), written by Liao Jingwen, the second wife of Xu Beihong.[5] Liao Jingwen and Xu officially announced their engagement on February 12, 1944, and after the divorce from his former wife, Jiang Biwei, was finalized, they were married on January 14, 1946. At the time of Zhang Muhan's supposed visit in April 1944, the couple were already living together; thus Liao Jingwen's biography can be safely considered a reliable source of information about Xu Beihong's life during this period.

However, *The Life of Xu Beihong* does not recount the exchange of *Riverbank* for Jin Nong's painting. Although, toward the end of the biography, Liao Jingwen records Xu's inscription on the Jin Nong painting (fig. 2), she does not provide any specific information about the exchange.[6] *The Life of Xu Beihong* is a book filled with detailed expressions of human emotions and includes many scenes that make the reader smile at Liao Jingwen's passion. She becomes especially eloquent on the subject of Xu's personality and lifestyle after December 1942, when she first met him while interviewing for the position of librarian at the Chinese Academy of Art in Chongqing. Thus, it is most unusual, and unreasonable, that she would neglect to report or comment on such a momentous event as the delivery to her husband by Zhang Muhan of the Jin Nong painting in April 1944. Moreover, the most comprehensive documentation of Xu's life yet published, the *Xu Beihong nianpu* (Chronology of Xu Beihong), edited by Xu Boyang and Jin Shan, also does not record this event.[7]

All things considered, it is possible to suspect that there was no such visit by Zhang Muhan to Xu Beihong.

Note Three: The 1948 colophons on *Eighty-seven Immortals*. In May 1937 Xu Beihong discovered and purchased a handscroll entitled *Eighty-seven Immortals* (fig. 3) at the residence of a German woman in Hong Kong.[8] He was both thrilled and fascinated by this painting, and it became the centerpiece of his collection during the latter half of his life. He never once parted with this painting; even during overseas trips, he would carry it with him and guard it carefully, placing it in vaults of local banks for safekeeping. Xu's

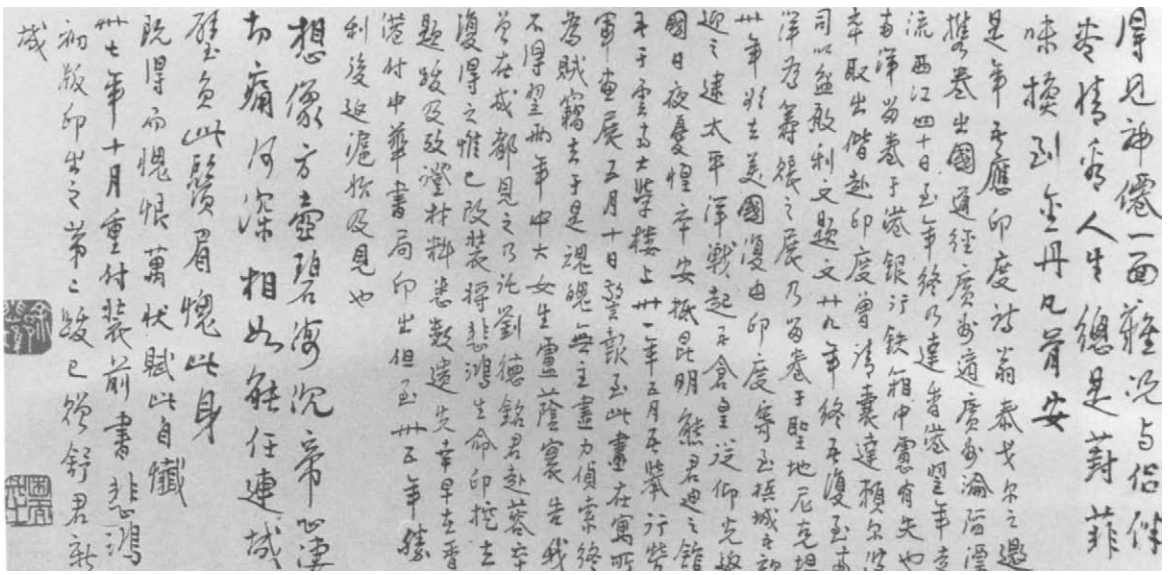
Figure 1 Attributed to Jin Nong (1687–1763), *Returning by Boat in a Rainstorm*, dated 1760. Hanging scroll, ink on paper. Xu Beihong Memorial Museum, Beijing

Figure 2 Inscription by Xu Beihong (1895–1953), dated 1950, on *Returning by Boat in a Rainstorm*, dated 1760, attributed to Jin Nong (1687–1763). Hanging scroll, ink on paper. Xu Beihong Memorial Museum, Beijing

inscription on the scroll reveals his passionate devotion to it (fig. 4). On May 10, 1940, when Xu was living at Yunnan University, in Kunming, the painting was stolen during a nighttime air raid. When his desperate search for the painting, with the help of police, ended in failure, Xu became dispirited. Two years later, however, informed by one of his female students at Nanjing Central University that she had seen the painting in Chengdu, Xu was able to re-acquire the scroll, albeit at an enormous price. Xu's previous inscription and a seal reading "Beihong's Life" had been removed from the painting; however, Xu remounted the painting and added a new inscription detailing his loss and rediscovery of this treasured painting (see fig. 4).

Xu also requested Zhang Daqian and Xie Zhiliu (1910–1997) to add their colophons to the scroll. These colophons, written in October 1948, are reprinted in their entirety in Liao Jingwen's biography of Xu.[9] The contents of the two colophons are nearly identical; both Zhang and Xie recall the experience of viewing *Eighty-seven Immortals* together with Xu Beihong in Nanjing eleven years earlier, in March 1937, and they congratulate Xu for having re-acquired this unsurpassed treasure. Although both Zhang's and Xie's colophons refer to *The Night Entertainment of Han Xizai* (Fong, fig. 23), a handscroll attributed to Gu Hong-

Figure 3 Unidentified artist (Song dynasty, 960–1279), *Eighty-seven Immortals*. Detail. Xu Beihong Memorial Museum, Beijing

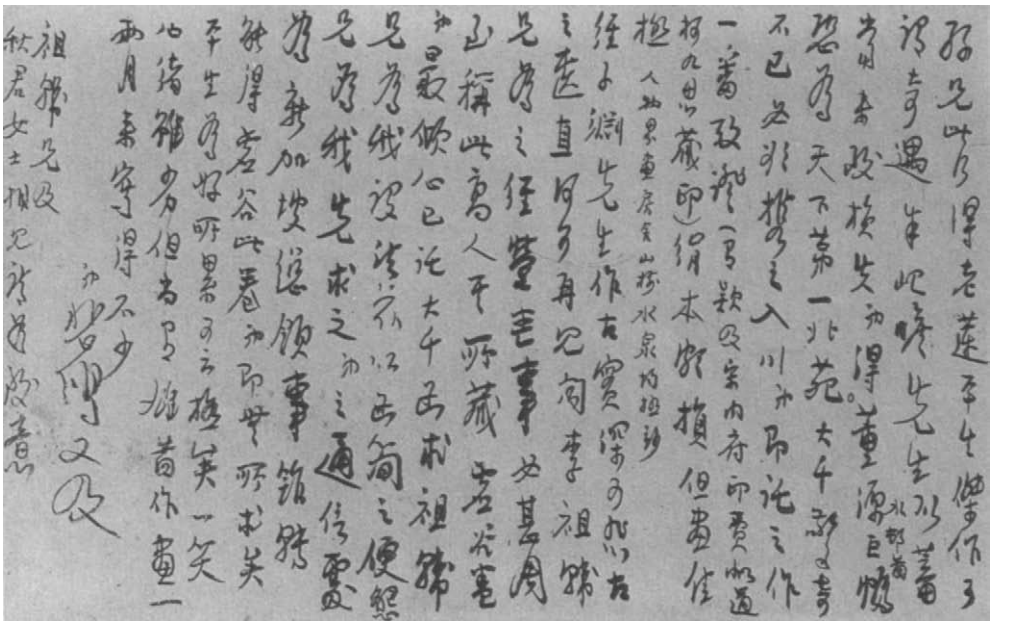


zhong (active ca. 943–75),[10] which Zhang had purchased in Beijing in 1945, and praise it as a rare masterpiece equaling *Eighty-seven Immortals*, mysteriously, neither mentions Zhang's 1938 acquisition of *Riverbank*. It is hard to believe that, in writing about early paintings they owned and admired, Zhang and Xie would fail to mention *Riverbank*, which was supposedly a Northern Song painting and which was ostensibly already in Zhang's collection. Following a traditional format of inscriptions for calligraphy and painting, Zhang and Xie are straightforward in their colophons and do not hesitate to cite other works. In this case, had they known of it, the work they would have most likely mentioned would have been *Riverbank*. There was no reason for Zhang to keep *Riverbank* a secret. The cause of this improbable omission is that neither Zhang Daqian or Xie Zhiliu could have written about *Riverbank*, as the painting did not exist at that time.

The argument that *Riverbank* did not exist as of October 1948 is undeniable. Its date of production should therefore be placed sometime between 1949 and 1957, when Xie Zhiliu first introduced the painting to the world in his book *Tang Wudai Song Yuan mingji* (Famous Paintings Surviving from the Tang, Five Dynasties, Song, and Yuan).[11]

Note Four: The letter purportedly written by Xu Beihong concerning *Riverbank*. Two written references by Xu are cited in support of the authenticity of *Riverbank*. One of these appears in an undated letter purpor-

Figure 4 Inscription by Xu Beihong (1895–1953), dated 1948, on *Eighty-seven Immortals*, unidentified artist (Song dynasty, 960–1279). Xu Beihong Memorial Museum, Beijing



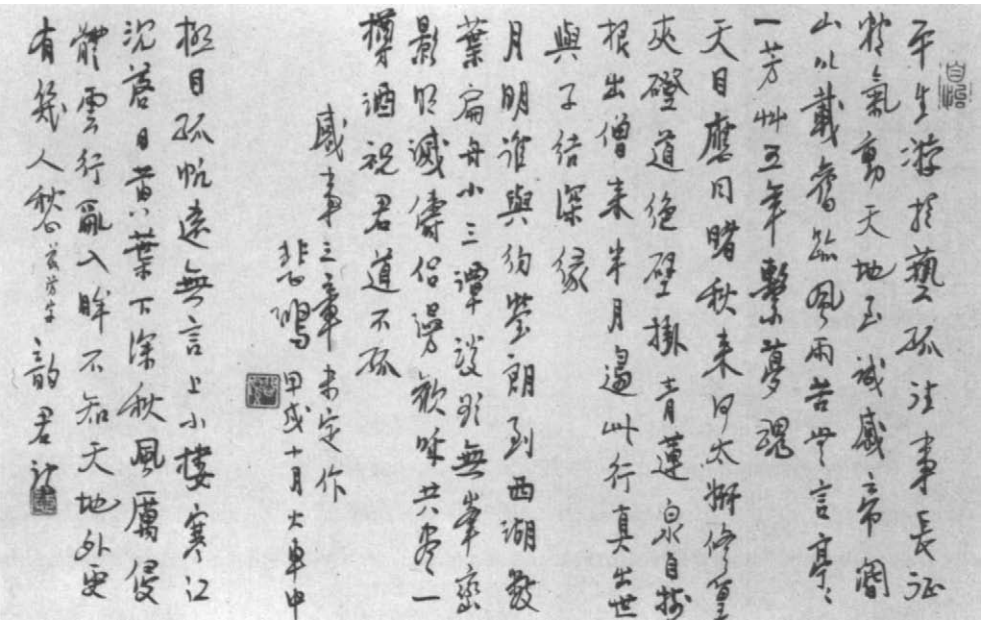
tedly written by Xu to Zhang's elder brother, Zhang Shanzi (1882–1940; fig. 5).[12] The other is in the aforementioned inscription by Xu on Jin Nong's *Returning by Boat* (fig. 2), in which he describes the exchange of a Dong Yuan painting for Jin Nong's *Returning by Boat*. The latter will be discussed below in detail.

The first six lines of the letter mention a painting by Dong Yuan. The painting is not called *Riverbank* but simply referred to as "Dong Yuan's large painting"; to the right of these words is an annotation written in small characters giving the title as *The Water Village*. It is strange that such an old, celebrated painting had no specific title. The first six lines of the letter read:

> *I obtained Dong Yuan's large painting depicting a village by the water. This is perhaps a peerless masterpiece of Dong Yuan. Zhang Daqian was astonished and pleased by it, and as he insisted that he take it back to Sichuan, I gave the painting to him so that he could research it.* (*It includes a signature by Dong Yuan, a seal of the Song palace, and collectors' seals of Jia Sidao and Ke Jiusi.*) *The silk is badly damaged, yet the painting is, in fact, superb. The figures, the meticulously depicted buildings, and the mountains, trees, and streams are all remarkable.*[13]

Compared with an example of Xu's writing from 1934 (fig. 6),[14] which shows his graceful and fine calligraphic style, the writing in this letter appears sluggish and loose. That it is not from the same hand is clear from the two characters "Beihong," which are noticeably inferior in execution to those in Xu's own writings (fig. 7).

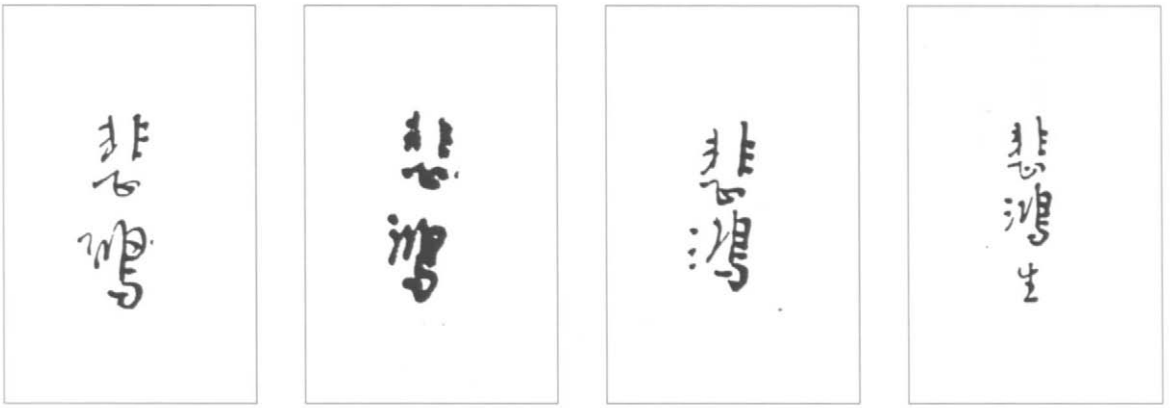
Figure 5 Letter purportedly written by Xu Beihong (1895–1953) to Zhang Shanzi (1882–1940), 1938 or 1939. Private collection, Japan



The letter is a poor and senseless forgery by Zhang Daqian and displays no attempt to imitate clearly the style of Xu Beihong's hand. While Zhang Daqian expended great energy and attention to detail in producing paintings, he had a tendency to make slovenly and careless mistakes out of his contempt for viewers and his disregard for their level of judgment. The problems with the letter do not end with the obvious differences in the style of handwriting. For instance, there is no record of any interaction between Xu Beihong and Zhang's brother, Zhang Shanzi—the purported writer and recipient of the letter—in any accounts about Xu. While one cannot conclude from this that Xu never wrote to Zhang Shanzi, the only existing support for a friendship between the two expressed in this letter comes from Zhang Daqian, which again points to Zhang's carelessness in forging the letter.

The letter also mentions with affection Li Zuhan and his sister Qiujun, two close friends of Zhang Daqian. When in Shanghai, Zhang always stayed with the Li family. He attended Qiujun's birthday celebration and purchased a tomb with her, pledging to be "buried together when death comes upon us." Zhang also promised to write a tomb inscription for her. So close was their friendship that when Qiujun died, in 1971, Zhang mourned deeply, considering it "the loss of the best friend of [his] whole life."[15] It is inconceivable that Xu Beihong, who did not know them, would have referred to Li Zuhan and his sister in such an intimate manner.

Figure 6 Xu Beihong (1895–1953), calligraphy, including poems by Xu Beihong and Sun Duoci, dated 1934. Qiu Zhongyi Collection



For all the reasons given above, there can be no doubt that the letter is an outright forgery made by Zhang. Consequently, the story about his receiving the Dong Yuan from Xu Beihong is fundamentally unsubstantiated. In short, all the episodes surrounding *Riverbank* are fictions, written and acted out by Zhang Daqian himself.

Note Five: Xu Beihong's inscription on the Jin Nong painting. In his inscription on Jin Nong's *Returning by Boat* (fig. 2), dated 1950, Xu Beihong discusses *Riverbank* in more detail than does the letter, and recounts the exchange of the painting for the Jin Nong scroll. This inscription, which is the only documentation of this exchange, is not without its own peculiarities. It reads in its entirety as follows (for purposes of discussion, the text has been divided into four parts):

(1) *This* [*i.e.*, Returning by Boat in a Rainstorm] *is one of the finest masterpieces of old Chinese painting. Together with Fan Kuan's* Travelers amid Streams and Mountains [*now in the National Palace Museum, Taipei*], Landscape in Snow *by an unidentified Song painter, and Zhou Chen's* North Sea [*in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art*], *this painting forms one of the four pillars of Chinese landscape paintings in existence.*[16]

(2) *Traditionally, the four painters Jing Hao, Guan Tong, Dong Yuan, and Juran have been highly praised. However, no painting by Guan Tong survives. Works by Jing Hao and Dong Yuan can still be found* [*but they do not appeal to me*]. *Paintings by Juran are vulgar. Thus, works by these three painters are not the ones I would select.*

(3) *In July 1938 Zhang Daqian took away with him from Guilin, where I was living, a large painting by Dong Yuan. In April 1944 when I was in Chongqing, Daqian, knowing my taste in painting,* [*selected*]

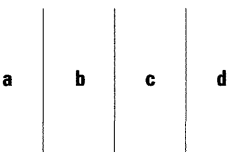
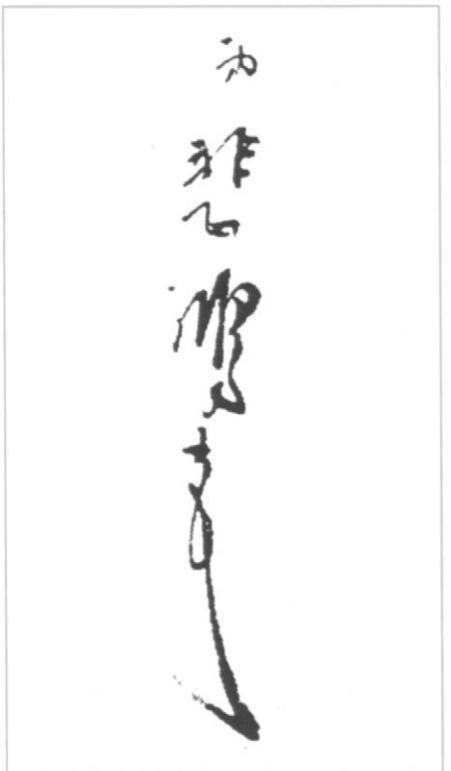
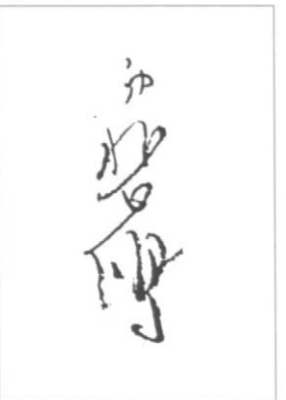


Figure 7 Examples of the signature *Beihong*
a. Detail, fig. 6: Xu Beihong (1895–1953), calligraphy, 1934
b. Detail of an inscription by Xu Beihong, 1934 (from *Gao Qifeng yizuo ji*)
c. Detail, fig. 4: Inscription by Xu Beihong, 1948, on *Eighty-seven Immortals*
d. Detail, fig. 4: Inscription by Xu Beihong, 1948, on *Eighty-seven Immortals*





a painting by Jin Dongxin [*Nong*] *from his fine collection of paintings, entrusted it to Zhang Muhan, and presented it to me. I was very much pleased by this* [*painting*].

(4) *The reason I accepted Daqian's request* [*for the exchange*] *is because I value paintings more than prestigious artists.*

1950, Xu [*Beihong*] *records this as the provenance of Jin Dongxin's painting.*

Note Six: The lack of specific detail concerning *Riverbank*. As is often the case among connoisseurs, Xu Beihong tended to indulge himself completely in his paintings and become blindly devoted to them. His art appreciation was the equivalent of a love affair. Once he lost his heart to a painting or a woman, he became obsessed with them, ignoring any criticism from others. His blind love for *Eighty-seven Immortals* attests to this tendency. In another case, concerning the Song painting *Breaking the Balustrade*, he enthusiastically cited the classics in his commentary on the work in an attempt to convey his excitement about the painting.[17] Considering his personality and habits, it would have been exceptionally unusual for him to hold back

e | **f**

Figure 7 Examples of the signature *Beihong* (continued)
e. Detail of a letter written by Xu Beihong to Wu Lianming, 1935
f. Detail, fig. 5: Letter purportedly written by Xu Beihong to Zhang Shanzi, 1938 or 1939

his opinion about *Riverbank*. Yet, in his inscription on *Returning by Boat* Xu Beihong relates only that Zhang Daqian took "Dong Yuan's large painting."

This lack of comment about *Riverbank* is not exceptional. Xu Beihong had never commented about *Riverbank* before that time either—because he had never seen the painting. A similar lack of commentary can be found in an English introduction Xu's wife, Liao Jingwen, wrote to *Selections from the Xu Beihong Painting Collection* (*Xu Beihong canghua xuanji*), published in 1991.[18] In this introduction, entitled "Collecting in the Past," she mentions only "the big size of that landscape" while failing to discuss its composition, subject matter, or style. *Selections from the Xu Beihong Painting Collection* records two hundred seventy paintings in two volumes. It can be surmised that Liao Jingwen had a reason for including the works by Dong Yuan and Jin Nong among the six selected for mention in her introduction. However, in regard to *Riverbank* she merely introduces a passage from Xu's inscription on *Returning by Boat* and avoids giving any concrete information about the subject. Regarding the Jin Nong painting, she simply repeats Xu Beihong in saying that it is "one of the finest masterpieces of Chinese landscape painting." Her manner of presentation concerning these two works stands in striking contrast to her comments on the other paintings she discusses.

From the actions and writings of both Xu and his wife, we can conclude that both had only heard about *Riverbank* but had never seen the actual painting. Liao Jingwen, like her husband, had never seen the painting in person but had only heard about "a large painting by Dong Yuan"; thus she could not write about it in detail. As for Xu Beihong, all that was required for Zhang Daqian to successfully execute his scheme was for Xu to write that *Riverbank* had formerly belonged to him and that he had given it to Zhang.

Note Seven: The inflated status of the Jin Nong painting. Let us continue our examination of the *Returning by Boat* inscription (fig. 2). Does Jin Nong's painting compare with Fan Kuan's and Zhou Chen's, and can it really be one of the four best Chinese landscape paintings extant? On the contrary, *Returning by Boat* is below the standard of Jin Nong's paintings; and, in fact, it is understandable that it appears to be a forgery. Since he knew better than anyone else that an exchange of *Returning by Boat* for a Dong Yuan painting would be seen as unbalanced and inexplicable, Xu Beihong felt compelled to explain, in part (4) of his inscription, that he cared deeply about the painting itself and would not evaluate a painting only by the name value of an artist.

Thus, Liao Jingwen, in recalling Xu Beihong's words, states in her introduction to *Selections from the Xu Beihong Painting Collection* that the Dong Yuan is a large painting and ten thousand times more valuable than the Jin Nong. However, the Jin Nong still carries Xu's judgment as "a miracle [among] all tradi-

tional Chinese landscapes," providing thereby the reason for the acceptance of "the offer of this ill-matched exchange." In her introduction, Liao writes:

> *So he gave Zhang the painting by Dong Yuan in exchange for the piece done by Jin Dongxin* [*Nong*]. *Because of the fact that paintings by Dong Yuan of the Northern Song dynasty were hard to find and also because of the big size of that landscape, it cost over ten thousand times more than the piece by Jin Dongxin in terms of money. But Beihong* [*Xu Beihong*] *thought that* [Returning by Boat] *by Jin was a miracle* [*among*] *all traditional Chinese landscapes.*

The claim that a painting by Jin Nong was equal in value to a tenth-century work by Dong Yuan could not have been Xu's honest opinion. The inscription on *Returning by Boat* was written at Zhang's behest and certainly with mixed feelings; as a result, the inscription's contents lack coherence.

In fact, parts (2) and (3) do not correspond with each other. Part (2) states that Dong Yuan had created renowned works, but that his work would not make it into Xu Beihong's list of the four best paintings. Part (2), then, does not relate logically to part (3), which narrates the story of Zhang taking the Dong Yuan in 1938. They are two separate assertions and circumstances, and are not sensibly connected.

In any case, however, part (3) is the kernel of Xu Beihong's inscription. The purpose of the inscription, that of authenticating *Riverbank*, is fulfilled by Xu's statement that the Dong Yuan belonged to him until 1938 when Zhang took it.

Note Eight: The date of Xu's inscription on the Jin Nong painting. *Returning by Boat* is currently in the collection of the Xu Beihong Memorial Museum in Beijing, and it is true that Zhang Daqian gave the painting to Xu. But whether he sent it to him in Chongqing in 1944, as is claimed in the inscription, is another matter. Might he not have received the painting in 1950 when the inscription was written? Could it not be related to the appearance of *Riverbank* in the world in 1950? Was the fictional story relating the dates 1938, 1944, and 1950 concocted in response to a request from Zhang Daqian?

There are similar incidents that support this last speculation. For example, when Pu Xinyu (Pu Ru; 1896–1963) was living in Taipei, he received a letter from Zhang Daqian, then residing in Brazil. In the letter Zhang asked Pu to inscribe, on an enclosed sheet of paper, eleven characters stating, "Dong Yuan's *Myriad Trees and Strange Peaks*, an unsurpassed divine work," with a signature and a seal. Evidently, as Pu Xinyu admitted, he had been asked to write a title for a painting he had never seen.[19]

It is highly probable that the inscription on Jin Nong's painting was similarly written by Xu Beihong in response to a request from Zhang Daqian. If so, the discrepancies discussed above can be easily solved.

Note Nine: The authority of Xu Beihong. Xu Beihong is respected both inside and outside China as a patriotic painter who led a virtuous life. At first glance, it may seem inconceivable that he would take part in a conspiracy involving *Riverbank*. But there is one circumstance that might have motivated him to conspire with Zhang Daqian in committing such a transgression.

In February 1944 Xu was in the midst of legal proceedings related to his pending divorce from his first wife, Jiang Biwei. The terms of the divorce included a payment of one million yuan and one hundred of Xu's own paintings as a separation settlement. The requirement regarding his own paintings posed no problem, but Xu was having a hard time getting together the money. Around this time, Zhang had a number of opportunities to meet Xu Beihong through various artists' associations in Sichuan, and he would have known about the difficulty Xu was facing.

On December 31, 1945, Xu's divorce from Jiang Biwei was finalized. Did Zhang help finance Xu's settlement to his ex-wife, and was it in exchange for this help that Xu agreed in 1950 to write the inscription at Zhang's request? If so, Liao Jingwen would have certainly known about it. Could this have generated some of the contradictions and absurdities related to the provenance of *Riverbank* before the painting appeared in the world?

Zhang Daqian is known to have perpetrated elaborate ruses when selling his forgeries: he was a master at manipulating collectors, making them believe that the works he offered were ones that they must have.[20] He also marketed his own forgeries by taking advantage of the post-war social dislocations.[21] In the case of *Riverbank*, the provenance indicating Xu Beihong—"a world-famous painter"—as its previous owner added a greater authenticity to the work. Even a young but learned acquaintance of mine once said, "it cannot be a fake, because it belonged to Xu Beihong."

Note Ten: The whereabouts of *Riverbank* before 1938. The fatal flaw in arguments for the authenticity of *Riverbank* is that no one can explain when, where, and from whom Xu Beihong obtained the painting. Its whereabouts prior to 1938, when it purportedly entered Zhang's collection, remain completely unknown. In her introduction to *Selections from the Xu Beihong Painting Collection*, Liao Jingwen states only that "[Xu Beihong] once bought [*Riverbank*] in Guilin." This statement is unreliable because there is no record of such a purchase in Liao's biography of Xu Beihong. According to *Selections from the Xu Beihong Painting Collection*, Xu did purchase two paintings in Guilin: a landscape handscroll by Tang Yin (1470–1523) and an anonymous Ming portrait of an imperial concubine, both of which bear Xu's inscriptions, dated 1930 and 1951, respectively. Only *Riverbank* lacks documentation regarding its acquisition.

* * *

In May 1997 *Riverbank* was displayed in an exhibition at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. It was "an unprecedented success," according to Ding Xiyuan. Ding continues, "[C]ontemplating the traces left by the sixty years of this painting's stormy history, I cannot help being overcome by deep emotion."[22] However, these very traces left by the storms that *Riverbank* underwent for six decades are in fact the marks of many people plotting to keep secret the real circumstances of the birth of *Riverbank*. The account written by Liao Jingwen is perhaps her desperate effort to keep secret the scheme that had made her marriage possible.

Translated by Miwako Tezuka

1. See Li Yangqiao, *Zhang Daqian nianpu* (Chronology of Zhang Daqian) (Sichuan: Sichuan shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 1987), p. 187.

2. Reproduced in *Dafengtang yiseng mingji tezhan tulu* (Special Exhibition of Famous Paintings Presented by Zhang Daqian), exh. cat. (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1983), pl. 43.

3. For a discussion of this work, see Wen C. Fong, *Beyond Representation: Chinese Painting and Calligraphy 8th–14th Century* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992), pp. 248–56 and pl. 43.

4. This description of the painting appears in a letter reputedly written by Xu Beihong in 1938 or 1939 (see fig. 5). For a discussion of the letter, see James Cahill, "The Case Against *Riverbank*," in the present volume, pp. 49–53.

5. Liao Jingwen, *Xu Beihong yisheng: Wode huiyi* (The Life of Xu Beihong: A Memoir) (Beijing: Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe, 1982).

6. See ibid., p. 391. For translations of Xu's inscription on the painting, see below and Cahill, "The Case Against *Riverbank*," pp. 53–54.

7. Xu Boyang and Jin Shan, eds., *Xu Beihong nianpu* (Chronology of Xu Beihong) (Taipei: Yishujia chubanshe, 1991).

8. This painting is reproduced in *Xu Beihong canghua xuanji* (Selections from the Xu Beihong Painting Collection) (Tianjin: Renmin shuhua chubanshe, 1991), no. 2. A second volume was published in 1992.

9. Liao Jingwen, *Xu Beihong yisheng*, pp. 274–75.

10. This painting is reproduced in Maxwell K. Hearn and Wen C. Fong, *Along the Riverbank: Chinese Paintings from the C.C. Wang Family Collection* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999), p. 70, fig. 59.

11. Xie Zhiliu, ed., *Tang Wudai Song Yuan mingji* (Famous Paintings Surviving from the Tang, Five Dynasties, Song, and Yuan) (Shanghai: Gudian wenxue chubanshe, 1957), pl. 2. In this publication, Xie introduces the painting with the title *Riverbank*. In Zhao Mengfu's (1254–1322) collected works *Songxuezhai ji*, there is a poem titled "For Dong Yuan's *Riverbank*," but judging from the wording of the poem, the painting referred to is a different work from the present *Riverbank*; see *Songxuezhai ji, juan* 2, pp. 12a, b, in *Lidai huajia shiwenji*, 1970, vol. 2. In addition,

Li Tiaoyuan's *Zhujia cang huapu* (preface 1778), ch. 6, records a Dong Yuan *Riverbank* owned by Zhuang Liaotang. However, since the painting is described there as having "a title written by the Song emperor Gaozong," it is most likely not the same work as the present *Riverbank*.

12. See *Zhongguo Bali: Caoqi liu fa Zhongguo huajia huazhan* (China and Paris: Seven Chinese Painters Who Studied in France, 1918–1960) (Taipei: Taipei Fine Arts Museum, 1988).

13. Ibid.

14. This piece of calligraphy includes three poems composed by Xu Beihong and one by his student and lover, Sun Duoci, who was, in Xu's words, a painter of genius; see Jiang Biwei, *Wo yu Xu Beihong* (Xu Beihong and Me) (Taipei: Taipei zongheng chubanshe, 1979). Sun, who was from Anhui Province, first met Xu Beihong in August 1929 when she was eighteen years old. In the following year, she officially became his student. Sun was literally the love of Xu's life, but their relationship ended after three years because her father did not approve of it. The poems were sent to Xu in Hong Kong by Sun from Zhejiang after their separation. Xu had memorized them and is said to have recited them to Liao Jingwen; see *Xu Beihong yisheng: Wode huiyi*, pp. 234–36). It is reproduced in Xu Boyang and Jin Shan, eds., *Xu Beihong nianpu* and Jiang Biwei, *Wo yu Xu Beihong*.

15. Zhang's close friendship with Li Zuhan and Li Qiujun is recorded in Xu Boyang and Jin Shan, *Xu Beihong nianpu*; see, for example, July 1938, April 17, 1948, September 1948 (when Zhang attended Qiujun's fiftieth-birthday celebration and purchased a tomb with her), and July 1949. Their friendship continued until Qiujun's death in August 1971.

16. Xu Beihong had long thought highly of Zhou Chen's *North Sea*, but had also commented that it was the "only good painting" by Zhou; see *Beijing daxue rikan* (May 10, 1918).

17. See Liao Jingwen, *Xu Beihong yisheng*, pp. 390–91. For an illustration of this painting, see *Xu Beihong canghua xuanji*, vol. 1, pl. 6. The painting depicts an anecdote about Zhu Yun, a loyal official during the reign of the Han emperor Chengdi (r. 33–7 B C). Another Song painting with the same title and composition is reproduced in *Gugong shuhua tulu* (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1989), p. 81. Xu Beihong observes that his painting "is identical to the National Palace Museum painting in composition and style," but it is a copy of that painting.

18. See n. 8 above.

19. See Zhu Shengzhai, *Huaren huashi* (On Painters and Paintings), p. 27, "*Du nan Zhang bei Pu*" (Concerning Zhang in the South and Pu in the North) (Hong Kong: Zhongguo shuhua chubanshe, 1962).

20. See Hironobu Kohara, "Gisaku no kisetsu: 1950 nendai no Cho Taisen" (The Season of Making Forgeries: Zhang Daqian in the 1950s), *Nara Daigaku bunkazai gakuhō* (Nara University Cultural Properties Report), no. 13 (1995).

21. See Hironobu Kohara, "Da huan ying: Daqian and Dong Yuan" (The Great Phantom: Daqian and Dong Yuan), *Guoli Taiwan Daxue meishushi yanjiu jikan*, no. 2 (1995).

22. Ding Xiyuan, "Du '*Xi'an tu*'" (Concerning *Riverbank*), *Gugong wenwu yuekan*, no. 179 (February 1998), pp. 101–107.

Sherman
Lee

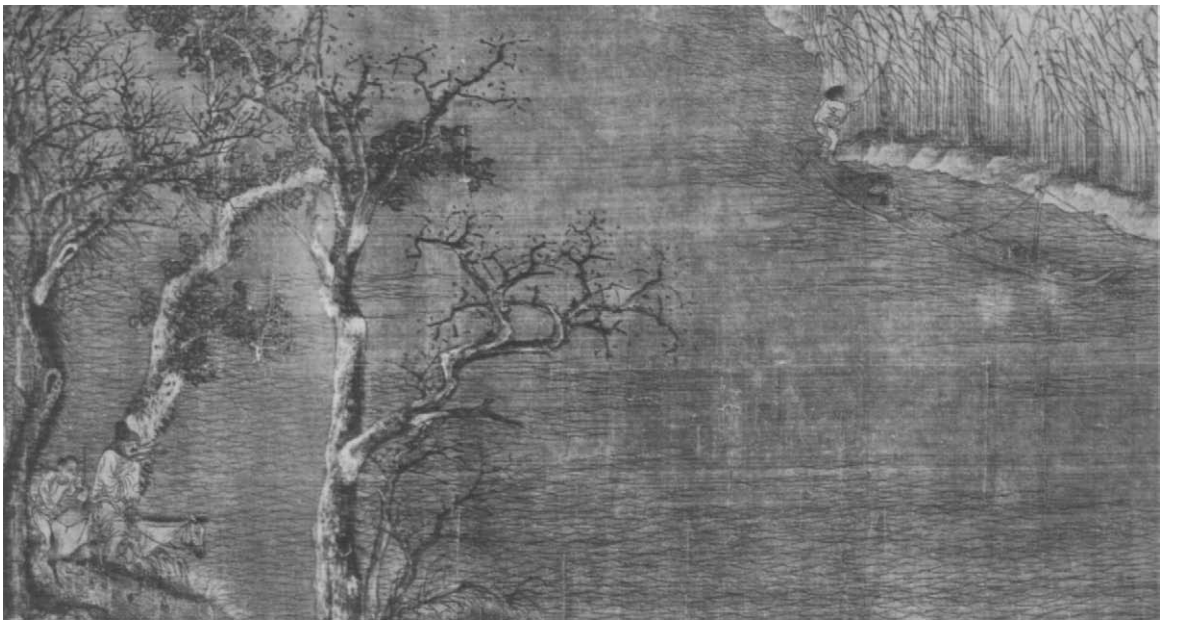
Riverbank: A Recent Effort in a Long Tradition

The first thing we should consider is the Chinese definition of "landscape." The word for a Chinese landscape is *shanshui*, or mountain-water picture. The water content is paramount, and it is a lively thing, curving patterns observed both at close range and at a distance; when patterned, it is a pattern that convinces, that shows the mastery of the brush, as seen in Zhao Gan's (active ca. 960–75) *First Snow along the River* (fig. 1), a painting fortunately preserved from the Southern Tang dynasty (937–75) that is universally recognized as a work most likely by Zhao and with a continuous history from before the reign of the Northern Song emperor Huizong (r. 1101–25). The water in this painting has a varied fishnet pattern, occasionally flattening out to little or no pattern where it is temporarily disturbed or calmed, or recedes into the distance to be lost from view. The pattern of the water is not uniform; when disturbed by a rock, the water breaks and flows differently, then runs swiftly along. It is a living thing.

Compare this water with the washboard effect of the water in *Riverbank* (see facing page and Cahill, fig. 1), which is tiresome to look at and must certainly have been tiring to paint. Where it is near a group of rocks, it is passably executed, but it continues to the lower left of the painting with scant attention paid it. Nowhere does it dance and flatten in response to variations in the surface tension. It is not the *shui* observed in early works; only a modern could fail to see the varying tension when observing water in nature.

In *Riverbank* we are confronted with a *terra incognito* rather than a *terra firma*. The closer we look at the details, the vaguer and more insubstantial the forms and shapes become. Whether a receding plane of

Opposite Attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), *Riverbank*. Detail. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 87 × 42 ⅞ in. (221 × 109 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Ex. Coll.: C.C. Wang Family. Promised Gift of the Oscar L. Tang Family



earth or a vertical rock sheet, we are confronted with nothing. We do not perceive lines and boundaries, but an obscure, rough shape implying something vague; we strain to read the structure of the cliff, a rock, a mist-shrouded point, but are confronted with nothing. Surely there is nothing comparable to this treatment of substance in any of the handful of works surviving from the Tang, Five Dynasties, or early Northern Song periods.

Wonders succeed wonders. A distant river becomes a path. A thatch roof appears, its structure sadly misunderstood. Scraggly old deciduous trees appear at random, their old holes dimpling their surfaces in a simulation of random selection. But some of the trees bear leaves, others are leafless with old twigs that jut forth, bare to our puzzled gaze. And the population of the area seems, when legs are visible, to be struck with a rare disease of thick ink—charitably due to retouching but perhaps not, since they seem to be of one family.

These are discrepancies of style and representation. Similar discrepancies of appearance in the matter of the seals and the signature on the painting as well as the history of the painting are a piece of the whole, which matches the style and the methods of representation in the work. The result is a morass of starts, false starts, and half starts that point inexorably to a modern pastiche all too familiar to many of us and unworthy of serious consideration by our serious colleagues.

Figure 1 Zhao Gan (active ca. 960–75), *First Snow along the River*. Detail. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 10 ¼ × 149 ¼ in. (25.9 × 376.5 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

Qi
Gong

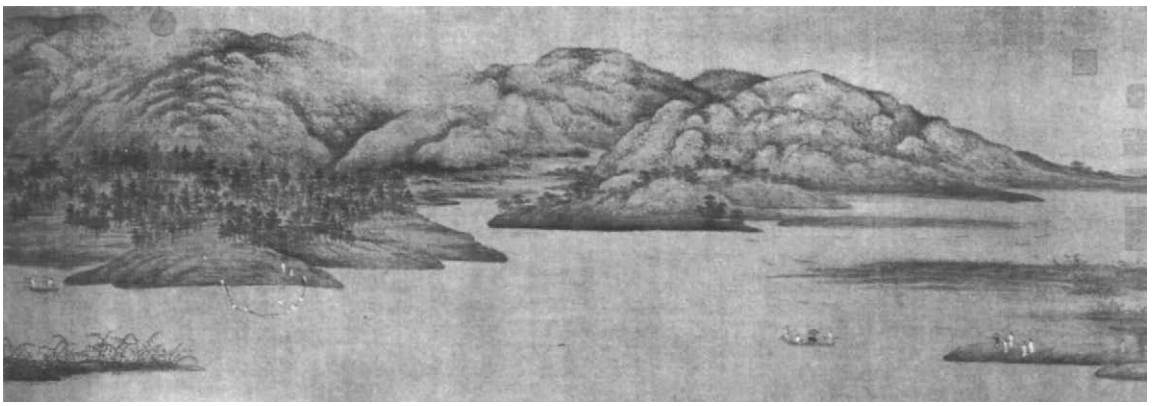
On Paintings Attributed to Dong Yuan

Dong Qichang (1555–1636), the Ming-dynasty painter, calligrapher and connoisseur, held high office and enjoyed great fame. Although he frequently viewed and examined ancient paintings and calligraphies and wrote colophons on them, he paid little attention to serious authentication. Because of his special literary talent and accomplished calligraphic skill, however, few people have questioned the authenticity of paintings and calligraphies bearing his colophons. After Dong Qichang's death, a eunuch in the court of the Qing dynasty who had seen Dong inscribing colophons on paintings described the style of his calligraphy to the Kangxi emperor (r. 1662–1722), prompting the emperor to imitate Dong's style in his own calligraphy. Dong Qichang's brush technique went on to exert great influence on the calligraphy of the imperial court. Thereafter, no one dared to dispute Dong Qichang's connoisseurship. Although the collection of Dong's essays entitled *Rongtai ji* was later listed as a forbidden book, the portion on painting and calligraphy remained very popular.

Dong Qichang shared the same surname with the celebrated Southern Tang painter Dong Yuan (also known as Dong Beiyuan; active ca. 930s–60s[1]), which served as Dong Qichang's initial claim to fame. During the Qing period, the opinions expressed in Dong Qichang's colophons on Song paintings carried great weight among scholars and connoisseurs, who accepted these opinions as definitive conclusions. Of the paintings that were attributed to Dong Yuan by Dong Qichang's colophons, I have seen and studied either the original or photographs of the following works:

Opposite Wang Yuan (active ca. 1310–50), *Along the Riverbank at Dusk*. Detail. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 70 ½ × 45 ⅞ in. (179 × 116.5 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

Figure 1 Attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), *Residents of the Capital City*. Detail. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 63 × 61 ⅜ in. (160 × 156 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei



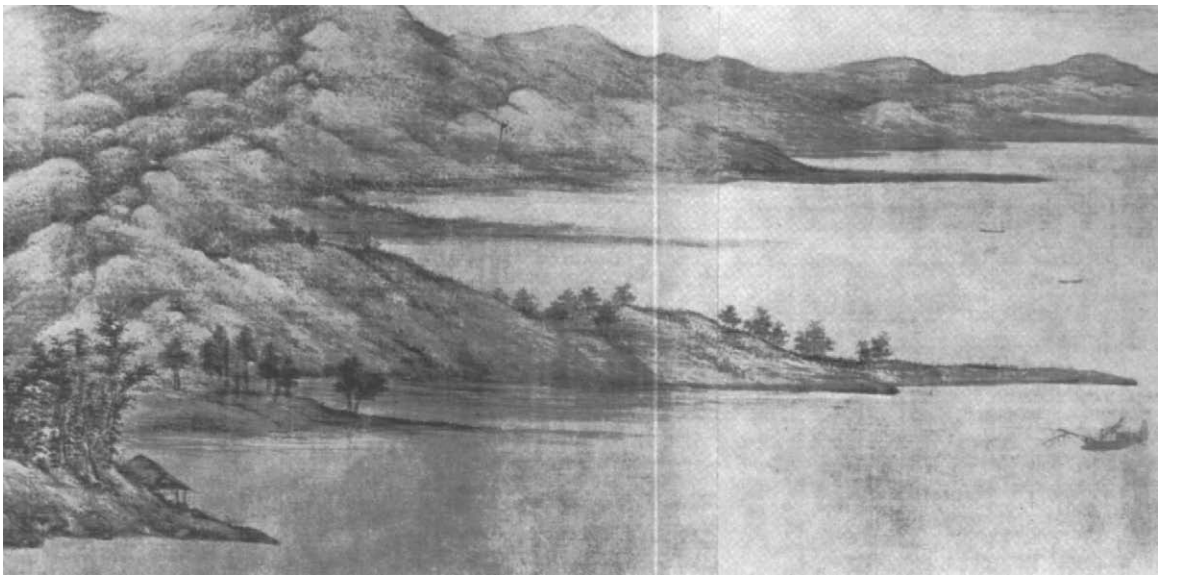
* *Residents of the Capital City* (*Longsu jiaomin tu*; fig. 1), in the National Palace Museum, Taipei (the original of which I saw in Beijing over fifty years ago).
* *The Xiao and Xiang Rivers* (fig. 2), in the Palace Museum, Beijing (the original of which I have seen).
* *Awaiting the Ferry at the Foot of Summer Mountains* (fig. 3), a long handscroll with a colophon by the Yuan connoisseur Ke Jiusi (1290–1343), in the Liaoning Museum (the original of which I have seen).
* *Travelers amid Streams and Mountains* (fig. 4), known as the "half-scroll" version, in the Ogawa Collection, Kyoto. Because the photographs I have seen are unclear, I do not know whether this painting bears any colophons by Dong Qichang.
* *Wintry Groves and Layered Banks* (Shih, fig. 7), in the Kurokawa Institute of Ancient Cultures, Japan (photographs of which I have seen).

These five paintings attributed to Dong Yuan are all early paintings dating to at least the Song period. In addition, there are two other paintings attributed to Dong Yuan:

* *Pavilions on the Mountain of the Immortals* (*Dongtian shantang*), in the National Palace Museum, Taipei. The late-Ming calligrapher and connoisseur Wang Duo (1592–1652) considered this to be a work by Dong Yuan. The calligraphy of the title inscription, "*Dongtian shantang*," appears to be from the Jin period (1115–1234).
* *A Clear Day in the Valley*, in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, which bears an inscription by Zheng Xiaoxu (1860–1938). Fu Xinian has argued that the architecture in the painting is typical of the Jin period.

Of these well-known extant works by or attributed to Dong Yuan, *The Xiao and Xiang Rivers* and *Residents of the Capital City* received the highest praise from Dong Qichang. In an inscription written on the mounting silk of the painting, Dong Qichang proclaimed *Wintry Groves and Layered Banks* "Dong Yuan

Figure 2 Attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), *The Xiao and Xiang Rivers*. Detail. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 19 ¾ × 55 ⅝ in. (50 × 141.4 cm). Palace Museum, Beijing



in the Wei Family Collection, First under Heaven," but he never mentioned this painting in his critical essays.

Among the works listed above, only *The Xiao and Xiang Rivers* and *Awaiting the Ferry* are similar in style; in fact, it has been proposed that the *Xiao and Xiang* scroll originally constituted part of the composition of *Awaiting the Ferry*.[2] All the other paintings display completely different styles. Moreover, none of the works listed here are signed by Dong Yuan. In his writings on paintings, Dong Qichang described Dong Yuan as a mysterious "dragon among painters," which suggests that he recognized that the artist painted in many different styles.

The meaning of the painting title *Longsu jiaomin*, literally "the surburban residents of the dragon's abode," is unclear. Song writers referred to the citizens of the Song capital Bianjing as *longsu jiaomin* (the proud residents of the dragon's sleeves), implying that their prosperity and happiness derived from the imperial ruler (the dragon), and thus they were "the privileged and proud residents of the emperor's sleeves." (The scene in this painting should therefore be that of a capital city.) This interpretation of the painting's title can support the claim that the painting is a work from the Southern Tang period, but the style is quite different from that of *The Xiao and Xiang Rivers* and *Awaiting the Ferry*.

The brush technique used in *Wintry Groves and Layered Banks* is unlike that of all the other paintings attributed to Dong Yuan, but it is similar to that of *First Snow along the River* (Shih, fig. 8), a handscroll by

Figure 3 Attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), *Awaiting the Ferry at the Foot of Summer Mountains*. Detail. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 19 ⅝ × 125 ⅞ in. (49.8 × 319.7 cm). Liaoning Provincial Museum

Figure 4 Attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), *Travelers amid Streams and Mountains.* Ogawa Collection, Kyoto.

Zhao Gan (active ca. 960–75), another painter of the Southern Tang. More than fifty years ago, Zhang Daqian (1899–1983) and I were among the guests at a gathering to view paintings at the home of Ma Heng, a former director of the Palace Museum, Beijing. At that meeting, Zhang pointed out to me that *Wintry Groves and Layered Banks* should be considered a work by Zhao Gan rather than Dong Yuan. I found his suggestion very persuasive, and evidence to support it can be readily discerned through a close examination of good reproductions of Zhao's *First Snow along the River*. A survey of all the paintings attributed to Dong Yuan reveals a variety of styles. Dong Qichang's witty reference to Dong Yuan as a "dragon among painters" was therefore quite perceptive.

* * *

I have long heard of *Riverbank*, now in the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. When I visited the United States three years ago, the painting was still in a private collection, and not available for public viewing. When Wen Fong, Mrs. Fong, and Maxwell Hearn visited me in Beijing and showed me photographs of this painting, I was astonished by the inscription, which reads, "Painted by the Assistant Administrator of the Rear Park, Servitor Dong Yuan." "I must be fair," I said, "these characters could not have been written by anyone later than the Song period." Professor Fong also observed that "the calligraphic style of the inscription follows that of Yan Zhenqing [709–785]." If the signature is not a later addition and the painting is old, what more is there to say? Prior to my seeing the photographs, I had heard that there were speculations about the painting's authenticity, including rumors that the painting is a forgery by Zhang Daqian and that the signature is a later addition. The idea that *Riverbank* is a forgery made by Zhang Daqian is, of course, ludicrous, and is not worthy of further discussion.

The theory that the signature is a later addition, as was suggested to Huang Junshi (K.S. Wong, then at Christie's) by the famous Japanese conservator Meguro, who had once restored this painting, at first seemed plausible. It was not uncommon for brushstrokes and even entire characters to be added during the process of restoring old paintings, but the circumstances of such cases are different. Different conclusions can be drawn from the degree of ink penetration discernible when the backing paper is removed from the original silk fabric of a painting. The ink of an added signature cannot penetrate below the surface of old silk. Also, the ink itself can display various degrees of sheen, but the presence of such a sheen does not impute the authenticity of a work. I have on a number of occasions personally examined a version of the *Thousand Character Classic* by Zhi Yong (active late 6th–early 7th century), in the Ogawa Collection, Japan.

In his colophon on this calligraphic work, the Japanese connoisseur Naito Torajiro pronounces it to be a Tang tracing copy, with some characters copied directly from the original work. In my repeated examinations of this work, however, I have never found the slightest evidence of copying. In an original work, the ink impression left on the surface by a fully inked brush at the beginning of a brushstroke will display a reflective sheen. Thus, it is very possible that the *Thousand Character Classic* was indeed one of the eight hundred copies written by Zhi Yong and donated to several Buddhist temples in eastern Zhejiang Province.

The presence of such a surface sheen on the ink of a signature should therefore not cast doubt on its authenticity. It is regrettable that the overly cautious private collector who owned *Riverbank* did not show this rare treasure to more people, since well-informed comments and evaluations can only enhance the value of a good painting.

* * *

Most written sources and commentaries, including Dong Qichang's colophons on *Wintry Groves and Layered Banks*, render the second character of Dong Yuan's name as *yuan* (origin). It is only in Guo Ruoshu's *Tuhua jianwen zhi* (preface dated 1075) that we find his name rendered as the homophonous character *yuan* (source); that work also gives Dong's style-name as Shuda. It is true that the two *yuan* characters were used interchangeably, as can be illustrated by the entry for *yuan* (source) in the rhyme dictionary *Guangyun* of the Song period: "A man of the Tuoba tribe named He came to the [Tuoba] kingdom of [Northern] Wei, and the emperor Taiwu of Wei ordered him to take the surname Yuan (source)" because he came from the same "source." The imperial family of the Northern Wei also used the character *yuan* (origin) as their surname. It is possible that Dong Yuan used *yuan* (source) as an alternate name. However, since the character *yuan* used in the signature on *Riverbank*, the only extant work that bears Dong Yuan's signature, is unmistakably the character meaning "origin," it is difficult to know on what evidence Guo Ruoshu based his rendering of Dong's name as the character meaning "source." This lone example of the use of that character for Dong's name stands in striking contrast to the numerous sources that record his name as *yuan* (origin), in particular the *Xuanhe huapu*, the official catalogue of the imperial painting collection of the Song emperor Huizong, and the critical writings of the Yuan scholar-artist Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322). Even those who doubt the authenticity of the signature on *Riverbank* can hardly dismiss the Song catalogue and the writings of Zhao Mengfu as unreliable.

* * *

As is well known, Zhang Daqian was not only one of the most prominent painters of modern times, but also an insightful connoisseur. About fifty years ago, he acquired a large blue-and-green landscape painting (see frontispiece, p. 84)[3] from Guohua Tang, a studio owned by Xiao Chengyuan, in Liulichang, Beijing. This painting had been stored in a wooden barrel and taken out only occasionally for viewing. Although it had an inscription, written along the edge of the picture, reading "Ruoshui Wang Yuan [active ca. 1310–50]," Zhang decided that the work was actually by Dong Yuan, and so he purchased the painting. He had remembered a letter written by Zhao Mengfu to the Daoist Xue Xi (Huanqing), in which Zhao described a Dong Yuan painting he had seen that resembled the blue-and-green style of the Tang painter Li Sixun (651–716). Zhang was convinced that the painting he had found in Guohua Tang was the very same work. After acquiring the painting, Zhang [removed the Wang Yuan signature and] requested that Xie Zhiliu (1910– 1997) inscribe the text of Zhao's letter on the mounting above the painting. Zhang then added a title, "Dong Yuan, the Assistant Administrator of the Rear Park of the Southern Tang, 'Along the Riverbank at Dusk,'" the phrasing of which he fashioned after the signature on *Riverbank*.[4]

Translated by Eileen Hsü and David Kamen

1. The signature on *Riverbank* gives Dong Yuan's official title as "Assistant Administrator of the Rear Park." In the Southern Tang, the "Rear Park" was located to the north of the imperial palace; thus, Dong Yuan came to be called "Beiyuan," or Northern Park.

2. Richard M. Barnhart, *Marriage of the Lord of the River*, Artibus Asiae Supplementum 27 (Ascona, Switzerland: Artibus Asiae, 1970), pp. 15–20.

3. For a discussion of this painting, see Maxwell K. Hearn and Wen C. Fong, *Along the Riverbank: Chinese Paintings from the C.C. Wang Family Collection* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999), pp. 46–48.

4. In some publications in which this painting is reproduced, the character for Dong Yuan's given name is mistakenly recorded as *yuan* (source) instead of *yuan* (origin).

Maxwell
K.
Hearn

A Comparative Physical Analysis of *Riverbank* and Two Zhang Daqian Forgeries

In addressing the issue of the authenticity of *Riverbank* (fig. 1), scholars have examined the style and pictorial content as well as the documentary evidence of the painting, but, to date, there has not been an opportunity to place it alongside acknowledged forgeries by Zhang Daqian (1899–1983) and compare its silk, ink, seals, and condition, including conservation and mounting, with such works.[1] Specific compositional devices or pictorial motifs are usually inconclusive as evidence of a painting's date as such elements are susceptible to copying. But the presence of techniques that a modern forger typically uses to create the illusion of antiquity—artificial discoloration of the silk, deliberately induced creases, tears, worn areas, and repairs, and purportedly old collectors' seals — can provide concrete evidence of a painting's age. If the physical condition of *Riverbank* were similar to that of an acknowledged Zhang forgery of an ancient work, then the case for it being a modern fabrication would be significantly strengthened. Conversely, if the physical condition of *Riverbank* were markedly different from that of Zhang's forgeries, and consistent with other works of acknowledged antiquity, then the possibility of the painting being a modern fabrication would seem unlikely.[2]

Such a comparison was made possible in the summer of 1999, when *Dense Forests and Layered Peaks* (fig. 2), a work once attributed to Juran (active ca. 960–95) but now acknowledged to be a forgery by Zhang Daqian, was loaned to the Metropolitan Museum by the British Museum for the specific purpose of being subjected to a detailed examination by members of the Asian Art Department curatorial and conservation

Opposite Detail (see fig. 11). Zhang Daqian (1899–1983), formerly attributed to Juran (active ca. 960–95). *Dense Forests and Layered Peaks*, ca. 1951. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 72 ¾ × 29 in. (184.7 × 73.8 cm). British Museum, London

Figure 1 Attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–960s). *Riverbank*. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 87 × 42 ⅞ in. (221 × 109 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Ex Coll.: C.C. Wang Family. Promised Gift of the Oscar L. Tang Family

Figure 2 Zhang Daqian (1899–1983), formerly attributed to Juran (active ca. 960–95). *Dense Forests and Layered Peaks*, ca. 1951. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 72 ¾ × 29 in. (184.7 × 73.8 cm). British Museum, London

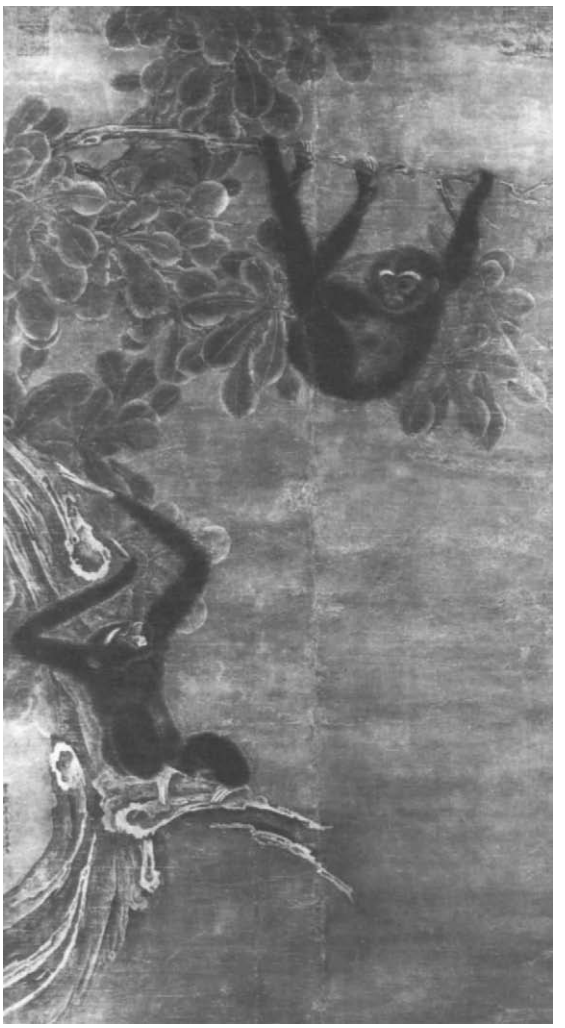


Figure 3 (left) Zhang Daqian (1899–1983), formerly attributed to Yi Yuanji (died ca. 1064). *Two Gibbons in a Loquat Tree.* Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 62 ⅝ × 33 ½ in. (159 × 85 cm). British Museum, London

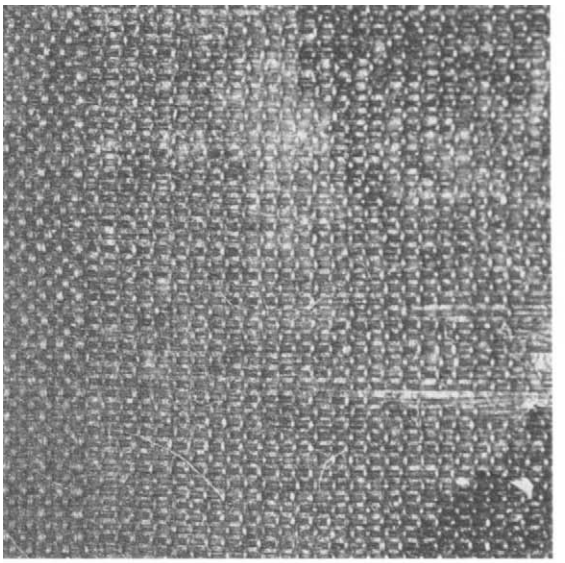
Figure 4 (right) Zhang Daqian (1899–1983), formerly attributed to Guan Tong (active ca. 907–23). *Drinking and Singing at the Foot of a Precipitous Mountain,* ca. 1951. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 86 × 36 ¼ in. (218.2 × 90.2 cm). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Keith McLeod Fund 57.194. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Reprinted with permission. ©1999 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. All Rights Reserved

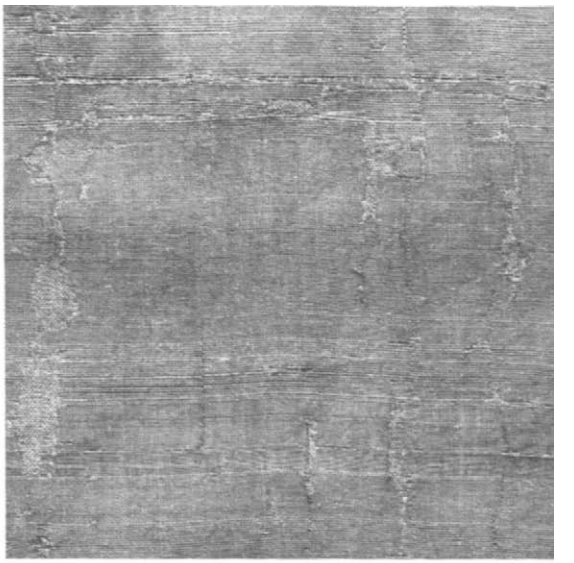
staffs.[3] Anne Farrer, Assistant Keeper in the Department of Oriental Antiquities at the British Museum, accompanied the painting to New York and participated in a one-week examination of this work alongside *Riverbank*. This examination made extensive use of digital photography to create enhanced computer images of the entire painting, including the inscription and early collectors' seals. A second Zhang Daqian forgery now in the British Museum, *Two Gibbons in a Loquat Tree* (fig. 3), formerly attributed to Yi Yuanji (died ca. 1064), was also examined. Many of its characteristics are similar to those of *Dense Forests and Layered Peaks*, but because its subject matter does not relate so closely to that of *Riverbank* and because of the space limitations of this publication, I will restrict my comparative illustrations to *Dense Forests*. Two other Zhang forgeries, *Drinking and Singing at the Foot of a Precipitous Mountain* (fig. 4), formerly attributed to Guan Tong (active ca. 907–23); and *The Three Worthies of Wu* (fig. 5), formerly ascribed to Li Gonglin (ca. 1041–1106), were unavailable for loan, but were examined in their home institutions.[4]

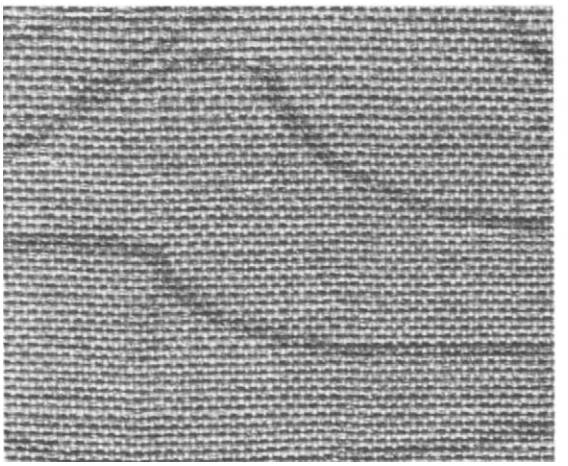
Silk Structure

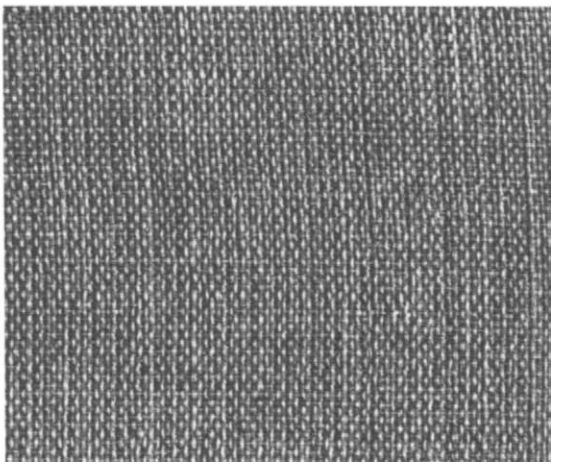
Dense Forests and *Two Gibbons* show a weave structure markedly different from that of *Riverbank*. The weave structure of *Dense Forests* (fig. 6) and *Two Gibbons* consists of narrow, widely spaced warp threads woven together with broad weft threads — a weave structure typical of silk used for paintings of post-Song date, from the late thirteenth century onward. The silk used for *Riverbank* shows a very dense structure of weft and warp threads of nearly equal diameter (fig. 7). This plain-weave structure matches that found in the silk of other early paintings, for example *Summer Mountains* (fig. 8), a painting datable to the mid-eleventh century.

Figure 5 Zhang Daqian (1899–1983), formerly attributed to Li Gonglin (ca. 1041–1106). *The Three Worthies of Wu*, early 1950s. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 17 ½ × 58 ¾ in. (44.3 × 149 cm). Courtesy of Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.





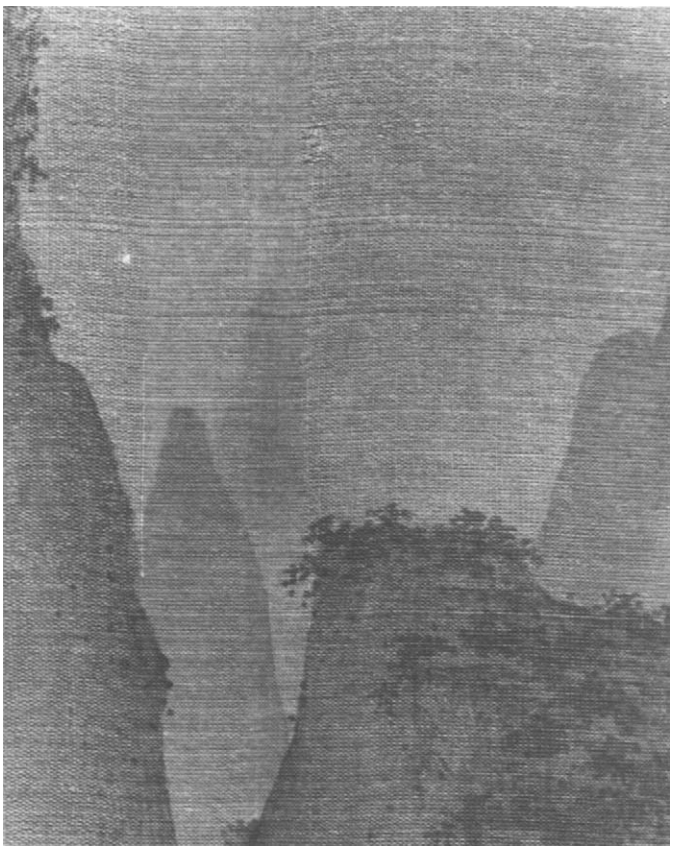




Another difference between the forgeries and *Riverbank* is the consistency of the weft threads. While *Dense Forests* and *Two Gibbons* show weft threads of nearly uniform thickness across the entire painting surface, the weft threads in *Riverbank* vary markedly in width and tonality as successive spools of thread were used to weave the silk (fig. 9). This results in a pronounced pattern of coarse and fine bands across the painting surface, a common feature in early paintings such as *Summer Mountains* (fig. 10) but not in silks of recent manufacture.

6	9
7	8

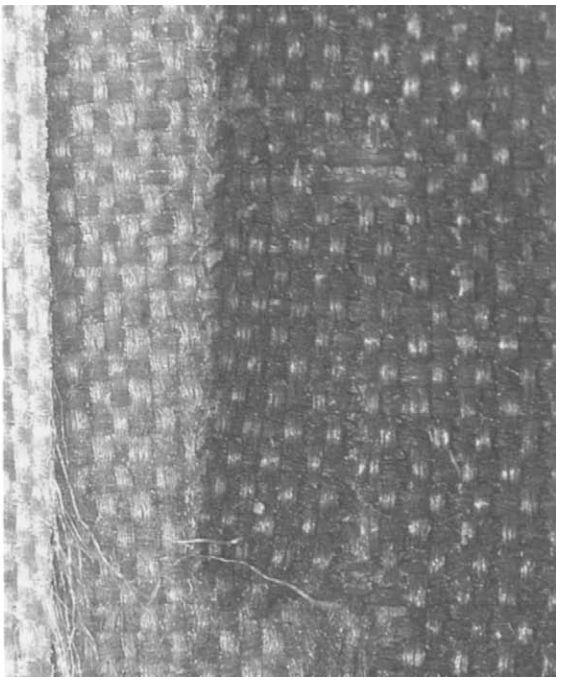
Figure 6 *Dense Forests.* Detail, weave structure
Figure 7 *Riverbank.* Detail, weave structure
Figure 8 Attributed to Qu Ding (active ca. 1023–56; formerly attributed to Yan Wengui, active ca. 970–1030). *Summer Mountains.* Detail, weave structure. Handscroll, ink and light color on silk, 17 ⅞ × 45 ⅜ in. (45.3 × 115.2 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Ex Coll.: C.C. Wang Family. Gift of The Dillon Fund, 1973
Figure 9 *Riverbank.* Detail, wefts of varied width and tonality from successive spools



Loom Width

Dense Forests is formed of a single width of silk, measuring 73.7 centimeters (29 inches), as shown by weft bands that continue across the full width of the painting (fig. 11). Traces of the selvage have also been found along both edges (fig. 12). The selvage, which marks the original edge of the fabric when it was woven, consists of a narrow band where the warp threads are denser and the weft threads may be seen to loop back into the body of the fabric. The survival of the original edges of the silk fabric is extremely rare in early paintings. In most cases, the selvage was probably trimmed away before the painting was executed as the denser weave of the selvage might cause the ink to be absorbed differently. Further trimming of the silk edges during the course of successive remountings would insure that any remaining selvage would be removed. Given the purported age of *Dense Forests*, it would be reasonable to assume that it would have been

Figure 10 *Summer Mountains.* Detail, wefts of varied width and tonality from successive spools

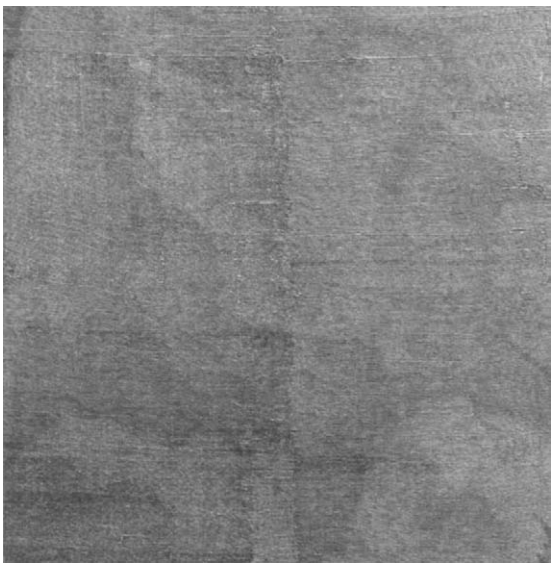


remounted several times in the course of its existence; one would thus expect the selvage on both sides to have long since been trimmed away. The 73.7-centimeter width of silk used for *Dense Forests* and the survival of the selvage along both edges indicate that it was made from one large piece of silk that was then cut into two halves to look as if it were made from two separate pieces, a clear indication of its modern manipulation. The same pattern of manipulation is observable in *Two Gibbons*.

Riverbank is formed of two separate pieces of silk—the left panel measuring 51.4 centimeters (20¼ inches) in width, the right, 58.4 centimeters (23 inches)—joined together along a central seam. These dimensions reflect the standard loom width of about 60 centimeters (approximately 23 to 24 inches) commonly found in Tang and early Song paintings.[5] Each of the the two pieces of silk exhibits its own distinctive surface pattern caused by weft threads of changing thickness (fig. 13), so that there is no chance that the two pieces were once part of a single wide bolt of silk that was cut in half. Both panels have been trimmed along their outside edges (there is no sign of selvage on either piece of silk), particularly the left panel where the signature and early seals lie very close to the edge; the narrower left panel may reflect the original need to make the painting fit a specific architectural framework, specifically, a multipanel screen in which the outside panels would be somewhat narrower.[6]

Figure 11 *Dense Forests*. Detail, continuation of the same weft threads on both sides of central cut

Figure 12 *Dense Forests*. Detail, traces of the selvage on left edge, including the weft threads looping back into the body of the fabric

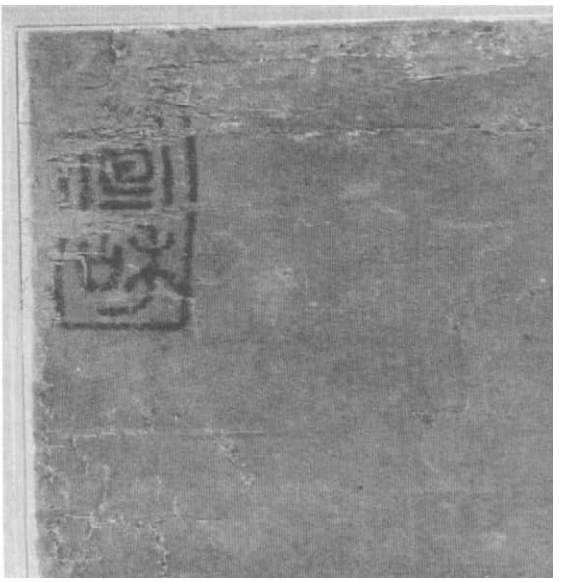


Surface Coloration and Damage

The mat tone and greenish-brown hue of the silk of *Two Gibbons* appears to have been achieved through a surface application of ink and color washes. This is confirmed by the presence of numerous whitish horizontal creases, where the underlying light color of the silk shows through. Since these creases do not show any surrounding abrasion or breakage of the warp threads, which are usually the first threads to be damaged, the creases were probably made by the systematic folding of the fabric prior to its final mounting rather than through wear. Under magnification it is clear that both warp and weft threads are still round rather than flattened or abraided as they would be if they were of great age.

In contrast to *Two Gibbons*, the superficial appearance of *Dense Forests* suggests that it has suffered far more damage and wear; there are numerous patches, holes with in-filled painting, areas with missing warp threads, and weft threads that have been distressed, frayed, and mashed. But all these apparent signs of age have been artificially induced. The silk has clearly been dyed, as evidenced by splotchy areas where the color has not been uniformly absorbed (fig. 14). The cracks are sharp, with the silk on either side intact and showing little sign of wear or stress. Most revealing is the regular pattern of cracks on both sides of the central seam, a pattern that contradicts the possibility of their being caused by the normal wear that may occur to hanging scrolls or screens. The left-hand piece of silk shows numerous horizontal creases extending the full

Figure 13 *Riverbank.* Detail, central seam showing discontinuity of weft threads on either side of join



width of the piece of silk at the bottom of the scroll, but becoming shorter and spaced further apart as one follows them up to the top of the scroll. The interval between cracks increases from 8.3 to 10 centimeters in a regular progression. This would occur if the silk were rolled most tightly at the bottom and more loosely and at greater diameter toward the top, the usual circumstance if the cracks were created when the scroll was rolled up. However, the opposite pattern appears on the right-hand piece of silk. Although the lowermost portion of the silk is too damaged to interpret clearly, where the spacing of cracks becomes distinguishable, about 40 centimeters (15¾ inches) from the bottom, it decreases in width from bottom to top from 15.1 centimeters (6 inches) to 12.2 centimeters (4¾ inches), suggesting that the cracks occurred when the silk was rolled from the top down. Such contradictory patterns are impossible on a single hanging scroll. The only explanation is that the cracks were induced on each piece of silk separately before they were joined and mounted together. The presence of diagonal and curved creases in several areas also shows that the creases were induced artificially prior to mounting.

The silk of *Riverbank* is dark in hue, but shows no indication of having been dyed or artificially colored. Instead, its deep olive tone resembles that of numerous other early paintings that have darkened naturally with age. The skein of cracks that extends across the surface of *Riverbank* shows none of the regular patterning found on *Dense Forests* or *Two Gibbons*; instead, cracks appear to have formed as a natural consequence of wear and stress. In contrast to the crisp horizontal cracks of *Dense Forests*, for example, the

Figure 14 *Dense Forests.* Detail, *Xuanhedian bao* seal showing splotchy areas where the color used to create an antique patina has not been absorbed. Also visible are small patches using other pieces of silk.

Figure 15 *Dense Forests.* Detail, upper left corner showing the silk backing with color added to blend in with the painting silk

numerous horizontal cracks on *Riverbank* are often accompanied by tiny branching vertical cracks where tears have developed from brittleness.

Finally, *Riverbank* is painted in a largely monochrome palette that is consistent with most early landscape paintings; color is limited to tan and red tints on some of the architectural elements, furniture, and items of clothing. *Dense Forests*, on the other hand, makes extensive use of colored washes to enliven landscape details and draw attention away from the artificially tinted silk background. These colors are far more assertive than the pale hues visible today on genuinely early works.

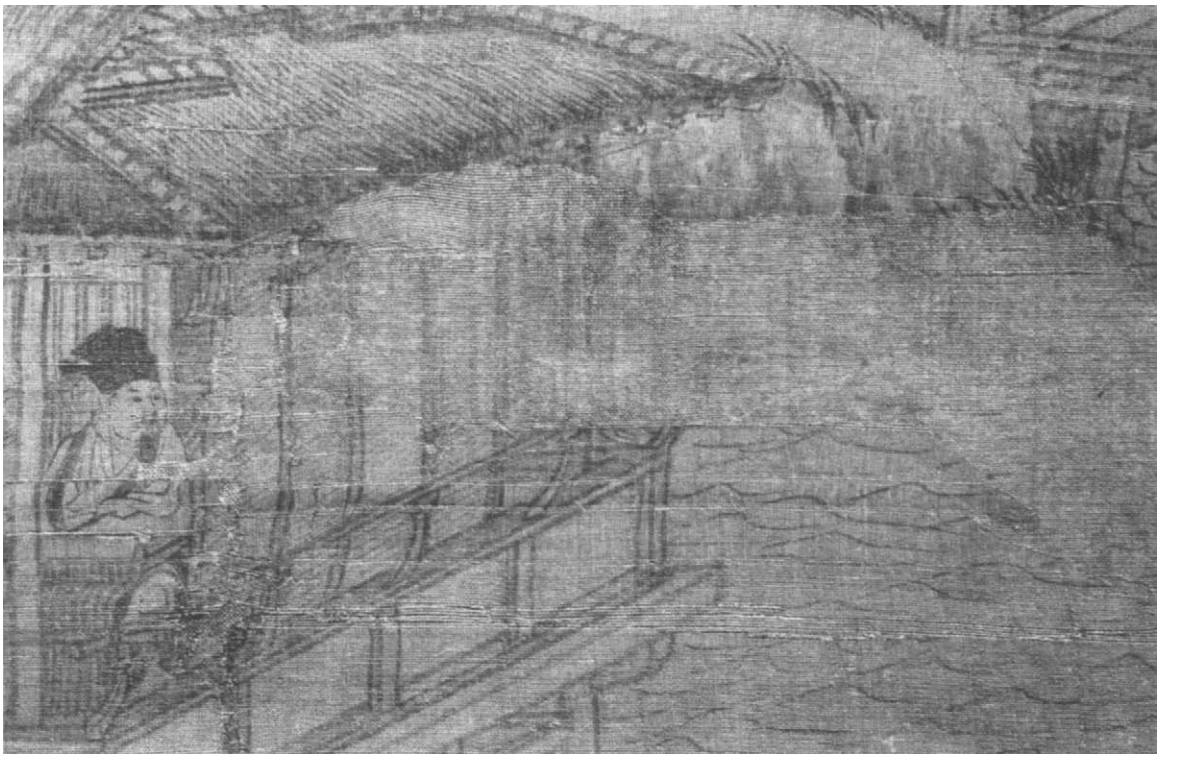
Restoration and Remounting

Both *Dense Forests* and *Two Gibbons* have silk backings. This mounting technique offers a labor-saving method of restoring damaged silk: rather than cutting and applying pieces of silk to fit into areas where the original silk is missing, the silk backing is allowed to show through and serves to make the surface appear homogeneous, even though close examination reveals that it lies behind the original silk (fig. 15). The condition of the silk backing used for *Two Gibbons* and *Dense Forests* indicates that the silk is of recent manufacture; neither the backing silk nor the areas of in-filled color show signs of fading, wear, or color loss associated with old repairs.

In both of these scrolls, touch-up painting has been added directly onto the silk backing to enable these touched-up areas to blend with the surface color of the painting (fig. 15). But this work has been so crudely done that the effect is to emphasize the presence of repairs rather than disguise them. The ink and colors are harsh compared with those of the painting, and the touch-up ink or color often extends onto the painting surface. In a few areas where the size of the repair warranted, patches using a silk of a different weave structure have been added, but this is the exception, not the rule (see fig. 14). The absence of fading, wear, or color loss in all of the repaired areas confirms that these areas are recent restorations.

During the remounting process cracks are commonly reinforced with paper strips added to the back of the painting after the first backing has been applied. Because *Dense Forests* and *Two Gibbons* both have a silk backing, this restoration technique has not been used.

While there is no indication that *Two Gibbons* has undergone any remountings, *Dense Forests* has been provided with two elements that might be construed as evidence of a prior remounting: traces of a gray paper backing that still appear around some damaged areas, especially at the bottom of the scroll, and remnants of a tan paper edging that are visible along the bottom border of the painting silk (see fig. 23). Since



the gray paper is only visible where damage to the painting made its removal difficult and since the damage can be shown to have been artificially induced, it seems likely that the painting silk was backed with this gray paper prior to being creased, and that traces of this backing were left where it was too time-consuming to remove easily. The tan paper edging appears only in one small area, the lower right corner, with no evidence that it was ever applied to other areas of the border. It appears to be an intentional piece of false evidence meant to suggest an earlier remounting.

In contrast to *Dense Forests* and *Two Gibbons*, *Riverbank* shows a far more labor-intensive and time-consuming process of restoration. Currently mounted with a paper backing, *Riverbank*'s hundreds of cracks and creases have all been reinforced with paper strips. Where the original fabric of the painting has been torn or is missing, pieces of silk have been cut and pasted into the holes in order to make a homogeneous surface of uniform thickness. Where these repairs have interrupted the original composition, the in-filled portions have been painted with lightly sketched suggestions of the missing information. In the riverside pavilion (fig. 16), for example, the patch covering part of the right corner of the pavilion has been painted

Figure 16 (above) *Riverbank*. Detail, silk patch and in-painting on riverside pavilion

Figure 17 (opposite) Unidentified artist (late 17th century), after Juran (active ca. 960–95). *Myriad Ravines with Wind in the Pines*. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 79 × 30 ⅜ in. (200.7 × 77.2 cm). Shanghai Museum

with lines that continue those of the original architecture and surrounding waves. There is no indication of retouching on the original silk.

Riverbank has undergone at least three remountings. The oldest in-filled silk shows the same weave structure as that of the original painting. Most likely, this silk was salvaged from the top of the painting when it was transferred from a screen to scroll format, probably in the Song dynasty.[7] A second campaign of restoration used silk with a distinctly different weave structure of narrow paired warp threads and thicker wefts. Both types of silk patch bear in-fill painting in light ink tones where missing elements have been lightly sketched in. A third silk used for restoration work dates to the time of the painting's last remounting. Characterized by a dense weave of thick wefts and warps, this silk is identical to that used around the outside edges of the painting. This final remounting, undertaken by the Japanese conservator Meguro in the late 1960s, conserved many of the earlier repairs and added new silk patches, particularly around the perimeter.

Fabrication Process

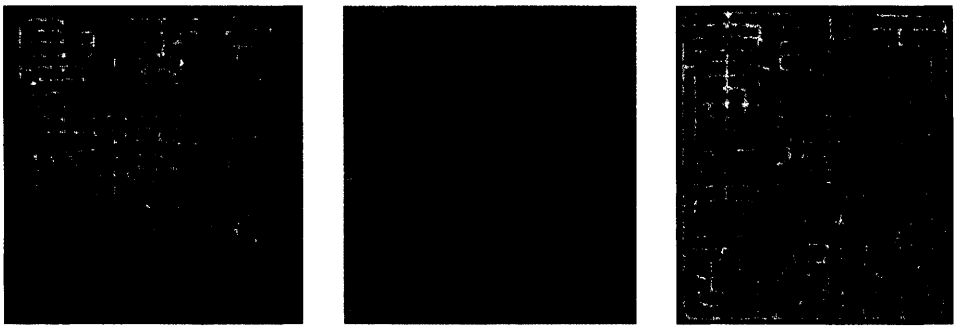
Based on the above analysis, one may reconstruct the process likely used by Zhang Daqian in the creation and antiquing of *Dense Forests*. Zhang, who studied fabric dyeing in Kyoto as a youth, would have started with a large piece of silk that he dyed and colored to impart an antique appearance. Next, the piece of silk was backed with thin gray paper. Zhang then created his painting, basing his composition on a photographic reproduction of a specific model: an attribution to Juran entitled *Myriad Ravines with Wind in the Pines* (fig. 17), now in the Shanghai Museum.[8] Once the painting was completed it was cut down the middle and the two pieces were rolled and folded separately to produce different patterns of horizontal cracks.

18	19	20
a b	a b	a b

Figure 18 Forged *Xuanhe* seal: a. *Dense Forests;* b. *Two Gibbons*

Figure 19 Forged *Zhenghe* double seal: a. *Dense Forests;* b. *Two Gibbons*

Figure 20 Forged *Shaoxing* double seal: a. *Dense Forests;* b. *Two Gibbons*



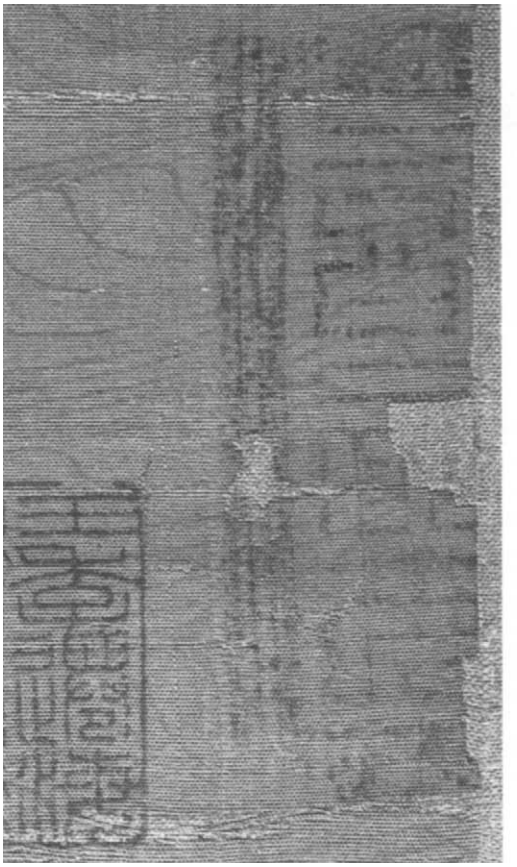
Most of the gray paper backing was then removed except where areas of damage, particularly along the bottom of the painting, made its removal difficult. There, one may still see bits of the gray underlying cracks in the painting silk. A tan paper border was also added to the bottom and lower right edges as if it were a remnant of an earlier mounting. Some holes were created either by tearing or cutting the silk. Next, the two halves of the painting were rejoined by mounting them onto a silk backing. Some patching was done, but, for the most part, in-fills of ink and pigment were added directly onto the silk backing. Another backing of paper was then applied. Lastly, framing sections of silk were attached to the painting and a final backing of white paper was added to the entire assembly. At some point before the painting entered the British Museum, the top and bottom mounting silks were cut down to shorten the height of the scroll.

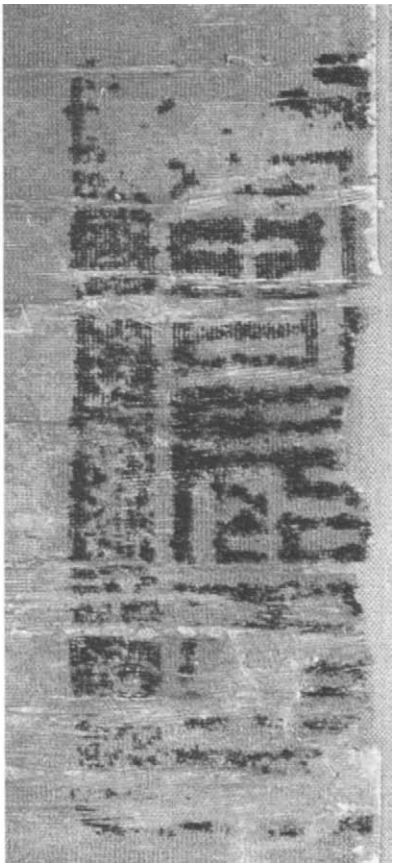
Seals

Both *Dense Forests* and *Two Gibbons* are provided with an impressive array of early collectors' seals that enhance the appearance of age. *Dense Forests* bears seals of the Song emperors Huizong (r. 1101–25) and Gaozong (r. 1127–62), the official inventory seal of the Ming imperial collection that was used about 1374–84, as well as several private collectors' seals, including one that purports to belong to the noted early-Qing connoisseur Wang Shimin (1592–1680). *Two Gibbons* has an even more distinguished array of seals, beginning with those of the purported artist, Yi Yuanji, and followed by those of emperors Huizong and Gaozong, the early Ming prince Zhu Gang (died 1398), Yixin (1833–1898), the sixth son of the Qing emperor Daoguang (r. 1821–50), and four seals belonging to later collectors. Three of the seals on these two paintings appear to be identical: the rectangular *Xuanhe* seal (fig. 18), the *Zhenghe* double seal (fig. 19), and the *Shaoxing* double seal (fig. 20). Many of these seals also appear on other Zhang forgeries.[9]

a | b | c

Figure 21 "Seal of the Tianshui Commandery Calligraphy and Painting Collection" (*Tianshuijun shoucang shuhua yinji*) collector's seal:
a. *Riverbank*
b. *Gentlemen on a Spring Outing*, attributed to Zhao Yan (died 923). National Palace Museum, Taipei
c. *Model Calligraphies from the Chunhua Pavilion* (engraved 992). Private Collection

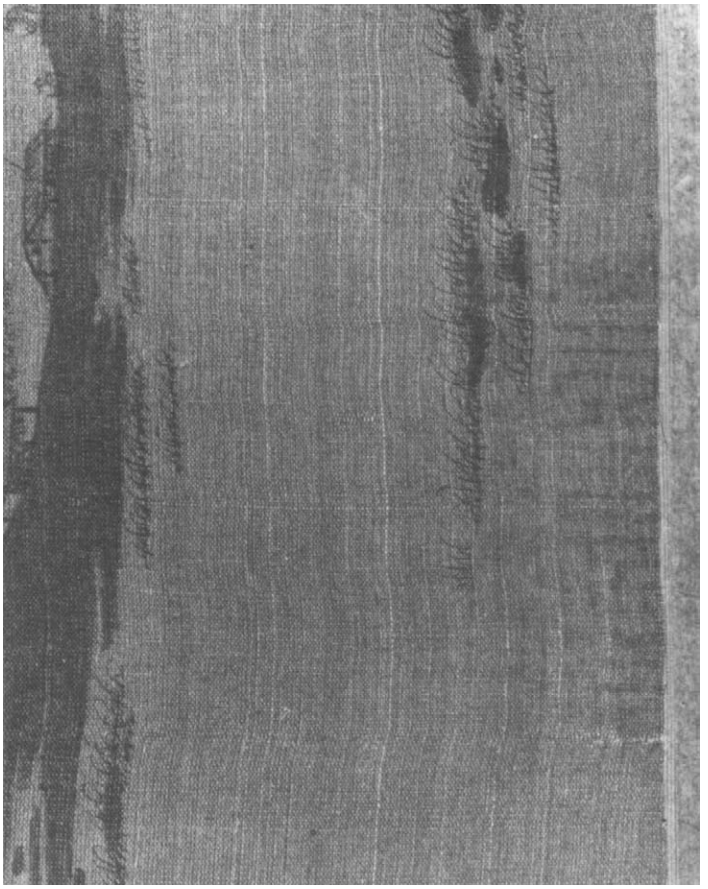




Riverbank bears seven seals of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century date.[10] These early seal impressions include two seals of the Southern Song prime minister and collector Jia Sidao (1213–1275); a seal impressed several inches below Jia Sidao's seals that reads "seal of the Tianshui Commandery Calligraphy and Painting Collection" (*Tianshuijun shoucang shuhua yinji*), which may be identified as belonging to Zhao Yuqin (late 13th century); three seals belonging to Ke Jiusi (1290–1343), a noted collector who also served as connoisseur for the Yuan imperial collection under emperor Wenzong (r. 1328–29, 1330–32); and the official Ming inventory half-seal of 1374–84. A limited survey of other paintings and seal compendia did not turn up an exact match for either Jia Sidao's or Ke Jiusi's seals.[11] But the Tianshui Commandery collector's seal matches that on several other early paintings and calligraphies (fig. 21). Another convincing match is the Ming half-seal (fig. 22). Since forged seals of premodern times were not photographically reproduced, the

Figure 22 *Riverbank*. Detail, official Ming inventory seal of ca. 1374–84. A portion of a seal belonging to C.C. Wang (born 1907) is also visible showing difference in pigment wear.

Figure 23 *Dense Forests*. Detail, official Ming inventory seal of ca. 1374–84; traces of a gray paper backing and tan paper edging



closeness of these seals to other known and accepted impressions presents a strong case for their being original and thus supports the painting's existence in the thirteenth century.

A telling indication of the recent vintage of the ostensibly old seal impressions on *Dense Forests* and *Two Gibbons* is the nature of the seal paste. The color of the paste of these seals is harsh and unnatural. Furthermore, the pigment is still vivid and sits on the surface of the painting with little sign of wear, in spite of the apparently battered state of the painting, as exemplified by the Ming inventory half-seal on *Dense Forests* (fig. 23). All the early seals on *Riverbank*, on the other hand, appear worn and faint due to the loss of almost all the color from the top surfaces of the silk weave, indicating they have been present on the silk for a very long time. This is apparent when the Ming half-seal impression on *Riverbank* (fig. 22) is compared with that on *Summer Mountains* (fig. 24). Both of these half-seals are markedly more worn than the

Figure 24 *Summer Mountains*. Detail, official Ming inventory seal of ca. 1374–84. Image has been rotated to show seal in same orientation as on *Riverbank*.

impression of this seal on *Dense Forests*. The remaining twelve seals on *Riverbank* are twentieth century in date and belong to Zhang Daqian, to Zhang's brother, Zhang Shanzi (1882–1940), and to C.C. Wang (Wang Jiqian, born 1907; see fig. 22). These are the only seals on *Riverbank* whose paste compares in intensity and substantiality to those on *Dense Forests* and *Two Gibbons*.

* * *

The physical attributes of the weave structure, coloration, condition, manner of restoration, and seal impressions on *Riverbank* all support an early date for the painting. A comparable examination of *Dense Forests* and *Two Gibbons* as well as other acknowledged forgeries by Zhang Daqian reveals a clever but ultimately implausible pastiche of tricks used to age artificially and disguise a work of clearly recent manufacture. While such a physical examination cannot settle the question of *Riverbank*'s authorship or period of execution, it nonetheless makes it impossible to argue convincingly that it is of modern manufacture. The evidence supports a date prior to the thirteenth century, by which time loom sizes had expanded to permit the weaving of single large pieces of silk to accommodate monumental paintings. A similar terminus ante quem is suggested by the late-thirteenth- and fourteenth-century seals impressed on the painting.

1. For a full discussion of the style, content, and documentary evidence of *Riverbank*, see Maxwell K. Hearn and Wen C. Fong, *Along the Riverbank: Chinese Paintings from the C.C. Wang Family Collection* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999). For a noteworthy recent addition to the corpus of works discussing Dong Yuan and *Riverbank*, see Howard Rogers, "Tung Yuan Chronicle," *Kaikodo Journal* 12 (Autumn 1999), pp. 55–89.

2. Carbon dating of *Riverbank*'s silk is not feasible. To secure an adequate sample (80–100 mg) would require at least a partial disassembly and remounting of the scroll. Once secured, the sample would have to be thoroughly cleaned as the dating process would be compromised by any traces of glue remaining from previous remountings. The likelihood that not all glue residues could be removed would have to be offset by taking either a larger sample or several samples from different portions of the surface. Each sample would destroy a portion of the composition as there are no unpainted surfaces remaining. To subject the painting to this destructive process with no guarantee of a reliable outcome makes such a technique unacceptable in this instance.

3. For a discussion of *Dense Forests* as a forgery, see Fu Shen, *Challenging the Past: The Paintings of Chang Dai-chien* (Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1991), no. 42, pp. 189–92.

4. For a brief discussion of *Drinking and Singing* as a Zhang forgery, see Fu Shen, *Challenging the Past*, pp. 193–95; for *The Three Worthies*, see Fu Shen, "Chang Dai-chien's The Three Worthies of Wu and His Practice of Forging Ancient Art," *Orientations* 20, no. 9 (September 1989), pp. 56–72.

5. Richard Barnhart has observed that three early attributions to Juran (active ca. 960–95) range in width from 55.5 to 59.6 cm (21⅞ to 23½ in.); see Richard M. Barnhart, *Along the Border of Heaven: Sung and Yüan Paintings from the C.C. Wang Family Collection* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1983), p. 37. Anne Farrer in a verbal communication has observed that the Tang paintings recovered from Dunhuang by Sir Aurel Stein are also made up of panels of silk measuring around 60 cm (23 to 24 in.) in width.

6. It is likely that *Riverbank* as it now survives formed only the left panel of a three-panel screen composition similar to that seen in *Scholar Examining Books*, attributed to Wang Qihan (active ca. 961–75); see Wen Fong's discussion in Hearn and Fong, *Along the Riverbank*, pp. 12–19 and fig. 10.

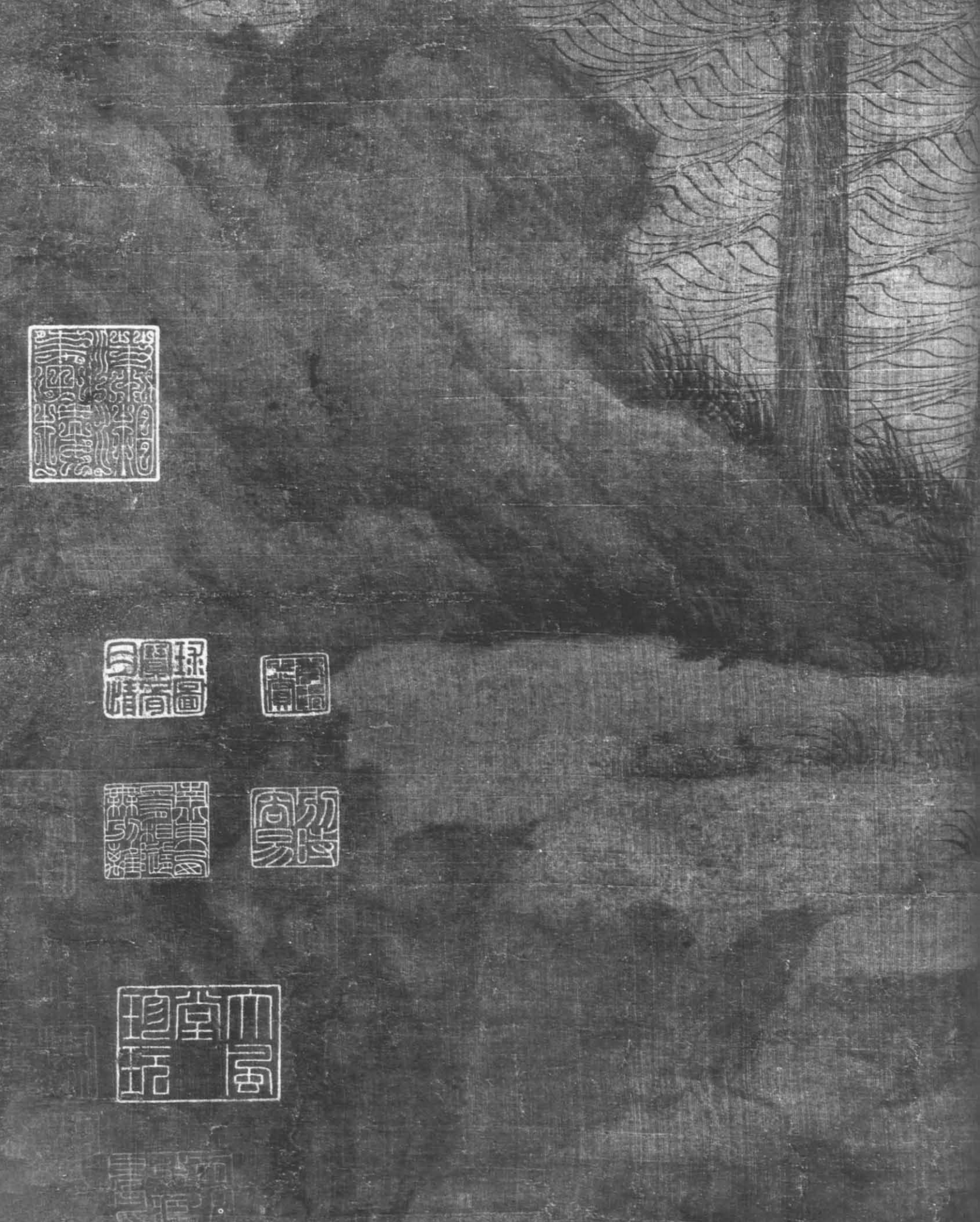
7. See Hearn and Fong, *Along the Riverbank*, Appendix, p. 157.

8. For a discussion of Zhang's use of a photographic model as the basis of *Dense Forests*, see Fu Shen, *Challenging the Past*, p. 191. For a color reproduction of *Myriad Ravines*, see Xu Bangda, "Connoisseurship in Chinese Painting and Calligraphy: Some Copies and Forgeries," *Orientations* 19, no. 3 (March 1988), pp. 54–62, fig. 11.

9. See Fu Shen, "Cheng Dai-chien's The Three Worthies of Wu," and *Challenging the Past*, no. 45; Fu Shen has discovered reproductions of all of these seals, made either by photographically transferring an image onto a zinc plate or hand-carved into wood or stone, among Zhang Daqian's possessions, which is clear evidence that Zhang used such bogus seals in making his forgeries.

10. For illustrations of all the seals on *Riverbank*, see Hearn and Fong, *Along the Riverbank*, Appendix, pp. 158–60.

11. In ibid., p. 159, fig. 94, one of the Ke Jiusi seals on *Riverbank*—*Danqiu Ke Jiusi zhang*—is identified as matching another impression of this seal. Further examination has convinced me that the two seals are not the same. Another of Ke's seals on *Riverbank*—*Ke shi qingwan*—appears to match that on *Four Stages of Blossoming Plum*, by Yang Wujiu (1097–1169), now in the Palace Museum, Beijing, but a close examination has yet to be made.



Shih
Shou-chien

Positioning *Riverbank*

In attributing *Riverbank* to the tenth-century Southern Tang painter Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), we are confronted with two problems, concerning author and period. The first of these, identifying the author of the painting, is the greater obstacle since *Riverbank* is markedly unlike any of the other extant works attributed to Dong Yuan. The problem of period is less difficult to solve, despite our very limited knowledge of tenth-century landscape painting. Some new insights may be gained by re-examining existing literary documents and some early landscape works transmitted from the Song imperial collection, in combination with the study of mural paintings from recent archaeological discoveries. In addition, it will be worthwhile to give special consideration to the specific character of landscape painting from the southeastern region of China, home to the Southern Tang dynasty (937–75), in order to determine *Riverbank*'s position in the history of Chinese painting.

On Dating *Riverbank*

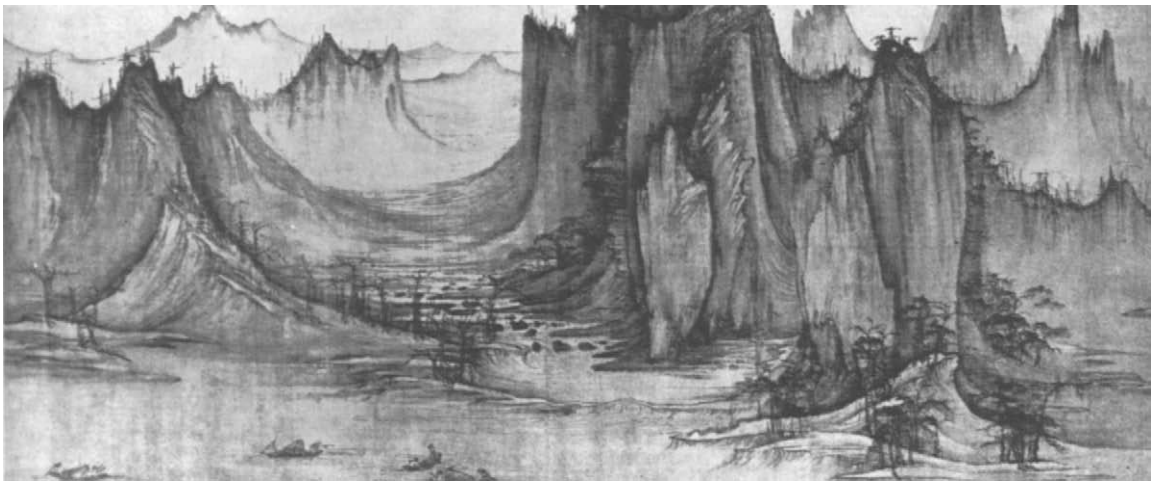
Stylistic analysis remains a valid and powerful tool in the hands of art historians. The use of style as a way of dating paintings is based on the conviction that painters from different periods make use of different schemata in depicting pictorial images. These schemata are in turn based on specific period-related structural concepts. When later painters copy earlier works, they can often imitate such elements as motifs or

Figure 1 Attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), *Riverbank*. Detail. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 87 × 42 ⅛ in. (221 × 109 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Ex Coll.: C.C. Wang Family. Promised Gift of the Oscar L. Tang Family

composition. However, they cannot re-create successfully the structural schemata of the original, since it is impossible for them to break loose completely from the structural concepts of their own period. We therefore have only to examine closely the way an image is depicted to be able to see the structural concept it conceals. Recognizing the historical succession of different structural concepts allows us in turn to identify the relative position within history of a particular pictorial image. In the study of ancient landscape paintings, it is therefore necessary to focus attention on mountains and rocks, trees, and architectural elements, as well as on the specific spatial representation of these elements. Such a stylistic analysis of *Riverbank* will show that the painting should be dated to the tenth century.

The description of mountains and rocks in *Riverbank* (fig. 1; Cahill, fig. 1) displays very distinct characteristics. Although the rocks are painted in delicate ink work, there are no traces of brushwork formulae

Figure 2 Guo Xi (ca.1000–ca.1090), *Early Spring*, dated 1072. Detail. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 62 ¼ × 42 ⅝ in. (158.3 × 108.1 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei



commonly seen in later works. The rocks are uniquely modeled in delicate ink wash, which is applied on the silk in repetitive, parallel brush movements. As to the surfaces of the rocks, while there is less emphasis on textural detail, the movements of the brush merge and create a smooth visual effect. If we compare this treatment with that in *Early Spring* (fig. 2; Fong, fig. 14), dated 1072, by the Northern Song painter Guo Xi (ca. 1000–ca. 1090), the difference in descriptive technique is obvious. Although in *Early Spring* attention is paid to the expression of volume and to relief and texture in the description of the rock surface, brush traces are ubiquitous in the complex and varied brush patterns, all of which aim to strengthen the illusion of rich textural variations of physical form. This descriptive technique is also evident in Xu Daoning's (ca. 970–1051/52) *Fishermen* (fig. 3), datable to around 1050, suggesting that similar descriptive concepts were shared by painters working in the same period. In comparison, the brushwork in *Riverbank* appears far less complicated. Not only is every motion of the brush simple and direct, but there is also very little variation in types of brush movement. The effect of surface texture is limited to tonal gradations resulting solely from a variation in the number of strokes. This specific rendering of rock forms thus reveals a conception of structure more straightforward than that shown in *Early Spring*, where patterned brushwork plays a dominant role in the articulation of structural complexity.

The method of modeling forms employed in *Riverbank* relates closely to the technique used in a landscape painting unearthed from a Liao-dynasty (916–1125) tomb in Yemaotai, Liaoning Province in 1974 (fig. 4), which is datable to around 980. Although traces of brushstrokes can be detected, they are highly repetitive in character. In this respect, it is fair to say that the execution of the surface texture of the main peak

Figure 3 Xu Daoning (ca. 970–1051/52), *Fishermen*, ca. 1050. Detail. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 19 ¼ × 82 ½ in. (48.9 × 209.6 cm). The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City

Figure 4 Unidentified artist (10th century), *A Chess Party in the Mountains*, ca. 940–85, from a tomb at Yemaotai. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 41 ⅞ × 25 ⅝ in. (106.5 × 65 cm). Liaoning Provincial Museum

and precipice in the foreground of the Yemaotai painting belongs to the same descriptive tradition as that of *Riverbank*, even though the painting may be from a peripheral region or be by a lesser artist.[1] Items suitable for comparison discovered closer geographically to southeastern China, where Dong Yuan lived, are landscape representations in wall paintings from a tomb in Quyang, Hebei Province, dated to 924, in the Five Dynasties period (907–60). The tomb's occupant, Wang Chuzhi, was Military Commissioner of the Yiwu Military Prefecture during the late Tang (618–907) and early Five Dynasties period. Wang's high social position as a virtually autonomous regional governor of Hebei finds its expression in the lavish decoration of his tomb, including two landscape paintings that are invaluable for the study of the development of tenth-century landscape style.[2] The landscape on the central section of the northern wall of the front chamber (fig. 5) is far more complex in its rendering of mountain forms than the Yemaotai painting. This complexity lies mainly in the combination of many small discrete form units, each of which is quite simple in its description. The compositional units are created by first outlining the contours, and then by filling these in with repeated layers of brushstrokes, creating nuances in texture only by variations in the number and tonal value of the strokes. The similarity to *Riverbank* is unmistakable.

Figure 5 Unidentified artist (10th century), *Landscape*, 924. Wall painting from the front chamber of the tomb of Wang Chuzhi, Quyang, Hebei Province

Few comparable examples are extant among transmitted works of early landscape painting, with *The Lofty Scholar Liang Boluan* (fig. 6), attributed to the tenth-century painter Wei Xian (active ca. 960–75), in the Palace Museum, Beijing, being most similar to the paintings discussed above. *Lofty Scholar* preserves the original mounting of the Xuanhe era (1111–25) of the late Northern Song, which therefore constitutes a terminus ante quem for its execution. While its mountain peak and rock formations are more sophisticated in execution than those in either the Yemaotai painting or the wall painting in Wang Chuzhi's tomb, this

Figure 6 Wei Xian (active ca. 960–75), *The Lofty Scholar Liang Boluan*. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 53 × 20 ⅝ in. (134.5 × 52.5 cm). Palace Museum, Beijing

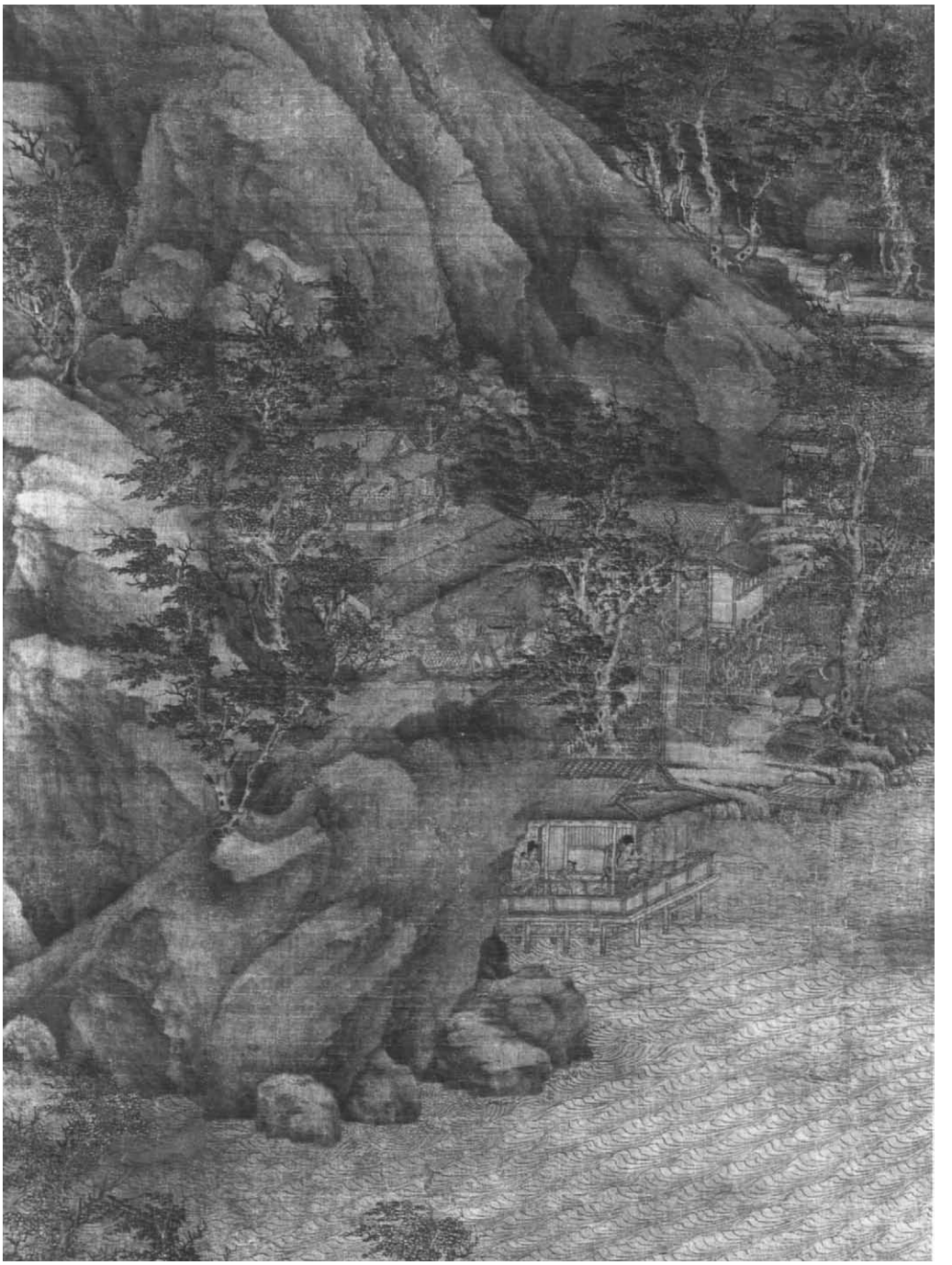
Figure 7 Attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), *Wintry Groves and Layered Banks*. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 71 ½ × 45 ⅞ in. (181.5 × 116.5 cm). Kurokawa Institute of Ancient Cultures, Hyōgo Prefecture, Japan

work follows the same basic modeling technique. Emperor Huizong's (r. 1101–25) inscription on the label identifies the painter as Wei Xian, who, like Dong Yuan, was a member of the Southern Tang Painting Academy. If this identification is correct, then there should exist a close connection between *Lofty Scholar* and *Riverbank*.

Further indications of similarity can be observed in the depiction of the trees in the foreground of *Lofty Scholar* and *Riverbank*. Although they differ in form and type, the trees in both paintings are similarly modeled in delicate but simple ink wash and display the same attention to descriptive detail in the execution of the gnarled trunks. The unfolding branches are treated in a rather two-dimensional manner, and only occasionally are spatial relationships delineated through the overlapping of tree forms. When we move later in time, to Guo Xi's *Early Spring*, this two-dimensionality is noticeably absent. Instead, Guo Xi focuses on the presentation of the spatial relationships of branches and trunk. Compared to *Riverbank*, Guo Xi's trees are less frontal, and the branches extend at angles in different directions, creating a more convincing three-dimensional effect. The archaic treatment of trees in *Riverbank* is not only consistent with that in *Wintry Groves and Layered Banks* (fig. 7), a painting attributed to Dong Yuan, in the Kurokawa Institute of Ancient Cultures, but also compares closely to that of *First Snow along the River* (fig. 8) by the tenth-century painter

Figure 8 Zhao Gan (active ca. 960–75), *First Snow along the River*. Detail. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 10 ¼ × 149 ¼ in. (25.9 × 376.5 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

Shih
Positioning
Riverbank



Zhao Gan (active ca. 960–75), in the National Palace Museum, Taipei. *First Snow along the River*, which bears a Song imperial seal of the Xuanhe era and an attribution, possibly inscribed by the Southern Tang ruler Li Yu (Li Houzhu), reading "illustrated by Zhao Gan, Student in the Painting Academy," is one of the very few existing works widely accepted as a genuine Five Dynasties painting.[3] As to *Wintry Groves and Layered Banks*, most historians of Chinese painting consider this work to be a plausible Dong Yuan attribution, based on the general consensus that the painting faithfully transmits an early form of Dong's style. Even if one does not accept it as a genuine work of the master's hand, no one would deny its validity as representative of tenth-century landscape style. The above-mentioned consistency in the execution of the tree motif in *Riverbank* with techniques discernible in works of the Five Dynasties period supports a correspondingly early date for the painting.

Apart from the depiction of individual forms, the spatial construction of *Riverbank* displays other pre-Song pictorial concepts. Note, for example, the spatial arrangement of the manor in the middle distance (fig. 9). Although the main buildings of this manor are linked to each other by fences and roofs, they still seem independent of one another; while every room is open for scrutiny by the viewer, each architectural unit is kept from overlapping. At the same time, a feeling of interconnection is created by filling the open spaces between the buildings with figures and objects. There is apparently no attempt to create an effect of spatial unity between this spatial unit and those defined by the foreground rocks or the background mountain peaks. The painter seems to aim at a sense of compositional completeness simply by filling in the open spaces of the landscape with narrative detail. This concept of "filling in" open spaces with architectural structures can also be seen in the Yemaotai painting (fig. 4). The pavilion in the upper-left corner of that painting is simpler in structure than that in *Riverbank*, but it is basically conceived in the same way. Similarly, the trees in *Riverbank* are not used to indicate recession into space. Although the trees are arranged in groups of diminishing size, there is no indication of spatial recession through the overlapping of tree forms; instead, different groups of trees are viewed as disconnected units. This is fundamentally different from the way architectural elements and trees function in Guo Xi's *Early Spring*. Not only are trees and buildings in *Early Spring* far more complex in execution than in the tenth-century paintings discussed above, but they function spatially as transitional elements connecting scenes of different distances into an integrated whole.

An aspect of the spatial structure of *Riverbank* that offers even clearer proof of its archaic character is the treatment of the background in the upper-right corner of the painting (fig. 10). Although the mountain peak towering in the middle distance dominates the composition of *Riverbank*, scenery in the far distance is added to create an effect of recession into space similar to that in *Early Spring* where a river valley

Figure 9 Attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), *Riverbank*. Detail. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 87 × 42 ⅞ in. (221 × 109 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Ex Coll.: C.C. Wang Family. Promised Gift of the Oscar L. Tang Family

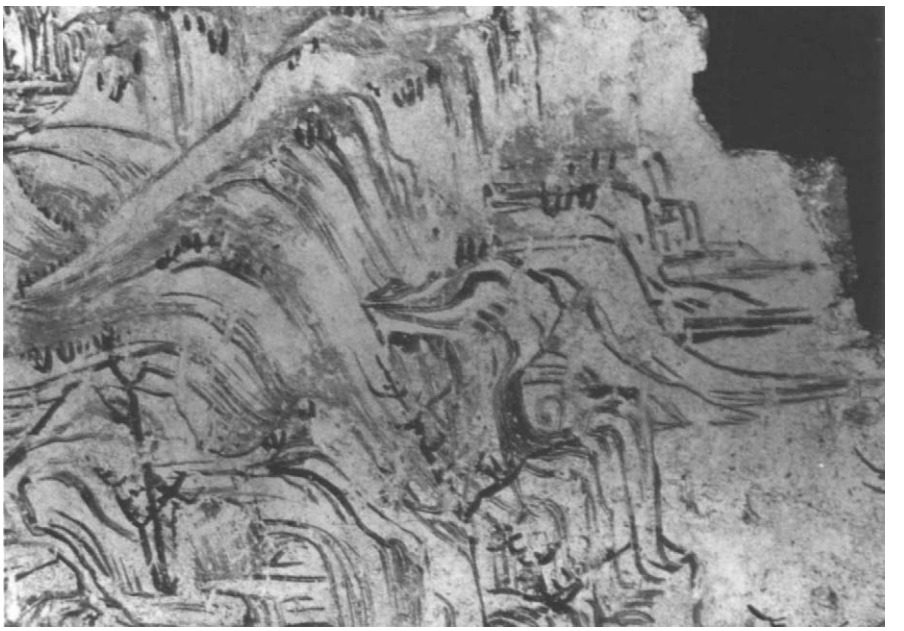
also creates a strong feeling of extension into a mist-filled deep distance. Guo Xi's deep recession culminates with two lines of mountain ridges (fig. 11). In *Riverbank* distant mountain ridges veiled in mist at the far end of the river valley similarly suggest infinite expansion into space. The rendering of these mountain ridges is very delicate, using pale ink that has become nearly invisible on today's dark and faded silk, so that all we can now rely on to imagine the effect of infinite expansion is a flock of geese flying in formation into the distance. But *Riverbank* lacks the smooth progression from foreground to middle ground to far distance suggested in *Early Spring*. Instead the composition appears fragmented into distinct pockets of space, each with its own ground plane, with picture elements additively assembled and distant elements indicated by their smaller size and higher placement on the picture surface. While the danger of this technique resulting in a fragmentation of space seems to go unheeded, the diagonally receding line of geese into the distance appears to function as a measure to make up for this structural ambiguity.

Figure 10 Attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), *Riverbank*. Detail. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 87 × 42 ⅞ in. (221 × 109 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Ex Coll.: C.C. Wang Family. Promised Gift of the Oscar L. Tang Family

Figure 11 Guo Xi (ca.1000–ca.1090), *Early Spring*, dated 1072. Detail. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 62 ¼ × 42 ⅝ in. (158.3 × 108.1 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

This additive and compartmental treatment of forms and spatial relationships in which recession is suggested through the piling up of successively smaller forms reflects a representational concept that may be traced back to as early as the eighth century. *Musicians Riding on an Elephant* (fig. 12), a painting on a lute plectrum guard in the Shōsō-in Treasury, displays a similar spatial treatment of the background. The effect of infinite expansion into depth is here likewise suggested by two groups of distant mountains piled up in the upper right of the picture plane. These mountain ranges are similarly disconnected from the foreground peak, and it is only the geese flying in a zigzag formation into the distance that link them spatially to each other.[4] This archaic way of depicting distance was still in use in the tenth century. For instance, the landscape paintings in Wang Chuzhi's tomb feature similar ranges of distant mountains piled up above the area of the main peak, while additional foliage dots on these far-off mountains underline the equivalence of reduced scale and vast distance. While there clearly is a lack of spatial unity between these distant moun-

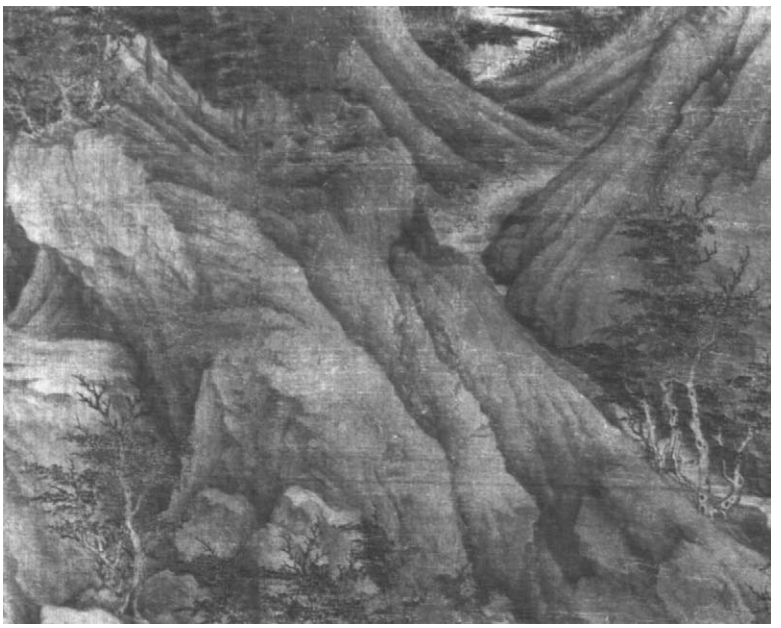
Figure 12 Unidentified artist (late 8th century), *Musicians Riding on an Elephant*. Painting on a lute plectrum guard, Shōsō-in Treasury, Nara



tains and the main peak, the damage by grave-robbers to the upper-right corner of the wall painting makes it impossible to verify whether the painting originally employed such measures as the receding line of flying geese to suggest spatial recession.

Another indication of *Riverbank*'s early date is the great variety of rock formations depicted, a feature that recalls the different mountain forms, including peaks, ranges, caverns, and cliffs, described by Jing Hao (ca. 870–930), a tenth-century painter from northwest China, in his *Bifaji* (A Note on the Art of Brush). Jing Hao spares no effort in defining and categorizing these various mountain forms. Besides displaying his scholarly enthusiasm for the investigation of the natural world, Jing reflects the high level of interest among tenth-century painters in the pictorial representation of a wide variety of mountain formations.[5] Although we have no authentic works by Jing Hao, concrete evidence of the existence of such an interest is provided by the wall painting from Wang Chuzhi's tomb in Hebei. The large variety of types of rock formations in this tenth-century landscape painting provide an almost literal illustration of the verbal images in *Bifaji*. The creation of such fantastic landscapes did not rely solely on the depiction of a variety of mountain forms, but, more essentially, on the construction of these various forms into one single integrated mountain formation. The arrangement of the central part of the wall painting in Wang's tomb (fig. 13) reveals the structural method that was devised to this end. While a multitude of peaks, ranges, and crests

Figure 13 Detail, fig. 5: Unidentified artist (10th century), *Landscape*



appear in the upper layer of the landscape mass, broadly constructed mountain forms run through the entire lower layer, supporting the stability of the whole, a scheme that can also be discerned in *Riverbank*, particularly in the structure of the cliff and peak in the center of the painting (fig. 14). Jing Hao seems to describe this same structural technique in his treatise: "Although the peaks and the humps high above are separated, below them the hills and the ranges run together." By the mid-eleventh century, this archaic method was replaced by a technique that created a greater sense of structural order. Indeed, the structural technique we see in *Early Spring* is fundamentally different, with the upper part of the mountain formation arranged in a continuous line of movement that unfolds within a single picture plane.

Positioning Dong Yuan

The above analysis of stylistic features indicates that *Riverbank* is a product of the tenth century. More difficult to evaluate is whether this painting is from the hand of the Southern Tang court painter Dong Yuan. A direct relationship with Dong Yuan is indeed difficult to establish. *Wintry Groves and Layered Banks*, which is attributed to Dong, certainly represents a style different from *Riverbank*. At most, the rock forms on the left-hand mountain peak in *Riverbank* show some similarity with the execution of the *fantou*

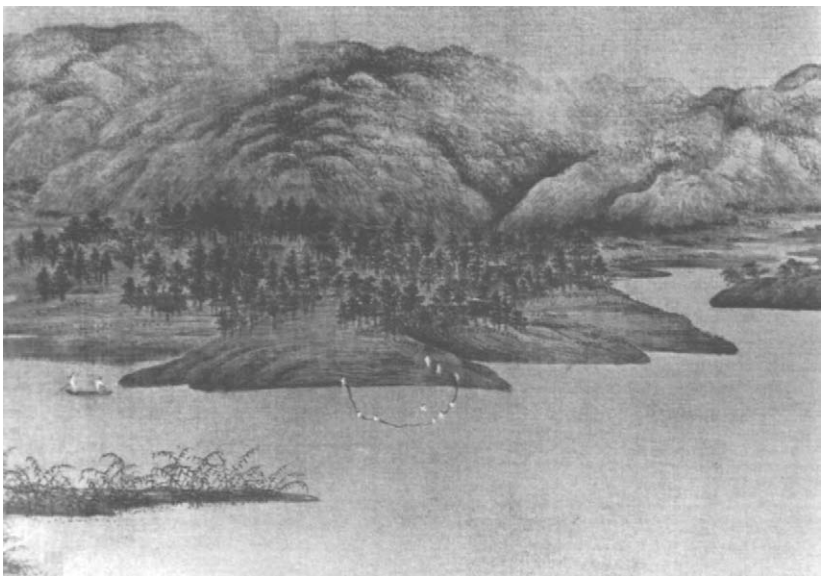
Figure 14 Attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), *Riverbank*. Detail. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 87 × 42 ⅞ in. (221 × 109 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Ex Coll.: C.C. Wang Family. Promised Gift of the Oscar L. Tang Family

(alum stones) idiom visible in works attributed to Dong's follower Juran (active ca. 960–95), such as *Xiao Yi Seizing the Lanting Manuscript* (fig. 18), in the National Palace Museum, Taipei. To tackle this problem of authorship, it is necessary to understand the process by which Dong Yuan's image was created and reshaped over time and establish a historiographical background for the discussion to follow.

Our present understanding of Dong Yuan's place in the history of Chinese painting is the result of a long evolutionary process. The central figures in this evaluation of Dong Yuan are the Northern Song scholar and critic Mi Fu (1052–1107) and the late-Ming painter and critic Dong Qichang (1555–1636). Their appreciation of the artist has in turn engendered the transmission of an image of Dong Yuan as the painter of a particular type of landscape.

A court painter of the Southern Tang, Dong Yuan does not seem to have enjoyed great renown after the surrender of the kingdom to the Song in 975. His name remains unmentioned both in Liu Daochun's (active 1057–59) *Shengchao minghua ping* (Evaluations of Song Dynasty Painters of Renown) and in his *Wudai minghua buyi* (A Supplement to Famous Paintings of the Five Dynasties) of around 1059.[6] The earliest extant reference to Dong Yuan appears a little later, in 1074, in Guo Ruoxu's *Tuhua jianwen zhi* (Experiences in Painting). This early record of Dong is, however, very brief, stating only that "in ink painting he resembles Wang Wei [701–761], and in color Li Sixun [651–716]."[7] Although Guo Ruoxu's treatise claims that achievements in landscape painting since the tenth century surpass those of earlier periods, Southern Tang masters are not regarded as having played a major role in this development. His view of Dong Yuan as no more than a follower of Wang Wei and Li Sixun means that he excludes Dong from what he sees as "modern" landscape painting, represented by the Northern Song masters Li Cheng (919–967), Guan Tong (active ca. 907–23), and Fan Kuan (active ca. 990–1030). Guo also pays little attention to Juran, who was subsequently recognized as the main follower of Dong Yuan. In his brief note on Juran, he makes no mention of any connection with this famous predecessor.[8] Guo Ruoxu came from a family of officials from Taiyuan, in present-day Shanxi Province, and his *Tuhua jianwen zhi* may be said to reflect eleventh-century northern Chinese mainstream cultural attitudes, an integral part of which was eagerness to boost the cultural achievements of the new dynasty. Seen from this point of view, Dong Yuan was only entitled to a minor role in the history of landscape painting.

In contrast, Mi Fu, active in the late eleventh century in southeast China, elevated Dong Yuan to the summit of landscape painting history. In his words, Dong Yuan belonged to "the divine class of modern times, too great for comparison. Peaks and hills rise and fall, clouds and mist gather and clear, there is no pretense or cleverness, all is plain naiveté."[9] This last observation refers to Mi Fu's highest criterion for



quality in painting: plainness, lightness, and naturalness (*pingdan tianzhen*). Mi Fu's dismissal of the painter who won Guo Ruoxu's highest praise, Li Cheng, as "more clever than true" clearly shows an intentional belittling of the achievements of those painters who represented the northern Chinese tradition, putting in their place as new models Dong Yuan and Juran of the southeast Jiangnan region. The historical lineage Mi Fu chooses for Dong Yuan is meanwhile quite different from the artistic origins recorded by Guo Ruoxu. Bypassing Wang Wei and Li Sixun of the Tang dynasty, he traces Dong Yuan's origins directly to Gu Kaizhi (ca. 345–ca. 406) of the Eastern Jin (317–420), who in his eyes was the first, and the ultimate, patriarch of Chinese painting.[10] Within this new lineage, Dong Yuan and Southern Tang landscape painting not only occupy a central position, but are also assigned a role of crucial significance — namely, they become the link between Mi Fu and Gu Kaizhi. While Mi Fu's self-definition is as much a reflection of his own historical vision as his unique personality, it allows us to catch a glimpse of the ferocity with which north and south China vied for cultural superiority.

Although this self-definition and reassessment of Dong Yuan interpenetrate to a certain extent, Mi Fu's understanding of Dong Yuan was not entirely a fabrication. Mi's account of Dong Yuan's style in his *Huashi* (History of Painting) does agree with the image of the misty riverine scenery of south China depicted in the famous handscroll *The Xiao and Xiang Rivers* (fig. 15) attributed to Dong Yuan, now in the Palace Museum, Beijing. The so-called Mi-family landscape that Mi Fu created together with his son,

Figure 15 Attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), *The Xiao and Xiang Rivers*. Detail. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 19 ¾ × 55 ⅝ in. (50 × 141.4 cm). Palace Museum, Beijing

Mi Youren (1074–1151), stems essentially from that same tradition (fig. 16). However, this image of Dong Yuan's landscape painting was also imbued with Mi Fu's prejudice. Mi apparently ignored Guo Ruoxu's documentation concerning the two styles of Dong's landscape and their separate origins in the styles of Wang Wei and Li Sixun. And, there is no obvious connection between *The Xiao and Xiang Rivers* and the Tang landscape styles known to us. The Tang origins of Dong Yuan's style apparently never aroused the interest of later critics, especially after southern Chinese culture gradually surpassed that of the north and Mi Fu's art-historical theories became widely adopted.

If we move forward to around the year 1600, we notice that Dong Qichang's interest in Dong Yuan was influenced by Mi Fu. Dong Qichang acquired *The Xiao and Xiang Rivers*, and conducted a detailed formal analysis of works related to Dong Yuan in contemporary collections.[11] In the process of this research, he placed particular emphasis on the layers of long, curved texture strokes associated with Dong Yuan, the so-called hemp-fiber strokes, and established this brush pattern as the central norm for an appreciation of Dong Yuan's landscape painting. Dong therefore professed that he considered *Wintry Groves and Layered Banks*, from the collection of the Duke of Wei of Nanjing, to be "the best under heaven," since, to his eye, it was the most exquisite example of this type of brushwork. It should be mentioned that Dong Qichang's study of Dong Yuan was at the same time also directed at the establishment of an "orthodox" lineage of masters, which was to include himself as a painter. Within this lineage, Wang Wei figured as the foun-

Figure 16 (above) Mi Youren (1074–1151), *Cloudy Mountains*. Handscroll, ink on paper, 10 ¾ × 22 7/16 in. (27.3 × 57 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Purchase, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, by exchange, 1973

Figure 17 (opposite) Dong Qichang (1555–1636), *Mountains after Rain*. Hanging scroll, ink on silk, 40 ⅞ × 16 ¼ in. (101.8 × 41.2 cm). Xubai Zhai Collection, Hong Kong

Shih
Positioning
Riverbank

tainhead, an ideal difficult to attain, while Dong Yuan functioned as a true-to-life model from antiquity, of which later masters like Mi Fu were regarded as the reincarnation. Dong Qichang's understanding of Dong Yuan not only formed one of the cornerstones of his new orthodox lineage, but also established the brush idiom associated with this "orthodoxy." His image of Dong Yuan also provided a concrete and formal basis for the realization of his ideal of a "great synthesis" of landscape painting. Dong Qichang's own *Mountains after Rain* (fig. 17), in the Xubai Zhai Collection, Hong Kong, originates from an interpretation of the Mi-family landscape tradition through the Dong Yuan idiom, and becomes an articulation of an individual style that claims to extend back to the eighth-century painter Wang Wei.[12]

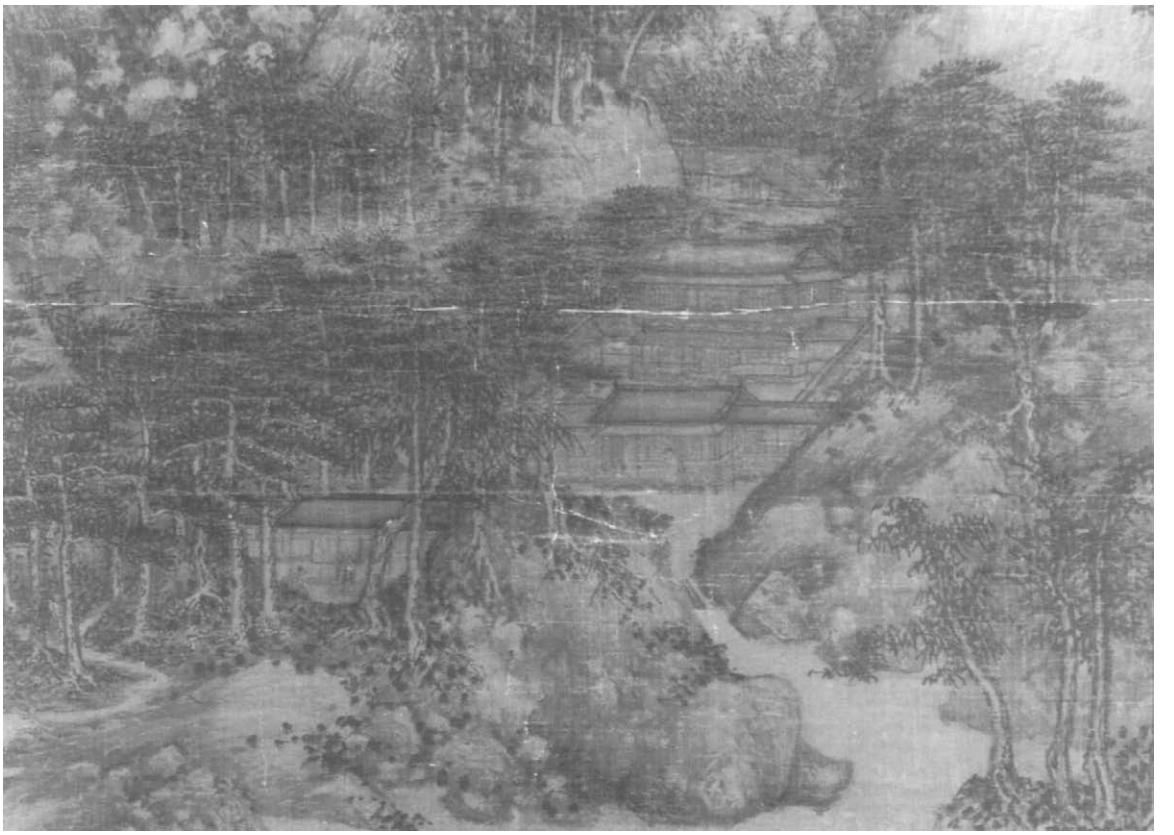
Most modern scholars seem to agree with Dong Qichang concerning *Wintry Groves and Layered Banks*. The painting, while closely resembling *The Xiao and Xiang Rivers*, does not essentially surpass the boundaries of the Mi Fu-Dong Qichang definition of Dong Yuan, thus perpetuating the limits this definition already entailed at the time of its inception in the twelfth century. In terms of thematic content, both *The Xiao and Xiang Rivers* and *Wintry Groves and Layered Banks* depict the lush scenery of the Jiangnan region. It seems rather unbelievable, however, that Dong Yuan, a Southern Tang court painter, would only have been able to depict this particular kind of scenery, especially when one takes into account the stylistic diversity of his landscape painting as described in Northern Song treatises, such as Guo Ruoxi's *Tuhua jianwen zhi*. Therefore, the question whether *Riverbank* may be attributed to Dong Yuan not only challenges an eight-hundred-year-old image of Dong Yuan—in form as much as in content—but also demands a re-positioning of Dong Yuan within the history of Chinese painting.

Lofty Reclusion amid Rivers and Mountains

If we regard *Wintry Groves and Layered Banks* as our sole standard for understanding Dong Yuan, *Riverbank* cannot be described as "obviously Dong Yuan" in style. The painting not only lacks the typical smooth and round riverbank slopes, but also does not feature the so-called hemp-fiber brushstrokes or any other trademark motif that we have come to associate with Dong Yuan. Moreover, the overall effect of *Riverbank* does not seem to support the traditional dictum that "seen from close by, [his painting] shows no resemblance to physical forms, but when seen from afar, landscape scenery unrolls before the eye,"[13] a dictum that is clearly true for *Wintry Groves and Layered Banks*. Further underscoring the impression of the "archaic" character of *Wintry Groves and Layered Banks* is the connection between this painting and other extant works attributed to Dong Yuan, such as *The Xiao and Xiang Rivers* and *Awaiting the Ferry at the Foot of*

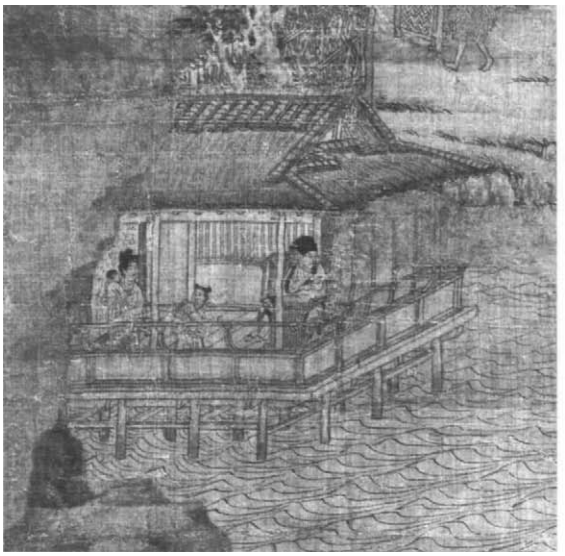
Summer Mountains (Qi, fig. 3), in the Liaoning Provincial Museum.[14] By contrast, *Riverbank* stands virtually alone, and lacks an auxiliary body of works that will support the claim to authorship by Dong Yuan. Therefore, even if the above analysis safely locates the painting's date in the tenth century, its authorship still appears uncertain. In attempting a thematic approach in our inquiry into the connection of this work with Dong Yuan, we should not limit ourselves solely to Dong Yuan attributions, but instead must expand our focus to include the larger context of works by Southern Tang court painters.

The paintings we have already discussed in connection with the dating of *Riverbank*, namely, *First Snow along the River* and *The Lofty Scholar Liang Boluan*, are both by Southern Tang court painters. They are, as is *Riverbank*, depictions of scenes of life in southeast China. Water is depicted in these paintings, but in addition, detailed wave patterns model the river's surface. *Lofty Scholar* (fig. 6) displays an especially close similarity with *Riverbank*. Both paintings depict reclusive life in architectural settings within a distinct space along a riverbank, a feature rarely found in early landscape painting from north China. *Lofty Scholar* places narrative content, the story of Lady Meng Guang and her husband Liang Hong of the Eastern Han, within a landscape setting of fantastic rock formations.[15] *Riverbank*'s rock formations are also fantastic in shape, and similarly lack the smoothness of *Wintry Groves and Layered Banks*. It is also rich in its depiction of scenes of human activity, featuring such details as a herdboy on a water buffalo heading home, a kitchen where women are preparing food, and the lord of the manor relaxing in a pavilion at the river's edge, accompanied by his wife and child. Although the story it represents may not be obvious, the painting clearly has a narrative quality. In this respect, it is similar to *Xiao Yi Seizing the Lanting Manuscript*, attributed to Dong Yuan's follower Juran, which also features a large mansion on a riverbank and such scenes of human activity as the lord of the mansion seated in a waterside pavilion, with monks and visitors outside and a figure on horseback galloping across a bridge toward the mansion (fig. 18; Cahill, fig. 22). It is impossible to say whether these details are in any way connected to the story of how Xiao Yi obtained by trickery Wang Xizhi's (ca. 303–ca. 361) calligraphic masterwork, the *Lanting Preface*, but the narrative content of the painting cannot be denied. Although Juran was influenced by northern landscape styles after his arrival in the Northern Song capital Kaifeng, following the fall of the Southern Tang,[16] this painting largely preserves an earlier landscape style. It seems probable that this type of landscape painting, imbued with a very strong narrative quality, was popular at the Southern Tang court. By contrast, all extant early landscapes from the northern tradition, such as Fan Kuan's *Travelers amid Streams and Mountains*[17] and Guo Xi's *Early Spring*, though depicting travelers and fishermen, lack a similar profusion of narrative detail. Thus, in its narrative quality, there appears to be a close connection between *Riverbank* and the Southern Tang court.



Another aspect of the narrative character of these landscape paintings in vogue at the Southern Tang court deserves our attention, namely, the residential setting within the landscape in which the "narrative plot" invariably unfolds. *Riverbank* appears to be the most striking in this regard. The central focus of the painting is without question the pavilion situated at river's edge at the foot of the central mountain. Apart from the figure of a scholar looking out at the river scenery, the scene also features his wife and son and a boy servant standing in the background, as well as a screen inscribed with calligraphy (fig. 19). The calligraphic screen functions effectively as a symbol for the cultural accomplishments of its owner (fig. 20);[18] the image of a woman carrying her child as representative of life at home is one with which we are already familiar from eighth-century Tang ceramic figurines (fig. 21). These images indicate the thematic focus of the painting—the family life of a recluse. Alongside this depiction of the family at home, the realistic aspects of the hermit's life are conveyed by a variety of activities carried out by family members and ser-

Figure 18 Attributed to Juran (active ca. 960–95), *Xiao Yi Seizing the Lanting Manuscript.* Detail. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 56 ¾ × 23 ½ in. (144.1 × 59.6 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei



vants. The scenery outside the manor represents in turn the outermost level of such a life in reclusion, not only marking its geographical distance from the everyday world, but also functioning as the object of contemplation of the lofty recluse. Moreover, the landscape is not merely a direct portrayal of specific natural scenery; the fantastic imagery also symbolizes the existence of an ideal world, which functions as an echo of the mind landscape of the recluse. *Riverbank* thus records this interaction between the natural landscape and the recluse's mental image of an idyllic life in reclusion. In the words of Northern Song theorists of painting, this thematic content of *Riverbank*, depicting life in "lofty reclusion amid rivers and mountains" (*jiangshan gaoyin*), is no less than the "expressive intention" (*huayi*) of the painting.

Riverbank thus belongs to a category of painting that is basically different from works that seek to express such themes as "traveling in landscape," "four seasons," or "famous scenic sites," all popular during the Northern Song period. The popularity of "lofty reclusion amid rivers and mountains" as a landscape subject has generally been thought to post-date the Yuan-dynasty painter Wang Meng (ca. 1308–1385), but it now appears that the origins of this theme actually go back as far as the tenth century—*Riverbank*, along with Wei Xian's *Lofty Scholar*, being one of its few extant models. An examination of written records from the Northern Song reveals that landscape paintings of this kind were very scarce during the Five Dynasties period, with most of them produced by Southern Tang court painters: the *Xuanhe huapu* (Painting Catalogue of the Xuanhe Era) lists six works of this type by Dong Yuan, six by Wei Xian, and one by Wang

Figure 19 Attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), *Riverbank*. Detail. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 87 × 42 ⅞ in. (221 × 109 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Ex Coll.: C.C. Wang Family. Promised Gift of the Oscar L. Tang Family

Figure 20 Unidentified artist (11th century), wall painting, dated 1099. From Tomb no. 1, Baisha, Henan Province

Qihan (active ca. 961–75).[19] In this connection, we are reminded of records concerning the reclusive ideals of the two sovereigns of the Southern Tang, Li Jing (r. 943–61) and Li Yu (r. 961–75). The former was alleged to have built a studio facing a waterfall on Mount Lu as his future place of retirement from public life,[20] while legends in Northern Song literature refer to accounts of the latter adopting the style name "Recluse of Mount Zhong."[21] The appearance and the popularity at the Southern Tang court of the theme of lofty reclusion must have occurred in response to this particular disposition on the part of the kingdom's two sovereigns.

This preference for depicting the theme of recluses amid rivers and mountains in the landscape paintings of the Southern Tang Painting Academy naturally influenced the work of painters active outside the academy. The *Xuanhe huapu*, for example, lists at least ten works of this type under the name of Juran, a monk from the Kaiyuan Temple in Nanjing, in addition to those by members of the Painting Academy.[22] Whatever its narrative content, it is evident that the painting *Xiao Yi Seizing the Lanting Manuscript*, attributed to Juran, basically belongs to this category of landscape. The *Xuanhe huapu* also mentions a certain Sun Keyuan, who "liked to paint recluses and lofty men living in mountains and as reclusive fishermen." (The wording here is practically identical to that in the entry on Wang Qihan, said to have "excelled in paintings of recluses and lofty men of forests and mountains, free of all association with the ordinary world.") Although the exact identity of Sun Keyuan is unknown, the description of him in the *Xuanhe huapu*, along with the statement that he "excelled in the depiction of the landscape of the Wu and Yue regions," indicates that even if he did not live during the Southern Tang, he at least was a Northern Song painter from southeastern China who followed the specific Southern Tang landscape painting tradition.[23]

Although the compilers of the *Xuanhe huapu* provide us with evidence for the reconstruction of a Southern Tang painting tradition, they display no appreciation for the theme of reclusion in landscape painting. Instead, their record seems to reflect prevalent Northern Song cultural attitudes toward the history of landscape painting. Guo Ruoxu makes scarcely any mention of this kind of landscape in his *Tuhua jianwen zhi*. Although Guo Xi, in the section titled *huayi* in his *Linquan gaozhi* (Lofty Ambitions among Groves and Streams), lists sixteen different verses by Tang and Song poets that he considers suitable for pictorial representation, most of these verses represent themes of natural scenery observed during travels.[24] His preference for such subjects is also reflected in his own landscapes: none of his works may be said to represent the topic of reclusion. Even Mi Fu's understanding of landscape painting inhibited him from paying attention to the importance of this theme in Southern Tang landscape painting. In comparison, Mi Fu's friend Li Gonglin (ca. 1041–1106) was probably the only Northern Song painter with a serious interest in

the theme of reclusion. He painted his own life of reclusion at his retreat in the Longmian Mountains, in a scroll titled *Dwelling in the Longmian Mountains*. Nevertheless, he seems to have opted for an archaistic style in his execution of the theme, basing his description of life at his Longmian retreat directly upon such Tang models as Wang Wei's *Wangchuan Villa* and Lu Hong's (active ca. 713–42) *Ten Scenes of a Thatched Hut*.[25] With regard to its expressive intent (*huayi*), *Dwelling in the Longmian Mountains* follows the example of *Wangchuan Villa*—a description of a mountain retreat as such—which distinguishes it from the idealized landscape of the recluse (*jiangshan gaoyin*). It thus appears that even Li Gonglin paid little attention to the existence of this genre of landscape in Southern Tang painting. At the onset of the Song dynasty, the *jiangshan gaoyin* landscape represented by *Riverbank* seems to have fallen gradually into oblivion.

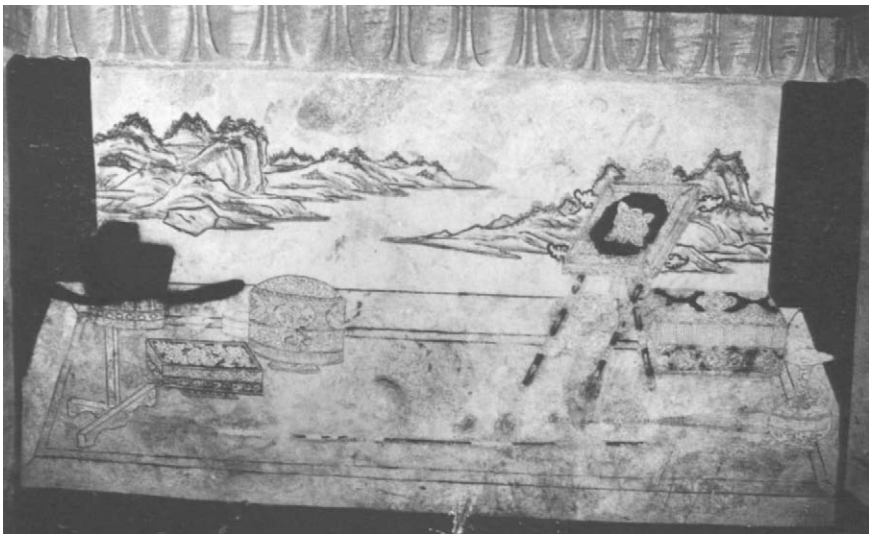
An Archetype for the Landscape of the Mind

The discrimination against the theme of reclusion after the Southern Tang, apart from being motivated by the wish to downplay the political and cultural significance of the Southern Tang, was more importantly inspired by a fundamental shift in the perception of landscape painting in the Song dynasty. Northern Song painters not only aimed at truthful representation of the outward appearance of the natural world, but also,

Figure 21 Seated Lady Holding a Child, eighth century. Pottery with *sancai* glaze, h. 12 ⅜ in. (31.5 cm). The Tsui Museum of Art, Hong Kong

in exploring the inherent sense of order of that world, sought to create a grand vision of landscape, the structure of which paralleled the hierarchical structure of the empire. The landscape of reclusion belongs to a very different order. Its main attention does not concern the representation of the natural world surrounding the recluse's dwelling, but rather the expression, through a rich variety of forms, of the spiritual landscape the recluse has made his own through his long experience of living within nature. In other words, the landscape of lofty reclusion is in a sense a landscape of the mind, imbued with a fantastic quality that transcends the realistic confines of the natural world. Although the compilers of the *Xuanhe huapu* never recognized the importance of this category in Dong Yuan's landscape painting, they record that "in the landscapes painted by Dong Yuan the brush is used with a heroic vigor, the forms have all the force of perilously towering peaks; his serried ranges and precipitous cliffs are a source of strength to those who look at them."[26] These words are a concrete description of the incessantly fluctuating character of the landscape of the mind, which is essentially the nature of the main scenery depicted behind the recluse in *Riverbank*. Seen from this perspective, *Riverbank* can be considered an archetype of the mind landscape.

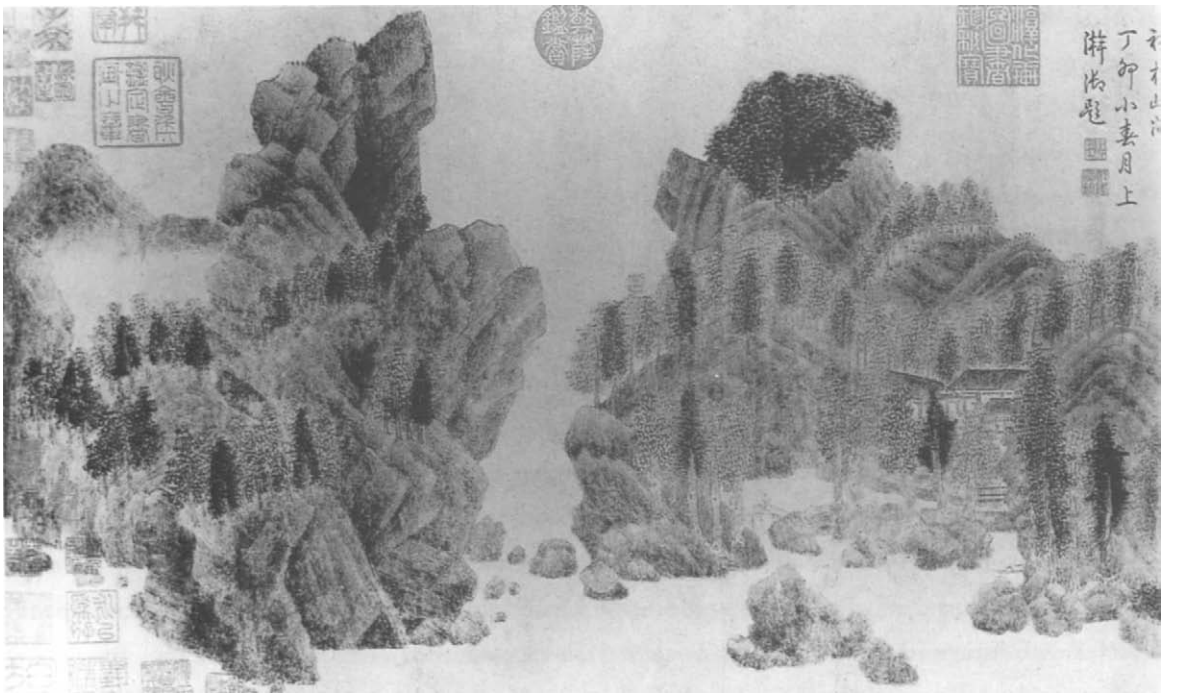
The recluse's family life plays an important role in the construction of this archetypal imagery of the mind landscape, for its presence bestows on the fantastic landscape behind the hermit a sense of connection with the secular world, and, at the same time, functions as a medium that transforms this landscape into a representation of the idealized world within the hermit's mind. The concept of reclusion in China had its origin in an early belief in immortality, but this belief became more worldly with time; if one was not able to renounce entirely worldly pursuits, one could still find an ideal place in real life where it was possible to find peace of mind. Thus, the theory behind "reclusion of the mind." The prerequisite for attaining such reclusion of the mind was to sever all ties with society, retaining only those at the most basic level—that of the family. This presence of family constitutes the fundamental difference between the recluse and the Buddhist monk or Daoist priest, and also explains why the recluse was able to move freely between the realms of the real and the ideal. In the prose-poem *Returning Home*, by Tao Yuanming (Tao Qian; 365–427) of the Eastern Jin dynasty, the recluse shares his paradise with his wife and children, but in Tao's famous fable *Record of the Peach Blossom Spring*, the fisherman enters alone the world inside the Peach Blossom Spring, a fictitious spiritual realm to which there is no return.[27] In this respect, when the image of reclusive family life is combined with a fantastic landscape, as in *Riverbank*, the landscape is immediately transformed into a symbolic representation of the ideal world existing in the mind of the scholar-recluse and his lofty personality. The landscape behind the recluse therefore functions in a similar way as the calligraphic screen at the back of the pavilion in which he sits reflecting upon his surroundings.



Such archetypal imagery can also be seen in the landscape paintings in the tenth-century tomb of Wang Chuzhi. The east wall of the eastern side chamber of the tomb is decorated with a wall painting, the upper tier of which displays a level-distance landscape that features soaring peaks rising at both ends of a broad river vista. On the lower tier is painted a long table on which are laid out daily utensils, such as a hat, mirror, vase, box, and fly whisk, belonging to the master of the house (fig. 22). This wall painting also combines the imagery of family life with that of wonderful landscape. It is worth noting that the landscape is depicted with dark borders at both ends, simulating the appearance of a screen frame and thus functioning similarly to the calligraphy screen in the scholar's pavilion in *Riverbank*. According to his epitaph, Wang Chuzhi sought a life of seclusion in the countryside after he fell from power.[28] The landscape "screen" in the wall painting of Wang's tomb depicts exactly the intention of its occupant, to live a life of reclusion. The combination of family life and reclusive landscape in a single image is essentially identical with the image of reclusion depicted in *Riverbank*. Although Wang Chuzhi's tomb is located in Hebei Province, its lavish bas-relief decoration is not typical of contemporary tombs in northern China. We may, however, observe close stylistic similarities in the decoration of this tomb with that of large tombs in southern China, such as the mausolea of the two Southern Tang sovereigns in Nanjing.[29] If Wang's tomb does in fact have this connection with the southeastern region of China, the resemblance of its image of reclusive landscape to the landscape of the *jiangshan gaoyin* theme popular in Southern Tang landscape painting does not seem in the least accidental.

Figure 22 Unidentified artist (10th century), wall painting, 924. From the side chamber of the tomb of Wang Chuzhi, Quyang, Hebei Province

Shih
Positioning
Riverbank



When Northern Song landscape painters decided to concentrate on the rational and majestic landscape of the four seasons or the landscape of travel, they renounced further exploration into the fantastic nature of mind landscape. Although painters of the Southern Song returned to the theme of reclusive landscape, the focus of their attention had by that time shifted toward the observation and contemplation by the recluse of his natural environment, which was imbued with a sense of romantic lyricism. It was no longer their aim to reconstruct the inner world of the recluse on the picture surface. Toward the end of the Southern Song, this situation underwent some major changes, and the literati painters who lived under the Mongol regime of the Yuan dynasty (1272–1368) eventually brought about a radical transformation in landscape subject matter. This generation of painters was forced to withdraw from the political arena, and the experience of a life in reclusion impelled them to redirect the "expressive intention" of landscape painting toward the creation of images of the landscape of the mind. *Dwelling in the Floating Jade Mountains* (fig. 23), by Qian Xuan (ca. 1235–before 1307), in the Shanghai Museum, is an early example of such an effort. This scroll may be viewed as a version in horizontal format of the type of *jiangshan gaoyin* landscape represented in *Riverbank*. Its fore-, middle-, and background are arranged in a horizontal sequence from right to left, with the mountain dwelling of the recluse located in the central part of the painting. The depiction of the landscape in this painting is clumsy, and therefore very unrealistic. But the brightly colored towering rock formations that make up the ridges and peaks in the latter section of the picture create fantastic, fairyland-like scenery. Although Qian Xuan has not situated the recluse within his landscape, his presence is felt and confirmed by the content of the poem Qian inscribed on the painting. In this respect, *Dwelling in the Floating Jade Mountains* resorts once again to the *jiangshan gaoyin* landscape tradition.[30]

The landscape of reclusion created by literati painters of the Yuan elevated the theme of mind landscape to an entirely new level. This kind of landscape painting even became fashionable. A fine example is the Nelson-Atkins Museum's *Pleasant Summer in a Mountain Retreat* (fig. 24) by Sheng Mou (active ca. 1330–69), a professional painter from Hangzhou.[31] While the architectural structure of the waterside pavilion in which the recluse is seated is quite sophisticated, the location of the pavilion, with the stream in front and the mountain behind, follows the basic scheme used in *Riverbank*. Moreover, Sheng Mou makes use of the Li Cheng-Guo Xi idiom to construct the meandering motion of the mountain in the distance, thereby defining the content of the fantastic inner landscape of the recluse. Paintings of this period on the theme of dwelling in mountains, however, reveal fundamental differences from such Southern Tang thematic archetypes as *Riverbank*. One of these is the pavilion featuring the seated recluse, in which the original image of the recluse's family life is replaced by the independent image of the recluse, accompanied at

Figure 23 Qian Xuan (ca.1235–before 1307), *Dwelling in the Floating Jade Mountains*. Detail. Handscroll, ink and color on paper, 11 ⅝ × 38 ⅛ in. (29.6 × 98.7 cm). Shanghai Museum

Figure 24 Sheng Mou (active ca.1330–69), *Pleasant Summer in a Mountain Retreat.* Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 47 5/8 × 22 3/8 in. (120.9 × 57cm). The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City

Figure 25 Wang Meng (ca.1308–1385), *Dwelling in Seclusion in Summer Mountains*, dated 1354. Hanging scroll, ink on silk, 22 ⅜ × 13 ½ in. (56.8 × 34.2 cm). Courtesy of Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

most by a servant. An empty thatched pavilion or an unoccupied, tranquil house, symbolizing the presence of its lofty inhabitant, often substitutes for the pavilion featuring the image of the recluse. In consequence, the surrounding landscape is a far purer symbol of the inner world of the recluse.

Nevertheless, the "expressive intention" revealed in *Riverbank* was once again enthusiastically revived in the work of the Yuan painter Wang Meng (ca. 1308–1385). In his *Dwelling in Seclusion in Summer Mountains* of 1354 (fig. 25), in the Freer Gallery of Art, Wang not only makes use of the basic *jiangshan gaoyin* imagery, but he also adds a residential structure to the left of the riverside pavilion in which the recluse is seated. In this dwelling his wife is seen holding her young son by the hand. The painter thus reintroduces family life into the imagery of the landscape of lofty reclusion. This remarkable act on the part of Wang Meng was quite probably inspired by his experience of Southern Tang landscape paintings portraying lofty reclusion amid rivers and mountains. The influence of this tradition opened the way for his many later depictions of fantastic mind landscapes. In this regard, Wang Meng's landscape of reclusion is obviously archaistic in inclination, an archaism that does not point toward the tenth-century northern landscape tradition of Jing Hao and Guan Tong, but finds its origin in the *jiangshan gaoyin* landscapes of the Southern Tang.[32]

* * *

In its style, *Riverbank* not only displays obvious tenth-century characteristics, but its expressive intention is also closely connected to *jiangshan gaoyin* landscape, which rose to prominence within the cultural environment of the Southern Tang court. If we regard *Riverbank* as an early model of this category of landscape, it seems reasonable to attribute the painting to the most important landscape painter active at the Southern Tang court, Dong Yuan. Meanwhile, our interest in this work does not lie only in whether it provides us with another reliable painting by Dong Yuan, or in what we may or may not learn about a previously unknown aspect of Dong Yuan's painting style. Its importance also lies in the rediscovery in painting history of this category of landscape, one that portrays lofty reclusion amid rivers and mountains. In defining a category of painting within traditional Chinese painting history, it is not enough to search for representative examples of the category; we must also place it within the creative activity of great masters. Identification of *Riverbank* as a representative work of *jiangshan gaoyin* landscape and attribution of the painting to Dong Yuan are precisely the necessary steps in this process of recovering and redefining a long-neglected landscape painting category. Extant information on the collection and documentation of *River-*

bank indicates that this process was initiated toward the end of the thirteenth century.[33] Once this category of landscape was rediscovered, it came to play an influential role in the creation of landscape painting by Wang Meng.

The significance of *jiangshan gaoyin* landscape in the study of Chinese painting also lies in the archetype it provided for the mind landscape paintings that flourished after the Yuan period. It is impossible to have an adequate understanding of the extent of this tradition's influence on Wang Meng or on landscape painters of later periods if we limit our analysis to the transmission of formal elements, for instance, the use of a particular type of mountain form or the reintroduction of scenes of family life. In his study of the tradition of the landscape of lofty reclusion, Wang Meng recaptured the image of a fantastic landscape of the mind that is located somewhere between the real and the ideal. This was also the focus of attention of later painters in their study of Wang Meng's landscape of reclusion. Seen from this point of view, the significance of the archetype provided by *Riverbank* is not a formal one, but lies in the transmission of an "expressive intention," in this case the ideal of reclusion amid rivers and mountains. This transmission of expressive intention, though seemingly abstract, operates as a valid and significant clue in our continuing construction of Chinese painting history.

1. Yang Renkai, "Yemaotai Liao mu chutu guhua de shidai ji qita" (Old Paintings Unearthed from the Liao Tomb at Yemaotai), in *Liaoningsheng bowuguan cangbaolu* (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Co. Ltd., 1994), pp. 133–34.

2. Hebei Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Baoding Municipal Office of Cultural Relics, *Wudai Wang Chuzhi mu* (The Tomb of Wang Chuzhi of the Five Dynasties) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1998).

3. Jiang Zhaoshen, "Cong huajia goutu yinian laikan Zhongguo shanshuihua de jiuyou jinzhan" (The Development of Landscape Painting in Terms of the Study of the Painters' Concepts of Composition), in *Shuangxi duhua suibi* (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1977), p. 103.

4. Cf. Wen Fong, *Summer Mountains: The Timeless Landscape* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1975), pp. 2–5.

5. Kiyohiko Munakata, *Ching Hao's "Pi-fa-chi": A Note on the Art of Brush*, Artibus Asiae Supplementum 31 (Ascona, Switzerland: Artibus Asiae, 1974), p. 14.

6. Liu Daochun, *Wudai minghua buyi* (A Supplement to Famous Paintings of the Five Dynasties), in *Zhongguo shuhua quanshu*, vol. 1 (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 1993), pp. 460–64.

7. Guo Ruoxu, *Tuhua jianwen zhi* (Experiences in Painting), *juan* 3, in *Zhongguo shuhua quanshu*, vol. 1, p. 478.

8. Ibid., p. 483.

9. Mi Fu, *Huashi* (History of Painting), in *Zhongguo shuhua quanshu*, vol. 1, p. 979.

10. Ibid., p. 989. For an excellent discussion of Mi Fu's study of Gu Kaizhi, see Hironobu Kohara, "Notes on Mi Fu's

Hua-shih," *Taida Journal of Art History* 4 (1997), pp. 91–107.

11. Hironobu Kohara, "Tung Ch'i-ch'ang's Connoisseurship in T'ang and Sung Painting," in Wai-kam Ho and Judith G. Smith, eds., *The Century of Tung Ch'i-ch'ang 1555–1636* (Kansas City: The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 1992), pp. 94–101.

12. For a more detailed study of Dong Qichang's *Mountains after Rain*, see Shih Shou-chien, "Luelun Dong Qichang *Yuncang yusan tu*," *Han Mo* 32 (September, 1992), pp. 66–75.

13. Shen Gua, *Mengxi bitan, Sibu congkan* edition (Taipei: The Commercial Press, 1966), *juan* 17, p. 8b.

14. The Liaoning handscroll is illustrated in Richard M. Barnhart, *Marriage of the Lord of the River*, Artibus Asiae Supplementum 27 (Ascona, Switzerland: Artibus Asiae, 1970), fig. 4.

15. The painting is recorded in Emperor Huizong's catalogue; see *Xuanhe huapu, Zhongguo shuhua quanshu*, vol. 2, p. 84.

16. See Wai-kam Ho et al., *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting: The Collections of the Nelson-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, and The Cleveland Museum of Art*, exh. cat. (Cleveland: The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1980), pp. 18–19.

17. See Wen C. Fong, James C.Y. Watt, et al., *Possessing the Past: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei*, exh. cat. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and National Palace Museum, 1996), pl. 59.

18. Wu Hung, *The Double Screen: Medium and Representation in Chinese Painting* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 176–77.

19. *Xuanhe huapu*, pp. 73, 84, 91.

20. Chen Pao-chen, "Nantang Zhongzhu de zhengji yu wenhua jianshe" (The Political and Cultural Achievements of the Zhongzhu emperor [Li Jing] of the Southern Tang Dynasty), *Taida Journal of Art History* 3 (1996), p. 62.

21. Mi Fu, *Huashi*, p. 981; *Xuanhe huapu*, p. 114.

22. *Xuanhe huapu*, p. 99.

23. Ibid., p. 95.

24. Guo Xi and Guo Si, *Linquan gaozhi* (Lofty Ambitions among Groves and Streams), in *Zhongguo shuhua quanshu*, vol. 1, p. 500.

25. For Wang Wei's and Lu Hong's paintings, see Robert Harrist, *Painting and Private Life in Eleventh-Century China: Mountain Villa by Li Gonglin* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), figs. 14.1–5, 15.1–10.

26. *Xuanhe huapu*, p. 91.

27. For a concise introduction of these two works by Tao Yuanming, see Richard M. Barnhart, *Peach Blossom Spring: Gardens and Flowers in Chinese Painting*, exh. cat. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1983), pp. 15–16.

28. *Wudai Wang Chuzhi mu*, pp. 65–66.

29. Ibid., p. 55.

30. Shih Shou-chien, "Eremitism in Landscape Paintings by Ch'ien Hsuan (ca. 1235–before 1307)," Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1984, pp. 167–73.

31. James Cahill, *Hills Beyond a River: Chinese Painting of the Yüan Dynasty, 1279–1368* (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1976), pp. 67–68.

32. For a discussion of the relationship between Wang Meng's works and paintings from the tenth century, see Richard Vinograd, "New Light on Tenth-Century Sources for Landscape Painting Styles of the Late Yuan Period," in *Chūgoku kaigashi ronshū: Suzuki Kei sensei kanreki kinen* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kobunkan, 1981), pp. 2–30.

33. See Richard M. Barnhart, *Along the Border of Heaven: Sung and Yüan Paintings from the C.C. Wang Family Collection* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1983), p. 37.

Jerome
Silbergeld

The Referee Must Have a Rule Book: Modern Rules for an Ancient Art

If there is one single thing I feel certain about after reading and listening to all the differences of opinion about *Riverbank* (Cahill, fig. 1), it is that most of us would like to leave this debate knowing who won, who is right—when this work was painted, and who painted it. Certainly, one of the things that accounts for the popularity of modern sports, to introduce an analogy I will use throughout my remarks, is that when the game is over, the audience leaves with the satisfaction of knowing who has won—may the better team win, on a level playing field, fair and square, when it's over, it's over, and all that. In reality, the "better team" may not always win, but there is always a winner. And this is facilitated by the singular fact that the rules of sport are standardized so that the play, by and large, is fair. Over time, of course, the rules are subject to change, and these changes come in two kinds: rules themselves may be rewritten—as in basketball, with the elimination of zone defense, the introduction of the 24-second shot clock, the 3-point shot. Less obviously but no less important, modifications are made *in effect* through changes in enforcement, with subjective interpretation of the written rules becoming stricter or looser in practice. Players today, for example, regularly get away with what in earlier times would consistently have been called as violations—for traveling, palming the ball, manhandling opponents, and so forth. As discussant for this session of the symposium, I could come before you today in a referee's striped shirt with a whistle around my neck, but first let me tell you what any referee has that I don't have is a rule book that all the players respect and play by. In Chinese connoisseurship, there is no rule book. We do have rules, and many years

Jerome Silbergeld served as the discussant for the morning session of the symposium.

Opposite Attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), *Riverbank*. Detail. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 87 × 42 ⅞ in. (221 × 109 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Ex. Coll.: C.C. Wang Family. Promised Gift of the Oscar L. Tang Family.

of patient scholarly effort have been spent trying to establish appropriate rules, but we do not all play according to the same rules.

What we do have in common, as I shall elaborate on later, is paradigms, but that is a different matter. As James Cahill has already said, "in painting style, not everything is possible at any given time,"[1] and I am sure we all agree. That is a paradigm we all work with, but we do not agree on what *is* possible nor is there a rule for determining this. And as Wen Fong states, "When a copyist or a forger imitates or appropriates an ancient style, he easily captures its basic form elements or motifs and compositional patterns, but in combining such elements or motifs to create a new effect or to find the solution to a new problem, he inevitably creates form relationships and visual structures more characteristic of his own time."[2] We will perhaps all agree with this paradigm also, and yet it, too, is insufficient for producing consistent rules and a clear consensus on authenticity in distant periods like the tenth century and on anomalous works like *Riverbank*.

Let me summarize some of the different rules that have been followed by connoisseurs engaged in this *Riverbank* controversy. C.C. Wang, from whose collection this work comes to the Metropolitan Museum, bases his connoisseurial judgment primarily on brushwork. A life spent practicing brushwork himself allows him to find the brush habits of particular artists recognizable. It is like voice, he tells us. Painting is like opera, combining voice and words, brushwork and composition, and, like opera, the words may be dreadful but it is the voice that counts. Fong does not reject these terms, but he seeks to ground his observations in something more objective, through an analysis of "form relationships and visual structures" and the way these are established both on the picture plane and the ground plane.[3] This approach is particularly appropriate for the long transitional period that stretches from the Tang (618–907) through the Yuan (1272–1368) dynasty, which he proposes as a *general rule* leads from an earlier period when forms were assembled additively to a later time when artists discovered how to merge these forms in a visually unified manner. In analyzing works in this fashion, however, there is no guarantee that viewers will share a common conclusion, and even Fong's own conclusions have evolved over time. When I was one of his students, in the late 1960s, we understood him to believe that a work like Guo Xi's (ca. 1000–ca. 1090) *Early Spring* (Fong, fig. 14), which we now all regard as a masterpiece of eleventh-century painting and a milestone for the art historian, was too unified in form to fit the period, and we crafted our seminar papers accordingly. So, too, the Xu Daoning (ca. 970–1051/52) scroll, *Fishermen* (Shih, fig. 3), in the Nelson-Atkins Museum. Of course, his conclusions have evolved as those of any good historian or scientist must, and he has brought to the Metropolitan's collection many fine works he once considered out of bounds, including a Guo Xi

painting formerly in the Crawford collection.[4] My main point is that Wen Fong's rules have not changed. But I am not sure, either, that they have been interpreted consistently enough by various scholars to produce a level playing field or that they are subscribed to consistently enough to constitute a set of commonly held rules. Whereas Fong regards the spatial structure of *Riverbank* as additive — simple, essentially — and appropriate to its attributed time period, James Cahill, quite clearly, does not agree, viewing the painting instead as structured along the convoluted organizational principles of Dong Qichang (1555–1636), first introduced in the early seventeenth century.

Setting forth a rather different standard, Cahill rejects brushwork as a sufficient criterion, and, like Fong, takes structure as his guide, but with a difference: he relies especially on the descriptive intent of the original, which in the hands of the copyist will lead inevitably to mistakes and misreadings that tend toward incoherence, arbitrary mannerisms, ambivalence and ambiguities, and unnatural effects:

> *My firm conviction, after many years of doing this, is that brushwork apart from its representational value or effect is virtually useless as a criterion of authenticity — the C.C. Wang hand-of-the-artist argument, personal handwriting etc. I mean — while the "good"* (= *authentic, for present purpose*) *painting will always be the one in which the brushstrokes, lines, etc. best perform their descriptive function. That has proven true for me so consistently that I'm ready to make a rule of it. The point is that the original artist is principally concerned with depicting something … while the copyist isn't.*[5]

In discussing different rules or the varying application of rules, I do not mean to suggest a total lack of concurrence or a significant lack of progress as a scholarly discipline. On the contrary, we can look back at earlier views with some assurance of the "superior" status of our modern vantage point. Of Dong Qichang, whose seventeenth-century views were a kind of orthodoxy adhered to well into the present era, Richard Barnhart has written caustically but most tellingly,

> *Dong had difficulty distinguishing between Tang, Song, Yuan, and Ming paintings. He ascribed Ming paintings to the Song, Yuan paintings to the Five Dynasties, and Song paintings to the Tang. He confused Wu Zhen with Juran, Fan Kuan with Li Cheng, and numerous obscure painters of later times with Li Gonglin. There was no room in Dong's mind for minor or unknown masters, and no interest on his part in the actual historical associations and context of any painting. Each work he came across became a small piece in the fictive history he was constantly inventing, to be used by him in the same unhistorical but privately creative way the past was used in his own painting and calligraphy.*[6]

To be sure then, our problems with *Riverbank* are not new, but, with an accumulation of historical evidence, we are more capable of addressing them than our predecessors were. It is perhaps this weight of

evidence that produces our current predicament. James Cahill once lamented in a letter to Maxwell Hearn (since published), "Despair. One imagines that once the other person is made to see the significant differences, no doubt could remain about which is original and which copy; but evidently it isn't so."[7] There is an alternative to such despair, and that is to relish our intellectual diversity, to revel in it. Indeed, nothing better serves the continuing advancement of our knowledge than the kind of intellectual competition we are engaged in here. The open exchange of opinion and the kind of venue that the Metropolitan Museum has established on this occasion constitute the best pathway toward improving our state of understanding. The whole field of Chinese art study has profited for several decades now by such frank debate. Whatever doubts I might harbor about *Riverbank*, I commend the Metropolitan Museum for having acquired it and brought it into the public domain. The purposes of a museum are not the same as those of an academic institution, but they greatly overlap and mutually support each other, and in the quest for deeper understanding—for paradigms and rules to guide us—I believe this acquisition will serve its purpose. Academicians can well afford to indulge in delay; I always stress to my students, keep an open mind, develop a rhetoric of tentativeness, do not draw unnecessarily firm conclusions, and take pleasure in the uncertainties in which this field abounds. But that is an academic perspective that differs from the practical one faced by a museum, for which, when it has the option to acquire a painting, a deferred judgment is often no option at all. Thus, while this symposium offers everyone the chance to offend long-time colleagues, there will be no booing allowed (except that, in the time-honored fashion, you *may* boo the referee). The referee, however, while he has an obligation to offend everyone equally, is not also the scorekeeper. Even if I am to keep up the guise of "refereeing" this discussion—by commenting on the participants' remarks rather than by entering the competition myself and introducing one more set of remarks about the painting—still the question of "who won?" is not going to be settled by any one person's judgment, and certainly not by mine. For now, you will have to judge for yourselves, and we obviously will not leave here all of the same mind, nor should we.

* * *

Connoisseurship is a particularly challenging enterprise. Not one but two paradoxes have been noted in this peculiar business of reconstructing the past in the context of the determined efforts of forgers to confuse matters and the less determined but equally confusing impact of copyists. One of these paradoxes has to do with style and authenticity, the other with style and theory, or one might say image and text. The

first, as noted by Wen Fong, was formulated by the late Max Loehr: "The authenticity question results in a true paradox: (1) Without knowledge of styles, we cannot judge the authenticity of individual works, and (2) without convictions about authenticity, we cannot form concepts of style."[8] In other words, in recreating the history of style, general knowledge and specific knowledge are mutual prerequisites, each needed to attain the other. In seeking a way out of this dilemma, scholars have often resorted to texts to guide them on questions of image, but let us note Kiyohiko Munakata's cautionary words: "Correctness of interpretation of a certain Chinese passage often depends upon correct understanding of the circumstance in which the passage was written. There exists a vicious cycle that in order to draw a general picture of the artistic development of China from the written material, we have to interpret the material with our general understanding of the artistic development of China."[9] That is, we have to see the art in order to really "see" the text. None of this helps us in our misery; it only describes our plight.

If we look at early texts that mention Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), we find sufficient material to support the authenticity of *Riverbank*, but we also find sufficient material to impeach it. One thing that all the evidence demonstrates is that Dong Yuan was not regarded as a foremost artist by the judges of his own time, and not because he was obscure or because his paintings were unknown. While good enough to be called upon to paint for his emperor, it remained for historical standards to change, radically, before he enjoyed a great reputation in later times. We are reminded that reputations are relative, hence manufactured things. Dong was apparently best known in his own time for the kind of precise, colored painting that his later army of admirers disparaged, and not for the style that his later critics so greatly admired.[10] And while the Song imperial painting catalogue *Xuanhe huapu* speaks of the "heroic vigor" of his brushwork," his "perilously towering peaks," his "serried ranges and precipitous cliffs,"[11] Dong's first great champion, Mi Fu (1052–1107), wrote that he "was not a skillful painter of towering peaks."[12] Most scholars today acknowledge that we have no original, representative works of Dong Yuan: We know his "typical" style only through copies, while *Riverbank*, at best, is presented as early and atypical, absent the brush technique — the "hemp-fiber" texture stroke — that was his stylistic signature for later centuries of admirers (Shih, figs. 7, 15). My question to all is, *Riverbank* aside, what should we expect in our search for the original Dong Yuan? Maybe he was not all that good a painter. Guo Ruoxu, admittedly, called him an "excellent" or "good" painter (*shan*), but he said that of many artists and he had much better things to say of many others.[13] Maybe, like our ancestors in the Olduvai Gorge, he was simply good genetic material out of which later material could eventually be fashioned. And with *Riverbank* in mind, perhaps lowered expectations and a tempered rhetoric are more appropriate to its assessment. When Sherman Lee writes disappointedly of the

"washboard effect" of its wave pattern and its "insubstantial" forms,[14] and when James Cahill writes that a "good early artist would not have permitted such visual confusion,"[15] they may be (in part, at least) responding to misplaced expectations of high quality. Structural anachronisms, of course, are another matter and we must deal with that, but perhaps we would get more here if we expected less. Between the poles of the question—"*Riverbank:* Tenth-Century Masterpiece or Modern Forgery?"—posed by Wen Fong in his essay in the present volume, I would like to suggest there is plenty of wiggle room.[16]

Indeed, inflated expectations and appraisals can lead in surprising directions and set art history on a wobbly course. Richard Barnhart has written of *Riverbank* that "its importance to the history of Chinese landscape painting can scarcely be overstated"[17] and that it is "one of the treasures of world art."[18] Strangely, then, in Barnhart's recent chapter on Five Dynasties and Song painting in *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting*, this painting goes entirely unmentioned by him.[19] More strangely, in his book *Along the Border of Heaven*, Barnhart makes Dong the "leading landscape master" in the Painting Academy of the Southern Tang and turns the academy painter Zhao Gan (active ca. 960–75) into his "faithful student and follower."[20] In the book *Along the Riverbank*, which accompanies the present exhibition, Fong follows this formulation while Hearn does not.[21] Since historically Dong Yuan's distinguishing social characteristic was his scholar-amateur status, which made him an eligible model for later socially exclusive amateur artists, his radical transformation into a leading court artist by Barnhart and Fong highlights the historical revisionism that has remade Dong Yuan's reputation time and again. Most decidedly, Dong Yuan has been known through the ages not as a hireling artist but as a scholar-official—assistant administrator of the imperial (North or Rear) park according to Guo Ruoxu, chief park administrator according to Shen Gua (1030–1093).[22] That he might have held both administrative ranks, in succession, is surely not out of the question. And although this position has repeatedly been called a "minor" one[23] or even representing a token title, this too is questionable when one considers historically both the physical scope and the symbolic value of Chinese royal parks. That he might have held all three of these positions (assistant administrator, chief administrator, and court painter) seems also not impossible when one considers the fluidity of court rank and the ascendant position of painters at court, first in the Southern Tang dynasty (937–75) and subsequently in the Northern Song (960–1127).[24] So, in short, the textual evidence provides little certainty.

In Barnhart's support, Guo Ruoxu, writing about 1070, has left us a well-known and unchallenged anecdote showing that Dong Yuan painted at least once on royal command, in the year 947.[25] But the true impetus for Barnhart's assertions that Dong Yuan was a leading court painter comes directly from the signature on *Riverbank* (fig. 1), which, if authentic, would confirm that Dong Yuan obeyed the royal command

Figure 1 Attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), *Riverbank*. Detail. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 87 × 42 ⅞ in. (221 × 109 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Ex. Coll.: C.C. Wang Family. Promised Gift of the Oscar L. Tang Family.

repeatedly. This signature reads "Painted by the Assistant Administrator of the Imperial (Rear) Park, by Royal Servitor (*chen*) Dong Yuan." In the list of questions about *Riverbank*, great emphasis must be focused on the signature itself. James Cahill has written that "to admit *Riverbank* into the small canon of believably signed, early Chinese paintings would allow us — or oblige us — to rewrite our histories."[26] Yet it is not only stylistic history that is affected by the authenticity question here, but the very social underpinnings of Chinese painting history as well. The signature's authenticity would require a rewriting of the status of Dong Yuan, traditionally hallowed as standing at the front of the scholar-amateur lineage, yet who purportedly signs his name here as only a court painter would do.

Regarding the authenticity of this inscription, C.C. Wang concludes that "the ink of the signature has penetrated the silk and the ink tone is harmonious with that of the painting. In my opinion, there can be no doubt that Dong himself painted and signed this work."[27] Others have been more doubtful and readier to separate the judgment of the painting from its signature. Barnhart, for example, has written that "there is no way to confirm or to deny the authenticity of the signature."[28] Hearn concludes that "no reliable signatures of Dong Yuan survive to corroborate the authenticity of this inscription," but he dates the inscription to "no later than the early Song period" based on a stylistic analysis that places it within the eighth-century manner of Yan Zhenqing (709–785) as practiced by such later artists as Yan's eleventh-century champion, Ouyang Xiu (1007–1072).[29] To other doubts about the signature, I would add this reservation, that the use of Yan Zhenqing's style might be about a century premature here, Yan's star not yet having risen high, and certainly not at this southern court. *Riverbank* is presumably and peculiarly dedicated in Yan-style script to the Southern Tang emperor Li Jing (r. 943–61), whose son and successor on the throne, Li Yu (r. 961–75), found Yan's calligraphy crude and objectionable — in Li Yu's own words, "like an uncouth farmer facing forward with arms folded and legs spread apart."[30] Whatever irresolution remains about the signature, the appeal to different sets of rules is evident here. Which rule book should we go by? The book of materials and techniques that C.C. Wang uses? Stylistic history, which Hearn employs? Social content and context? Can we take a bit of each? Maybe we can, but what balance do we bring to bear on the contrary results that emerge? To resort again to sports analogy, the referee who calls traveling violations by the standards of the 1950s will not be around for long in the age of the slam-dunk. Some consistency of approach would go a long way, but how do we come by it?

The seals on the painting are another feature whose implications extend beyond mere authentication. I appreciate Maxwell Hearn's judicious approach to the authenticity question: "This evidence," he writes "is necessarily circumstantial. Signatures and seals may be added to a work of art at any time as a way of

enhancing its pedigree.... This said, once the painting's period of execution has been established through stylistic analysis, other sources of evidence may be judiciously employed to fill out the painting's likely history of transmission."[31] Of the seven seals ascribable to the period from the late Song through the early Ming (1368–1644) dynasty, only two, according to Hearn, have been provided with a "convincing match" from other, reliable works, namely, those of Zhao Yuqin, in the late thirteenth century (Shih, fig. 1, the seal at the bottom), and the imperial Ming half-seal, a century later (Hearn, "Comparative Physical Analysis," fig. 22).[32] Seal forgery remains a possibility for the other seals, but so too does the possibility of forged seals being placed on an early authentic painting in order to enhance its credibility and status. A careful examination of the early seal impressions for patterns of silk penetration and surface wear bolsters Hearn's conclusion that the Zhao Yuqin and Ming inventory seals "[support] the painting's existence in the thirteenth century."[33] Yet, the fact that all the other purportedly early seals have no demonstrated match elsewhere and are possibly more recent in date leaves lingering the question of how and when such patterns of wear were established.

The Zhao Yuqin seal is the most interesting of all the seals, for it is the only source of our name for this painting, *Riverbank*. The documents associated with Zhang Daqian's (1899–1983) acquisition of the painting, supposedly in 1938 or 1939, indicate that he called it *The Water Village*, not *Riverbank*.[34] Subsequent inquiry based on Zhao Yuqin's seal led to a list of Zhao's collected paintings recorded by his contemporary Zhou Mi (1232–1298), where a painting entitled *Riverbank* by Dong Yuan is listed, and this title was "restored."[35] Based on this, Wen Fong also claims the painting for Wang Ziqing's (active ca. 1290–1310) collection, just a few years later, on the basis of a poem by Wang's friend Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322) entitled "For Dong Yuan's *Riverbank*," which Fong translates in *Along the Riverbank*.[36] But it must be noted that the list of Zhao Yuqin's collected works includes a second scroll ascribed to Dong Yuan, *Mist and Layered Ranges* (*Yanlan chongdie*), which might well have provided us the missing title for this composition.[37] In fact, however, neither of these two titles refers to the Metropolitan painting, as correctly noted elsewhere by Barnhart, Cahill, and Ankeny Weitz: Zhou Mi's list ends with the clear statement that "the calligraphies and paintings above are short handscrolls [*duanjuan*] only and [Zhao's] larger ones [*dazhe*] are not included in this enumeration."[38] So the title is specious, and there is no reason to conclude that any historical references to a Dong Yuan painting named *Riverbank*, such as Zhao Mengfu's poem, coincide with the Metropolitan painting.

On the other hand, this dissociation means that the work might have been discussed in historical texts by some other name without our being able to determine that fact today. Cahill's indictment "Count 11" —

that despite the many purportedly early seals on this painting there are no early textual references to the work[39] — does not really impeach it: the painting might once have had some other title, now removed, and any number of references to it under some untraceable name might still exist. Our continuing reference to this work as *Riverbank* is now simply a matter of convenience. (Regarding all the action surrounding this painting's title, the referee here is going to call a double foul and a jump ball.)

Richard Barnhart may have been the first to deal with this painting thematically, and for this occasion Fong, Hearn, and Shih Shou-chien have developed it further. This is a theme that has been central to Shih's own research since the time of his dissertation, which was an exemplary study of "lofty reclusion amid rivers and mountains" (*jiangshan gaoyin*) in the Yuan period. As you know, the referee calls players for fouls; he doesn't shout, "Good play!" While I cannot resist applauding these players for setting up this shot, I have to question a few of their moves. Through their defensive strategy, questions already raised about style have been deftly turned into an interpretation of artistic expression, and that, in turn, has been rapidly passed into a conclusion about iconography. What Cahill has seen in the hilltops of the upper right of the scroll as "sloppily executed, as if it were unfinished or finished off quickly," as "essentially unreadable," as murky and "anachronistic,"[40] and what he has defended against as a *connoisseurial* problem, is pressed forward by the pro-Dong Yuan offensive as an expressive statement of the recluse-scholar theme (Shih, fig. 10). In Hearn's description, we are looking at a "gathering gloom," a "rising storm," an intense approaching squall that sweeps the trees and chops the waves and frightens a child in the upper story. But the gentleman, joined by his family and "protected by a transparent bamboo blind," "serenely faces the storm — a vivid metaphor for the political chaos sweeping across the land at this time" and "for the tenth-century ideal of finding in nature sanctuary from political chaos"[41] (Shih, figs. 9, 19).

I am watching this deft strategy with my whistle held tightly in my hand, pondering several aspects of its presentation. First of all, there is a piece of backcourt play peripheral to the main action for which I am not likely to stop the game, but: while I appreciate Shih's analysis of northern versus southern historiography,[42] to his suggestion that this theme of lofty reclusion is particularly southern, I wonder about the example of *A Chess Party in the Mountains* (Shih, fig. 4), excavated way up north in Liaoning Province, referred to by Shih in terms of style but not of theme,[43] yet identified by Fong as related to *Riverbank* in theme.[44] And what of the entire œuvre of Jing Hao (ca. 870–930), the devout recluse of Hong Valley who stood at the head of the entire lineage of northern monumental landscape painters, which Shih again discusses here in terms of formal qualities but not of theme? All right, a minor infraction perhaps. Second, is it not possible to view this painting less metaphorically, as less of an allegory of political crisis and instead

something closer to face value? Could we not, instead, regard it as merely portraying retirement to family and fields, happy and harmonious, perhaps done as a gift for the retiree? If that were the case, it might mean that the so-called approaching storm is nothing more than a depiction of the "obscure depths of the picture's evening light," which the Northern Song writer Shen Gua saw in Dong Yuan's paintings,[45] or an instance of Dong's "wind and rain over streams and valleys," as described in the *Xuanhe huapu*, statements that are innocent of politics.[46]

This more tepid interpretation would leave open several questions raised by the "Dong Yuan" signature, as to how the retirement theme is intended to relate to the emperor addressed in the signature as recipient of the painting. Surely the lowly servitor Dong Yuan did not paint this about own retirement, so the painting can hardly be self-expressive; the signature, if valid, would not allow for Fong's conclusion that *Riverbank* was "an embodied image of the artist's self."[47] And while early records tell us that Dong Yuan's royal boss (assuming that to be Li Jing) did indeed plan for his own future rural retirement,[48] can we imagine Dong Yuan blowing him there on the winds of a political storm? So, while still clutching my whistle and poised to use it, my third questions is: can we really be comfortable with the notion of this allegory of "political chaos," in Hearn's words, being depicted for and presented to a sitting emperor? Would that not be an inflammatory political critique, implying that the emperor and his court officials were all failing in their work, not up to the task of maintaining harmony in the state? We know what emperors wanted and expected to see from hireling painters at their courts. The late Northern Song emperor Huizong (r. 1101–25), facing a dire threat to dynastic stability, got from court artist Zhang Zeduan in his *Qingming Festival* scroll an unrealistically harmonious depiction of life in the capital city, one that took no note of the country's growing fiscal crisis, of corruption in high places, or of war-clouds on the horizon.[49] An earlier and contrary example, Zheng Xia's depiction of the impoverished citizens at the Anshang Gate of the capital city during the reign of Shenzong (r. 1068–85), was immediately understood for its provocative intent, and produced a furor at court that led to the artist's banishment to Guangdong (the whole event is too complex to describe here) and the disappearance of the painting. The notion that Dong Yuan, either as vice-director of the royal park or as court painter, would have produced something so politically sensitive rouses my suspicion and causes me to raise the whistle to my lips. But before I blow, let us get straight just what rules are being violated here. It is not so much the thematic interpretation of the image, which is perhaps overreaching but arguable, as it is the notion of Dong Yuan painting such a theme for his ruler. Unlike Wei Xian's (active ca. 960–75) painting of the Han-dynasty recluse Liang Hong (Liang Boluan; Shih, fig. 6), proposed by Fong, Hearn, and Shih as a parallel to this painting, *Riverbank*, as interpreted by them, could hardly have served as a

"recruitment" theme as Wei Xian's was likely meant to do, identifying worthies and "calling recluses" (*zhao yin*) to court. In short, the "political crisis" thesis and the dedicated inscription seem incompatible. The more credence one gives to the former, the less one is able to accept the latter, and it is the signature, primarily, that offends. Unintentionally, I think, the defenders of this thesis have impeached the purported authorship of the painting with their interpretation of its theme. But I am not going to whistle them down (traveling would be the call) because I think they have just passed the ball away to the other team.

But can the other team score? Note that for the "political storm" proponents the figures here all relate more or less to the theme. For Cahill, however, these figures are more a problem of genre and style, and for him "the family scene and the abundance of figures in *Riverbank* would be out of place in an early monumental landscape."[50] He writes that "figure groups of this kind ... do not, judging from extant examples, belong in monumental landscape paintings, in which the landscape is itself the central subject and the figures are small and conventional."[51] The tendency of Zhang Daqian's landscapes to be "similarly overpopulated" and "overinhabited in just this way" is drawn upon for comparison.[52] Altogether, one counts fourteen figures here in a work that is over seven feet tall and almost half as wide.[53] Let us compare it with other credible works of the tenth and early eleventh centuries: in Guo Xi's *Early Spring*, dated 1072 (Fong, fig. 14), I count maybe ten figures; there are ten in the Nelson-Atkins' little "Li Cheng," which is only one-quarter the size;[54] fifteen in the Nelson-Atkins' Xu Daoning handscroll *Fishermen* (Shih, fig. 3), which has less than half the area of *Riverbank*;[55] perhaps twenty-three in the Nelson-Atkins' "Jing Hao," which may be the earliest of these designs;[56] and at least thirty-two in the Beijing *The Xiao and Xiang Rivers* handscroll (Shih, fig. 15), which most everyone regards as a "close copy" of a Dong Yuan original.[57] So if this is just a matter of mere arithmetic, *Riverbank* has fewer figures per area of painting than any of these works, far fewer in most cases, and not quite one-eighth the "figural density" of the *Xiao and Xiang* scroll.[58] But Cahill's charge is not just numerical and is predicated on the notion that the landscape here, and not the figures, is the "central subject" that defines the genre. Since to him there is at most a "quasi-narrative,"[59] this makes the figures—especially the family group—too active and "attention-drawing" for the monumental landscape genre in which they appear; again, Zhang Daqian's all-too "self-conscious" or "self-aware" figures are used for comparison.[60] On the other hand, Wei Xian's tenth-century depiction of Liang Hong and his wife Meng Guang as conspicuous figures within a monumental landscape (Shih, fig. 6) is dismissed by Cahill as a possible parallel to *Riverbank*'s figures because there are only these two figures in Wei Xian's painting and because the painting is said to represent a different genre.[61] Cahill's argument seems hard to undo because it is hard to find where it begins and where it ends; in short, its reasoning appears to me to

be circular. So as referee, I feel obliged to blow my whistle and call something like double-dribble—ball out of bounds.

At the other end of the court again, one more signature problem arises, which I will summarize briefly. Because *Riverbank* typifies neither of the two variant Dong Yuan styles already fixed in the modern imagination by documentary texts and extant copywork, namely, the blue-and-green style and the monochrome style executed with "hemp-fiber" texture lines and "moss" dots, a third variant has now been proposed for him, one both monochrome and compositionally dramatic but lacking brush lines. We could think of it perhaps as positioned somewhere between the other two. Beginning with Max Loehr's 1968 analysis, this variant has been explained as "early and still atypical" Dong Yuan.[62] Barnhart and Fong follow Loehr's suggestion.[63] But, in fact, the signature works against this logic. To be an "early" painting, it must have been painted by about 930, perhaps even earlier, and certainly not much later; the Southern Tang was not even founded by Li Bian until 937, a date that can no longer be considered all that early in Dong's career, and Li Jing did not ascend the throne for yet another six years, in 943. Moreover, by the time Dong Yuan had risen to the position of assistant administrator of the royal park as the inscription asserts, perhaps the highest official rank he was to attain, he was not likely to be young. In other words, the inscription suggests the painting is not early. So, too, does the interpretation of the theme: if this is an early Dong Yuan—and not too early—then the Southern Tang was also young, "a prosperous and relatively stable haven from unrest" in Wen Fong's words.[64] Where, then, is its imminent collapse? Conversely, the stylistic dating, if we were to accept it, could show that the interpretation of the theme is wrong. Clearly, there is confusion on the court. So, whistle. And buzzer.

It must be obvious by now that we have not yet looked at the central issue, that of style, so here we go into the final quarter. James Cahill writes about the "serious, in fact fatal structural flaws" and the "representational inconsistencies" of *Riverbank*, about its "visual confusion" that a "good early artist would not have permitted."[65] *Riverbank* is, he asserts, "more visually exciting than [an early picture] properly should be.... It is as if a Cézanne landscape were dropped in among a group of Claude Lorrains."[66] He writes that its lighting is "too dramatic and sophisticated."[67] In other words, it is at once too advanced in conception and too crude in execution. One example of this, already noted, is the upper right portion (Shih, fig. 10), which Cahill regards as "sloppily executed, as if it were unfinished or finished off quickly," perhaps meant "to be read as the murkiness of a rainstorm, but ... nonetheless anachronistic [for that]."[68] Others, however, have written to the contrary, regarding all this apparent confusion and inconsistency as hewing closely to early descriptions of Dong Yuan's distinctive interests in atmospherics ("peaks and ranges [that] emerge

and disappear; clouds and mist [that] now reveal, now obscure ... his dark valleys wild and distant ... rich in their sense of reality," to quote Mi Fu.)[69] Shih Shou-chien suggests that this part of the painting is structurally weak in ways that are consistent with the inability of artists in the tenth century to render an image of spatial unity.[70] While it is clear that the painting as a whole is broken into discontinuous ground planes, I read this upper section as depicting a single, consistent ground plane, receding to a rather low horizon, with a rising series of upper ridges left visible above mist-shrouded foothills that drop, implicitly, far down to the ground below. In other words, I read it neither as primitive and spatially fragmented, as Shih does, nor as crudely executed, as Cahill reads it. I find it convincing and quite lovely. Shih compares it tellingly to Guo Xi's *Early Spring* (Shih, fig. 11), where spatial depth is similarly emphasized by contrast with a closely juxtaposed middle-ground form (*shen yuan* in traditional Chinese terminology). But unlike Shih, comparing the distant views in these two paintings, I find *Riverbank* to be no less sophisticated and therefore not implicitly "earlier" than *Early Spring*.

Cahill critiques the section close by that joins the far distance to the foreground, writing that the "river winding out of the distance ... turns all but imperceptibly into a road with people walking on it," describing it as "*visually* continuous" despite the thatched houses that separate the road and the river and denouncing it as "visual confusion."[71] Sherman Lee strongly concurs.[72] Personally, I have no trouble with either the physical or the visual logic of these two natural passageways being conjoined as they are, whereby a level, watery terrain turns into an earthen rise, with the nexus marked by huts seen from above, over an embankment that cuts off their lower portion. Wen Fong calls Cahill's interpretation "a misreading of the scene,"[73] which reveals how subjective the very notion of visual reading really is. C.C. Wang has said to me, if I understood him correctly, that there is no water here, only one continuing earthen pathway. These different readings of the painting remind us of the difference between vision and perception. Here we have the case of a rule book that every would-be referee reads in a different way.

Sherman Lee writes of *Riverbank*, "The closer we look at the details, the vaguer and more insubstantial the forms and shapes become."[74] Cahill has referred to the structure of this landscape as "full of spongy, ambiguous forms and spatial contradictions,"[75] dominated by "vigorous diagonal thrusts and counterthrusts"[76] that are indebted to the innovations of Dong Qichang and indicative of a seventeenth-century date or later. You can see a good example of what he means if you follow the single contour line that descends from the base of a plateau just to the right of a pool in the midst of the waterfall (see detail, p. 148). The contour line drops right to the base of that pool, but a steeper line of descent from the same point on the plateau lands up far in front of the waterfall itself, having somehow traversed several other vertical

lines in the process and ultimately resulting in an ambiguous reading of spatial structure. The space above is impossibly compressed compared to the extension of space below. This is the kind of spatial ambiguity Dong Qichang loved to exploit; it became second nature to many of his followers, but served less of a purpose in their painting. Cahill scores a three-point shot in identifying this relationship. But how are we to read it historically? Is it a telltale post-Dong Qichang trait, or does it instead exemplify the kind of source from which Dong derived his mannerisms? What rule do we apply here? Cahill, consistent with the principles of his forebear Max Loehr, regards pre-Yuan painting as part of a steady progress toward visual naturalism, and the arbitrary structures and lighting effects of *Riverbank* have no place in this phase of Chinese painting's evolution. Although, to him, it is an "exceptionally fine" painting by Zhang Daqian's standards of production, "perhaps his finest," it is "sloppily executed" by tenth-century standards, "essentially unreadable."[77] "A good early artist would not have permitted such visual confusion," he tells us.[78] That claims a high standard for all Song painting, in principle, but is it really tenable in practice? Should the referee sustain or nullify this basket?

I would suggest that we have to look no farther than Guo Xi's *Early Spring* of 1072 (Fong, figs. 14, 15) to find an early work characterized by exaggerated lighting effects and impossible spatial structures. Consider the central span of earthen mountains that reaches upward to connect with the higher portion and the figures climbing steeply just to the left of this span. Either we have a natural arch that permits the passage of the travelers through this section, such as would be possible in the sandstone deserts of Arizona and Utah but not in the soft loess formations of Hebei, Shanxi, and Shaanxi, which the Guo Xi work describes, or we have a massive piece of spatial confusion about to confront these hapless travelers—a structure "hovering ambiguously," to use Cahill's description of *Riverbank*[79]—and perhaps a drastic artistic mistake. As if recognizing such a mistake but possessing the artistic genius required to turn it into a great dramatic success, Guo Xi covers the unjoinable mountain section in mist, even plunges the upper branches of nearby trees into sudden obscurity—a most striking effect of lighting and unlike any other I am familiar with. Actually, it all works, but not by Cahill's rules, if I understand them rightly. Fong writes of *Early Spring* in terms of the greater spatial continuity of that work in comparison with *Riverbank*,[80] but this portion of *Early Spring* is an example of extreme discontinuity. Cahill, I suspect, is well aware of this and attempts to forestall its application when he writes of *Riverbank*'s lighting, "This is not a deliberate and expressive manipulation of geological forms and their lighting, as in Guo Xi's *Early Spring*; it is the outcome of a lack of full control, and results in an effect of arbitrariness."[81] But how are we empowered to judge artistic intent and deliberation as opposed to actual results? When Cahill writes that the drama of Guo Xi's lighting is

different from that of *Riverbank*, I think that once again we are dealing more with subjective perceptions than with objectively measurable vision.[82]

Cahill's own description of *Riverbank* could be well applied to *Early Spring:* "volumetrically rendered earth masses that engage in vigorous diagonal thrusts and counterthrusts."[83] Imagining either work reversed left-to-right would reveal a striking similarity in composition and compositional forces, not exactly the same but with strongly shared characteristics. Nor is either of these works the earliest example of such compositional possibilities, for there are still earlier precedents, such as the well-known version of Lu Hong's (active ca. 713–42) famous eighth-century composition.[84] As for the question of how much thrusting is too much thrusting, I feel sure that there was already plenty of it in the Tang period, to judge from extant original designs like the mid-Tang screen panel recently recovered from a tomb in Fuping County, Shaanxi (Fong, fig. 9), from various eighth-century royal tombs, and from copies like the well-known *Minghuang's Journey to Shu*,[85] which I take as quite an accurate copy of a Tang original.

* * *

The words "scientific" and "anomaly" have come up several times in discussions of *Riverbank*. Cahill, Lee, and others believe that the painting is an anomaly by their expectations of tenth-century painting, and so they search for another, ultimately modern, alternative. Cahill writes, "Those who argue for *Riverbank* as an authentically tenth-century product say that we do not have enough safely datable tenth-century paintings to rule out any new contender for that period. I would reply that we do have, and we can."[86] The others do not seem to disagree. Wen Fong and others, using "scientific principles,"[87] seem intent on finding the right fit, down to the specific Dong Yuan niche, based on style and signature, without clarifying how that specific identification challenges our current paradigms for tenth-century painting style and patronage. In other words, despite the different rules by which they operate, Fong, Hearn, Shih, Cahill, and Lee all approach the problem of authentication by comparing *Riverbank* with works taken to be normative and by either accepting it or rejecting it on the basis of such comparisons. Theirs is a positivist paradigm, represented by the quotations at the outset of my remarks: Cahill's "in painting style, not everything is possible at any given time," and Fong's "When a copyist or a forger imitates or appropriates an ancient style … he inevitably creates form relationships and visual structures more characteristic of his own time." Similarly, Shih Shou-chien tells us that copyists and forgers "cannot re-create successfully the structural schemata of the original, since it is impossible for them to break loose completely from the structural concepts of their

own period."[88] But this assumes that we art historians are able to do this, to re-create ancient structural schemes, that we somehow have powers of visual discrimination superior to those of the forgers and that we can use our superior insights to unmask the forger—even though the forgers not only look but actually paint and thereby learn, like Zhang Daqian, who spent two and a half years at the Dunhuang Buddhist caves copying ancient paintings line by line. But is our connoisseurial "superiority" truly demonstrable? What this positivist paradigm does not prepare us for, it seems to me, is the possibility that some very fine forgeries might seem to us, in our imperfect state of knowledge, even more real, even more authentic, than the real thing; that some copywork or pastiche might seem even more true to its subject than the original. Conversely, we might misjudge some authentic but anomalous works that come along because they radically disrupt our current understanding of what is normal in, let us say, tenth-century painting style and because they require a thorough redefinition of that norm. Fully reconstructing the distant past might actually be impossible, forever beyond our ability.

I find the positivism that all these scholars share, despite their differences, particularly problematic for several reasons:

1. Our current understanding of tenth-century norms is based on such a narrow sample of information (Cahill's comments to the contrary) that our expectations may be artificially constricted compared to historical practices.

2. This entire period is understood to be one of rapid change, enormous experimentation, and revolutionary import, a period in which one might expect a far higher degree than usual of anomalous work, some of it helping to shape future trends, some of it falling by the wayside in terms of historical influence.

3. The textual evidence concerning Dong Yuan suggests that much of his work was anomalous in his own time and that later artists seized upon this to help redefine the norms of Chinese painting.

4. The early literary definitions of Dong Yuan suggest an artist who painted in a variety of modes, no one of which therefore can be regarded as individually normative; and perhaps because Dong's actual practice was only partially glimpsed by any one of those early authors, their descriptions are sometimes at significant variance with each other.

5. In any case, it is questionable whether a normative definition of period styles can account for each and every work in a given period without subscribing to a highly deterministic view of history and a narrow view of individual artistic behavior.

I realize that our humanities disciplines only partially parallel the sciences in methodology, but I believe that our field of Chinese painting studies is in the midst of what Thomas Kuhn in his now-classic work

The Structure of Scientific Revolutions has called a paradigm crisis phase, and it has been so continuously for the past five decades.[89] Kuhn structures scientific learning according to three levels: (1) facts, information; (2) the rules by which facts are gathered, organized, and evaluated; and (3) the overarching paradigms, models, or theoretical expectations by which those rules are developed and by which the entire pursuit is governed. Crisis emerges when the paradigms break down, an event triggered by new, anomalous information that seems to belie the operative rules. In Chinese art history, the positivist paradigms shaping our present discussion are confronted by the paradoxes formulated by Loehr and Munakata, quoted earlier here—Loehr telling us that without already authenticated works we cannot establish authenticity, Munakata advising us that without a verified knowledge of styles we cannot verify our understanding of textual descriptions of style. The speakers at this symposium agree on a general paradigm but cannot agree upon a set of rules to sustain it. Some of the scholars mentioned in Wen Fong's paper—Craig Clunas, Martin Powers, and Wu Hung, for example[90]—represent a portion of our discipline that has largely abandoned the field of stylistic history and connoisseurship for other methodological pursuits, driven to some degree by the shortcomings of the positivist paradigm. They are like players who have bolted the league to set up their own new teams with their own new set (or sets) of rules. I feel like a referee contracted to officiate in both leagues, engaged with the other teams and their activities, yet convinced that we cannot do without connoisseurship and its fruits. Our activity here is essential, but our rules are in conflict and inadequate, and I believe that we need a new or at least a modified paradigm. We need some equivalent to Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, a kind of Quantum Connoisseurship, to account for the inescapable truth of the Loehr and Munakata paradoxes, to inform us of and calibrate for us the limits of the knowable.[91] Our perceptions impinge upon everything we see and attempt to measure. We should continue to pursue the issues set before us here, and I applaud the efforts made—from Wen Fong's curatorial boldness in acquiring *Riverbank* to James Cahill's and Sherman Lee's sincere questioning of it; from Maxwell Hearn's and Shih Shou-chien's thematic extrapolations to the Metropolitan's careful laboratory research, persuasively analyzed by Hearn. But we must also keep a very open mind; there is too much we do not yet know to draw firm conclusions. We can deny uncertainty but we cannot escape it, and rather than being troubled by it, we should make it our ally and embrace it. As part of the Chinese aesthetic, it is after all a very "Daoist" phenomenon. And, for better or for worse, connoisseurship, properly conducted, really is more like a science than a sport.

As referee, I have not demonstrated either the authenticity or the spuriousness of *Riverbank*—in other words, I have not announced a final score, which, as I pointed out at the start, is the scorekeeper's and not

the referee's task. I can only say that when it came to calling fouls, the "violations" that drew my loudest whistles were Cahill's assertion about the invariable rationality and predictable spatial order of tenth-century landscape painting[92] and *Riverbank* proponents' identification of the painting with Dong Yuan because the inscription says so (and because that, after all, is such a glamorous prospect). In my personal opinion, this might well be an early painting, even tenth century. A Dong Yuan? Very problematic. An important painting for us today and a very important acquisition for the Metropolitan Museum? Yes, I think so. Yet that is just one more opinion. You can have a lot of fouls called against you but still win the game; and this game is not yet over.

1. James Cahill, "The Case Against *Riverbank:* An Indictment in Fourteen Counts," in the present volume, p. 16.
2. Wen C. Fong, "*Riverbank:* From Connoisseurship to Art History," in the present volume, p. 265.
3. Ibid., p. 265.
4. The painting, entitled *Old Trees, Level Distance*, is reproduced in Wen C. Fong, *Beyond Representation: Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, 8th–14th Century* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992), pl. 11.
5. Richard M. Barnhart, James Cahill, Maxwell K. Hearn, and Stephen Little, "The Tu Chin [Du Jin] Correspondence, 1994–95," *Kaikodo Journal* 5 (Autumn 1997), p. 8.
6. Richard M. Barnhart, "Tung Ch'i-ch'ang's Connoisseurship of Sung Painting and the Validity of His Historical Theories: A Preliminary Study," in *Proceedings of the Tung Ch'i-ch'ang International Symposium* (Kansas City: The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 1992), p. 11–1.
7. Barnhart, Cahill, et al., "The Tu Chin Correspondence," p. 13.
8. Max Loehr, "Some Fundamental Issues in the History of Chinese Painting," *Journal of Asian Studies* 23 (1964), p. 187.
9. Kiyohiko Munakata, "Some Methodological Considerations: A Review of Susan Bush, *The Chinese Literati on Painting*," *Artibus Asiae* 38, no. 4 (1976), p. 308.
10. *Xuanhe huapu*, in Richard M. Barnhart, *Marriage of the Lord of the River*, Artibus Asiae Supplementum 27 (Ascona, Switzerland: Artibus Asiae, 1970), pp. 23–24.
11. Ibid., p. 23.
12. Mi Fu, *Huashi* (History of Painting), in Barnhart, *Marriage of the Lord of the River*, p. 26.
13. Guo Ruoxu, *Tuhua jianwen zhi* (Experiences in Painting), in Barnhart, *Marriage of the Lord of the River*, p. 23; Alexander C. Soper, trans. and ann., *Kuo Jo-hsü's* Experiences in Painting (T'u-hua chien-wen chih): *An Eleventh Century History of Chinese Painting Together with the Chinese Text in Facsimile* (Washington, D.C.: American Council for Learned Societies, 1951).
14. Sherman Lee, "*Riverbank:* A Recent Effort in a Long Tradition," in the present volume, pp. 81–82.
15. Cahill, "The Case Against *Riverbank*," p. 18.
16. Fong, "*Riverbank:* From Connoisseurship to Art History," pp. 260ff.
17. Richard M. Barnhart, *Along the Border of Heaven: Sung and Yüan Paintings from the C.C. Wang Family Collection* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1983), p. 30.
18. Richard M. Barnhart, "Letter to the Editor," *Orientations* 28, no. 11 (December 1997), p. 86.
19. Yang Xin, Richard M. Barnhart, James Cahill, et al., *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press and Foreign Languages Press, 1997), 95–97.
20. Barnhart, *Along the Border of Heaven*, pp. 33–34.

21. Maxwell K. Hearn and Wen C. Fong, *Along the Riverbank: Chinese Paintings from the C.C. Wang Family Collection* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999), pp. 26, 75.
22. Barnhart, *Marriage of the Lord of the River*, pp. 23, 24–25.
23. Hearn and Fong, *Along the Riverbank*, p. 72; cf. Cahill, "The Case Against *Riverbank*," p. 43.
24. Cf. Susan Bush, "Different Perspectives on the Organization of Painters in Hui-tsung's Reign," unpublished paper presented at the College Art Association annual meeting, 1987; and "Status and Training of Twelfth-Century Academy Landscapists," unpublished paper.
25. Soper, *Kuo Jo-hsü*'s Experiences in Painting, pp. 100–101.
26. James Cahill, "Authenticity Issues Re-emerge in Chinese Painting Studies," *Lotus Leaves* (San Francisco: Society for Asian Art) 1, no. 1 (Autumn 1997), p. 5.
27. C.C. Wang, in Barnhart, *Along the Border of Heaven*, p. 185.
28. Barnhart, *Along the Border of Heaven*, p. 30.
29. Hearn and Fong, *Along the Riverbank*, p. 158.
30. Peter Sturman, *Mi Fu: Style and the Art of Calligraphy in Northern Song China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 29.
31. Hearn and Fong, *Along the Riverbank*, p. 158.
32. Maxwell K. Hearn, "A Comparative Physical Analysis of *Riverbank* and Two Zhang Daqian Forgeries," in the present volume, pp. 109–12. The Zhao Yuqin seal does not seem to appear among Zhang Daqian's crop of forged seals; see Fu Shen, *Challenging the Past: The Paintings of Chang Dai-chien* (Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 1991), pp. 304–307. Fu Shen (p. 41) also believes that "Zhang never reproduced his forgeries in his illustrated catalogue of collected paintings, *Dafengtang mingji*," whereas *Riverbank* appeared in the fourth volume in 1956.
33. Hearn, "A Comparative Physical Analysis," pp. 110–11.
34. Hearn and Fong, *Along the Riverbank*, p. 46.
35. In 1957 Xie Zhiliu published the scroll as *Riverbank*; by this means, in Fong's words, "it had recovered its proper title." Hearn and Fong, *Along the Riverbank*, pp. 46–47.
36. Ibid., p. 30.
37. Zhou Mi, *Yunyan guoyan lu* (Taipei: Yiwen yinshu guan, 1975, *Meishu congshu* edition), *shang*, p. 19.
38. Ibid., *shang*, 22. See Barnhart, *Marriage of the Lord of the River*, p. 39; Cahill, "The Case Against *Riverbank*," p. 45; Ankeney Weitz, "Collecting and Connoisseurship in Early Yuan China: Zhou Mi's *Yunyan guoyan lu*" (Ph.D. diss., University of Kansas, 1994), pp. 296, 307.
39. Cahill, "The Case Against *Riverbank*, pp. 45–46.
40. Ibid., p 16.
41. Maxwell K. Hearn, "The Changing Face of Narrative in Early Chinese Paintings: Three Milestones from the Metropolitan Museum," *Orientations* 28, no. 11 (December 1997), p. 26; Hearn and Fong, *Along the Riverbank*, p. 77.
42. Shih Shou-chien, "Positioning *Riverbank*," in the present volume, pp. 132–37.
43. Ibid., pp. 117–19.
44. Hearn and Fong, *Along the Riverbank*, p. 13.
45. Shen Gua, "*Tuhua ge*," in Fong, "*Riverbank:* From Connoisseurship to Art History," p. 272.
46. In Barnhart, *Marriage of the Lord of the River*, p. 24.
47. Fong, "*Riverbank:* From Connoisseurship to Art History," p. 287.
48. Shih, "Positioning *Riverbank*," p. 136.
49. See Yang Xin, Barnhart, Cahill, et al., *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting*, fig. 98.
50. Cahill, "The Case Against *Riverbank*," p. 40.
51. Ibid., p. 41.
52. Ibid., pp. 41–42.
53. *Riverbank* measures 221 × 109 cm., or 24,354 sq. cm.
54. 6,238 sq. cm. See Yang Xin, Barnhart, Cahill, et al., *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting*, fig. 92. Cahill takes this to be a "fine eleventh-century work?"; see James Cahill, *An Index of Early Chinese Painters and Paintings, T'ang, Sung and Yüan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), p. 43.
55. 10,249 sq. cm.
56. 10,200 sq. cm. See Max Loehr, *The Great Painters of China* (New York:

Harper and Row, 1980), fig. 43; "probably after an early design," according to Cahill, *Index* p. 27.

57. 7,068 sq. cm. Cahill, *Index*, p. 47.

58. *Riverbank* has one figure per every 1,739 sq. cm.; Guo Xi's *Early Spring*, with 17,112 sq. cm., has one per 1,711 sq. cm.; Xu Daoning's *Fishermen*, one per 683 sq. cm.; "Li Cheng," one per 624 sq. cm.; "Jing Hao's" *Winter Landscape*, one per 443 sq. cm.; *The Xiao and Xiang Rivers*, one per 220 sq. cm.

59. Cahill, "The Case Against *Riverbank*," pp. 40–41; Zhang Daqian's figural landscapes are similarly described as "quasi-narrative" and "narrativelike."

60. Ibid., pp. 42–43.

61. Ibid., p. 41.

62. Max Loehr, *Chinese Landscape Woodcuts: From an Imperial Commentary to the Tenth-Century Printed Edition of the Buddhist Canon* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1968), pp. 52–53, presents this as "not the typical Dong Yuan" and not the "coarse and rough manner" of his late style; in Loehr, *The Great Painters of China*, p. 113, this becomes explicitly formulated as an early style of the master.

63. Barnhart, *Along the Border of Heaven*, p. 34; Hearn and Fong, *Along the Riverbank*, p. 26.

64. Fong, "*Riverbank:* From Connoisseurship to Art History," p. 282.

65. Cahill, "The Case Against *Riverbank*," pp. 17–18.

66. Ibid., p. 39.

67. Ibid., p. 39.

68. Ibid., p. 16.

69. Mi Fu, *Huashi*, in Barnhart, *Marriage of the Lord of the River*, p. 26; cf. Fong, "*Riverbank:* From Connoisseurship to Art History," p. 271–72.

70. Shih, "Positioning *Riverbank*," pp. 123–24.

71. Cahill, "The Case Against *Riverbank*," pp. 17–18.

72. Lee, "*Riverbank:* A Recent Effort in a Long Tradition," p. 82.

73. Fong, "*Riverbank:* From Connoisseurship to Art History," p. 271.

74. Lee, "*Riverbank:* A Recent Effort in a Long Tradition," p. 81.

75. Cahill, "Authenticity Issues Re-emerge in Chinese Painting Studies," p. 5.

76. Cahill, "The Case Against *Riverbank*," p. 35.

77. Ibid., p. 16.

78. Ibid., p. 18.

79. Ibid., p. 16.

80. Fong, "*Riverbank:* From Connoisseurship to Art History," pp. 274–75.

81. Cahill, "The Case Against *Riverbank*," p. 30.

82. Closer than Guo Xi's *Early Spring* to the purported date of *Riverbank*, the archaeologically excavated *A Chess Party in the Mountains* (Shih, fig. 4) from Yemaotai, Liaoning Province, provides ample evidence of spatial disjunctures and ambiguity in tenth-century painting. Nearby, middle-ground, and distant mountains are all rendered in similar tones. The central "mountain" is far too large for the small space its base must fit into; above, it looks like a massive, distant peak, but, below, the closest reach of its base actually lies in front of the nearby gateway, just forward of the three close-by travelers. The embankment leading up to the promontory just behind this trio is peculiar in a manner reminiscent of *Riverbank:* directly above the main figure, where it meets the pine-bearing plateau, the form is clearly readable as the underside of the embankment, but further to the left it is equally readable as the underside or as a rising, round-topped earthen mound.

83. Cahill, "The Case Against *Riverbank*," pp. 33–35.

84. See Cahill, *Index*, p. 15, for reproduction sources.

85. See Yang Xin, Barnhart, Cahill, et al., *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting*, fig. 60.

86. Cahill, "The Case Against *Riverbank*," p. 13, 15.

87. Fong, "*Riverbank:* From Connoisseurship to Art History," p. 281–82.

88. Shih, "Positioning *Riverbank*," p. 116.

89. Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962). I have chosen the figure of five decades based on C.C. Wang's visit to America and the Metropolitan Museum in 1947, when he judged the Museum's newly acquired A.W. Bahr Collection to be riddled with forgeries; that judgment put an end to the Museum's collecting of Chinese painting for a quarter century, and had a marked effect on museum collecting throughout the country.

90. Fong, "*Riverbank:* From Connoisseurship to Art History," pp. 260, 263–64, 279–80.

91. As Werner Heisenberg observed in 1927, one cannot simultaneously account for an electron's energy/momentum and position; the bombardment by high energy (high frequency, short wavelength) particles required to determine electron location disrupts its energy and momentum, while the low energy (high wavelength) bombardment required to determine its energy/momentum is insufficient to determine it location. This paradoxical situation, which derives in turn from the unresolvable wave-particle duality of radiation, requires the particle physicist to deal in probability theory rather than specifically measurable encounters.

92. I have not responded to Cahill's Judge Dee-like scenario, which only becomes pertinent if one finds *Riverbank* stylistically wanting. Certainly, there are great peculiarities in the documentation, but in the complex Chinese system of art-exchanged-for-favors, who can begin to imagine what set of private obligations might have surrounded Zhang Daqian, Xu Beihong, and others in shaping the transmission of this painting? The Uncertainty Principle of Quantum Connoisseurship should apply to external as well as internal evidence.

Wan-go
Weng

A Tall Pine and Daoist Immortal: An Examination of a Painting Attributed to Chen Hongshou

Authentication of works of art, especially of Chinese painting and calligraphy, is not a parlor game for either scholars or art lovers. It is, instead, the foundation of art history. Without the identification of genuine works by a master, there is no sense in pursuing any inquiry into his life and art. Theories built upon undetected forgeries are patently misleading and often contaminate other related studies. Unfortunately, fame attracts forgers, who profit by meeting the demand of gullible collectors. Furthermore, distinct styles of some masters lend themselves to mimesis. One of these is Chen Hongshou (1599–1652; fig. 1), the leading figure painter of the late Ming dynasty (1368–1644). According to his contemporary or near-contemporary chroniclers, Chen's paintings fetched such high prices in his lifetime that "several thousand" imitators made a living manufacturing works under his name, selling their wares in places as distant as as Samarkand, Tibet, eastern Mongolia, Korea, and Japan.[1] Such activities have not ceased in the three and a half centuries since his death. Although most forgeries do not pass examination based on the simple but rigorous principle of comparison, in practice this is a difficult principle to apply. My brief presentation, which examines the widely published painting *Qiaosong xianshou tu* (fig. 2) in the National Palace Museum, Taipei—variously translated as *A Tall Pine and Daoist Immortal* by James Cahill and as *An Immortal Under Pines* by Wen Fong[2]—may serve as a case study of how to undertake such a comparison.

In subjecting a work of art to comparison, we must first have authentic examples. These touchstone works must be well established and similar in subject matter and approximate dating. In other words, a

Opposite Detail, fig. 2: Attributed to Chen Hongshou (1599–1652), *A Tall Pine and Daoist Immortal,* 1635. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 79 ⅝ × 38 ½ in. (202.1 × 97.8 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

figure painting of an artist's middle period cannot serve as a comparison for a flower painting of his late period. A crucial question naturally arises here: how to establish such a body of recognized genuine works for a particular artist? The answer requires systematic research and analysis: the search for as many of the artist's existing works as possible, the examination of as many of these works in the original as possible, the collection of good photographs of these works for prolonged study in one place, and the study of relevant books and articles by and about the artist. The analysis of this body of material results (one hopes) in a logical, coherent, and comprehensive sequence of credible items (paintings, calligraphy, poetry, and prose) that fairly represent an artist's lifelong output, all in the context of the events and social milieu of his lifetime.[3]

Few Chinese artists before the eighteenth century provide us with the opportunity to carry out such a comprehensive analysis. Fortunately, a large number of works by Chen Hongshou have come down to us. This body of work, which consists of several hundred paintings and items of calligraphy as well as wood-block prints based on the artist's designs, together with approximately 1,500 poems and essays, enables us to construct a coherent narrative of Chen's life.[4] Fortuitously also, this substantial body of work includes a

Figure 1 Wang Yuan (1862–1908), *Portrait of Chen Hongshou.* Wood-block print

Figure 2 Attributed to Chen Hongshou (1599–1652), *A Tall Pine and Daoist Immortal,* 1635. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 79 ⅝ × 38 ½ in. (202.1 × 97.8 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

painting datable to Chen's teenage years (fig. 3)[5] and an unfinished painting begun shortly before his death (fig. 4),[6] in addition to many dated and undated works for the years between. The principle of comparison has to be applied in every instance to determine the approximate year of an undated item and to ascertain the authenticity of every item in this long list. Then, by surveying selected items in chronological order, one can form a sense of flow and development, and occasionally of significant transformation, from the early to the late period. I have been privileged to work on Chen Hongshou in this manner for a number of years and to see the fruits of my labor recently published.[7] Thus in examining *A Tall Pine and Daoist Immortal*, I am drawing on the many resources gathered in building a foundation for further studies of Chen Hongshou.

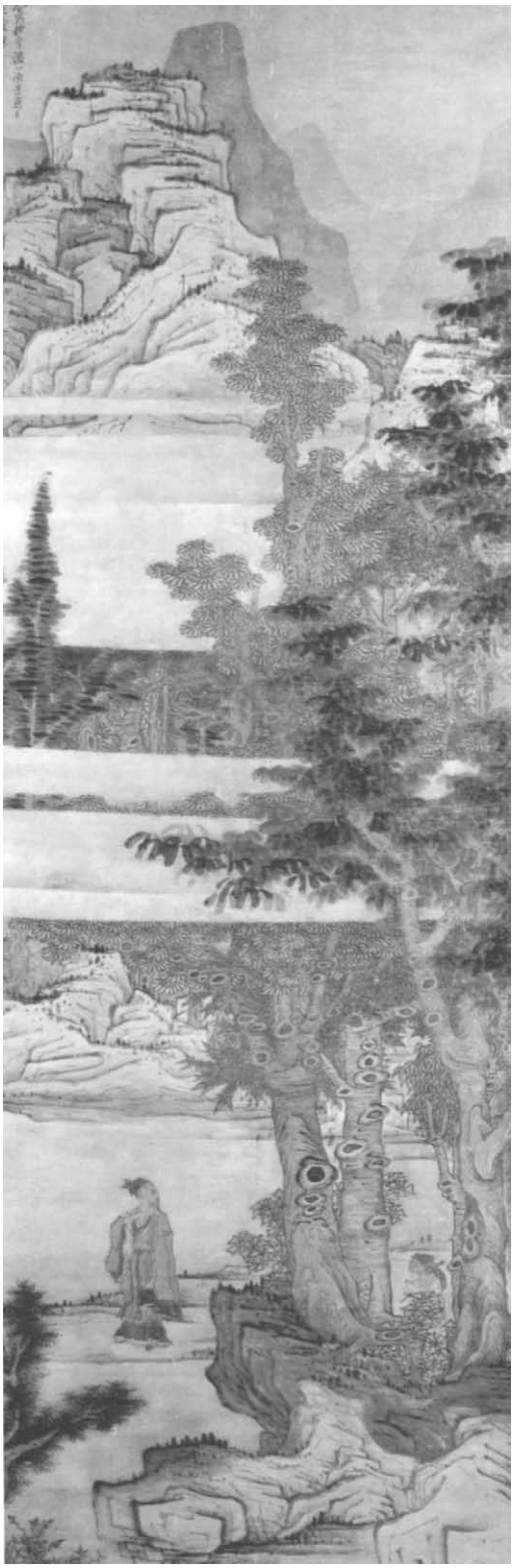
The first step in our analysis of *Tall Pine* is to observe the picture itself—supposedly a self-portrait by Chen accompanied by his nephew Bohan on an outing (fig. 5)—both as a whole and in selected details. The

Figure 3 Chen Hongshou (1599–1652), *Tortoise and Snake*, ca. 1609. Hanging scroll, ink and light color on paper. Zhejiang Provincial Museum, Hangzhou

Figure 4 (top) Chen Hongshou (1599–1652), *Literary Gathering at the Western Garden,* ca. 1652. First section of a handscroll, ink and color on silk, 16 ⅜ × 171 ½ in. (41.7 × 429 cm). Palace Museum, Beijing

Figure 5 (bottom) Detail, fig. 2: Attributed to Chen Hongshou (1599–1652), *A Tall Pine and Daoist Immortal,* 1635.

Weng
A
Painting
Attributed
to
Chen
Hongshou



painting attracts immediate attention by its large size (202.1 × 97.8 cm), as well as by its bold composition and strong colors. It is distinctly a piece of public art, impressive at first glance. But it cannot withstand further scrutiny, for the artist who produced this painting lacked sophisticated skills in manipulating the brush and in using ink, in structuring landscape elements, and in forming facial features and rendering drapery lines. I take the liberty of borrowing James Cahill's eloquent words to describe the painting's awkward visual effects:

> *The terrain stretching behind [the two figures] is uncongenial and thoroughly unnatural. In the interest of instability, Chen locates the horizon at different levels on the two sides of his picture, tilting the ground plane more steeply upward on the right side than on the left.... Chen repeats his rock formations from the foreground to a point near the horizon without diminishing them in size, changing the markings on them, or dimming them in tone.*
>
> *The materials of the landscape are subjected to extreme, even perverse formalization: the rocks look like carved wood, the trunk and branches of the pine like a dragon's body and limbs. The foliage of the farthest tree is drawn in rows of repeated markings that had once, in their original form, represented curled leaves. All these forms look uncomfortably like the debased schemata to be seen in heavy-handed imitations or forgeries of old paintings by hack artists of the period.*[8]

Cahill goes on to say that "such debased conventions" were utilized by Chen in order to accentuate the implausibility of these conventions and to employ style as metaphor and thus show his "bitter sense of the degeneration of an artistic mode that had once been used for fresh images of a comprehensible world." Cahill concludes that even though Chen as an artist found it impossible to make simple statements, in *Tall Pine* he created a painting of extraordinary honesty and self-awareness.

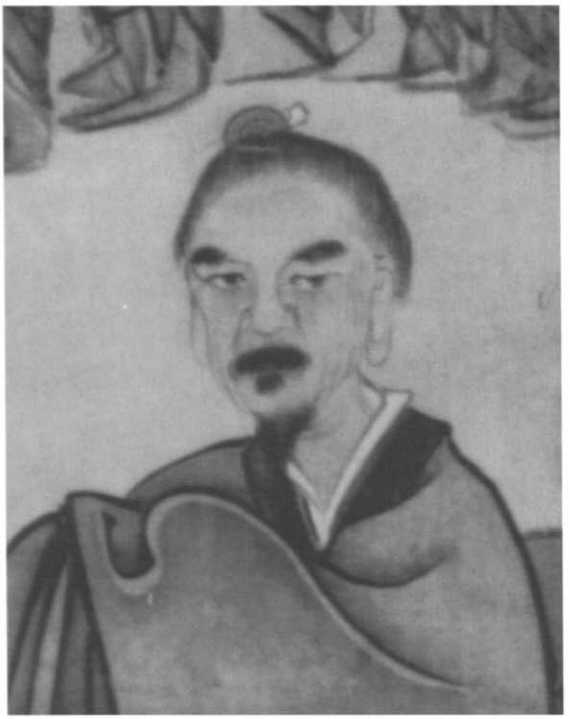
Such an interpretation of a painting laden with "debased conventions" is not credible when subjected to rational analysis. Let us compare *Tall Pine* with some of Chen's paintings from the same period, that is, about 1635. The first appropriate example is a landscape with figures dated 1633, a similarly large hanging scroll (235.6 × 77.5 cm), also done in ink and color on silk (fig. 6), in The Metropolitan Museum of Art.[9] The subject matter, a scholar with a boy in a scenic setting, is similar to that of *Tall Pine*. The brushwork is executed with variety, vitality, and natural rhythmic flow in contrast with *Tall Pine*'s flat, repetitious, and mechanical forms. The three essential elements in a landscape, namely, rocks, trees, and water, offer compelling evidence when seeking to distinguish a real artist from a hack. Even though Chen's *Landscape* features mist and omits water, the contrast of its three-dimensional tree trunks and naturalistic foliage with the cardboard-like tree trunks and rubber-stamped bark and foliage of *Tall Pine* is striking. Equally conspicuous is the difference between the lively delineation of rock forms in Chen's *Landscape* and the artless piling up of pre-cut chunks

Figure 6 Chen Hongshou (1599–1652), *Landscape*, 1633. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 92 ¾ × 30 ½ in. (235.6 × 77.5 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Earl Morse, 1972.

(wood, stone, or some other unidentified material) from the foreground to the horizon in *Tall Pine*. The waterfall in *Tall Pine*, which resembles a basket panel woven neatly with regular bamboo strips, appears equally artificial and unnatural.

In *Landscape*, the scholar's facial features and clothing are well articulated (fig. 7), while in *Tall Pine* the main figure as well as the accompanying figure are composed of formularized postures and silhouettes (fig. 8). By transposing the image of the Daoist figure in a fake Chen Hongshou entitled *Three Religions* (fig. 9),[10] one can almost see a double of the so-called self-portrait in *Tall Pine*. Let us look closely at the face (fig. 10): one of the skin creases at the corner of the left eye issues straight from the eyeball, while another drops to meet an upward line wrapping the left jaw. The upward parallel creases at either side of the chin create the impression of a shrunken jaw. The elongated left ear, which is fully visible, shows the blank inner part overlapping the outer rim, a most unnatural sight. If we compare this with the left ear of Chai Jin, a character in Chen's *Illustrations from "The Romance of the Water Margins,"*[11] a set of wood-block cards dating to about 1633 (fig. 11), we see how unlikely it is that the shoddy execution of the *Tall Pine* figures are by the hand of this master of figure painting.

Figure 7 (left) Detail, fig. 6: Chen Hongshou (1599–1652), *Landscape*, 1633.
Figure 8 (center) Detail, fig. 2: Attributed to Chen Hongshou (1599–1652), *A Tall Pine and Daoist Immortal*, 1635.
Figure 9 (right) Attributed to Chen Hongshou (1599–1652), *Three Religions*, 1627. Detail, showing the image of the Daoist figure transposed. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 51⅛ × 18⅛ in. (130 × 46 cm). Wuxi Museum



Beyond this pictorial comparison, the second step in our analysis of *Tall Pine* is to examine the inscription, both the text and the calligraphy. Supposedly written and dated by Chen himself, the text is instead prime evidence of the forger's guile. The following translation of the inscription is based largely on that by Wen Fong,[12] with a few changes that take us closer to the original:

Master Lotus [*one of Chen's frequently used sobriquets*] *and Nephew Han* [*Bohan*],
wandering about all day long:
In spring, intoxicated by the beauty of peach blossoms;
In autumn, viewing the colors of hibiscus;
In summer, lingering in the thick pine forests;
In winter, singing verses about the snowy white.
Things often involve each other,
Occasionally turning a few book pages,
Feeling doubly at ease in both spirit and mind,
Making high-minded conversation while painting the pines and rocks.

Figure 10 Detail, fig. 2: Attributed to Chen Hongshou (1599–1652), *A Tall Pine and Daoist Immortal*, 1635.

Figure 11 Chen Hongshou (1599–1652), *Illustrations from "The Romance of the Water Margins,"* ca. 1633. Detail. Wood-block cards, ink on paper, 7 × 3 ⅝ in. (17.9 × 9.3 cm). Li Yimang Collection, Beijing

Figure 12 Chen Hongshou (1599–1652), *Two Vases with Chrysanthemums,* 1635. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 68 ⅞ × 38 ⅝ in. (175 × 98 cm). British Museum, London

My words are slightly in accord with the Dao,
Why feel ashamed to eat three meals [*every day*]?
In the spring of the year yihai [*1635*], *Hongshou inscribed.*

Chen's attitude toward his nephew Bohan, the son of his elder brother Hongxu, is well reflected in his poems: "To Nephew Shizhen [Bohan's proper name] upon Returning from Hangzhou," written about 1625, and "Encouraging My Nephew," written in 1631, upon Bohan's turning twenty by Chinese count.[13] In the former poem, Chen expresses his pleasure in seeing that the boy had grown to be a young man five-feet tall and remembered that, when younger, he had studied well under the uncle's occasional teaching. In the latter poem, Chen emphasizes the importance of studying the Confucian classics in order to achieve high positions through the examinations and scholarly elegance through self-study. Considering his own failure in establishing an official career, Chen expected the next generation to bring glory to the family's name. The text of *Tall Pine*, however, would have us believe that Bohan, born in 1612 and thus twenty-three (twenty-four in Chinese reckoning) at the time of this painting,[14] exactly the age when he should have been preparing for the examinations, was instead loafing all day long, indeed in all seasons. It is also hard to imagine that Chen would treat a twenty-three-year-old young man as a boy-servant who accompanied him in the luxury of roving about mountains and rivers. The representation of Nephew Han in such humble attire and with a coyly smiling face in *Tall Pine* can only be called an invention.

The poetic verse in the inscription, starting from "In spring" and ending in "three meals," consists of ten lines of five characters each, the *wugu* or "five-ancient" form, which does not restrict the number of lines or the pairing of lines, and thus gives the poet a great deal of freedom. The first four lines describing the pleasures of four seasons are not remarkable, but five of the following six lines definitely arouse suspicion. For comparative purposes, let us look at the British Museum's excellent painting by Chen Hongshou entitled *Two Vases with Chrysanthemums* (fig. 12), which has a lengthy inscription by the artist, also dated 1635, the same year as *Tall Pine*.[15] The literal translation of this inscription reads:

Old Lotus [*another sobriquet of Chen*] *of Xishan calmed his spirit and mind, and confessed to his friends: things often involve each other, I could not accompany you gentlemen to the inner courts of autumn fragrance to pick chrysanthemums and compose poems and gather in the pleasurable realm of autumn fragrance, thus we were unable to talk about writing and seek nature's rhythm. Now, I can accompany you gentlemen there. The friends responded:*

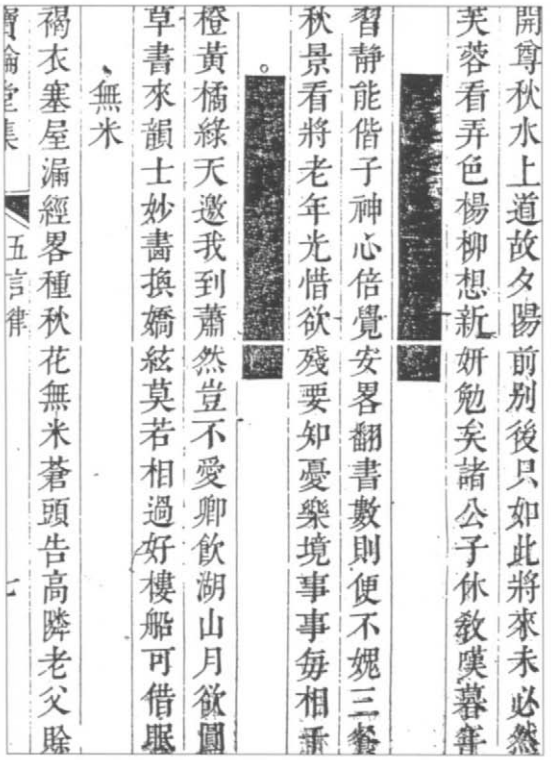
Autumn rains over a thousand hills
Basket chairs carry you there.

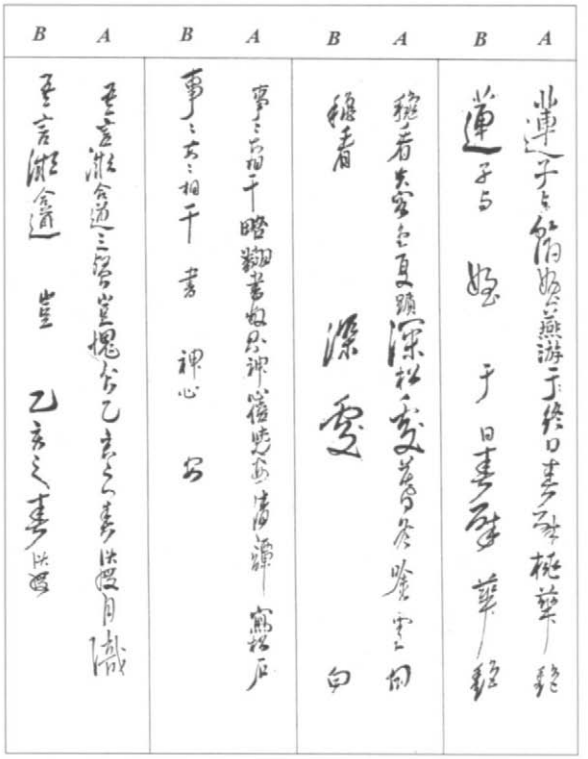
Shou [*Chen*]: *My words are slightly in accord with the Dao*
Your sayings must fit the feelings
Friend: *It is not only good to enjoy leisure*
But also happy to avoid neglecting the lessons
Shou: *The chrysanthemums bloom luxuriantly*
Yet they have passed the bright days of Little Spring [*tenth month*]
Friend: *We thank you for inviting us to pick chrysanthemums*
To the place of autumn fragrance we go
Shou: *Providing wine in the inner courtyard*
Helping the drunken ones to return home
Friend: *Calling each other to look at red leaves*
Drinking to the autumn flowers under the trees
Shou: *Breaking off a branch to take home*
Presenting it to you as the flower of longevity
Friend: *Among the young and old faces in the pavilion*
Give it to the one with the visage of long life
Shou: *Putting it in a green glass vase*
Painting it for raising a drink to the honored one

Just after finishing this dialogue, Nephew Jing came to transmit Third Uncle Shanyu's request for a painting to honor the august Uncle Kai on his eightieth birthday. Instantly I did this in fine brushwork and inscribed it in grass script, in the inner court of autumn fragrance. Then I accompanied my friends to the splendid hall to offer congratulations and imbibed with abandon among autumn flowers and trees, surrounded by the brilliant aura of begonia. We drank as if our stomachs could have contained the Milky Way. The first day of the eleventh month of the year yihai [*December 9, 1635*], *Hongshou kowtows.*

It is apparent that the lines "Things often involve each other" and "My words are slightly in accord with the Dao" in *Tall Pine* have been lifted from the inscription on *Two Vases*. Furthermore, Chen composed two poems related to this long inscription, both of which are published in his collected writings, *Baoluntang ji*.[16] One of them (fig. 13) demands our attention:

To learn meditation and be with you
Feeling doubly at ease in both spirit and mind
Occasionally turning a few book pages





Thus not ashamed to eat three meals [*every day*].
Viewing autumn scenes gradually fading
Sad to see the year nearing its end
One must understand the realms of happiness and sorrow
Things often involve each other.

Here, three more lines are supplied to the poem in the inscription of *Tall Pine*, namely, "Occasionally turning a few book pages," "Feeling doubly at ease in both spirit and mind," and "…ashamed to eat three meals." Without delving further into this matter, one cannot avoid the conclusion that the *Tall Pine* inscription is a pastiche.

Similarly, the forger relied heavily upon the inscription of *Two Vases* for guidance in calligraphy. Out of sixty-eight characters in the *Tall Pine* inscription, thirty-five are direct imitations of characters used in *Two Vases*. I found two additional characters copied from Chen's *Four Poems in Running-Cursive Script*,

Figure 13 Chen Hongshou (1599–1652), *Baoluntang ji*, ca. 1705 edition, *juan* 5, p. 7a. Wood-block print, ink on paper, 7 ¼ × 5 ⅛ in. (18.3 × 12.9 cm)

Figure 14 Chart comparing identical characters from the inscriptions on *A Tall Pine and Daoist Immortal* ("A") (fig. 2) and *Two Vases with Chrysanthemums* ("B") (fig. 12). Wan-go Weng

dated 1636.[17] For visual clarity, a chart showing a comparison of characters in the two inscriptions is presented here (fig. 14). The comparison of individual characters also brings out the defects of the forger's work, in which weak construction and hesitant movement are the most obvious. Putting these two complete inscriptions side by side, we see the difference between the arbitrary, awkward, and disjointed linking of characters in the imitator's work and the natural, rhythmic flow of the original composition. The forger timidly stuck with the same dark and saturated ink from beginning to end. In contrast, the original calligrapher dipped his brush into ink as needed to create a rhythm of dry and wet, thick and thin; he further

Figure 15 Attributed to Chen Hongshou (1599–1652), *The Goddess Magu.* Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 71 ¾ × 38 ⅝ in. (182.1 × 98.1 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

Figure 16 Attributed to Chen Hongshou (1599–1652), *The Goddess Magu.* Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 67 ⅞ × 37 ⅝ in. (172.5 × 95.5 cm). Palace Museum, Beijing

accentuated the expressive quality of his writing by the uneven spacing of lines as well as by mingling large and small characters, loose and tight formations. In short, one stutters, the other sings.

There is no lack of other high-profile "Chen Hongshou" paintings. Here, I will only point out the series of *The Goddess Magu* pictures (one in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, a second in the Palace Museum, Beijing, and a third in the collection of the modern artist Huang Zhou; figs. 15, 16, 17), which can be put in the same category as *Tall Pine*.[18] All are large hanging scrolls displaying the same audacity of bold composition, brilliant colors, and coarse brushwork, and with the same theme: longevity. The obvious motivation

Figure 17 Attributed to Chen Hongshou (1599–1652), *The Goddess Magu*. Detail. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk. Huang Zhou Collection, Beijing

for the existence of all these "other Chen Hongshous" was the demand for an auspicious gift for an important birthday. *Tall Pine*, however, does have one distinction: it is most likely the cooperative work of a hack artist and a half-learned fellow who had read Chen Hongshou's poems and enjoyed access to Chen's original works, probably including *Two Vases*.[19]

1. As recorded in Mao Shen (Mao Qiling; 1623–1716), *Chen Laolian biezhuan* (Another Biography of Chen Hongshou), in *Baoluntang ji* (Collected Writings of Chen Hongshou) (Kuaiji: Dong Jinjian, wood-block edition, 1888).

2. See James Cahill, *The Compelling Image: Nature and Style in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Painting* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), pp. 141–45; pl. 4.44, p. 142. Wen C. Fong, James C.Y. Watt, et al., *Possessing the Past: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei*, exh. cat. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and National Palace Museum, 1996), pp. 411–13; pl. 209, p. 413.

3. My recently published study of Chen Hongshou is the result of the type of systematic research and analysis detailed here. See Wan-go Weng, *Chen Hongshou: His Life and Art*, 3 vols., in Chinese (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1997).

4. The poems and essays are found in *Baoluntang ji*, 1888 edition, and *Baoluntang ji* (Zhuji: Baoluntang, wood-block edition, ca. 1705).

5. *Tortoise and Snake*, ca. 1609, Zhejiang Provincial Museum. Reproduced in Weng, *Chen Hongshou: His Life and Art*, vol. 1, pp. 67–68; vol. 2, pls. 1, 2.

6. *Literary Gathering at the Western Garden*, ca. 1652, Palace Museum, Beijing. Chen did the first section only; Hua Yan completed the painting in 1725. Reproduced in ibid., vol. 2, pl. 138.

7. See n. 3 above.

8. Cahill, *The Compelling Image*, pp. 141–43.

9. See Roderick Whitfield, *In Pursuit of Antiquity: Chinese Paintings of the Ming and Ch'ing Dynasties from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Earl Morse* (Princeton: The Art Museum, Princeton University and Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1969), pp. 33–34; nos. 6, 6a, pp. 85–86.

10. Illustrated in *Yiyuan duoying*, vol. 23, 1984.

11. Chen Hongshou, *Illustrations from "The Romance of the Water Margins,"* wood-block cards, ca. 1633, Li Yimang Collection, Beijing (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1980 facsimile print).

12. Wen Fong, James C.Y. Watt, et al., *Possessing the Past*, p. 412.

13. *Baoluntang ji*, 1888 edition, *juan* 4, pp. 12b, 27.

14. Huang Yongquan, *Chen Hongshou nianpu* (A Chronicle of Chen Hongshou's Life) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1960), p. 18.

15. See Weng, *Chen Hongshou: His Life and Art*, vol. 1, p. 58; vol. 2, pl. 34.

16. *Baoluntang ji*, 1888 edition, *juan* 5, pp. 7b, 28a.

17. Chen Hongshou, *Four Poems in Running-Cursive Script*, 1636, handscroll, ink on paper, Palace Museum, Beijing. See Weng, *Chen Hongshou: His Life and Art*, vol. 1, p. 124; vol. 2, pl. 36.

18. On the three versions of *The Goddess Magu* paintings, see ibid., vol. 1, pp. 151–52.

19. For further discussion of this point, see ibid., vol. 1, ch. 5.

Stephen
Little

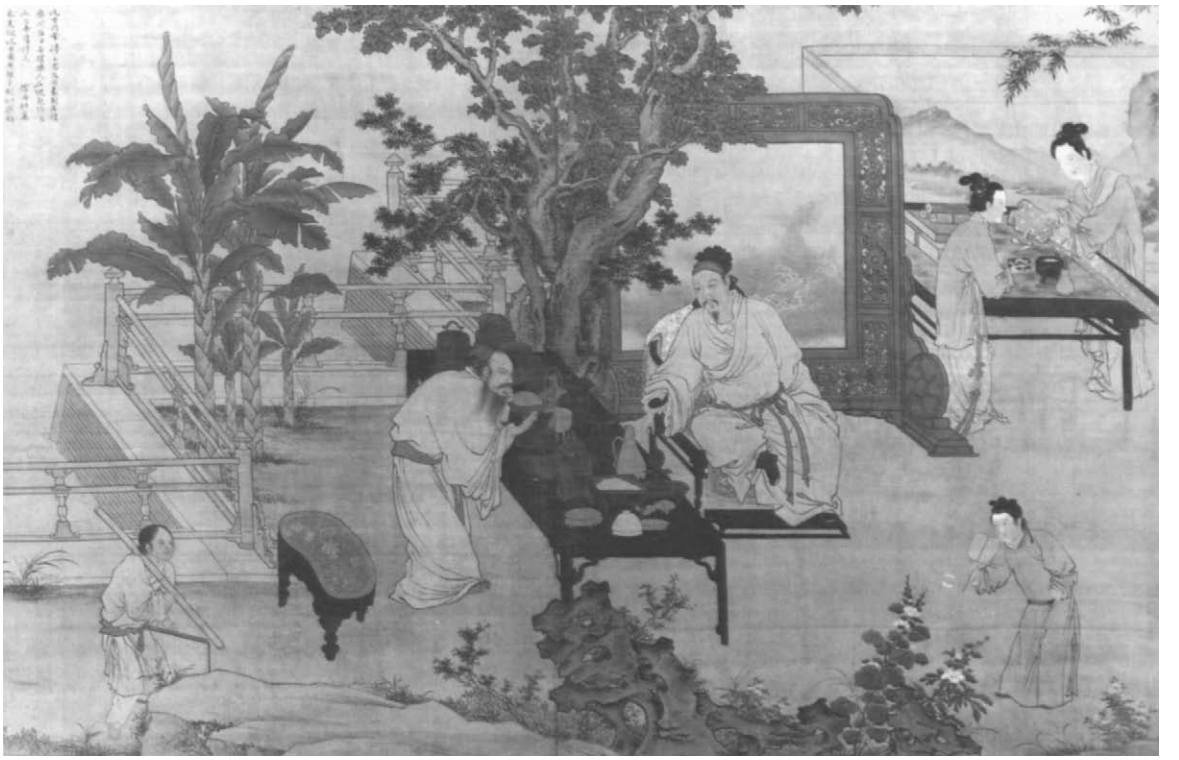
Du Jin's *Enjoying Antiquities:* A Problem in Connoisseurship

The aim of this paper is to examine the authenticity of *Enjoying Antiquities*, a Ming-dynasty painting in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, attributed to Du Jin (active ca. 1465–ca. 1509). This work survives in three versions: one (complete) in the National Palace Museum, Taipei (fig. 1), one (comprising the left third of the original composition) once seen and photographed by James Cahill at the Kongōbu-ji on Mount Kōya in Wakayama Prefecture, Japan (fig. 2), and one (comprising a section of the right third of the original composition) in the Yale University Art Gallery (fig. 3).[1] The authenticity of the well-known Taipei version was first called into question by James Cahill in 1978 in his book *Parting at the Shore: Chinese Painting of the Early and Middle Ming Dynasty, 1368–1580:*

> *Another version of the left-hand third of the present composition was in fact recently discovered in a Japanese temple, the Kongōbu-ji on Mount Kōya.... The Kongōbu-ji version agrees better in the calligraphy of its inscription and in its drawing with the other extant paintings by Du Jin than does the Palace Museum version, which may in fact be a copy by some Suzhou artist close to Qiu Ying, or perhaps by Qiu himself.*[2]

Subsequently, a lively written exchange on the Taipei scroll's authenticity, comprising a series of letters by James Cahill, Richard Barnhart, Maxwell Hearn, Charles Mason, and myself, was published in *Kaikodo Journal*, vol. 5 (Autumn 1997), under the title "The Tu Chin [Du Jin] Correspondence, 1994–95."[3] While Richard Barnhart, Maxwell Hearn, and I favored acceptance of the Taipei version of *Enjoying Antiquities*

Opposite Detail, fig. 1: Du Jin (active ca. 1465–ca. 1509) *Enjoying Antiquities.* Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 73 ⅞ × 49 ⅝ in. (187 × 126.1 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei



as a genuine work by Du Jin, James Cahill and Charles Mason were not convinced. This paper revisits the controversy, and draws a few lessons from the exchange.

The Art of Du Jin

Du Jin was a renowned figure and landscape painter of the early Ming dynasty (1368–1644) who worked in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.[4] While his birth and death dates are unknown, his earliest and latest known dates of activity correspond to 1465 and 1505.[5] His career was roughly coeval with that of his more famous contemporary and friend, Shen Zhou (1427–1509).

Du was born in Dantu, a district of Zhenjiang, Jiangsu Province. Han Ang's (active early 16th century) supplement to the *Tuhui baojian*, dated 1519, states that Du was a native of Dantu, "but was [later] registered as a resident of the capital [Beijing]."[6] Trained as a scholar, he took the *jinshi* examination but failed. Thereafter he "cut short any thought of progressing further [with an official career]." Although nothing is known

Figure 1 Du Jin (active ca. 1465–ca. 1509) *Enjoying Antiquities*. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 73 5/8 × 49 5/8 in. (187 × 126.1 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

Figure 2 Partial version of *Enjoying Antiquities*, late 15th–early 16th century. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk. Reputedly Kongōbu-ji, Mount Kōya, Wakayama Prefecture, Japan

Figure 3 Partial version of *Enjoying Antiquities*, late 15th–early 16th century. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 39 ¾ × 12 ¼ in. (101 × 31 cm). Yale University Art Gallery

about Du Jin's family background, it is evident that as a young man he had the means and intention of pursuing the path of a scholar-official.[7] Xu Qin's *Minghualu* of 1673 states that Du took the *jinshi* examination during the reign of the Chenghua emperor (r. 1465–87).[8] Du Jin's circle of acquaintances, fellow artists, and patrons included the Wu school artists Liu Jue (1410–1472), Shen Zhou, and Tang Yin (1470–1523); the Nanjing painter Xu Lin (1462–1538); the Nanjing scholar and calligrapher Jin Cong (1447–1501); and the scholar-officials Wu Kuan (1435–1504), Li Dongyang (1447–1516), and Cheng Minzheng (1445–1499).[9]

Our knowledge of Du Jin's painting rests on his surviving work, as well as on works by his predecessors, contemporaries, and followers. Roughly twenty of Du's paintings survive, only two of which are dated.

Figure 4 Liu Songnian (active ca. 1175–after 1195), *Luohan Seated Before a Screen*, 1207. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 46 ¼ × 22 ⅛ in. (117.4 × 56.1 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

Figure 5 Liu Jun (active ca. 1475–ca. 1505), *Remonstrating with the Emperor*. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 65 × 41 ⅞ in. (165 × 106.5 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Ex. Coll.: C.C. Wang Family. Promised Gift of the Oscar L. Tang Family

Both are handscrolls painted in the "uncolored line drawing" (*baimiao*) technique, and are dated in correspondence to 1473 and 1500 (see below).

Du Jin's paintings can be divided into several stylistic groups. The largest number of these are in an academic style based on that practiced at the Southern Song (1127–1279) court. Surviving literary evidence and the range of technical ability evident in Du's works in this style suggest that they span a period of some four decades, from roughly 1465 to 1505. These paintings reflect a style derived from such Southern Song court artists as Liu Songnian (active ca. 1175–after 1195; fig. 4), and are closely related to the works of several leading Zhe school painters of the late fifteenth century, for example, Liu Jun (active ca. 1475–ca. 1505; fig. 5) and Lü Wenying (1421–1505; fig. 6).[10] In Liu Songnian's *Luohan Seated Before a Screen* of 1207 (fig. 4),

Figure 6 Lü Wenying (1421–1505), *Peddler with Bird Cages*. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 64 ¼ × 36 in. (163.2 × 91.5 cm). Nezu Museum, Tokyo

Figure 7 Du Jin (active ca. 1465–ca. 1509), *Sacrifice to the Moon*. Hanging scroll, ink and light color on silk, 49 ⅜ × 31 ¾ in. (125.5 × 80.7 cm). Zhongguo Meishuguan, Beijing

the figures are painted in fluid brushstrokes, which in their graceful curves and hooks are the clear antecedents to Du Jin's style.[11] The main difference is that Du's brushwork has a more autonomous quality; its rhythms are more forceful and the changes in direction are more boldly accentuated. Liu's painting also provides an antecedent for Du's conception of a formal garden, defined by the low buttressing wall topped by flagstones, an outdoor folding screen with mounted paintings, and banana plants. Du Jin's technique of painting banana plants comes directly out of such traditions as Liu Songnian's.

Figure 8 Du Jin (active ca. 1465–ca. 1509), *Fu Sheng Transmitting the "Shujing."* Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 62 ⅞ × 41 ⅛ in. (157.7 × 104.5 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Gift of Douglas Dillon, 1991

Figure 9 Du Jin (active ca. 1465–ca. 1509), *Playing the Qin under a Plum Tree.* Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 82 ⅛ × 43 ⅜ in. (208.6 × 110.3 cm). Shanghai Museum

Roughly fifteen paintings by Du Jin in the academic manner survive. The earliest of these is probably *Sacrifice to the Moon* (fig. 7), a detailed but hesitantly painted work in the Zhongguo Meishuguan, Beijing, which bears a colophon by Dong Qichang (1555–1636) attributing the scroll to Du. Du Jin's finest and most mature paintings in this style combine meticulous technique with dynamic, expressive brushwork and multi-layered narrative or historical content. In *Enjoying Antiquities* (fig. 1), Du utilizes a scene of scholars examining ancient bronze vessels to make a statement on Confucian values and on the philosophical and ritual underpinnings of civilization itself. In *Fu Sheng Transmitting the "Shujing"* (fig. 8), in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Du portrays a pivotal event in ancient Chinese history, in which the ancient text that described the mechanism for establishing dynastic legitimacy was saved from destruction through the actions of an

Figure 10 (top) Du Jin (active ca. 1465–ca. 1509), *The Great Controller of Destinies*, from *The Nine Songs*, 1473. Handscroll, ink on paper, 10 ⅜ × 214 in. (26.5 × 534.8 cm). Palace Museum, Beijing

Figure 11 (bottom) Du Jin (active ca. 1465–ca. 1509), *Han Yu's "A Painting of the Peach Blossom Spring,"* from *Poems by Ancient Worthies*, 1500. Handscroll, ink on paper, 11 × 42 ⅝ in. (28 × 108.2 cm). Palace Museum, Beijing

aged scholar during the chaotic transition from the Qin (221–206 B C) to the Han (206 B C–A D 220) dynasties. In *Playing the Qin under a Plum Tree* (fig. 9), in the Shanghai Museum, Du uses a portrait of the Northern Song (960–1127) poet Lin Bu (967–1028) to give shape to a literary persona and symbol of Confucian rectitude much admired in Du's own day.[12]

Du Jin was also highly regarded in the Ming as a master of the *baimiao* technique of figure painting. The two dated works that survive from Du Jin's œuvre are both *baimiao* handscrolls, and are now owned by the Palace Museum, Beijing. The earlier of the two paintings is a handscroll depicting *The Nine Songs* (fig. 10), which has a cyclical date corresponding to 1473.[13] The later scroll is entitled *Poems by Ancient Worthies* (fig. 11); it bears a dated note by the calligrapher Jin Cong corresponding to 1500, written at the time Du Jin's illustrations were finished.[14] The existence of these two dated *baimiao* handscrolls, one from 1473 and the other from 1500, suggests that Du worked in this technique concurrently with his work in the Song academic style. The measured brushwork in the figures of *The Nine Songs* is altogether different from the bolder and more spontaneous brushwork of *Poems by Ancient Worthies*, a painting executed twenty-seven years later. This suggests that Du Jin's brushwork became increasingly dynamic between 1473 and 1500. The fact that Du worked simultaneously in the *baimiao* and Song academic styles highlights the similarities of his training to that of such Zhe school painters as Li Zai (died 1431) and Wu Wei (1459–1508), who also worked in both styles.[15] This stylistic diversity appears to have been critical to Du Jin's success as a professional painter. Other works from his œuvre are painted in a much looser style and technique (fig. 12), recalling the contemporaneous paintings of Shi Zhong (Xu Duanben; 1437–ca. 1517).[16]

Figure 12 Du Jin (active ca. 1465–ca. 1509), *Autumn Grove*. Hanging scroll, ink and light color on paper, 16 ⅝ × 25 ⅜ in. (42.2 × 64.6 cm). Shanghai Museum

Du Jin's *Enjoying Antiquities*

The complete version of Du Jin's *Enjoying Antiquities* in the National Palace Museum, Taipei (fig. 1) is a large hanging scroll painted in ink and color on two joined pieces of silk in a polished, academic style. The painting depicts two white-robed gentlemen in a formal garden examining antiques. There are twelve ritual bronze vessels set out on a table, in addition to a bronze mirror and five ceramic vessels. While the guest lifts the lid off a covered *ding* tripod and examines the vessel with intense concentration, the host, seated at the middle of the scene, looks on with amusement, as if testing his guest's knowledge of the ancient tripod's date. Behind the host are intertwined juniper and *wutong* trees and a painted screen with rolling waves set in an elaborately carved wooden frame. Behind the guest are a clump of banana plants and a stool with an embroidered seat. The foreground is taken up by a low boulder, a perforated garden rock, and flowers. In the background the garden is bounded by a zigzagging retaining wall and a carved wooden balustrade.

At the upper right, two women work at a table with an inlaid marble surface. One holds a tortoiseshell box while the other removes the silk wrapping from a *qin* zither. On the table are books, scrolls, a *ding*-

Figure 13 Detail, fig. 8: Du Jin (active ca. 1465–ca. 1509), *Fu Sheng Transmitting the "Shujing."*

Figure 14 Detail, fig 8: Du Jin (active ca. 1465–ca. 1509), *Fu Sheng Transmitting the "Shujing."*

shaped incense burner, and a Guan-ware ceramic vase. Behind the women is a folding screen decorated with a painted landscape in the manner of the Southern Song painters Ma Yuan (active ca. 1190–1225) and Xia Gui (active ca. 1195–1230). In the lower right corner, a young boy in a pale green robe holds a fan and watches two butterflies. In the opposite corner, a male servant approaches carrying a scroll and a *weiqi* board.

Du Jin's inscription, written in a mixture of running and standard script in the upper-left corner of the painting, consists of a poem and a short note:

It is common to enjoy antiquities,
Study them and one's moral purpose increases.
Examine their shapes and give them names,
For Ritual and Music lie within them.
A day without Ritual and Music,
And men would revert to ignorance.
To act on this and make it Orthodox,
This is my aim.

Jianmian asked for [*a painting of*] *"Enjoying Antiquities" and an inscription. Chengju Du Jin. I have tried to achieve a resemblance beyond the forms, in order to express my intentions. Those who see this should judge* [*for themselves*].

It is clear from Du Jin's inscription that the artist saw ancient ritual bronze vessels as symbols of deeply held cultural values and patterns of orthodox Confucian behavior. The bronze vessels in *Enjoying Antiquities* are depicted with great precision, and suggest a deep knowledge of antiquities on Du Jin's part.

The brushwork and setting of *Enjoying Antiquities* have distinct similarities to those of Du Jin's *Fu Sheng Transmitting the "Shujing"* and *Playing the Qin under a Plum Tree* (figs. 8, 9). These similarities are so close that I have no doubt that all three works are by the same painter. The three paintings depict formal gardens, defined by zigzagging retaining walls, outdoor furniture, and large rocks. The figures are shown in carefully arranged groups, and the formal elements of the paintings are very clearly composed. Most significantly, the dynamic lineament of the robes is quick and assured (fig. 1 detail, page 188; figs. 9, 13). The lines are deft, descriptive, and thoroughly calligraphic, with frequent modulations of width, ranging from supple curves to taut bends and sharp hooks. Strokes in draperies often begin with blunt, relatively wide "nail-heads" that immediately taper off to thin lines. These precise characteristics of Du Jin's mature brushwork set him apart from both his contemporaries, such as Liu Jun (fig. 5) and Lü Wenying (fig. 6), and later artists such as Qiu Ying (see figs. 20–22) and Tang Yin (see figs. 23, 24).

The Controversy over Du Jin's *Enjoying Antiquities*

The questions raised by the existence of two other partial versions of the *Enjoying Antiquities* composition have been enumerated at length in "The Tu Chin Correspondence, 1994–95."[17] To summarize, James Cahill's arguments with regard to the Taipei painting (fig. 1) include the following points:

One The banana trees (fig. 15) are overly stylized. Compared to the Kongōbu-ji version of the same painting (fig. 16), Cahill believes that the banana trees in the Taipei version are flat and unconvincing. In addition, he believes that the base of the nearest banana tree in the Taipei scroll grows too close to the edge of the adjacent flagstones, in a way that in reality would be impossible to support the tree.[18] Charles Mason supports that view: "the Taipei banana tree doesn't make sense horticulturally—if it was really that close to the wall, it would have no root structure and so would either have fallen over or grown out at an angle."[19] Preferring the depiction of the banana trees in the Kongōbu-ji painting, Cahill suggests that the artist of that version cared more about verisimilitude, and that such evidence points to the authenticity and primacy of the Kongōbu-ji version of *Enjoying Antiquities*.[20]

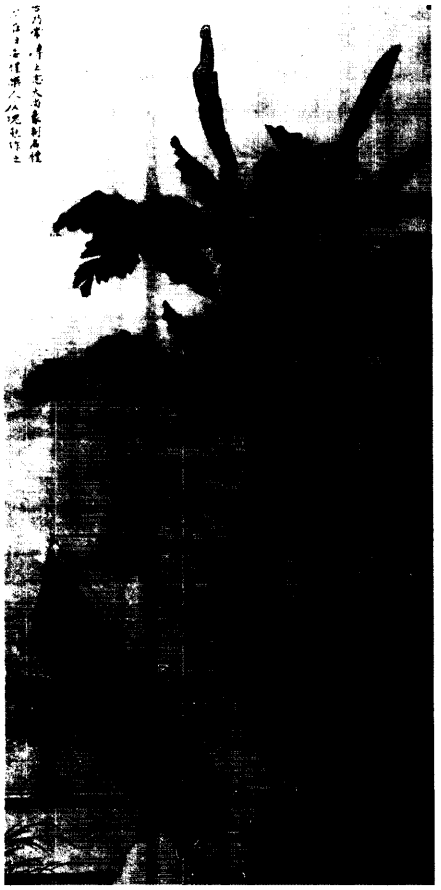
Two The central support in the balustrade section at the left that extends from foreground to background (fig. 15) is painted as flat instead of having thickness, unlike the same element in the Kongōbu-ji version (fig. 16).[21]

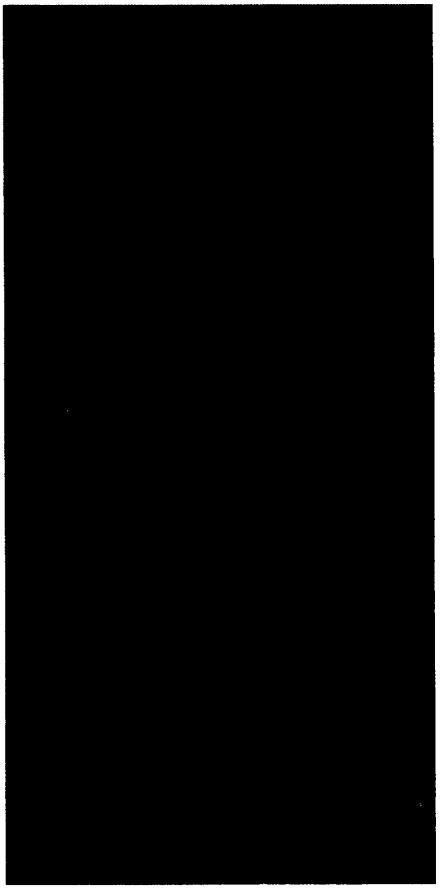
Three The rock in the immediate foreground of the Taipei version is essentially two-dimensional. Cahill surmises that the now-missing central section of the Kongōbu-ji version of the composition "would presumably have had proper Du Jin rocks here."[22]

Four The painting of certain details in the Yale fragment (fig. 3) are far more likely to have come from Du Jin's brush than the corresponding details in the Taipei scroll. The most disturbing detail is the two-legged *ding*-shaped tripod incense burner on the table between the two female attendants in the Taipei version.[23] For Cahill, this error in depicting a vessel that should have three legs negates any chance that the work is by Du Jin (the "proper" incense burner in the Yale painting has three legs).[24]

Five The calligraphy of the Kongōbu-ji version (fig. 17) is more spontaneous, and agrees better with other examples of Du Jin's work than does the Taipei version.

Six The trunks and branches of the trees in the central background of the Taipei version (see fig. 1 detail, page 188) are disjointed in their placement. (In my opinion, this is explained by the fact that a narrow vertical strip of silk that ran from the top to the bottom of the scroll is now missing. This strip was trimmed where the two pieces of silk that make up the painting were joined. The now-closed gap is the cause of the apparent discontinuity between the trunks and branches of the trees.)



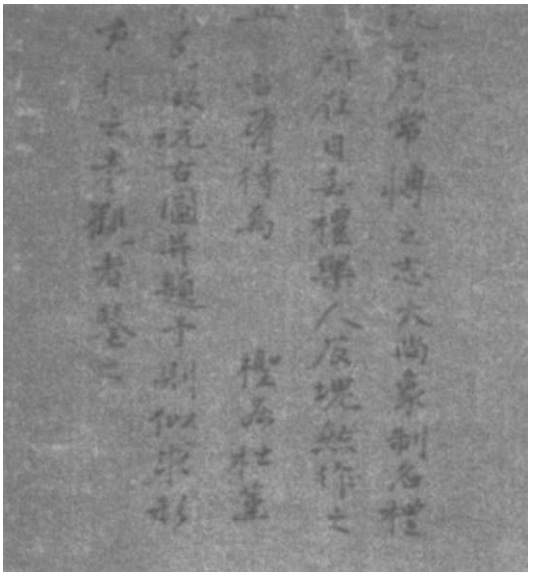


Cahill's view with regard to the issue of verisimilitude is summed up in a letter to Maxwell Hearn: *... my argument isn't "that various details of the painting appear more naturalistically conceived"—it's that they are* representationally right and wrong, *reflecting the fact that one artist is* painting *a picture and the other is* copying *a picture. It is inconceivable for me that a good painter such as Du Jin would commit all the representational mistakes in the Taipei version, or that the copyist would mysteriously get them right.*[25]

As a general response to Cahill's arguments, I would suggest that verisimilitude (that is, realistic depiction corresponding to what one sees in reality, or what is "representationally right") is not a useful criterion in judging the authenticity of any of Du Jin's academic-style paintings. Conformity to verisimilitude when judging the quality and authenticity of a five-hundred-year-old painting is, I think, a matter of degree and

Figure 15 Detail, fig: 1: Du Jin (active ca. 1465–ca. 1509) *Enjoying Antiquities*

Figure 16 Detail, fig. 2: *Enjoying Antiquities*



even personal taste. Cahill's assertion that the central section of the *Enjoying Antiquities* composition originally attached to the Kongōbu-ji painting "would presumably have had proper Du Jin rocks" points to this problem: the tendency to project a preconceived notion on an already complicated situation (who is to say what "proper Du Jin rocks" look like, particularly when there is a remarkable variety of rocks visible in Du's paintings?). Judging from the precarious placement of a deciduous tree directly next to a flagstone in Du Jin's *Women in a Palace Garden* (fig. 18) in the Shanghai Museum—just as the offending banana tree in the Taipei *Enjoying Antiquities* scroll "appears to grow too close to the edge of the flagstones, in a way that in reality would be impossible to support the tree"—it would seem that Du was not preoccupied with a high degree of representational accuracy in his paintings.

Similarly, Cahill's insistence that Chinese paintings be "good pictures" (works that rigorously adhere to high standards of verisimilitude) creates, I believe, an arbitrary criterion.[26] In the absence of a Chinese, Ming-period definition of a "good picture," we should steer clear of such seemingly airtight but haphazard criteria. It is one thing to point out that a tripod incense burner has only two legs, and to be disturbed by such a flaw in what is otherwise an elegant and finely executed painting, and another to reject the entire painting, ignoring the fact that the Taipei version of *Enjoying Antiquities* is in *complete stylistic and technical accord* with several other examples of Du Jin's work—particularly *Fu Sheng Transmitting the "Shujing"* (figs. 13, 14) and *Playing the Qin under a Plum Tree* (fig. 9). In my opinion, in addition to the balanced and spa-

Figure 17 Detail, fig. 2: *Enjoying Antiquities*

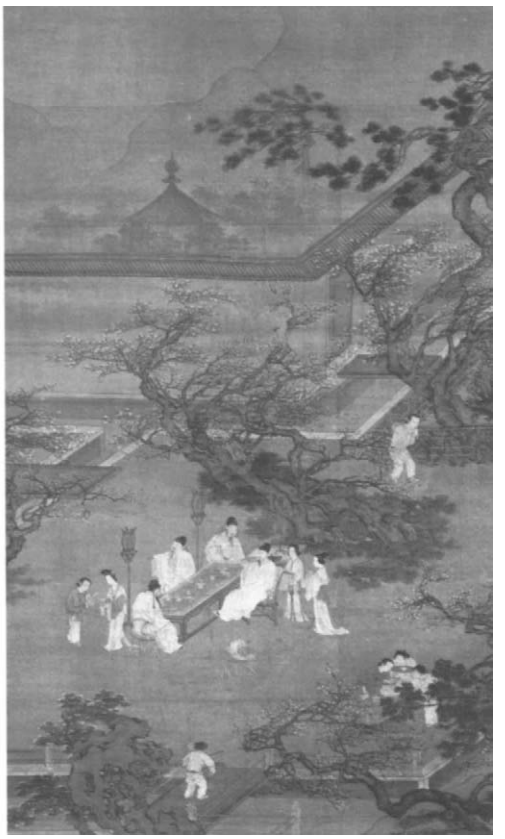
cious compositions of these works, the relative scale of the figures to their settings and the remarkable consistency in the brushwork point to a common author, namely Du Jin himself. As Maxwell Hearn writes:

> *All artists take license with reality and Du Jin is no exception. In "Inscribing Bamboo"* [*Palace Museum, Beijing*[27]] *and "Playing the Qin Under a Plum," for example, the junction of the railings to the posts is completely illogical, underscoring Du's ability to completely disregard representational accuracy and still make a beautiful painting.*[28]

By focusing on a few details of the Taipei version that he finds unacceptable (for example, the banana tree, the balustrade strut, the two-legged *ding* tripod), Cahill rejects the entire painting as a copy by someone other than Du Jin. In so doing, he rejects the possibility that the entire Taipei scroll was painted by Du Jin, or created by Du Jin with a less accomplished assistant, as has been suggested by Richard Barnhart.[29]

In considering the first option (that the entire Taipei painting is by Du Jin), it is important to recognize that painters, even great painters, make mistakes. In Chinese painting, where nearly every stroke of the brush is visible in the finished product, mistakes are going to (and do) appear. If one were to judge Zhao Mengfu's (1254–1322) *Portrait of Su Shi* (fig. 19), in the National Palace Museum, Taipei,[30] on the basis of "representational integrity," one would, I think, have to reject the painting as a copy or forgery. To my knowledge, despite the obvious representational problems in this work—the lines that depict the poet's staff are intersected by the lines that depict his robe, belt, and shoe, altogether violating "representational

Figure 18 Du Jin (active ca. 1465–ca. 1509), *Women in a Palace Garden*, late 15th century. Detail. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 12 × 66 ½ in. (30.5 × 168.9 cm). Shanghai Museum



integrity"—no one has suggested that this painting is anything other than an original work by Zhao Mengfu.

Brushwork as a Criterion of Authenticity

Since it has been suggested that the Taipei version of *Enjoying Antiquities* is more in keeping with the style of Qiu Ying (ca. 1495–1552) or Tang Yin, or at least a product of their milieu (early- and mid-sixteenth-century Suzhou), it is important to formulate a clear idea of what the styles of Qiu and Tang looked like, particularly in the academic "figure-in-garden" style.[31] Like Du Jin, Qiu Ying and Tang Yin simultaneously specialized in academic-style painting and *baimiao* painting. Both artists were skilled professionals who could easily switch styles.[32] I would argue, however, that the Taipei *Enjoying Antiquities* painting looks

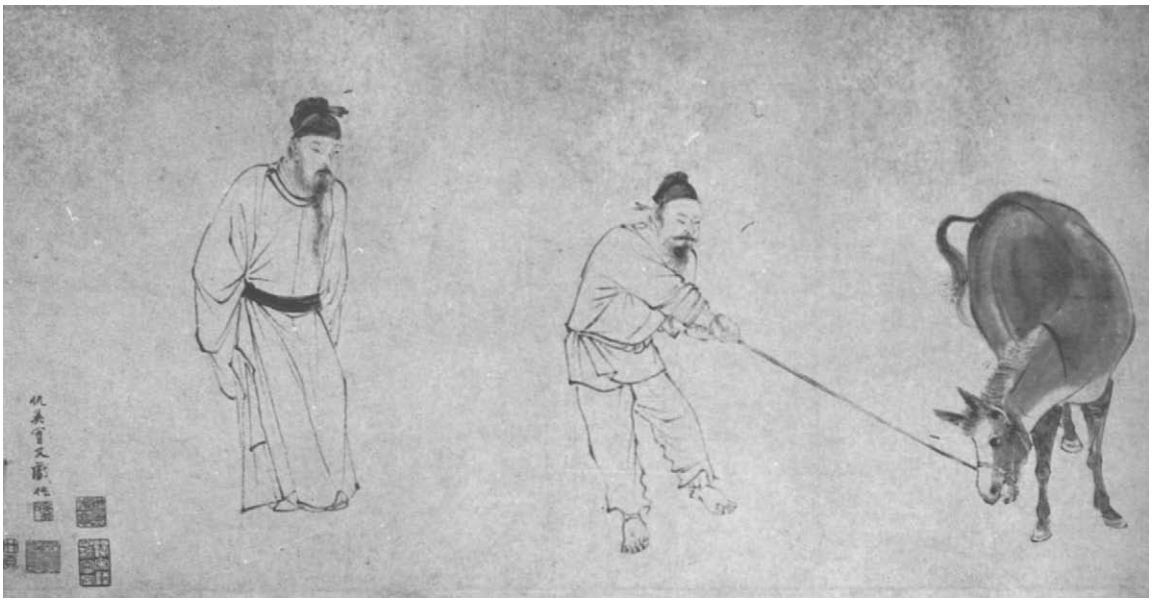
Figure 19 Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322), *Portrait of Su Shi.* Album leaf, ink on paper, 10 ¾ × 4 ⅜ in. (27.2 × 11.1 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

Figure 20 Qiu Ying (ca. 1495–1552), *The Garden of Peach and Pear Trees.* Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 88 ⅛ × 51 ⅛ in. (224 × 130 cm). Chion-in, Kyoto

neither like Qiu Ying nor Tang Yin, but uniquely like Du Jin himself. This distinction can be made on the basis of the three artists' brushwork, particularly in the figures.

Many of the detailed paintings of figures in gardens that Qiu painted between about 1520 and 1550 reveal a debt to Du Jin's work in the academic manner. A work by Qiu that comes closest to Du Jin is the hanging scroll in the Chion-in, Kyoto, entitled *The Garden of Peach and Pear Trees* (fig. 20).[33] Although Ellen Johnston Laing has recently condemned this scroll and its pendant (*The Golden Valley Garden*) as coarse copies, I believe that they are not only genuine works by Qiu Ying, but among his finest surviving paintings (anyone who doubts this should reserve judgment until they have actually visited the Kyoto National Museum, where these works are stored, and spent some time with the paintings themselves).[34] While the slick execution is entirely derived from such late-fifteenth-century painters as Du Jin and Liu Jun, the small scale of the figures is entirely *unlike* Du Jin, and entirely typical of Qiu Ying. More impor-

Figure 21 Qiu Ying (ca. 1495–1552), *Conversation in the Shade of Wutong Trees*. Detail. Hanging scroll, ink and light color on paper, 111 ¾ × 39 3/8 in. (279.5 × 100 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei



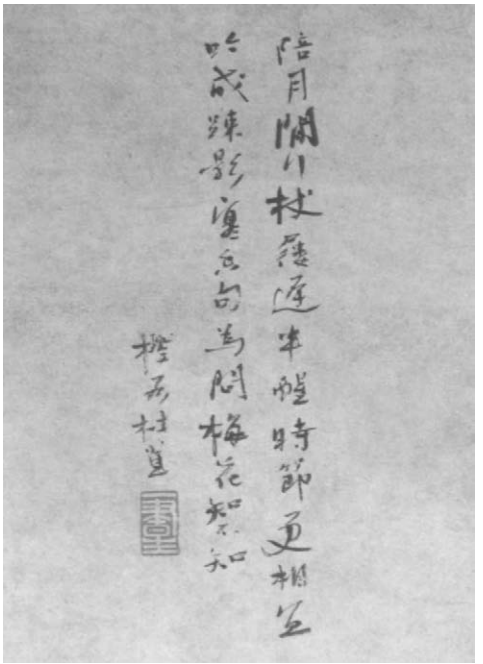
tant are the differences in Qiu Ying's brushwork in his figures. Whereas Du Jin's brushwork in such mature works as *Fu Sheng Transmitting the "Shujing"* (fig. 8) and *Playing the Qin under a Plum Tree* (fig. 9) is highly energetic, manifesting a tendency toward bold calligraphic flourishes and sudden changes in direction and width of line, Qiu Ying's brushwork is much more restrained, with rounder movements, thinner lines, and fewer calligraphic flourishes. There are occasionally exceptions to this in Qiu Ying's work, particularly in some of his more freely painted works on paper, such as *Conversation in the Shade of Wutong Trees* (fig. 21) in the National Palace Museum, Taipei,[35] but in such cases the overall style tends to be sketchier, distinctly different from the meticulously described surfaces and textures of Du Jin's work in the academic style. Even in this work by Qiu Ying, the brushwork is rounder in its movements, and lacking the large number of bends and hooks seen in Du Jin's brushwork (fig. 1 detail, page 188). Furthermore, Qiu Ying's figures tend to be more conventionalized and idealized, and rarely does one find the types of idiosyncratic caricature evident in Du Jin's paintings, such as the extraordinary figure of the ninety-year-old Fu Sheng in the Metropolitan Museum's painting (fig. 13). In Qiu Ying's *A Donkey for Mr. Zhu* (fig. 22), a painting in which the brushwork in the figures comes closest to those of Du Jin's *Enjoying Antiquities* in Taipei, the lineament is still more restrained, with fewer calligraphic flourishes, than in Du Jin's brushwork.[36] One rarely sees, for example, the many expressive "nail-heads" that characterize Du Jin's figures.

Figure 22 Qiu Ying (ca. 1495–1552), *A Donkey for Mr. Zhu.* Detail. Handscroll, ink on paper, 10 ⅜ × 27 ⅝ in. (26.5 × 70.1 cm). Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Du Jin's acquaintance with the Suzhou scholar and professional artist Tang Yin is well known, and Jiang Zhaoshen has demonstrated the influence of Du Jin's refined, academic style on Tang Yin's figure paintings.[37] This is most evident in such works by Tang as *Tao Gu Presents a Poem* (fig. 23).[38] Jiang Zhaoshen, in discussing the influence of Du Jin on Tang Yin, has specifically described the similarities in the composition, figure types, and brush techniques between Tang's *Tao Gu Presents a Poem* and the Taipei version of Du Jin's *Enjoying Antiquities*, and has pointed to the similar manner in which the figures of both the scholars and the young women are painted, and the similar rendering of the banana plants, the bamboo

Figure 23 Tang Yin (1470–1523), *Tao Gu Presents a Poem*, early 16th century. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 66 ½ × 40 ¼ in. (168.8 × 102.1 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

Figure 24 Tang Yin (1470–1523), *Lady Ban Holding a Fan*, early 16th century. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 59 ¼ × 25 in. (150.4 × 63.6 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei



growing over the painted screens, the tree branches, and finely specked foliage. There is a significant difference, however, in the two artists' brushwork in the figures: in contrast to Du Jin's nervous, constantly modulated, and often hooked line, Tang Yin's lines are much more restrained, curvilinear, and even in width. These differences are even visible in works such as Tang Yin's *Lady Ban Holding a Fan* (fig. 24), in which the brushwork, while very close to Du Jin's, is still more restrained and curvilinear. These clearly observable differences in brushwork indicate to me that the Taipei version of *Enjoying Antiquities* stands apart from the early- and mid-sixteenth-century Suzhou milieu of Qiu Ying and Tang Yin.

I have focused on a comparison of these three artists' brushwork because, in China, brushwork has for centuries been the primary criterion of authenticity in both calligraphy and painting. The Song painter Han Zhuo (active ca. 1095–ca. 1125) wrote, "The whole warp and weft of the picture is in the brushstroke."[39] Similarly, the Qing critic Lu Shihua (1714–1779) wrote, "the artist's wisdom or folly, his worth or worthlessness, all the strong and weak points in his character often come to light in his brushwork."[40] The ability to utilize brushwork in this way is due entirely to the fact that, with few exceptions (as pointed out above), nearly every stroke of the artist's brush is visible in the finished work. Cahill, in questioning the relevance of brushwork in assessing authenticity, writes:

Figure 25 Du Jin (active ca. 1465–ca. 1509), *The Poet Lin Bu Wandering in the Moonlight.* Detail of inscription. Hanging scroll, ink and light color on paper, 61 ⅝ × 28 ½ in. (156.6 × 72.4 cm). The Cleveland Museum of Art

> *My firm conviction, after many years of doing this, is that brushwork apart from its representational value or effect is virtually useless as a criterion of authenticity — the C.C. Wang hand-of-the-artist argument, personal handwriting etc. I mean — while the "good"* (= *authentic, for present purpose*) *painting will always be the one in which the brushstrokes, lines, etc. best perform their descriptive function.... The point is that the original artist is principally concerned with* depicting something (*whatever he may be doing with style, expressive distortions, whatever, at the same time*), *while the copyist isn't.*[41]

Similarly, Cahill states: "As for the highly trained eye that can recognize the hand of such-and-such a great master every time: believe me, it doesn't work with enough regularity to be a really decisive criterion."[42]

I think this too readily discounts the very real usefulness that traditional Chinese connoisseurs found in brushwork as a precise criterion of authenticity. I would hope that anyone examining the figures of Du Jin's *Enjoying Antiquities* in Taipei and *Fu Sheng Transmitting the "Shujing"* in New York, for example, would recognize the unique visual qualities of Du Jin's nervous and exuberant brushwork outlined above. It is precisely this distinctive brushwork that sets him apart from his fellows and followers.

As for the calligraphy of the inscriptions on the Taipei and Kongōbu-ji versions of *Enjoying Antiquities*, to my eye (judging in the latter case from a photograph) both look like genuine examples of Du Jin's writing. Du was a very eccentric calligrapher, as the detail of the inscription on his *The Poet Lin Bu Wandering in the Moonlight* (fig. 25) in The Cleveland Museum of Art indicates.[43] His calligraphy is characterized by structural distortions, lack of formal balance, spontaneity, awkward transitions between the strokes making up a given character, and awkward transitions between the characters themselves. Having examined the inscription on the Taipei version of *Enjoying Antiquities* several times, and compared it to other surviving examples of Du Jin's calligraphy, I am convinced that it satisfies all the above criteria, and is by Du Jin himself. Without access to the actual Kongōbu-ji scroll, however, it is impossible to judge the authenticity of its inscription.

I also believe that the Taipei version of *Enjoying Antiquities* dates to Du Jin's lifetime because the figure paintings at which Du excelled, many of which embody a moralizing narrative or have a clear moral agenda, reflect a period in which such works had a didactic function strongly reinforced by the stable political and moral climate of the Hongzhi (r. 1488–1505) court. The values expressed in such works — among which I would include *Enjoying Antiquities* — had significance in the late fifteenth century because they reflected values that were not only widely held, but were unambiguously promulgated at the highest levels of society.[44] This situation did not last, and the precipitous decline in moral standards within the imperial court that characterized the Zhengde (1506–21) and Jiajing (1522–66) reigns contributed to a milieu in

which the interest in and demand for such moralizing paintings declined dramatically. A very different taste in subject matter prevailed during the period of Qiu Ying's activity. When Qiu Ying depicts scenes of scholars enjoying antiquities, they do not convey the same moralizing message so unambiguously expressed in Du Jin's work.[45]

The Case of Qiu Ying

The problems posed by multiple versions of *Enjoying Antiquities* are mirrored in the work of Qiu Ying. Several examples from Qiu Ying's œuvre demonstrate that such cases are often not easy to solve, and provide an illuminating counterpoint to the different versions of Du Jin's *Enjoying Antiquities*. Qiu Ying was one of the most copied and forged painters in Chinese history.[46] In the National Palace Museum, Taipei, is a small hanging scroll by Qiu Ying with a date corresponding to 1547, entitled *Narcissus and Plum Blossoms* (fig. 26).[47] It is one of Qiu Ying's only dated works, and an important document in any discussion of Qiu's chronological development. A tracing copy of this painting is in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (fig. 27).[48] Based on close examination of the actual paintings, I believe that the Taipei version (on silk) is the original, and that the Freer version (on paper), a tracing copy, probably dates to the Qianlong period (1736–95). Significantly, it is the Taipei version that is recorded in the imperial Qing catalogue of painting and calligraphy, *Shiqu baoji*.[49] In my opinion, the Taipei scroll is a painting of extraordinary elegance, fully characteristic of the delicate and supple brushwork for which Qiu Ying was so deeply admired by Ming literati critics (including Dong Qichang). The Taipei version bears authentic seals of the Ming collector Xiang Yuanbian (1525–1590), and an authentic inscription and seals of the Qianlong emperor. The tracing copy in the Freer Gallery, while undeniably an attractive work, is in contrast two-dimensional and lifeless *when compared to the original* (in addition to bearing forged seals and a forged Qianlong colophon). While this distinction may be difficult to discern from photographs, an examination of the actual paintings reveals the differences quickly enough.

Let us now examine a genuine painting by Qiu Ying and a close copy, probably by an immediate student. Qiu Ying had several students, one of whom was his daughter, Qiu Zhu (Duling neishi; active mid-16th century), a talented painter who could closely imitate her father's work (fig. 28).[50] In the collection of the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco are two fan paintings attributed to Qiu Ying that have identical compositions (figs. 29, 30). While unsigned, both bear seals of Qiu Ying. Each fan depicts the Queen Mother

Figure 26 Qiu Ying (ca. 1495–1552), *Narcissus and Plum Blossoms*, 1547. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 18 ¾ × 9 ⅞ in. (47.5 × 25 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

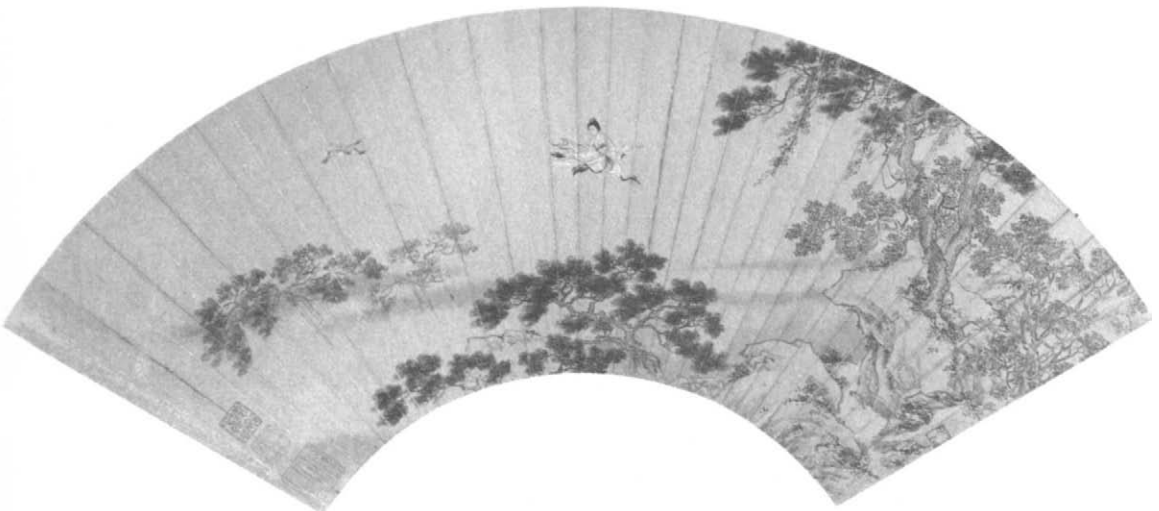
Figure 27 Tracing copy after Qiu Ying (ca. 1495–1552), *Narcissus and Plum Blossoms*, with a spurious inscription dated 1547. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 19 ½ × 9 ⅝ in. (49.5 × 24.6 cm). Courtesy of Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Little
Du
Jin's
Enjoying
Antiquities

of the West (Xiwangmu) flying through the air on a crane, with a phoenix flying behind. To the right are two pine trees, entwined with vines.

While the figures of Xiwangmu in the two paintings are similar in execution, the phoenix in the first painting is painted in a much more abbreviated, sketchy manner than the phoenix of the second painting —there is literally more detail included in the depiction of the phoenix in the second fan. This might suggest that the second painting is the original by Qiu Ying, and the first painting a close copy. If one compares the painting of the pine trees at the right, however, it seems clear that the pines in the first painting are superior in their rendering. Specifically, their trunks better convey the illusion of three-dimensionality as they turn and rise in space than do the straightened, two-dimensional trunks of the pines in the second

Figure 28 Qiu Zhu (active nid-16th century), *Female Musicians in a Garden.* Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk. Collection unknown.



painting. I believe that the first fan is an original work by Qiu Ying, and the second by a close student. What is significant is that the presence of more rather than less detail in a painting can just as often be the sign of a copy as the sign of an original.

Finally, let us examine two paintings by Qiu Ying that have the same composition, and which are both accepted by the staff of the National Palace Museum as genuine works. The first painting, on paper, is en-

Figure 29 (top) Qiu Ying (ca. 1495–1552), *The Queen Mother of the West Flying on a Crane.* Fan painting, ink and color on gold-flecked paper, 6 ⅛ × 18 ¾ in. (15.5 × 47.5 cm). Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

Figure 30 (bottom) After Qiu Ying (ca. 1495–1552), *The Queen Mother of the West Flying on a Crane.* Fan painting, ink and color on gold-flecked paper, 6 ¾ × 19 ¾ in. (17.1 × 50.2 cm). Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

titled *The Garden Dwelling* (fig. 31); the second, on silk, is entitled *Master Donglin's Villa* or *The Eastern Grove* (fig. 32).[51] Cahill has written as follows on the latter scroll:

> *Outstanding among his* [*Qiu Ying's*] *works of this type* [*i.e., idealized portraits of rustic retreats*] *is the handscroll titled "Master Donglin's Villa".... It exists in at least three versions, and the question of which if any of them is Qiu Ying's original remains to be investigated thoroughly. The one we reproduce is the better of the two in the Palace Museum, Taipei, and could be from Qiu's hand, although certain weaknesses in some passages suggest that it too may be an excellent copy by one of his followers.*[52]

From my own comparison of the two scrolls in Taipei, I believe that both are by Qiu Ying, and that *The Garden Dwelling* is the earlier of the two. Fully aware of the "weaknesses in some passages" that Cahill observes (for example, the mechanical rendering of the branches to the left of the pavilion), I believe that *Master Donglin's Villa* is a copy by Qiu Ying of his own work—and I would suggest that a similar relationship exists between the Taipei and Kongōbu-ji versions of Du Jin's *Enjoying Antiquities*.

Figure 31 (top) Qiu Ying (ca. 1495–1552), *The Garden Dwelling*, ca. 1520–30. Detail. Handscroll, ink and color on paper, 11 × 33 ⅛ in. (27.9 × 84 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

Figure 32 (bottom) Qiu Ying (ca. 1495–1552), *Master Donglin's Villa*, ca. 1540–50. Detail. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 7 ¾ × 21 ⅝ in. (19.8 × 54.2 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

* * *

In my opinion, the argument regarding the authenticity of the Kongōbu-ji version of *Enjoying Antiquities* is moot until the actual scroll can be examined by other scholars. In the meantime, I am convinced that the Taipei version of the composition is an original work by Du Jin, possibly (but not necessarily) painted with the aid of an assistant. The similarities in brushwork between this scroll and Du Jin's *Fu Sheng Transmitting the "Shujing"* and *Playing the Qin under a Plum Tree* indicate to me that the figures can only have been painted by Du Jin.

We may in fact never know the precise relationship between the three versions of *Enjoying Antiquities*. All three may be by Du Jin, or only one. To me the Kongōbu-ji fragment has every possibility of being an original work by Du, and possibly the earliest of the three, for it does not manifest the speed of brushwork and confidence of execution seen in the Metropolitan's *Fu Sheng* or Shanghai's *Playing the Qin*. There is seemingly little to criticize in the Kongōbu-ji painting, and no apparent reason not to accept it as a genuine, early work by Du Jin in the academic manner. As long as the painting is unavailable for study, however, it is impossible to judge. There is no substitute for studying the actual work of art if one hopes to understand it fully, and it is exceedingly dangerous (indeed, almost impossible) to make judgments with regard to authenticity on the basis of photographs alone. All the participants in the "Tu Chin Correspondence" agree that all three versions of *Enjoying Antiquities* date to the Ming dynasty, specifically to the late fifteenth or sixteenth century. In the broader scheme of things, this controversy has less to do with the enormous art-historical and cultural value of the Taipei version of the composition (which, being the only one that is complete, is the most important with regard to our understanding of the significance of the original painting for Du Jin and his audience) than with the ways in which we look at and perceive such paintings. To me, a much more difficult and interesting problem than the connoisseurship of any of Du Jin's works is the connoisseurship of the paintings of such masters as Juran (active ca. 960–95), the Northern Song emperor Huizong (r. 1101–25), and Ni Zan (1306–1374) — realms in which few Westerners have had the courage to venture.

Coda: Connoisseurship and Chinese Painting

The discipline of connoisseurship involves the analysis of many aspects of a Chinese painting — its physical materials (including the silk and paper of the mounting[53]), composition, brushwork, calligraphy, poetry and

prose inscriptions, colophons, seals, and ancillary documentation such as catalogue records, provenance (its past ownership and commercial history), and related works. Connoisseurship, which signifies the knowledge derived from such an encompassing analysis, is clearly a major prerequisite in determining the significance of a work of art in a particular historical context. The need for this understanding may seem obvious, but — as we see here and elsewhere in this volume — leading specialists in the field of Chinese painting often disagree and do not always arrive at a consensus about the authenticity of certain paintings. Many works still pose questions that simply bedevil seasoned experts. As art historians, how well-equipped are we to deal with such questions?

Our judgments, like the works we study, are part of a process of transmission. Every Chinese painting we study has *already* been assessed and judged for its aesthetic quality and art-historical significance long before we see it for the first time. Someone — an archaeologist, curator, professor, dealer, or collector — has already examined what we are studying, and exercised some degree of judgment; and their decisions (for example, whether to publish or exhibit a work, or to buy or sell a work and thereby attach a financial value to it which is then confirmed or denied through the mechanisms of the art market, augmenting or decreasing the work's *perceived* art-historical importance), whether we are aware of them or not, influence our own judgment. The study of Chinese painting inevitably builds on this transmission. The writings or pronouncements of a famous scholar, or the views expressed in a museum exhibition catalogue, similarly enter the catechism of what is considered worthy or unworthy, significant or insignificant, authentic or spurious.

Aware of such issues, we must also be willing to reassess continually the intellectual structures underlying the history of Chinese painting. These structures are hugely compelling, and as art historians we are rarely taught to challenge them. The intellectual formulations and artistic statements of the late-Ming scholar and critic Dong Qichang, for example, still carry enormous weight today.

A connoisseur of painting is also by necessity a student of calligraphy and its theoretical underpinnings, as well as literature, history, philosophy, religion, and technology, for each of these disciplines has a direct bearing on our perception and understanding of a painting and its context. The early-fourteenth-century scholar Tang Hou, author of *Hua jian* (Mirror of Painting), stressed the importance of careful and rigorous study in becoming a connoisseur, and as mundane as it may sound, this regimen cannot be overstated.[54] Among other things, it entails examining thousands of actual paintings, ranging from the finest masterpieces to the crudest forgeries, a discipline that requires almost daily practice, but rewards us with the assurance that we have begun to understand what we are looking at and can distinguish our judgment from the history of received opinion.

Finally, in the exercise of connoisseurship, one must be willing to develop an appreciation for a characteristic that has now become unfashionable—quality. Just as one can distinguish quality in scholarship, one can distinguish quality in painting. In the Tang dynasty (618–907), the scholar and critic Zhang Yanyuan, author of *Lidai minghua ji* (Record of Famous Painters of All the Dynasties), datable to 847, distinguished between paintings that were beautiful (*yan*) and ugly (*chou*), and, for better or for worse, such distinctions are still valid.[55] Carefully pursued, connoisseurship, a useful and necessary tool in the study of Chinese painting, allows us the confidence to make such an asssesment.

1. The Taipei version of *Enjoying Antiquities* has recently been published in *Circa 1492: Art in the Age of Exploration*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1991), no. 293, and Wen C. Fong, James C.Y. Watt, et al., *Possessing the Past: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei*, exh. cat. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and National Palace Museum, 1996), pl. 183. I am grateful to James Cahill for providing me with copies of his photographs of the Kongōbu-ji painting. The Yale version is previously published in *Fine Chinese Paintings and Calligraphy*, sale cat., Christie's, New York, March 22, 1995, no. 32.

2. James Cahill, *Parting at the Shore: Chinese Painting of the Early and Middle Ming Dynasty, 1368–1580* (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1978), p. 156.

3. Richard M. Barnhart, James Cahill, Maxwell K. Hearn, and Stephen Little, "The Tu Chin [Du Jin] Correspondence, 1994–95," *Kaikodo Journal* 5 (Autumn 1997), pp. 8–45; hereafter "Correspondence."

4. For studies of Du Jin, see Osvald Sirén, *Chinese Painting: Leading Masters and Principles*, 7 vols. (London: Lund Humphries, 1956–58), vol. 5, pp. 144–45; Cahill, *Parting at the Shore*, pp. 154–56; Stephen Little, "Du Jin, Tao Cheng, and Shi Zhong: Three Scholar-Professional Painters of the Early Ming Dynasty" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1987). During the writing of my dissertation, I accepted Cahill's assertion that the Taipei *Enjoying Antiquities* scroll was a later copy, but have since changed my mind on the basis of further examination of the original scroll.

5. The year 1465 is the date of a now-lost handscroll by Du Jin entitled *Scattered Herds*, recorded in the Qing imperial catalogue *Shiqu baoji sanbian* (1816) (reprint, Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1969), p. 1801. A handscroll by Du Jin depicting two scholars in a garden, dated 1509, is recorded by Osvald Sirén as being in the Huihuaguan of the Beijing Palace Museum (see Sirén, *Chinese Painting: Leading Masters and Principles*, vol. 7, p. 245). The current curators in Beijing, however, have no knowledge of this scroll (Yang Xin, personal communication, September, 1986). In its absence the latest fixed date in Du Jin's life is 1505, the date associated with a poem by Li Dongyang, written on a portrait by Du Jin of an official named Zhang Jimeng (see Li Dongyang, *Huailutang shi hougao* [reprint: Taipei, n.d.], ch. 3: 23b–24a).

6. Han Ang, *Tuihui baojian xubian* (Supplement to Precious Mirror of Paintings) (1519), ch. 6, in *Huashi congshu*, 4 vols. (Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1974), vol. 2, p. 835.

7. There is no evidence that Du Jin was the son of an official, or that he was a permanent resident of the southern capital at Nanjing; see Cahill, *Parting at the Shore*, p. 154.

8. Xu Qin, *Minghua lu* (Record of Ming Dynasty Paintings) (1673), ch. 1, in *Huashi congshu*, vol. 2, p. 1133.

9. Little, "Du Jin, Tao Cheng, and Shi Zhong," chs. 1, 2. Several poems referring to Du Jin appear in Shen Zhou's collected literary work, *Shitian xiansheng ji*.

10. The Liu Jun painting is published in

Richard M. Barnhart et al., *Painters of the Great Ming: The Imperial Court and the Zhe School*, exh. cat. (Dallas: Dallas Museum of Art, 1993), cat. 26; the Lü Wenying painting is published in Suzuki Kei, *Chūgoku kaiga sōgo zuroku*, 5 vols. (Tokyo, 1982), vol. 3, no. JM12–066.

11. Previously published in *Kōkyu Sōga seika*, 3 vols. (Tokyo: Gakken, 1975), p. 2, pl. 56; recorded in *Gugong shuhua lu* (Illustrated Catalogue of Paintings and Calligraphy in the Palace Museum) (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1965), ch. 5, p. 88.

12. For a discussion of the Lin Bu theme in Du Jin's work, see Stephen Little, "Dimensions of a Portrait: Du Jin's 'The Poet Lin Bu Walking in the Moonlight,'" *Bulletin of The Cleveland Museum of Art* 75, no. 9 (November, 1988).

13. Published in *Zhongguo meishu quanji, huihua bian, 6: Mingdai huihua, shang* (The Complete Collection of Chinese Art, Paintings: Ming Dynasty Paintings) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1988), pl. 138.

14. Published in Xu Bangda, *Guxian shiyi tu juan* (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1961); Yang Xin, *Ming Du Jin Guxian shiyi tu juan* (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin meishu chubanshe, 1982); and *Circa 1492*, no. 294.

15. Stephen Little, "Literati Views of the Zhe School," *Oriental Art* 37, no. 4 (Winter 1991/2), p. 198.

16. On Shi Zhong, see Little, "Du Jin, Tao Cheng, and Shi Zhong," pp. 205–22.

17. For my arguments, see "Correspondence," pp. 13–14, 24–26, 29–30.

18. Ibid., p. 11.

19. Ibid., p. 17.

20. Ibid., p. 11.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid., p. 12.

23. Ibid., p. 16.

24. Ibid., p. 16.

25. Ibid., p. 13.

26. Along these lines, see Richard M. Barnhart, "A Recent Freer Acquisition and the Question of Workshop Practices," *Ars Orientalis* 28 (1998), pp. 81–82.

27. Published in *Zhongguo meishu quanji, huihua bian, 6: Mingdai huihua, shang*, pl. 134.

28. "Correspondence," p. 29.

29. Ibid., p. 20.

30. Published in Fong, Watt, et al., *Possessing the Past*, pl. 143.

31. See Cahill, *Parting at the Shore*, p. 156; "Correspondence," p. 22

32. See, for example, Qiu Ying's paintings in the styles of Zhang Xuan, Li Tang, Ren Renfa, and Wang Zhenpeng, published in Stephen Little, "The Demon Queller and the Art of Qiu Ying," *Artibus Asiae* 46 (1985), figs. 38, 57, 39; and *Jin Tang Wudai Song Yuan Ming Qing mingjia shuhua ji* (Collected Works of Famous Artists of the Jin, Tang, Five Dynasties, Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasties) (Shanghai, 1943), pl. 149.

33. Cahill, *Parting at the Shore*, pl. 102.

34. See Ellen Johnston Laing, "Qiu Ying's Delicate Style," *Ars Orientalis* 27 (1997), p. 58, in which Laing describes the paintings as "at best copies of a Qiu Ying original, perhaps several generations removed," and full of "stylistic mutilations and discrepancies." Cahill, on the other hand, has described the Chion-in paintings as "superb pictures"; see Cahill, *Parting at the Shore*, p. 203.

35. Cahill, *Parting at the Shore*, pl. 104.

36. Qiu Ying's *A Donkey for Mr. Zhu* is discussed in Marilyn Wong Fu and Shen C.Y. Fu, *Studies in Connoisseurship: Chinese Paintings from the Arthur M. Sackler Collection in New York and Princeton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), pp. 86–95; see also Little, "The Demon Queller and the Art of Qiu Ying," figs. 5, 6.

37. Jiang Zhaoshen, *Guanyu Tang Yin de yanjiu* (A Study of Tang Yin) (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1976).

38. Published in *Wupai jiushi nian zhan* (Ninety Years of Wu School Painting), exh. cat. (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1975), nos. 91, 72; and Fong, Watt, et al., *Possessing the Past*, pl. 194. Other paintings by Tang Yin that recall Du Jin's compositions are his *Lady Ban Holding a Fan* (*Wupai jiushi nian zhan*, no. 72), and two versions of *The Courtesan Li Duanduan with a Scholar*, in the National Palace Museum, Taipei and the Nanjing Museum; see, respectively, *Wupai jiushi nian zhan*, no. 6, and *Yiyuan duoying*, vol. 5 (1979), p. 24.

39. Yu Jianhua, *Zhongguo hualun leibian* (Compilation of Writings on Chinese Painting), 2 vols. (1957) (reprint, Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1986), 2:672;

translated in Osvald Sirén, *The Chinese on the Art of Painting* (1936) (reprint, New York: Schocken Books, 1963), p. 82.

40. R.H. Van Gulik, *Scrapbook for Chinese Collectors: A Chinese Treatise on Scrolls and Forgeries* (*Shu-hua shuo-ling*) (Beirut: 1958), p. 39.

41. "Correspondence," p. 8.

42. Ibid., p. 18.

43. The painting is published in Wai-kam Ho, Sherman E. Lee, et al., *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting: The Collections of the Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, and The Cleveland Museum of Art*, exh. cat. (Cleveland: The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1980), no. 157; and Little, "Dimensions of a Portrait," fig. 1.

44. On this subject, see the analysis of the Metropolitan Museum's *Fu Sheng* scroll (fig. 8) in Little, "Du Jin, Tao Cheng, and Shi Zhong."

45. See Xu Bangda, *Zhongguo huihuashi tulu* (Illustrated Catalogue of the History of Chinese Painting), 2 vols. (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1984), vol. 2, pl. 953.

46. Michael Sullivan, *The Arts of China* (rev. ed., Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1973), p. 197. Yang Renkai has published several examples of forgeries of Qiu Ying's work, which he attributes to Suzhou workshops; see Yang Renkai, *Zhongguo gujin shuhua zhenwei tujian* (Illustrated Catalogue of Authentic and Forged Works of Chinese Calligraphy and Painting) (Shenyang: Liaoning huaban chubanshe, 1996), pp. 9–11. Similar works exist in the storerooms of many museums.

47. *Wupai jiushi nian zhan*, no. 13.

48. Cahill, *Parting at the Shore*, p. 262, n. 14. Cahill states that the Freer version is the original, and the Taipei version a copy.

49. *Shiqu baoji* (1743) (reprint, Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1971), p. 799.

50. Harada Kinjirō, *Shina meiga hōkan* (Tokyo: Otsuka kogeisha, 1936), pl. 577. For a discussion of Qiu Zhu, see Ellen Johnston Laing, "Wives, Daughters, and Lovers: Three Ming Dynasty Women Painters," in *Views from Jade Terrace: Chinese Women Artists, 1300–1912*, exh. cat. (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1988), pp. 34–35.

51. Published, respectively, in *Wupai jiushi nian zhan*, nos. 120, 156. See the discussion of these works in Cahill, *Parting at the Shore*, pp. 206; 262, n. 18. A third version of the scroll, in the Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Berlin, appears to be a later copy; see *Tōyō bijutsu taikan*, 12 vols. (Tokyo, 1912), vol. 10.

52. Cahill, *Parting at the Shore*, p. 206.

53. There are few better introductions to the subject of scroll mounting (and the broader history of the connoisseurship of Chinese painting) than R.H. van Gulik, *Chinese Pictorial Art as Viewed by the Connoisseur* (Rome: Is. M.E.O., 1958).

54. Translated in Susan Bush and Hsio-yen Shih, *Early Chinese Texts on Painting* (Cambridge: Harvard-Yenching Institute, 1985), p. 259.

55. Zhang Yanyuan, from the chapter "On Grading by Name and Price," in *Lidai minghua ji* (Record of Famous Painters of All the Dynasties); translated in Bush and Shih, *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*, p. 72. For the Chinese text, see Yu Jianhua, *Zhongguo hualun leibian*, vol. 2, p. 1224.

Maxwell
K.
Hearn

An Early Ming Example of Multiples: Two Versions of *Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden*

On April 6, 1437, the first day of the third lunar month, nine of the leading scholar-officials of early Ming (1368–1644) China came together in a private garden in Beijing to savor the spring weather and enjoy a variety of cultural pursuits. The assembled guests included three of the most powerful men in China at the time: Yang Shiqi (1365–1444), Yang Pu (1372–1446), and the party's host, Yang Rong (1371–1440). Known as the "Three Yangs," these officials played a key role in consolidating Ming governmental power and establishing a golden age of stability and prosperity while serving as virtual regents to the young emperor Yingzong (Zhu Qizhen, 1427–1464; r. 1436–49, 1457–64), who was only eight years old when his father died in January 1435.[1]

The gathering follows a long tradition of literary assemblies, including the most celebrated springtime garden outing in Chinese history, that held at the Orchid Pavilion on the third day of the third month of the year 353.[2] As at that earlier event, each of the participants in the Apricot Garden gathering composed a poem celebrating the occasion. All the poems followed the rhyme scheme of a poem contributed by Yang Shiqi, the senior member of the gathering. Yang Shiqi also composed a preface introducing the assembled poems. Following the poems, Yang Rong, as host, added a postface giving a fuller description of the event:

> *On the first day of the third month, in the spring of the* dingsi *year, the second year of the Zhengtong reign, it happened that it was a day of leisure, so when various court officials visited me I invited them into the Apricot Garden* [*attached to*] *my residence. Mr. Xie* [*Huan*] *Tingxun of Yongjia* [*Zhejiang*], *who had*

Opposite Detail, fig. 1: Unidentified artist (early 15th century), after Xie Huan (ca. 1370–ca. 1450), *Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden*, ca. 1437. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 14 ⅜ × 94 ¾ in. (36.7 × 240.7 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1989

recently lodged nearby, also happened to come to the gathering. The springtime scenery was clear and bright, the gentle breezes were mild and pleasant,[3] *flowering plants competed in elegance, and pungent fragrances assailed our senses. We took turns drinking wine while some strummed a zither and others composed poetry so that we all became exhilarated.*

Master Xie, an expert painter, has used various colors to describe the assembled gentlemen as well as the [*garden's*] *scenery and furnishings. The three persons seated in front of the stone screen are, to* [*my*] *left, the Junior Tutor to the Heir Apparent* [shaofu] *Yang* [*Shiqi*] *of Luling* [*Taihe, Jiangxi*]*; to his right,* [*myself, Yang*] *Rong* [*of Jian'an, Fujian*]*; and further to my left, the Vice Supervisor of the Imperial Household* [shaozhanshi] *Wang* [*Zhi*] *of Taihe* [*Jiangxi*]. *The three persons seated beside the blossoming apricot are, in the center, the grandee* [dazongbo] *Yang* [*Pu*] *of Nanjun* [*Shishou, Hubei*]*; to his left, the Vice Supervisor of the Imperial Household* [shaozhanshi] *Wang* [*Ying*] *of Jinxi* [*Fujian*]*; and to his right, the Hanlin Academy Reader-in-Waiting* [shidu xueshi] *Qian* [*Xili*] *of Wenjiang* [*Jishui, Jiangxi*]. *The four persons arriving at a dignified pace are, in the lead, the Left Mentor to the Heir Apparent* [zuoshuzi] *Zhou* [*Shu*] *of Jishui* [*Jiangxi*]; *next, the Hanlin Academy Reader-in-Waiting* [shidu xueshi] *Li* [*Shimian*] *of Ancheng* [*Jiangxi*]*; next, the Hanlin Academy Expositor* [shijiang xueshi] *Chen* [*Xun*] *of Taihe* [*Jiangxi*]*; and last, Master Xie* [*Huan*], *who holds the position of Battalion Commander in the Imperial Bodyguard* [jinyiwei qianhu]. *These ten persons are shown in their splendid robes and hats and are further distinguished by their white hair. Also shown are nine servants and youthful attendants as well as the five servants responsible for preparing the wine and delicacies. The harmonious atmosphere created by the scenery and furnishings is likewise marvelously conveyed. Mr.* [*Yang Shiqi of*] *Luling has happily inscribed* [*a frontispiece*], *"Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden," and also added a preface at the beginning* [*of the colophon section*] *in response to which each guest has composed a poem so as to form a set to which it has been left to me to add a postface.*

In appreciation for the inherited benevolence of our successive rulers as well as their plans for regulating affairs for the benefit of posterity, our generation of officials has humbly offered its service and has consequently been showered with imperial favors for many years. Now that a sagely son of Heaven has succeeded to the throne, the empire is at peace and the people enjoy abundance, and [*those of us*] *serving close* [*to the emperor*] [*have been granted*] *days for rest and ablutions on the first and fifteenth of each month, just as was the case in the ancient statutes, when we may do as we please. As this is all a gift bestowed by the emperor, it is appropriate that this gathering be depicted in order to record the benefits of this era of peace. In the Tang dynasty there were the "nine elders of the mountain of fragrance"* [*who met at the resi-*

dence of Bai Juyi (772–846) in 845], and in the Song dynasty there were the "twelve venerable worthies of the Luo Society" [who met at the home of Fu Bi (1006–1087) in 1083]. These were all men who, because of their advanced age and surpassing virtue, had retired from government service and lived at leisure and so were able to enjoy the pleasures of poetry and wine.[4] *Later generations depicted these men, considering them as worthy subjects. But the gatherings of these men took place during their retirement, while [the gathering depicted here] occurred in a leisure moment during our service, so that while appearances are similar, our situation is very different. In examining the circumstances of those men, their noble status and record of conduct were not the same, since each time has its own offices and duties. As for our generation's age and expectations, while we do not dare to compare ourselves with the ancients, still our intention to undertake important matters of state and manage imperial affairs is the same; and, with regard to the dangers faced by the ancients, our situation is not different. Who knows if later men will look with envy upon our present circumstances. Even though [this gathering and painting were done] as a token of gratitude for imperial favors that we hope to repay by praising this time of reposeful happiness, we must still remain on guard against idle excesses. Although I am old, I am still willing to add this after [the writings of] all the other gentlemen as a way of exerting myself [for the state].*

Written by the Grand Master for Glorious Happiness [ronglu dafu], *Junior Tutor to the Heir Apparent, Minister of Works* [gongbu shangshu], *and Grand Secretary of the Jinshen Palace* [Jinshendian xueshi] *Yang Rong.*[5]

As Yang Rong's postface makes clear, Xie Huan (ca. 1370–ca. 1450), the leading court artist of the day, was a guest at this garden party and produced a detailed pictorial account of the gathering.[6] A frontispiece, preface, and poems by the various participants were then mounted together with the painting and Yang Rong's postface.

Today, *Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden* survives in two painted versions, each accompanied by a full set of the appended texts to which Yang Rong refers. The version best known in Western publications is the handscroll formerly in the collection of Weng Tonghe (1830–1904) that is now in The Metropolitan Museum of Art (fig. 1).[7] A more complete composition — the Metropolitan scroll lacks the opening section showing Xie Huan — is preserved in the Zhenjiang Municipal Museum (fig. 2).[8] The Zhenjiang composition was the model for a wood-block printed version, published about 1560 in a book entitled *Two Garden Gatherings* (*Er yuan ji*) (fig. 3).[9] That publication also includes an illustration of *Birthday Celebration in the Bamboo Garden*, which was based on a painting by the court artists Lü Ji (ca. 1430–ca. 1504) and Lü Wenying (1421–1505). The painting (fig. 4), now in the Palace Museum, Beijing, was commissioned in 1499

1
2
3
4

Figure 1 Unidentified artist (early 15th century), after Xie Huan (ca. 1370–ca. 1450), *Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden*, ca. 1437. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 14 ⅜ × 94 ¾ in. (36.7 × 240.7 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1989

Figure 2 Xie Huan (ca. 1370–ca. 1450), *Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden*, ca. 1437. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 14 ½ × 157 ¾ in. (37 × 401 cm). Zhenjiang Municipal Museum

Figure 3 *Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden.* Woodblock print from *Two Garden Gatherings* (*Er yuan ji*), ca. 1560. Collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Figure 4 Lü Ji (ca. 1430–ca. 1504) and Lü Wenying (1421–1505), *Birthday Celebration in the Bamboo Garden*, datable to 1499. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 13 ¼ × 155 ½ in. (33.8 × 395.4 cm). Palace Museum, Beijing

by Minister of Revenue Zhou Jing (1440–1510) to record the sixtieth-birthday celebration of Zhou and several of his friends that took place in his Beijing garden and seems to have been inspired by Xie Huan's image as it contains many of the same motifs.[10]

Most scholars familiar with the Metropolitan and Zhenjiang versions of *Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden* accept both paintings as works of the early Ming academy, but by different hands.[11] But which, if either, is by Xie Huan, and if Xie did paint one, what was his relationship to the other version?

The Zhenjiang version has the stronger claim to being Xie Huan's original. Not only does its composition correspond more closely to the description in Yang Rong's postface, but it bears seals at the joins of its colophon sheets that read *Guanxi houyi* (Descendant of Guanxi). Two scholars have identified these seals as those of Yang Rong based on his descent from the famous Eastern Han scholar Yang Zhen, known during the Han as the "Confucius of Guanxi" (Guanxi Kongzi).[12] But if the Zhenjiang version is Xie Huan's original, then what was his relationship with the Metropolitan scroll? Did he participate in its painting, or did he merely provide artistic direction for an assistant? Or perhaps he was not connected with it at all. It is possible that the Metropolitan scroll is a later creation commissioned either by one of the original participants or their families at a somewhat later date, or by parties intent on perpetrating a fraud.

In the absence of any textual evidence, only a close comparison of the two scrolls can shed light on their relationship. This became possible in 1997 when the Zhenjiang version came to New York as part of the exhibition *China 5,000 Years: Innovation and Transformation in the Arts*, organized by the Guggenheim Museum. Thanks to the cooperation of the Guggenheim staff and the Chinese curators accompanying the exhibition, the Metropolitan and Zhenjiang paintings and inscriptions were compared side by side.[13]

Content

As even a cursory inspection makes clear, the two versions are not identical. The same sequence of guests appears in both paintings, and both paintings share the basic components of the same garden, but the specific details of the landscape, furniture, and scholarly accoutrements are different. Neither, therefore, is a direct copy of the other.

Both compositions open with figures entering from the right. In the longer Zhenjiang version, the entrance to the garden precinct is denoted by a moat flanked by tall trees and spanned by a bridge. Four servants are depicted crossing the bridge, two bearing a large container of wine on a carrying pole, the other two bearing what appear to be precious objects, perhaps gifts from the arriving guests. The next figure to

appear in the Zhenjiang scroll is Xie Huan himself. The loss of pigment on this figure reveals that it was painted over other landscape details, indicating that it was an addition to the completed painting (fig. 5). Since Xie Huan is explicitly mentioned as being present at the gathering in both Yang Rong's postface and Yang Shiqi's preface, the presumed owner of this painting, Yang Rong, must have insisted that Xie include himself in the visual record. The commission of such a project usually involved a process of review and amendment, including the approval of a draft version; the late addition of the artist suggests that, in this instance, no such draft was produced. It also suggests that, if multiple versions of the painting were created, this was the first, since the composition was still being worked out. The fact that Xie did not initially include himself in the painting also reflects the ambiguous status of artists at the Ming court. Even someone of Xie Huan's stature — an intimate of the previous Xuande emperor (r. 1426–35) and a descendant of a scholarly family — could not presume to include himself, despite his presence at the gathering. It seems that Xie left ample space for such an addition, but could not insert his portrait until the host approved or invited him to do so. Furthermore, Xie placed himself at a deferential distance from the other guests, although he is still slightly closer to them than to the anonymous servants.

The Metropolitan handscroll includes neither the four arriving servants nor the artist; instead, it begins abruptly with the first group of principal guests and presents a more condensed version of the Zhenjiang scroll. In spite of its abbreviated treatment, however, it preserves the same sequence and groupings of the participants as described in Yang Rong's postface: the first group — Chen Xun, Li Shimian, and Zhou

Figure 5 Zhenjiang version (fig. 2), detail, figure of Xie Huan (ca. 1370–ca. 1450)

Table 1 Order of Participants' Colophons Attached to the Zhenjiang Scroll (see fig. 7a)

Participants	Age at Gathering	Official Title as Given in Postface	Official Rank
1 Yang Shiqi(1365–1444)	72	*shaofu*	1b
2 Yang Rong (1371–1440)	66	*ronglu dafu*	1b
3 Yang Pu (1372–1446)	65	*dazongbo*	?
4 Wang Ying (1376–1450)	61	*shaozhanshi*	4a
5 Wang Zhi (1379–1462)	58	*shaozhanshi*	4a
6 Zhou Shu (*jinshi* 1404)	?	*zuoshuzi*	5a
7 Li Shimian (1374–1450)	63	*shidu xueshi*	5b
8 Qian Xili (born 1374)	63	*shidu xueshi*	5b
9 Chen Xun (1385–1462)	52	*shijiang xueshi*	6a
10 Xie Huan* (ca. 1370-ca. 1450)	67?	*jinyiwei qianhu*	5a

**Xie Huan did not contribute a colophon.*

Table 2 Shared Motifs in the Two Versions

wood and lacquered tables
squareback wood and rattan chairs
stools
wine cups on lacquer cup stands
bronze vase with arrows
bronze *zun* with magic fungus
bronze incense burner
lacquer boxes
books or albums
two table screens
weiqi game board with containers for markers
stone screen wall
crane
stone table with potted plants
hanging scrolls
zithers (*qin*)
vase with coral
covered wine jar
wine ewer with long spout
bundle of handscrolls
large garden rock with numerous perforations
bronze bowl on a red lacquer stand
inkstones
brushrest
brushes
sheet of paper
bamboo trellis with vine
stone table with food containers
large brazier with ewer inside

Shu—is shown proceeding leftward as if just arriving; the second group—Wang Zhi, Yang Shiqi, and Yang Rong—is shown seated between tables filled with antiques and scholarly implements; and the third group—Wang Ying, Yang Pu, and Qian Xili—is shown seated beside a writing table. The color of the men's robes and the presence or absence of rank badges in the Metropolitan version are also generally consistent with what is represented in the Zhenjiang version. Since the paintings serve as diagrams of political power, clearly the correct identification and placement of the participants was regarded as the most critical feature of both. The order of the colophons reflects this same attention to hierarchy (see table 1). When one correlates the order of the colophons appended to the Zhenjiang version with the location of the figures, it is apparent that the men closest to the apex of political power occupy positions closest to the center of the composition, and their inscriptions are correspondingly closest to the front of the colophon section. For example, Yang Shiqi, the eldest and highest ranking official in attendance, sits at the center of this gathering, and his preface and poem come first in the sequence of colophons. Yang Rong, the next most senior official and the host, sits immediately to Yang Shiqi's right, and his poem is next in the sequence of colophons. Yang Pu, the third of the "Three Yangs," who was elevated to the status of Grand Secretary the following year, in 1438, is seated at the center of the left-hand trio, and his poem is third. The fourth colophon writer, Wang Ying, sits between Yang Pu and Yang Rong, while Wang Zhi, the fifth colophon writer, sits to the left of Yang Shiqi. The four officials whose colophons appear last in the Zhenjiang version occupy successively more peripheral positions in the composition, denoting their relatively lower standing. In general, the ordering also reflects the men's ages.

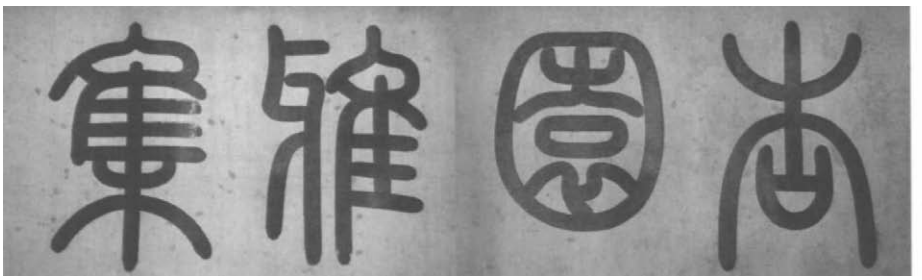
Equally significant is the fact that the figures hold nearly identical poses in the two versions. If we accept the Zhenjiang version as Xie Huan's original, then the Metropolitan version, although not an exact copy, is, nevertheless, clearly based on the Zhenjiang version's ordering of figures and poses. This same observation also applies to the landscape elements, antiques, and scholarly paraphernalia that surround the figures. Although somewhat varied in their particulars, these elements are remarkably similar in type, number, and appearance (see table 2). The differences in the depiction of these motifs in the two paintings may be explained as deliberate changes made by the artist to compress the horizontal dimension of the Metropolitan version. In the longer Zhenjiang version, for example, three of the figures sit on long couches, whereas in the Metropolitan version these figures sit on more compact yokeback chairs. Similarly, the stone screen that forms a backdrop to the central trio of figures in the Zhenjiang version has been reoriented in the Metropolitan version to function as a space divider separating the central trio of figures from the three preceding guests. This allows for the inclusion of not only the screen but also a large Taihu-style rock while

minimizing the horizontal dimension of the painting. Except for these calculated differences, the repertoire of elements featured in both versions is remarkably consistent. Undoubtedly, this is due to their important symbolic role as defining each participant's status and scholarly standing, a fundamental function of the painting. As James Cahill has pointed out, "Chinese portraitists tried to suggest the inner life of their subjects through the choice of their surroundings and attributes"; the setting and all the antiques and scholarly paraphernalia surrounding the guests in the Apricot Garden suggest their "literary abilities and aesthetic discernment as well as worldly power."[14] Although the painting style and precise arrangement of these elements might vary, their pictorial enumeration was vital to the painting's meaning.

The numerous points of correspondence in the content and organization of figures and elements attest to the close connection of the two versions, but how does one account for the fact that the Metropolitan painting is about one-third shorter in length than the Zhenjiang painting? Not only has the introductory passage in the Zhenjiang painting, which shows four servants and Xie Huan entering the garden, been omitted from the Metropolitan version, but the scene of servants preparing food and drink at the end of the Zhenjiang scroll has likewise been compressed and abbreviated in the Metropolitan version. The imposing pavilion featured at the end of the Zhenjiang scroll is barely hinted at in the Metropolitan painting, while the winding stream, tall trees, and earthen embankment that mark the left-hand border of the garden and bring closure to the Zhenjiang composition are all absent. Since the essential fixtures of the outdoor kitchen are present in both scrolls it would appear that the Metropolitan scroll has not lost its opening or final sections, but that it simply reproduces the contents of the Zhenjiang scroll in a more condensed form. In spite of its compositional compression, however, it could not have been created without access either to the Zhenjiang scroll or to another related version of the same composition.

Colophons and Seals

There are several other important differences between the two versions of *Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden.* First, the Zhenjiang scroll opens with an unsigned frontispiece that reads: "Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden" (*Xingyuan yaji*; fig. 6). This frontispiece, written in large seal-script characters, is presumably the one by Yang Shiqi referred to by Yang Rong in his postface. The Metropolitan scroll lacks any such frontispiece. Second, each version includes a full set of colophons, but the sequence of the colophons is different (fig. 7).[15] The order of the colophons attached to the Zhenjiang version reflects the relative status of the men portrayed (see fig. 2; table 1). That this order was approved by Yang Rong himself is confirmed



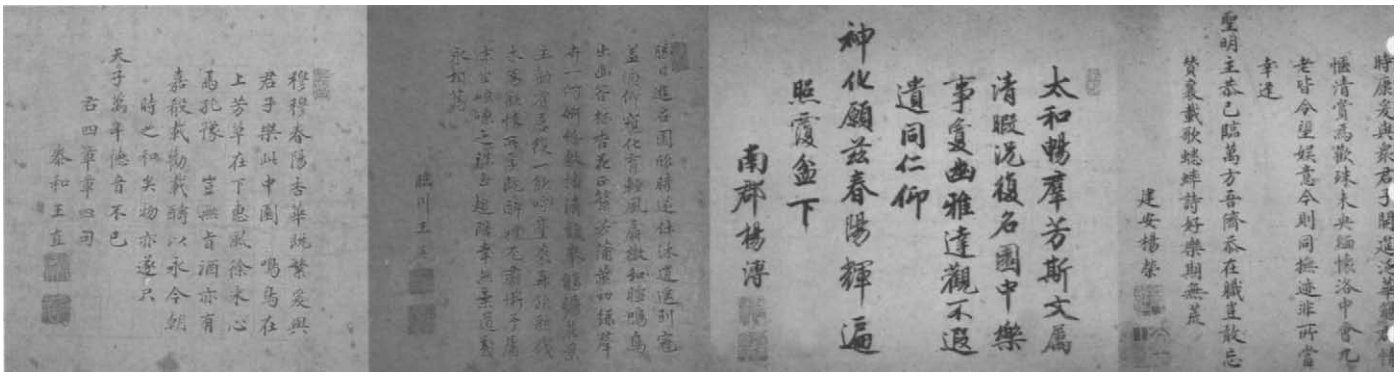
by the presence of his seal, *Guanxi houyi*, across the joins of the colophon papers (fig. 8).[16] The colophons attached to the Metropolitan version, which lack this seal across their paper joins, do not follow this order and must have been partially rearranged. The last three colophons in the Zhenjiang sequence, for example, are those of Li Shimian, Qian Xili, and Chen Xun. These three colophons have been reordered in the Metropolitan scroll so that Li Shimian's colophon now follows those of Qian and Chen, and all three are mounted directly after the colophons of the three Yangs and ahead of those of Wang Ying, Wang Zhi, and Zhou Shu — a clear breach of protocol. Either the Zhenjiang scroll was not available for the mounters of the Metropolitan scroll to consult when they assembled the colophons, or they were not aware of the significance of the ordering of the colophons. It is also possible that this rearrangement took place inadvertently in some subsequent remounting. Third, the colophons on the two sets are written on different kinds of paper. The frontispiece and all the colophons on the Zhenjiang scroll are written on gold-flecked paper. Most of the paper sheets have also been dyed blue; only the poems by Yang Rong, Yang Pu, Qian Xili, and Chen Xun are on undyed paper. None of the colophon papers on the Metropolitan version are dyed, and only two sheets are gold-flecked — those of Yang Shiqi's preface and poem. Finally, the transcriptions of the individual colophons are clearly the product of different hands.

This last observation requires a more careful analysis. Since many of the corresponding texts are transcribed in columns of varying length and number, it is clear that one version is not a slavish copy of the other. At the same time, the general brush style of the writings is quite close. Both sets of colophons reflect the dominant calligraphic style promulgated by the early-Ming court and later known as the "examination hall style" (*guangeti*) or the "secretariat style" (*taigeti*).[17] In spite of the evident standardization of writing styles in the colophons attached to both versions, those on the Zhenjiang version show a greater variety of brush mannerisms than those on the Metropolitan version, all of which, except for the first two inscriptions, appear to be the work of a single hand. Since the colophon sheets of the Zhenjiang version bear seals

Figure 6 (above, left) Zhenjiang version (fig. 2), detail, *Frontispiece* by Yang Shiqi. Four large seal-script characters: "Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden" (*Xingyuan yaji*)

Figure 7 (overleaf) Participants' colophons: a. Zhenjiang version (fig. 2); b. Metropolitan Museum version (fig. 1)

Figure 8 (above, right) Zhenjiang version (fig. 2), detail, seal belonging to Yang Rong on paper join preceding his *Postface*

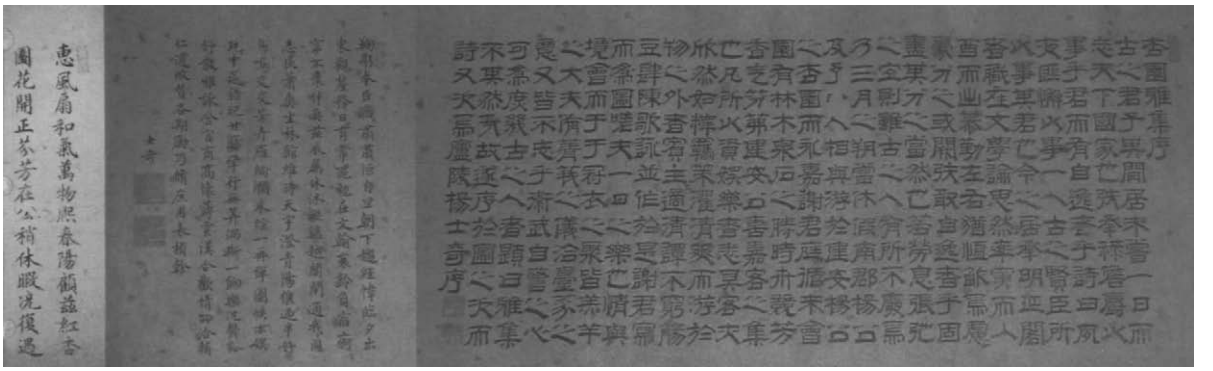


Wang Zhi　Wang Ying　Yang Pu　Yang Rong

Chen Xun　Qian Xili　Yang Pu

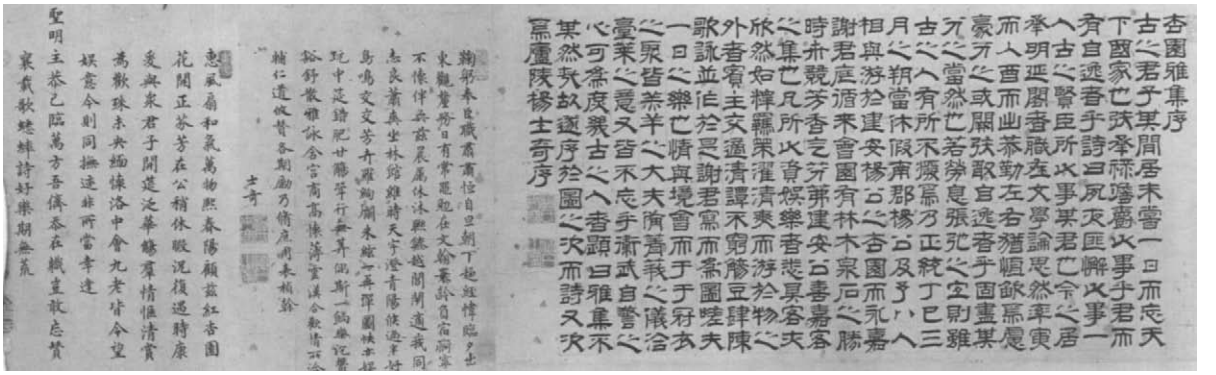
Yang Rong　Chen Xun

Yang Rong　Zhou Shu



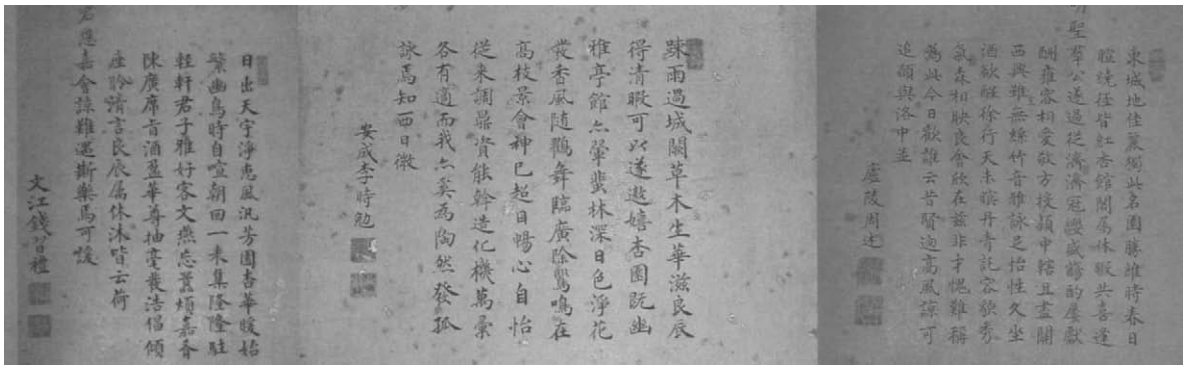
Yang Shiqi Yang Shiqi (preface)

Figure 7a



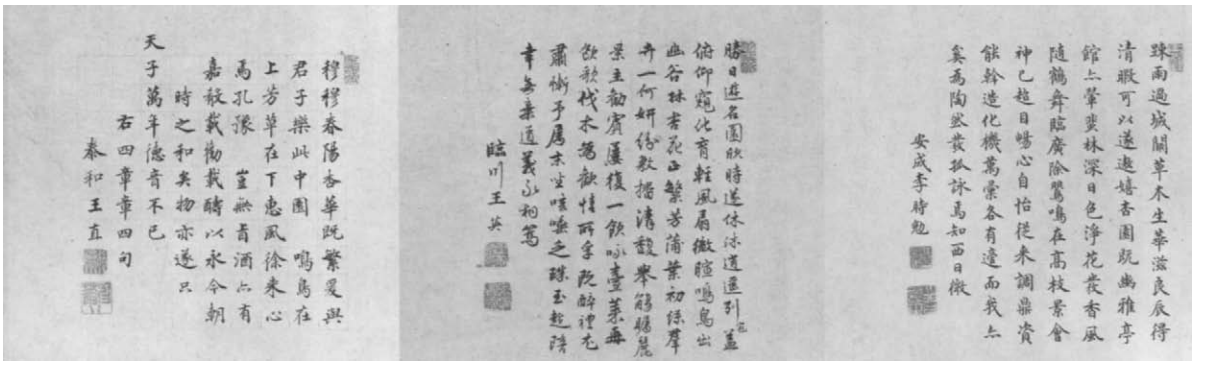
Yang Rong Yang Shiqi Yang Shiqi (preface)

Figure 7b



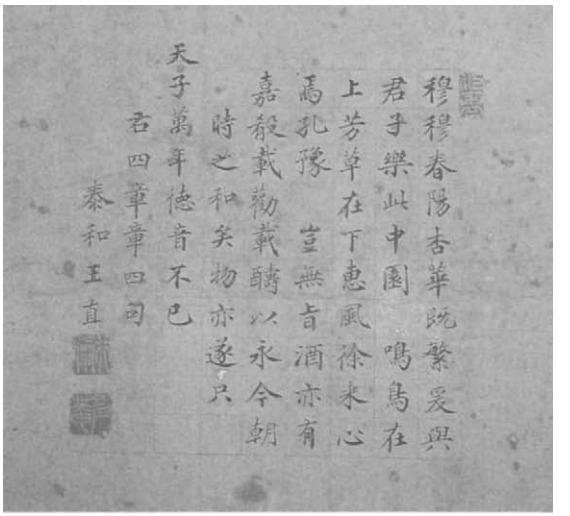
Qian Xili Li Shimian Zhou Shu

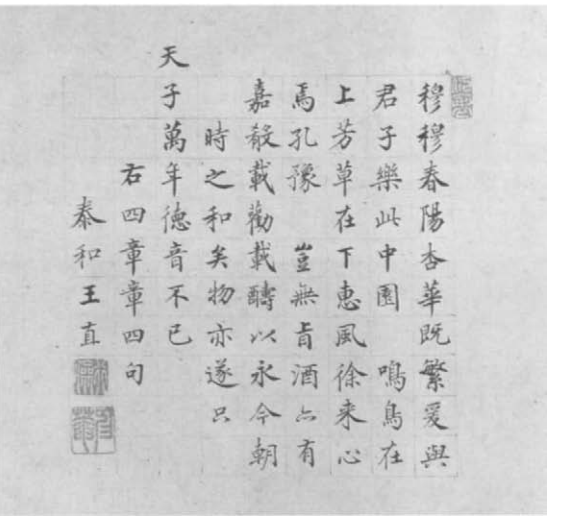
Figure 7a



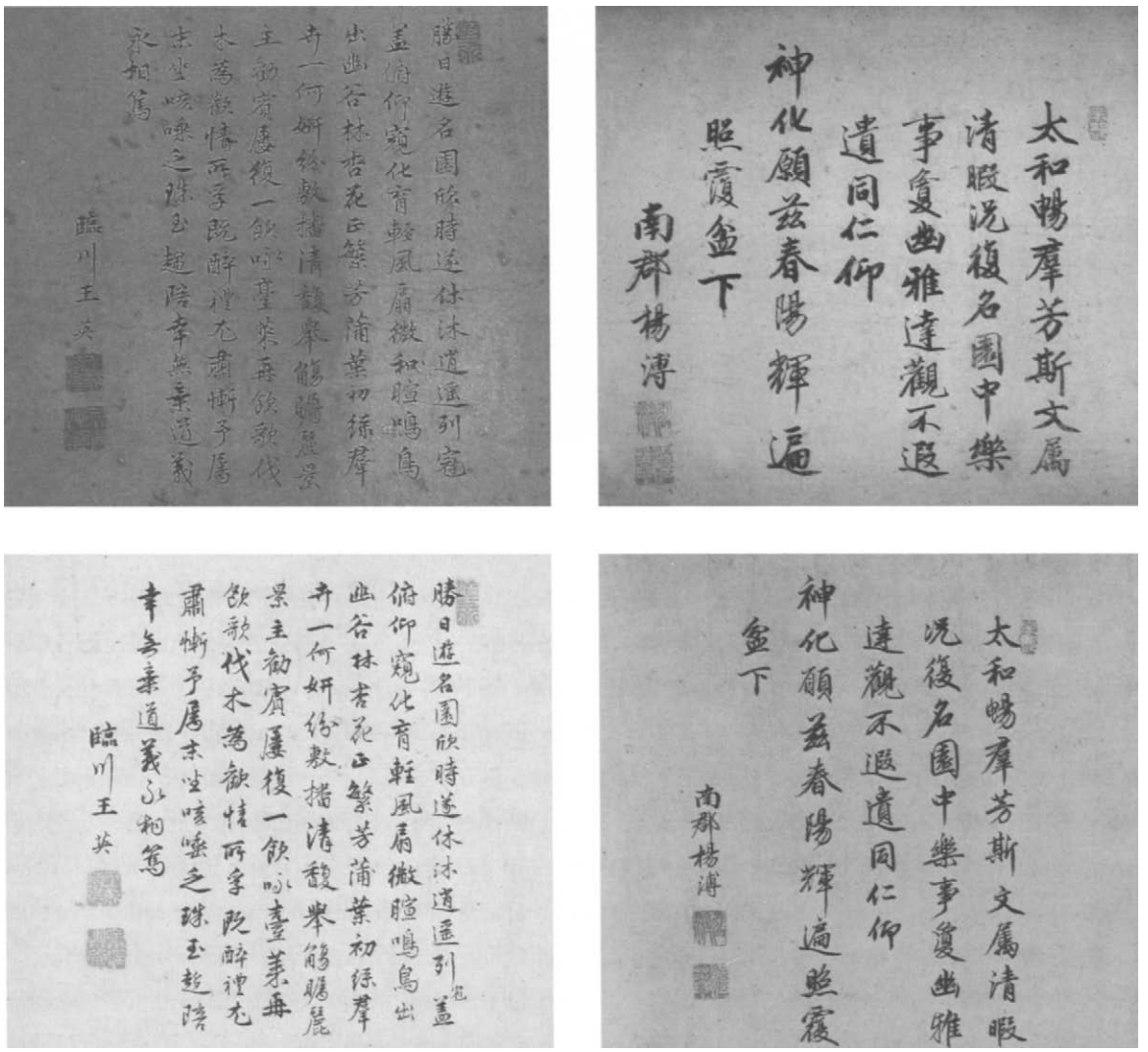
Wang Zhi Wang Ying Li Shimian

Figure 7b


穆穆春陽杏華既繁爰與
君子樂此中園　鳴鳥在
上芳草在下惠風徐來心
焉孔豫　豈無旨酒亦有
嘉殽載勸載疇以永今朝
時之和矣物亦遂只
天子萬年德音不已
右四章章四句
泰和王直


穆穆春陽杏華既繁爰與
君子樂此中園　鳴鳥在
上芳草在下惠風徐來心
焉孔豫　豈無旨酒亦有
嘉殽載勸載疇以永今朝
時之和矣物亦遂只
天子萬年德音不已
右四章章四句
泰和王直

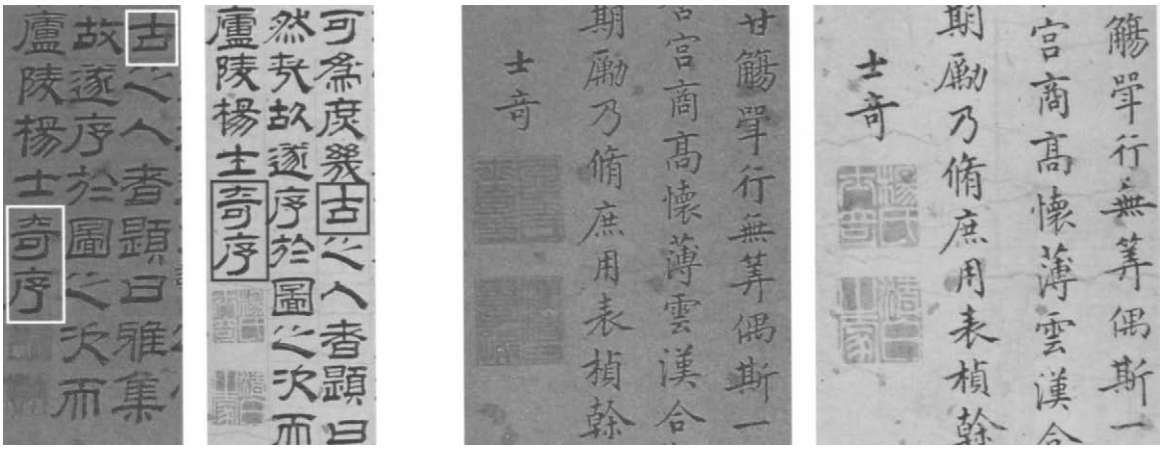
belonging to Yang Rong, we can assume that it was the model for any other versions that were created. A close examination of the Metropolitan colophons bears this out. Each of the colophons on the Metropolitan version imitates the general scale, script type, and signature style of the colophons on the Zhenjiang version. For instance, the colophons of Yang Pu, Wang Ying, and Wang Zhi on the Zhenjiang version proceed, respectively, from a flamboyant, large-scale running script, to a smaller, tightly formed running script, to a medium-sized regular script carefully inscribed in a ruled grid (fig. 9a). The corresponding colophons



on the Metropolitan scroll follow this same progression of styles (fig. 9b). However, the individual brush mannerisms of the two sets have notable differences. In each case, the Metropolitan colophons imitate the general features of the colophons on the Zhenjiang version, but often lack the naturalness and variety of the model. Instead, the writing betrays the consistency, regularity, and conventionality typical of a competent scribe. Not only does the uniform style of the Metropolitan colophons suggest a single hand, but the uniform tonality of the ink and seal paste underscores the likelihood that all of these colophons, with the

a	a	a
Wang Zhi	Wang Ying	Yang Pu
b	b	b

Figure 9 Colophons transcribing the poems of Yang Pu, Wang Ying, and Wang Zhi; a. Zhenjiang version (fig. 7a); b. Metropolitan Museum version (fig. 7b)



sole exception of the transcription of Yang Shiqi's preface and poem, were created at the same time by the same person.

The transcriptions of Yang Shiqi's writings on the Metropolitan version differ in style, paper, and seal paste from the other colophons on this scroll. These transcriptions are also different from the corresponding texts on the Zhenjiang version. Whereas Yang's preface on both versions is written in a similar form of clerical script, the Zhenjiang version consists of twenty-seven twelve-character columns, and the Metropolitan version of twenty-four fourteen-character columns (see fig. 7). Furthermore, subtle differences in the brush mannerisms of the two versions make it clear that they are by different hands (fig. 10). Compare, for example, the backward L-shaped stroke that appears in the character *qi* of Yang Shiqi's name or the character *xu* (preface), the last two characters in the third column of both details. The inside contour of that stroke in the Zhenjiang version makes a sharp right-angle turn while maintaining a fairly uniform thickness and a blunt, rounded ending. The interior contour of the same stroke in the Metropolitan version makes a more curved turn and shows greater modulation in the stroke width and ending. The same observation can be made concerning the long horizontal stroke in the character *gu* (antiquity). In the Zhenjiang version (first column, top character) that stroke is straight and uniform in width. In the Metropolitan version (first column, fifth character from the top) the same stroke forms a gentle arc that culminates in a flaring wavelike ending. The same kinds of differences are observable in Yang Shiqi's poem (fig. 11). Both versions are written in a neat, small regular script and the texts are transcribed in columns of equal length and number. But the brushstrokes in the Zhenjiang version are heavier and blunter, while those in the Metropolitan version are thinner with sharper endings.

10a | 10b | 11a | 11b

Figure 10 Yang Shiqi, *Preface*, detail showing signature and seals: a. Zhenjiang version (fig. 7a); b. Metropolitan Museum version (fig. 7b)

Figure 11 Yang Shiqi, *Poem*: a. Zhenjiang version (fig. 7a); b. Metropolitan Museum version (fig. 7b)

The seals accompanying the two versions of Yang Shiqi's preface and poem also differ. Both prefaces are preceded by a rectangular seal with an intaglio legend that reads *Taihe*, the name of the town in Jiangxi Province where Yang was born. The two seals following the preface on the Zhenjiang version have legends carved in relief that read *Huayin Yang shi* and *Shiqizi* (fig. 10a). The seals following the preface on the Metropolitan version have legends carved in intaglio that read *Yang shi Shiqi* and *Qingbai zhi jia* (fig. 10b). The seals accompanying the two versions of Yang's poem also differ. The start of the poem in the Zhenjiang version is impressed with the same *Taihe* seal impressed at the start of Yang's preface; his signature is followed by two square seals carved in relief that read *Taishi shi Shiqi yin* and *Han Qingbai* [?] *zi sun* (fig. 11a). The start of the poem on the Metropolitan version bears a rectangular seal carved in intaglio that reads *Guxuan*, while the two seals that follow Yang's signature are the same as those that follow this version's preface (fig. 11b). Such a varied and flexible use of seals contrasts with the meticulous copying of seals found in the other inscriptions and suggests that the Metropolitan scroll had a special connection to Yang Shiqi. Even if Yang Shiqi had an amanuensis write out his preface and poem for him, the writer seems to have had access to Yang's actual seals. If this version of the scroll were made for Yang Shiqi, it also stands to reason that he would use better paper for his texts, which explains why Yang Shiqi's texts on the Metropolitan version are on gold-flecked paper.

Because the participants in this gathering, particularly the Grand Secretaries Yang Shiqi and Yang Rong, would have had access to the imperial scriptorium, it is not impossible that the writings on both scrolls include the work of ghost writers (*daibi*). Not only are Yang Rong's poem and postface on the two versions clearly by different hands, but Yang Rong's poem and postface on the Zhenjiang version also

12a | 12b

Figure 12 Zhenjiang version (fig. 7a): characters with *na* stroke attributed to Yang Rong: a. detail, *Poem*; b. detail, *Postface*

Figure 13 Central trio of figures showing (right to left) Wang Zhi, Yang Shiqi, and Yang Rong: a. (top) Zhenjiang version (fig. 2); b. (bottom) Metropolitan Museum version (fig. 1)

appear to be by different hands. If one compares the wavelike diagonal strokes (*na*) of the two texts one sees that in the poem these strokes are modulated and curved in a relaxed manner, while in the postface the same strokes appear tauter and more angular and without a great deal of curvature (fig. 12).[18] Thus, the writings of both scrolls may include contributions by scribal assistants. Nevertheless, the Metropolitan colophons may be seen as loosely based copies of the Zhenjiang colophons. Their formal regularity and very high level of proficiency conforms closely to the early-fifteenth-century "secretariat" style of the Ming court.

Style

A close comparison of the two paintings demonstrates that they cannot have been the creation of a single hand. The most noticeable difference is the organization of the picture space. In both paintings, the composition is tightly focused on the foreground with a sharply uptilted ground plane so that only the lower portions of the tallest trees and architectural elements are visible—features that serve to emphasize the scale and prominence of the figures. But the pacing and density of picture elements in the Zhenjiang painting is grander and more spacious. The composition has distinct opening and closing passages, with the main action framed by tall trees that fill the height of the scroll. Low foreground rocks at either end mark the front edge of the narrow picture space and act as repoussoirs. This shallow stage is punctuated at three points by watercourses that flow out of the middle ground, creating vistas that serve as space dividers between the figure groupings and activities in the foreground. The resulting composition offers a stately progression into the environs of the garden and enhances its appearance as an elegant and spacious haven for leisurely pursuits. The opposite sensibility is at work in the Metropolitan painting. The truncated composition lacks the framing trees and stately pacing of motifs presented in the Zhenjiang version; also absent are any openings into the distance that might alleviate the sense of crowding. The background is obscured by a dense screen of bamboo and trees with no intervening watercourses or vistas. The numerous garden elements that project into the composition from below further intensify the congestion of the picture space. Whereas the foreground rocks that define the forward edge of the picture space in the Zhenjiang painting are limited to two clusters at either side of the main figures, permitting an unimpeded view of the main actors, the Metropolitan painting introduces four such elements that fill up virtually all of the open spaces around the figures.

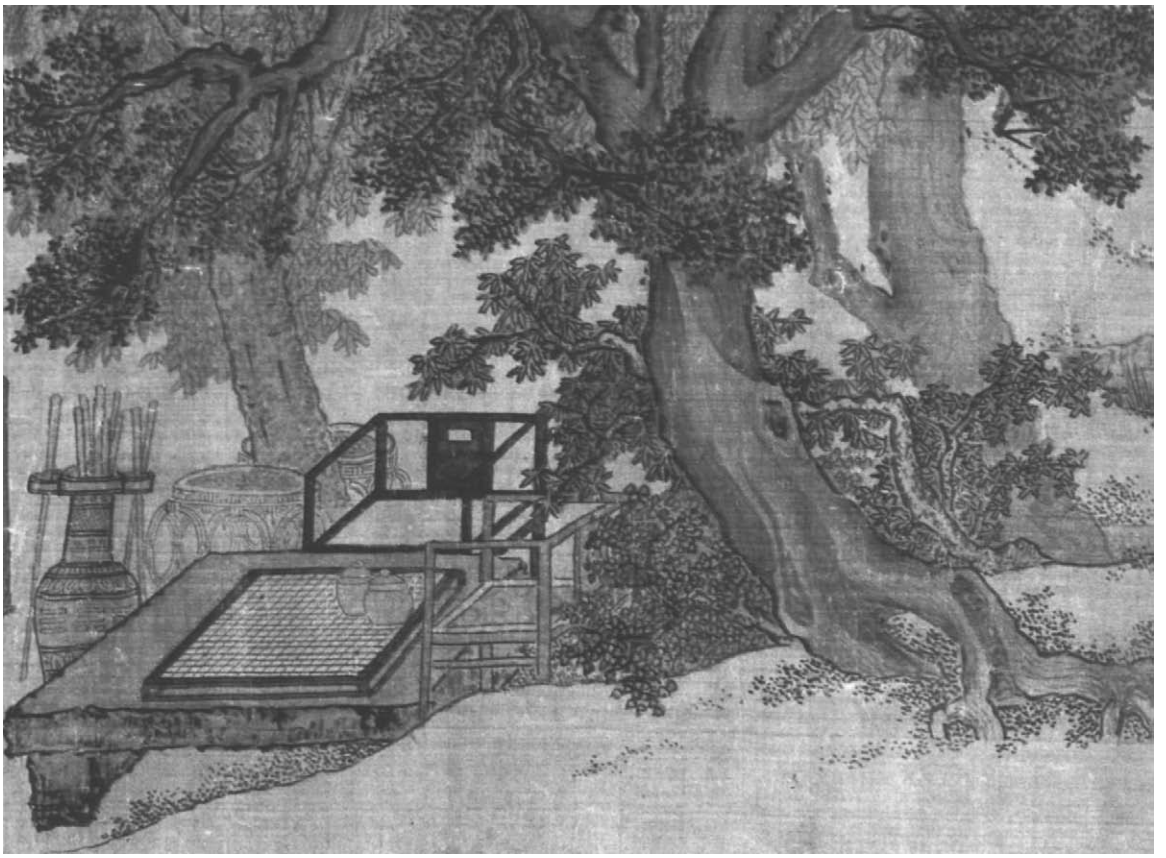
The figure style of the two paintings is quite close (figs. 13, 14). In both paintings, the participants' full robes are described in simple silhouettes, with a minimal number of narrow, unmodulated drapery lines

Figure 14 Leftmost trio of figures showing (right to left) Wang Ying, Yang Pu, and Qian Xili: a. (top) Zhenjiang version (fig. 2); b. (bottom) Metropolitan Museum version (fig. 1)

occasionally reinforced with shading but showing few calligraphic flourishes. Idealized faces, showing little variation of expression, are defined with prominent noses and high eyebrows that sit well above the eyes. The attendants are slightly more animated, but their features, like the style in which they are drawn, are subdued. The attendants' robes, like those of the guests, consist of simple monochromatic fabrics — nowhere is there a suggestion of elaborately patterned silks such as one finds in the figure paintings of the mid-Ming artists Tang Yin (1470–1524) and Qiu Ying (ca. 1495–1552). The faces in both scrolls have been damaged and repaired, suggesting the use of a similar kind of pigment that has led to the deterioration of the silk in these areas. The face of one of the servants in the Zhenjiang version, for example, is completely lost (fig. 14a). The faces in the Metropolitan version are similarly damaged (figs. 13b, 14b). While many of the guests' facial features — notably the amount of facial hair — seem to correspond in the two versions, the extensive damage the faces have sustained makes impossible an exact correlation in the identity of the men based on facial features.

In spite of this general correspondence of the two scrolls in the rendering of figures, the drawing styles are different enough to indicate two distinct hands. The robes in the Zhenjiang version are delineated with vigorous, dark contour lines with occasional angular turns to suggest folds. In the Metropolitan version, these lines are thinner, paler, and more tentative in execution. They copy the general form of the drapery lines in the Zhenjiang version, but they are far less effective in suggesting the weight and mass of the fabric. For example, the lines defining the folds of the fabric where it gathers above the mens' shoes in the left-

Figure 15 Detail of drapery folds on the robe of Qian Xili: a. (left) Zhenjiang version (fig. 2); b. (right) Metropolitan Museum version (fig. 1)

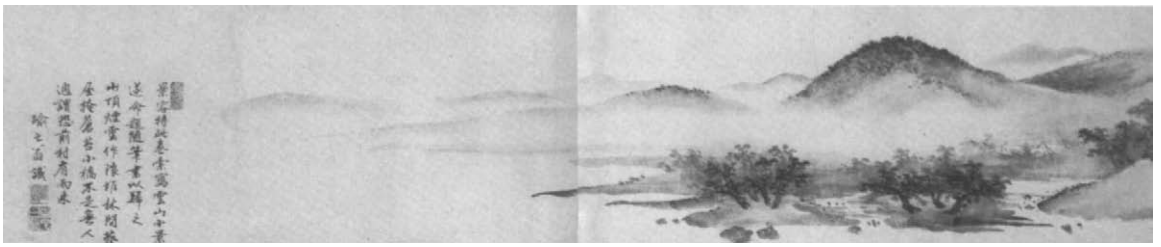


most trio of guests seem flatter and more patternized in the Metropolitan version (figs. 14b, 15b) than in the Zhenjiang version (figs. 14a, 15a). Something of this same sketchy and flat quality is also observable in the drawing of the trousers of the leftmost servant in the Zhenjiang version, but this seems to be a reflection of the confident but casual approach to all the forms in the painting. The Metropolitan version shows more attention to the number of folds in the robe of a similar servant, but the lines are more labored and tentative.

The same relationship that can be seen in the figures of the two versions — a general agreement in the conceptualization of forms, but a distinct difference in the manner of execution — is also apparent in the treatment of the furnishings and landscape elements. While the pieces of furniture and scholarly paraphernalia are keenly observed, there is a rather casual approach to representational accuracy in both versions. Perspective is often distorted, and the intersection of forms in space reflects a lack of concern with

meticulous descriptive accuracy found, for example, in Song academic works. In the Zhenjiang version, the legs of two of the tables set on either side of the three central figures are consistently out of alignment with the stretchers on which they stand (fig. 13a), while a third table at the left rear has a zigzag brace that appears completely illogical; elsewhere table legs appear two-dimensional (fig. 14a). A similar lack of concern for such details is apparent in the two-dimensional profile of a table leg in the Metropolitan version (fig. 15b). But the Metropolitan version seems even more inattentive to verisimilitude. The *weiqi* board in the Zhenjiang version is carefully drawn with a regular grid of uniform squares complete with the black dots located near the corners of the board (fig. 16a). The Metropolitan version is sketchier in its rendition of this grid with squares of varying size and no dots (fig. 16b). Yet neither board is entirely accurate: the Zhenjiang version shows a grid of eighteen squares on a side, the Metropolitan version twenty; in fact, the standard board has a grid of nineteen squares on a side.

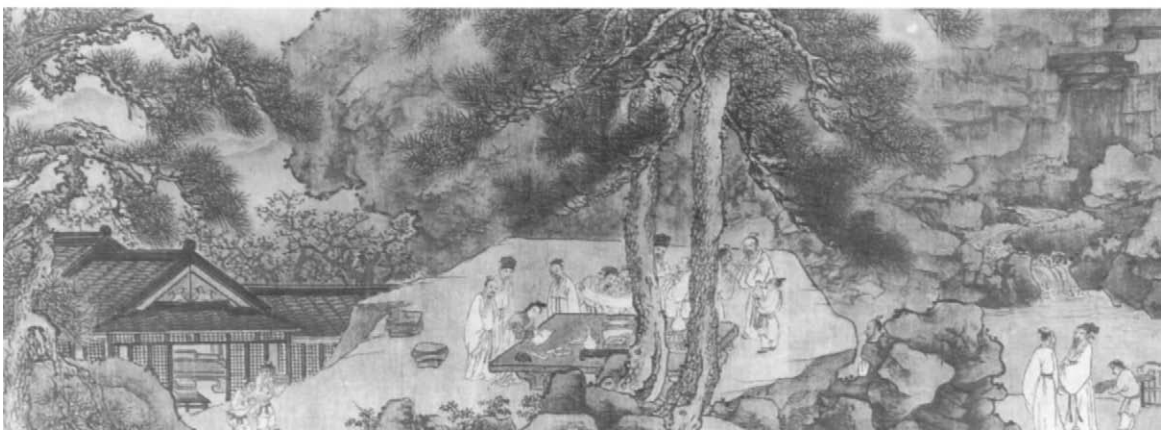
Figure 16 *Weiqi* board: a. (opposite) Zhenjiang version (fig. 2); b. (above) Metropolitan Museum version (fig. 1)



A similar disparity in execution is apparent in the representation of landscape details. Both scrolls reflect the influence of Southern Song academic models. The Zhenjiang version, for example, shows three distinct treatments of rocks. The foreground boulders and the cliff face behind the figure of Xie Huan (fig. 5) are defined by dark, angular, boldly modulated contour lines and a build-up of more lightly inked parallel texture marks that recall the "axe-cut" texture strokes of Li Tang (ca. 1070s–ca. 1150s) and Ma Yuan (active ca. 1190–1225). The stone screen that serves as a backdrop to the central trio of figures is modeled in softer long tapered strokes and washes overlaid with tiny foliage dots (fig. 13a). Finally, the Taihu-style ornamental garden rock with numerous perforations utilizes a variety of inkwashes and texturing marks to suggest the pitted and scalloped erosion pattern of its surface (fig. 14a). While the Metropolitan scroll does not include any boulder or cliff drawn with axe-cut texture strokes, the stone screen is rendered in a manner that conflates this idiom with that of the softer texturing of the stone screen in the Zhenjiang version (fig. 16b). This texturing is created in two steps: first, narrow horizontal lines are drawn; next, broader vertical strokes in more dilute ink are added below each horizontal stroke. The resulting pattern evokes the effect of a chiseled surface, but this meticulous method lacks the virtuoso spontaneity seen in the Zhenjiang version's boulders and cliff. The Taihu-style garden rocks in the Metropolitan version are similarly more meticulous in the way the pockmarks and perforations are described. Whereas dark dabs of ink are used in the Zhenjiang painting to suggest cavities (fig. 14a), the hollows in the rock surface in the Metropolitan scroll are carefully outlined, then filled in with wash (fig. 13b).

The manner in which the trees are modeled and textured shows the same divergence in technique. In the Zhenjiang painting, trees are systematically modeled with dark contours and bark patterns of varied tonality that effectively suggest the twisting trunks and three-dimensional root and branch structures of the various species depicted (fig. 16a). In the Metropolitan painting, the emphasis on bold surface patterns overshadows any interest in modeling; the foreshortened root structures of the Zhenjiang version are flattened out (fig. 16b).

Figure 17 Xie Huan (ca. 1370–ca. 1450), *Cloudy Mountains.* Handscroll, ink on paper, 11 ⅛ × 53 in. (28.3 × 134.6 cm). Huai'an District Museum



The above comparisons of the different execution of the same motifs in the two paintings indicate that the same artist could not have created both versions. The Zhenjiang version is convincingly that of a master, undoubtedly Xie Huan. The Metropolitan version is weaker and must represent the hand of a less accomplished artist trying to follow the Zhenjiang version as a model.

Stylistic Analysis and Dating

Identifying Xie Huan's hand today is virtually impossible. Only one other painting can reliably be attributed to him, an inkwash image of cloudy mountains (fig. 17) that has no stylistic affinities with *Elegant*

Figure 18 (top) Dai Jin (1388–1462), *Six Patriarchs of Chan*. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 13 ⅜ × 86 ⅜ in. (33.8 × 219.5 cm). Liaoning Provincial Museum

Figure 19 (bottom) Dai Jin (1388–1462), *Elegant Gathering at Nanping*, dated 1460. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 13 × 63 ⅞ in. (33 × 161 cm). Palace Museum, Beijing

Gathering.[19] It does, however, bear an inscription by Xie Huan that shows the same period style of calligraphy, seal carving, and seal placement as the colophons appended to the *Elegant Gathering* scrolls.[20]

In the absence of other reliable figure paintings attributable to Xie Huan, the only way to suggest a date for the Zhenjiang and Metropolitan paintings is by comparing them with other figure paintings of the same and later periods, thereby determining whether they reflect an early Ming-period style or whether one or both bear telltale signs of later stylistic innovations.

Compositionally, the two versions of *Elegant Gathering* are both analogous to other works of the early fifteenth century. The tilted ground plane with its limited view into the background and the trees truncated to maintain focus on the figures are features also found in two similarly dense handscroll compositions by Dai Jin (1388–1462): *Six Patriarchs of Chan* (fig. 18) and *Elegant Gathering at Nanping* (fig. 19). The brush mannerisms of Dai Jin's works, however, are very different from those in the two versions of *Elegant Gathering*, so it seems unlikely that the Metropolitan or Zhenjiang scrolls could be the work of Dai Jin serving as ghost painter for Xie Huan.

Figure 20 Unidentified artist (early 15th century), *Portrait of the Yongle Emperor* (r. 1403–24). Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 86 ⅝ × 59 in. (220 × 150 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

Figure 21 Unidentified artist (late 15th century), *Portrait of the Hongzhi Emperor* (r. 1488–1505). Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 82 ⅛ × 60 ¾ in. (208.6 × 154.3 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

The formal poses and substantial forms of the principal figures closely adhere to the approach to portraiture seen in early-Ming imperial portraits (fig. 20) and stand in marked contrast to the insubstantial bodies, flattened, elliptical faces, and patternized draperies of sixteenth-century imperial portraits such as that of the Hongzhi emperor (r. 1488–1505; fig. 21).[21] In period style, therefore, the faces and draperies in both scrolls exhibit characteristics that clearly predate the transformation in facial representation associated with such mid-sixteenth-century masters as Qiu Ying (fig. 22). While the faces in both versions have suffered considerable damage, the manner of building up facial features, by first drawing the nose and then adding other features, is still discernible. This method differs from that of Qiu Ying, who renders faces by first drawing an oval outline into which the features are set. The anatomical structure of the face is thus transformed into an abstract pattern. *Birthday Celebration in the Bamboo Garden* (fig. 23), datable to 1499, may be regarded as a transitional step between the early-Ming mode of visualizing figures and faces and that of the mid-sixteenth century. In this painting the figures appear static and frontal, and, despite varied poses, almost all the participants' faces are frontally displayed. Differences in the men's costume depicted

Figure 22 Qiu Ying (ca. 1495–1552), *Spring Morning in the Han Palace.* Detail. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 12 × 226 ⅜ in. (30.6 × 574.1 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

in this painting and the two versions of *Elegant Gathering* also reveal a change in the style of dress that had occurred in the intervening fifty years. Most of the men now wear a fringed purse suspended from their belt by a long cord, while the stiff lacquered wings or flaps that stand out on either side of their hats have also become broader. Significantly, the wood-block printed version of *Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden* (fig. 3) has anachronistically given the participants these wider flaps, even though both paintings show the earlier narrow form of these appendages.

Besides the resemblance of the figures in the two versions of *Elegant Gathering* to early-Ming imperial portraits, the placement of real personages within a schematic landscape setting may also be compared with a similar treatment in a large hanging scroll from the early Ming, *The Xuande Emperor on an Outing*, attributed to the court painter Shang Xi (active second quarter of the 15th century; fig. 24). This painting

exhibits the same boldly outlined and swiftly executed landscape details found in the Zhenjiang scroll, but the specific texture-stroke conventions used to describe various rock formations seem closer to those found in the Metropolitan scroll. In particular, the artist has used the same convention for creating the axe-cut facets of the cliff faces as is seen in the stone screen in the Metropolitan scroll (fig. 16b), namely, by first drawing narrow horizontal lines under which broader vertical strokes are added (fig. 25). This same mannerism is also seen in other works attributed to Shang Xi, such as the monumental *Guan Yu Captures an Enemy General* (fig. 26).[22] Thus, it was evidently part of the technical repertoire of early-Ming texturing conventions used by court painters. While the Metropolitan scroll is on a much smaller scale than the works attributed to Shang Xi and its brushwork is much less forceful, the fact that the artist of the Metropolitan painting utilized this convention rather than imitating the texturing methods found in the Zhenjiang ver-

Figure 23 (opposite and above) Details, fig. 4: Lü Ji (ca. 1430–ca. 1504) and Lü Wenying (1421–1505), *Birthday Celebration in the Bamboo Garden*, datable to1499

sion shows that he was not approaching his task with the mindset of a copyist, but rather as someone charged with making his own interpretation of the event.

By the late fifteenth century the integration of real figures within a landscape setting had achieved a far more homogeneous style. In *Birthday Celebration in the Bamboo Garden* of 1499, figures, landscape elements, and furnishings are all described in a consistently meticulous and refined manner (fig. 23). The earlier use of assertive brushstrokes to outline and texture rock faces has been restrained, and there is a new emphasis on representational accuracy and descriptive detail in the forms of the furnishings. The representational inaccuracies typical of the furniture in both versions of *Elegant Gathering* are no longer tolerated. This trend toward increasingly fastidious attention to descriptive detail culminates with the minutely detailed rendering of surface ornamentation seen in the works of Qiu Ying (fig. 22).

A final corroboration of the early date of both versions of *Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden* comes from a comparison of these paintings with an unsigned painting of a garden gathering entitled *The Nine Elders of the Mountain of Fragrance,* now in The Cleveland Museum of Art (figs. 27, 28).[23] This work, which carries an attribution to Xie Huan, includes many of the same motifs found in the Zhenjiang and Metropolitan scrolls, but its meticulous detail and flatter, more abstract treatment of faces and drapery lines indicate that it cannot be earlier than the mid to late sixteenth century. Although the Zhenjiang and Metro-

Figure 24 Shang Xi (active second quarter of the 15th century), *The Xuande Emperor on an Outing.* Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 83 ⅛ × 139 in. (211 × 353 cm). Palace Museum, Beijing

politan scrolls exhibit significant qualitative differences in brushwork, the above comparison with works by late-fifteenth- and sixteenth-century painters makes it apparent that they share a consistent early fifteenth-century style.

* * *

The above evidence bears out the assumption made by other scholars who have studied the two versions of *Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden*, namely, that both were created shortly after the event for different members of the gathering.[24]

The Zhenjiang version may be confidently accepted as Xie Huan's original composition painted for Yang Rong. This scroll also includes the original set of accompanying texts, although it is possible that some of the texts, including one or more of Yang Rong's, were written out by scribal assistants. The Metropolitan painting was undoubtedly done at the request of one of the other participants who also wanted a record of the gathering. Yang Shiqi, the senior guest at the gathering, is the most likely recipient. The fact that the transcriptions of Yang Shiqi's preface and poem are treated differently from the colophons by the other participants supports this assumption.

Figure 25 Detail, fig. 24: Shang Xi (active second quarter of the 15th century), *The Xuande Emperor on an Outing*

Figure 26 Shang Xi (active second quarter of the 15th century), *Guan Yu Captures an Enemy General*. Detail. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 93 ¼ × 78 ¾ in. (237 × 200 cm). Palace Museum, Beijing

Figure 27 (top) Unidentified artist (16th century?), *The Nine Elders of the Mountain of Fragrance*. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 11 ¾ × 58 ⅜ in. (29.8 × 148.2 cm). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. A. Dean Perry

Figure 28 (bottom) Detail, fig. 27: Unidentified artist (16th century?), *The Nine Elders of the Mountain of Fragrance*

It is not surprising that the spacious Zhenjiang version, with its dignified pacing and elaborate opening and closing sections that emphasize the magnificent proportions of the Apricot Garden, was the version created for Yang Rong. The Metropolitan scroll may be understood as a condensed version of Xie Huan's composition. Evidently, it was not important for Yang Shiqi, the likely recipient of the Metropolitan version, to have either the colophons or the painting duplicate exactly the form of Yang Rong's version; instead, he was satisfied to have an abbreviated pictorial record and a respectable transcription of the other participants' literary contributions. While less grand than Yang Rong's version, the Metropolitan version includes all the essential components needed to make the location of the gathering recognizable, manifest the participants' relationships, display their cultivated tastes and aesthetic discernment, and preserve their literary contributions.

It remains unclear whether Yang Rong, as the host of the party, would have commissioned a copy for Yang Shiqi or whether Yang Shiqi himself would have initiated the commission. Either way, both the painter and calligrapher responsible for the Metropolitan version had to have consulted the Zhenjiang scroll. It is also unclear whether Xie Huan exercised any supervisory role in this process. One of the principal sources of biographical information about Xie Huan is the writing of Yang Shiqi, who was clearly an admirer of the artist.[25] If the Metropolitan painting was created for Yang Shiqi, therefore, one might assume that Xie would have personally executed this commission. But other sources suggest that Xie Huan often employed ghost painters to help him fulfill his commissions.[26] Since Xie was engaged in completing the version for Yang Rong, he may have sketched out the general disposition of figures and motifs for the Metropolitan version, after which he delegated its completion to an assistant. In 1437 Xie Huan, a man in his sixties and the undisputed leader of the court painters, would undoubtedly have been able to call upon other artists to assist him.

The Zhenjiang and Metropolitan versions of *Elegant Gathering* represent an important example from the early Ming dynasty of what must have been a common practice — the production of multiple versions of a single composition. The differences in the composition and manner of execution between these two scrolls help to clarify the parameters of early-Ming style. At the same time, their similarities reveal which aspects of the works were most essential to their documentary function and cultural significance.

1. For information about these three officials, see L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang, eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368–1644* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1976), pp. 1519–22, 1535–38. Other participants at the gathering whose biographies appear in this source are Wang Zhi, pp. 1358–61, and Li Shimian, pp. 865–68.

2. Wang Xizhi (ca. 303–ca. 361), in his famous "Preface to the Orchid Pavilion Gathering" does not give a precise date of the gathering, but merely states the beginning of the last month of spring. He does write that the occasion was the Xiuqi festival, which was customarily celebrated on the third day of the third lunar month. See *Shodō zenshū* (Compilation of Calligraphic Works), new series, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1960), pl. 25.

3. This phrase, "the gentle breezes were mild and pleasant" (*hui feng he chang*), is a direct quotation from Wang Xizhi's "Preface to the Orchid Pavilion Gathering." For the complete text of Wang Xizhi's preface, see *Shodō zenshū*, vol. 4, pls. 12–17.

4. For a discussion of these two gatherings and their pictorial traditions, see Ellen J. Laing, "Scholars and Sages: A Study in Chinese Figure Painting" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1967), pp. 16–21.

5. For a transcription of Yang Rong's postface, see Mu Yiqin, *Mingdai yuanti Zhepai shiliao* (Historical Resources on the Court and Zhe School of the Ming Period) (Shanghai: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1985), p. 186. I am indebted to Mr. Wang Lianqi of the Palace Museum, Beijing, and Ms. Lu Huiwen of Princeton University, both Metropolitan Museum Fellows, for assistance with this translation.

6. For biographical information on Xie Huan, see Mu Yiqin, *Mingdai yuanti Zhepai shiliao*, pp. 18–21; Hou-mei Sung, "From the Min-Che Tradition to the Che School (Part 2) Precursors of the Che School: Hsieh Huan and Tai Chin," *The National Palace Museum Research Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (1989), pp. 1–4; and Richard M. Barnhart, *Painters of the Great Ming: The Imperial Court and the Zhe School* (Dallas: The Dallas Museum of Art, 1993), no. 25, p. 73. For Xie Huan's relationship with Dai Jin, see Mary Ann Rogers, "Visions of Grandeur: The Life and Art of Dai Jin," in Barnhart, *Painters of the Great Ming*, pp. 137–41, 160. Xie Huan's exact dates are unknown. Hou-mei Sung ("Min-Che," p. 2) argues that he was born in the 1360s, because he was a childhood playmate of Huang Huai (1367–1449). Sung also posits a date of death after 1452 on the basis of a painting attributed to Xie dated to that year and recorded (but not illustrated) in Harada Kinjiro, *Nihon Genzai Shina kaiga mokuroku* (Catalogue of Chinese Paintings now in Japanese Collections) (Tokyo, 1938), p. 133. The painting is reproduced in *Yiyuan zhenshang*, 9, but its authenticity is difficult to judge. The only other evidence suggestive of Xie Huan's continued activity after 1437 is an occasional piece, an undated landscape, that he painted for a certain Zheng Jun. Zheng mounted Xie's work in the first of two handscrolls that feature altogether twenty-five works. The majority of these works are occasional pieces that Zheng Jun solicited from famous artists active at the Ming court during the early fifteenth century. One of the works that Zheng solicited is dated 1446, but it remains unclear how long a collecting period the two scrolls represent. The two scrolls later entered the collection of a certain Wang Zhen who had the paintings buried with him when he died in 1496. See *Huai'an Mingmu qutu shuhua* (Paintings and Calligraphies Excavated from a Ming Tomb in Huai'an) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1988). See also Jiangsu sheng Huai'an xian bowuguan, "Huai'an xian Mingdai Wang Zhen fufu peizang qingli jianbao" (Brief Report on the Ming Dynasty Joint Burial of Wang Zhen and His Wife in Huai'an County), *Wenwu* 3 (1987), pp. 1–18.

7. Published in Bradley Smith and Wango Weng, *China: A History in Art* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), pp. 212–13; Goodrich and Fang, eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography*, pp. 1360–61, 1521; James Cahill, *Parting at the Shore: Chinese Painting of the Early and Middle Ming Dynasty, 1368–1580* (Weatherhill: New York and Tokyo, 1978), pp. 24–25, color pl. 2; James Cahill, *The Compelling Image: Nature and Style in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Painting* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 115, fig. 4.15;

Suzuki Kei, comp., *Chugoku kaiga sogo zuroku: daiikkan, Amerika-Kanada hen* (Comprehensive Illustrated Catalogue of Chinese Paintings: Volume I, American and Canadian Collections) (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1982), A13–052; *Yiyuan duoying* 34 (January 1987), p. 2; Alice R.M. Hyland, "A Selection of Figure Paintings from the Ming and Qing Dynasties," *Orientations* 18, no. 5 (May 1987), pp. 30–37; Alice R.M. Hyland, *Deities, Emperors, Ladies and Literati: Figure Painting of the Ming and Qing Dynasties* (Birmingham: Birmingham Museum of Art, 1987), no. 1, pp. 14–18, 79, color pl. 2, fig. 1; Hou-mei Sung, "Early Ming Painters in Nanking and the Formation of the Wu School," *Ars Orientalis* 17 (1987), pp. 78–79, fig. 3; Hou-mei Sung, "Min-Che," pp. 1–15, 127–31, fig. 2; Barnhart, *Painters of the Great Ming*, no. 25, pp. 73–79; Craig Clunas, *Fruitful Sites: Garden Culture in Ming Dynasty China* (London: Reaktion Books, 1996), p. 64, fig. 20.

8. Published in Lu Jiugao, "Xie Tingxun *Xingyuan yaji tujuan*" (Xie Huan's *Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden*), *Wenwu* 4 (1963), p. 24, pls. 3–4; Cahill, *The Compelling Image*, p. 115, fig. 4.16; Mu Yiqin, *Mingdai gongting yu Zhepai huihua xuanji* (A Selection of Ming Dynasty Court Paintings and Zhe School Paintings) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1983), color pl. 6, pls. 9–10; Mu Yiqin, *Mingdai yuanti Zhepai shiliao*, pp. 185–88; Yang Han et al., eds., *Zhongguo meishu quanji: Huihua bian, 6, Mingdai huihua, shang* (Complete Collection of Chinese Arts: Painting Series, vol. 6, Ming Dynasty Painting, part one) (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1988), pl. 42; Group for the Authentification of Ancient Works of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, comps., *Zhongguo gudai shuhua mulu* (Catalogue of Authenticated Works of Ancient Chinese Painting and Calligraphy), vol. 6 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1988), 13–002 (Note: the colophons as illustrated here have been trimmed of the paper between inscriptions so that the seals across paper joins have been omitted); Hou-mei Sung, "Min-Che," pp. 1–15, 127–131, fig. 3; Barnhart, *Painters of the Great Ming*, pp. 74–75, fig. 37 (Note: image reversed); Howard Rogers, ed., *China 5,000 Years: Innovation and Transformation in the Arts* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1998), no. 191.

9. *Er yuan ji* (Two Garden Gatherings), ca. 1560. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. For a discussion of this book, see Arthur W. Hummel, "Social Gatherings in the Ming Period," *Annual Report of the Librarian of Congress for 1940*. 1974 reprint ed., compiled by P.K. Yu, vol. 2, pp. 648–50. Hummel notes that the book was printed about 1560 by Xu Lun (1494–1566), the son of Xu Jin, who was one of the participants in the gathering of 1499. *Er yuan ji* is also discussed briefly and partially illustrated in Clunas, *Fruitful Sites*, pp. 64–66, figs. 17–18.

10. Published in Yang Xin, Shan Guoqiang, and Yang Chenbin, eds., *Gugong bowuyuan cang Ming Qing huihua* (Ming and Qing Paintings in the Collection of the Palace Museum) (Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe, 1994), pl. 5.

11. Cahill simply points out the existence of the two versions; see *The Compelling Image*, p. 115. Hou-mei Sung ("Min-Che," pp. 2–3) argues that the two versions are by different artists, the Zhenjiang version being by Xie Huan while the Metropolitan scroll "could have been a work done by another court painter about the same time." Barnhart (*Painters of the Great Ming*, pp. 74–75) argues that both versions "appear to be genuine products of their time ... by at least two different artists, one of whom was Xie Huan. The other painter, who may have worked on both scrolls along with Xie, was probably Xie's assistant."

12. See Mu Yiqin, *Mingdai yuanti Zhepai huihua shiliao*, p. 187; see also Hou-mei Sung, "Min-Che," p. 3.

13. Those in attendance included Shan Guolin, paintings curator of the Shanghai Museum, and Jane DeBevoise, Guggenheim Museum.

14. Cahill, *The Compelling Image*, p. 115.

15. A long colophon by Weng Fanggang (1733–1818) that follows the texts composed by the participants in the Zhenjiang version is reproduced in *Zhongguo gudai shuhua mulu*, vol. 6, 13-002. Three colophons by Weng Tonghe (1830–1904) that follow the participants' texts on the Metropolitan version are reproduced in Suzuki, *Chugoku kaiga sogo zuroku*, A13–052.

16. The presence of this seal on every paper join of the Zhenjiang colophon sheets is yet to be verified as the photographic documentation of the scroll as reproduced here is incomplete. The colophons have also been reproduced in truncated form in *Zhongguo gudai shuhua mulu*, vol. 6, 13–002.

17. See Hou-mei Sung, "The Formation of the Ming Painting Academy," *Ming Studies* 29 (Spring 1990), pp. 30–47, esp. pp. 36–37.

18. I am indebted to Mr. Wang Lianqi for this observation.

19. See *Huai'an Mingmu qutu shuhua*. The only other extant painting that may be by Xie Huan is a landscape dated 1452 (see n. 6 above).

20. Xie Huan signs himself on this painting as "Yuzhiweng." The editors of *Huai'an Mingmu qutu shuhua*, ibid., have misread this sobriquet as "Yuqiweng" ("The old man who has just passed seven[ty]").

21. For a discussion of this change, see Wen C. Fong, James C.Y. Watt, et al., *Possessing the Past: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and National Palace Museum, 1996), pp. 329–32.

22. For a reproduction of the entire painting, see *Zhongguo lidai huihua: Gugong bowuyuan cang huaji* (Chinese Painting of Successive Dynasties: Selected Paintings from the Collection of the Palace Museum), vol. 5 (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1986), p. 58.

23. See Wai-kam Ho et al., *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting: The Collections of the Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, and The Cleveland Museum of Art*, exh. cat. (Cleveland: The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1980), no. 133.

24. As Hou-mei Sung notes, "it was common practice during the early Ming to duplicate for each member of the group any painting depicting a literary gathering"; Hou-mei Sung, "Min-Che," p. 3.

25. See Mu, *Mingdai yuanti Zhepai huihua shiliao*, pp. 18–19.

26. See Mary Ann Rogers, "Visions of Grandeur," p. 141.

Wen
C.
Fong

Riverbank: From Connoisseurship to Art History

Over the last quarter century, with the field of art history dramatically expanding to embrace Asian and other non-Western arts, the methods of approaching art history traditionally associated with the West since the Renaissance have been increasingly called into question,[1] and the rethinking of the history of the visual arts has become part of our reexamination of long-established hierarchies and assumptions. Traditional art history, which encompasses stylistic analysis, iconographic readings, and biographical narratives, is held suspect both for its naïve positivism and for its perceived use of serving an official ideology. Connoisseurship, in particular, as a method of attribution, is ridiculed as a mere appendage of the art market.

Svetlana Alpers, in a 1977 article "Is Art History?" addresses the concerns of social art historians, who focus on "the work of art itself, not a history or sequences of works, which is seen as a piece of history."[2] A corollary of this new social history of art, she continues, "is the phenomenon of historians turning to art not for confirmation of the notion of period style, but rather for the fact of individual works." Alpers calls for a demystification of the once-hallowed notion of artistic invention: "What was previously puzzled over as a mystery has now come to be understood as the task of fitting a work to a particular task, to a particular set of describable historical conditions." She cites the study of Chinese painting as an example: "In studying a tradition such as Chinese painting, where imitation of an admired style is the rule and attribution a chancy and demanding procedure at best, would it not be useful to ask how appropriate the task of

Opposite Attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), *Riverbank*. Detail. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 87 × 42 ⅛ in. (221 × 109 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Ex. Coll.: C.C. Wang Family. Promised Gift of the Oscar L. Tang Family.

attribution is? How is the individual maker related as an individual to such a powerful and absorbing tradition? Should our aim always be first to sort out, to identify the hands? What is the status or nature of collaborative efforts at different times, in different societies?"[3]

More recently, as younger scholars have attempted to find new approaches to Chinese art, they have turned for inspiration to a variety of techniques ranging from literary criticism, structuralist anthropology, and ethnography to an examination of material and visual culture. Craig Clunas, for example, has rallied to a call "for a history of images, as opposed to a history of art, a form of historical enquiry which would ... range more widely across the entire 'field of cultural production.'" He writes that "pictures [seem] too important to leave to art historians. There have been moves from those whose self-definition is as 'historians' pure and simple, for whom images have come to seem a legitimate field of enquiry."[4] Clunas's new book is entitled *Art in China* rather than *Chinese Art* because, to quote the author, "it is written out of a distrust of the existence of any unifying principles or essences linking such a wide range of made things, things of very different types, having very different dates, very different materials, and very different makers, audiences, and contexts of use."[5]

Compelling though such new strategies are (and indeed they have both enriched and energized our ways of looking at Chinese art), there can be no real understanding of an individual work, either as art or as material object, without our first ascertaining, as accurately as possible, the date and circumstances of its production. Precisely because the history of Chinese painting is fraught with imitations and forgeries, connoisseurship remains the only means we have with which to determine the authenticity and significance of an individual work as evidence of historical inquiry. More than simply a tool for the art market, connoisseurship — the examination of the visual evidence of a work of art — alone enables us to decipher what art can tell us about history.

Riverbank: Tenth-Century Masterpiece or Modern Forgery?

Because the history of Chinese painting is still a relatively young discipline, it is possible for different critics to arrive at contradictory assessments of the same work or sequence of works. Such is the case with *Riverbank* (fig. 1), which, if our attribution of it to the tenth century is correct, becomes critically important to our understanding of early Chinese landscape painting. In this connection, let me quote Max Loehr:

> *Our judgements [about a work] will change; the work adjudged will not. We have to come to terms with it in the end.... The authenticity question results in a true paradox: (1) Without knowledge of styles, we*

Figure 1 Attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), *Riverbank.* Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 87 × 42 ⅞ in. (221 × 109 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Ex. Coll.: C.C. Wang Family. Promised Gift of the Oscar L. Tang Family

cannot judge the authenticity of individual works, and (2) *without convictions about authenticity, we cannot form concepts of style.*[6]

To come to terms with a work of art about which there are conflicting judgments, as there are with *Riverbank*, we must first examine the critical assumptions and methods on which these judgments are based.

James Cahill, in a 1981 article "Some Aspects of Tenth Century Painting as Seen in Three Recently-Published Works," written at a time when "the real nature of tenth-century painting [was] a central enigma in Chinese painting studies," analyzes three tenth-century works: *A Chess Party in the Mountains* (fig. 2), by an unidentified artist, in the Liaoning Provincial Museum; *The Lofty Scholar Liang Boluan* (fig. 3), attributed to Wei Xian (active ca. 960–75), in the Palace Museum, Beijing; and *A Flour Mill*, also attributed to Wei Xian, in the Shanghai Museum.[7] He points out that "[the] new way of organizing the composition [in these paintings] represents an important advance over the older, additive space-cell mode in which movement from one discrete unit of space to the next was achieved only with difficulty; it opens the way to the spatial unification of Song [landscape] painting." He adds that "after the Yuan, this mode of representation seems to have been virtually forgotten, and the Ming-Qing understanding of Five Dynasties style is limited, largely, to the familiar motifs and mannerisms associated with Dong Yuan and Li Cheng."[8] Cahill thus follows the broad conceptualization of the history of Chinese art sketched out earlier by Max Loehr, who saw the fifteen hundred years between the Han dynasty (206 B C–A D 220) and the end of the Southern Song (1127–1279) as the "phase of representational art in China, revealing a progress from images of isolated objects toward images of the visual phenomenon of pure space."[9]

For Cahill, *Riverbank* fails to fit into his conception of this progression of representational art. "The whole composition," he writes, "is full of spongy, ambiguous forms and spatial contradictions."[10] "In *Riverbank*, what must be a distant river turns imperceptibly into a road with people walking on it. Furthermore, the whole upper part is obscure, neither the top of the main mountain nor the distant ones to the right being really readable — not because of damage or concealing mist (which would be anachronistic in so early a work) but because they were never clearly painted in."[11] For Cahill, *Riverbank* fails, to his eye, to be representationally convincing as a tenth-century work.

As a critical concept, however, mimetic representation of nature, or naturalism, is of itself ahistorical. Because the rendering of nature changes in the course of history and in different cultures, the way a critic sees it today may not be the way the painter saw it. Therefore, our task is to place what we see in a historical context. There are scholars today who refuse to accept what they term a "purely formal approach to style." Martin Powers writes:

Figure 2 Unidentified artist (10th century), *A Chess Party in the Mountains*, ca. 940–85, from a tomb at Yemaotai. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 41 7/8 × 25 5/8 in. (106.5 × 65 cm). Liaoning Provincial Museum

Figure 3 Wei Xian (active ca. 960–75), *The Lofty Scholar Liang Boluan*. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 53 × 20 5/8 in. (134.5 × 52.5 cm). Palace Museum, Beijing

> *I have avoided, except in reference to the work of others, the issue of naturalism. Traditionally art historians tended to regard naturalism as a kind of normative standard against which to judge all styles and as a consequence would emphasize the differences between slightly more three-dimensional* [*stone*] *engravings and flatter ones. Freshmen art history students even today often attempt to divide all the world's style into "realistic" and "abstract" categories.*[12]

Powers cites Wu Hung, who also considers stylistic analysis ill-suited to dealing with problems of early Chinese art.[13] Rooted as his work is in the traditional Chinese antiquarian study of engraved inscriptions on ancient monuments, Wu challenges any analysis that interprets "[Chinese] stylistic evolution in terms of the accumulation of means to conquer the third dimension" as one that has "taken the evolution of Western painting as a model."[14] He strongly objects to what he perceives as a Western "Orientalist" approach which, "either consciously or unconsciously, equates [Chinese stylistic development] with post-Renaissance painting that employs linear perspective as the most powerful means to create pictorial illusions."[15]

The dearth of authenticated and dated monuments led early Western students of Chinese art mistakenly to follow Western analogies in their characterization of Chinese stylistic developments. Thus, Ludwig Bachhofer saw Chinese painting as passing through the familiar Wölfflinian Grundbegriffe cycle of archaic, classic, and baroque (or linear, plastic, and pictorial) stages.[16] Reacting to Bachhofer's dogmatic historicism, Benjamin Rowland wrote: "There is first of all an *a priori* framework to which works of art in evolutionary progression are made to fit.... Style [for Bachhofer] is a kind of sinister autonomous force which in all ages and in all climes inexorably induces artists to produce works of art in a certain preordained fashion."[17] It should be pointed out that most art historians today, who no longer believe in typical and recurrent Grundbegriffe or visual modes, nevertheless accept stylistic evidence because they consider the technical conditions of production essential for understanding a work of art. Before a painting can represent nature, or reflect a specific social or material context, it must be apprehended first as a visual structure of techniques, forms, and conventions that have their own history and development. As Gombrich has put it, "Art has a history ... the rendering of nature cannot be achieved by any untutored individual, however gifted, without the support of a tradition."[18]

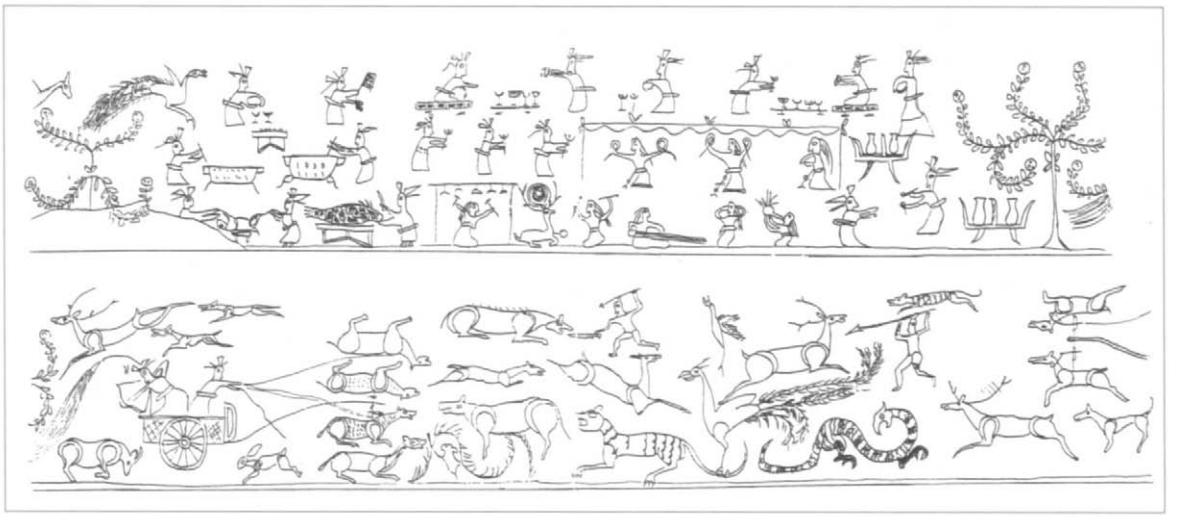
In attempting to date a Chinese painting, we must focus on defining period styles in Chinese painting history. At the same time, to avoid a teleological argument we must not assume that stylistic changes are predetermined. In truth, our approach to Chinese painting history through period styles, formulated on the basis of individual works that derive from stylistic permutations, mixed influences, and artistic creativity, can be conceived only with hindsight.

Periodization of Style in Chinese Landscape Painting

I have long discussed with James Cahill the need for defining period styles in Chinese painting history.[19] In describing style, modern art historians deal not only with techniques, form elements or motifs, and compositional patterns, which are earmarks of individual creations, but also with form relationships and visual structures (the way forms are visualized in painting), which are group or "period" characteristics.[20] In Chinese painting, traditional critics use form elements or motifs—for example, Dong Yuan's (active 930s–960s) round rocks and "hemp-fiber" texture strokes—to define the basic idiom of an individual style. When a copyist or a forger imitates or appropriates an ancient style, he easily captures its basic form elements or motifs and compositional patterns, but in combining such elements or motifs to create a new effect or to find the solution to a new problem, he inevitably creates form relationships and visual structures more characteristic of his own time. Through an analysis of the form structure—the way forms are conceived and organized on the picture plane—we can demonstrate how pictorial conventions were refined and altered within a certain period and over time, either to create a closer approximation of perceived reality as transmitted or to express meaning through new techniques, emphasis, or distortion. In order to deal with a diversity of styles, as well as avoid any suggestion of predictability of visual data, we may borrow George Kubler's concept of "prime objects," beginning with archaeologically recovered and, when possible, dated examples, as a basis for reconstructing periodized sequences of styles as "linked solutions" (Kubler's term) in Chinese painting history.[21]

When Cahill compares *Riverbank* with works by the twentieth-century painter Zhang Daqian (1899–1983), he points only to superficial form elements and motifs and compositional patterns. He writes that "Zhang was fond ... of long, continuous, winding movements connecting near to far along zig-zag streaks of white that can be either roads or rivers—and it is often unclear which."[22] This describes Zhang's imitation of the early-Qing "dragon-vein" compositional formula, which, in Zhang's hand, operates as a two-dimensional surface movement on the picture plane.[23] In the case of *Riverbank*, however, as befits a far earlier landscape, the painter was concerned with achieving recession in space.

Because the Chinese never developed an anatomical approach to figural representation or an approach to space based on linear perspective, the mastery of illusion in Chinese pictorial representation must be understood on its own terms, not on those of post-Renaissance Western painting. Over the centuries, Chinese painters mastered the modeling of forms and the representation of the illusion of depth and movement in space by developing a number of pictorial conventions that suggested three-dimensional space on



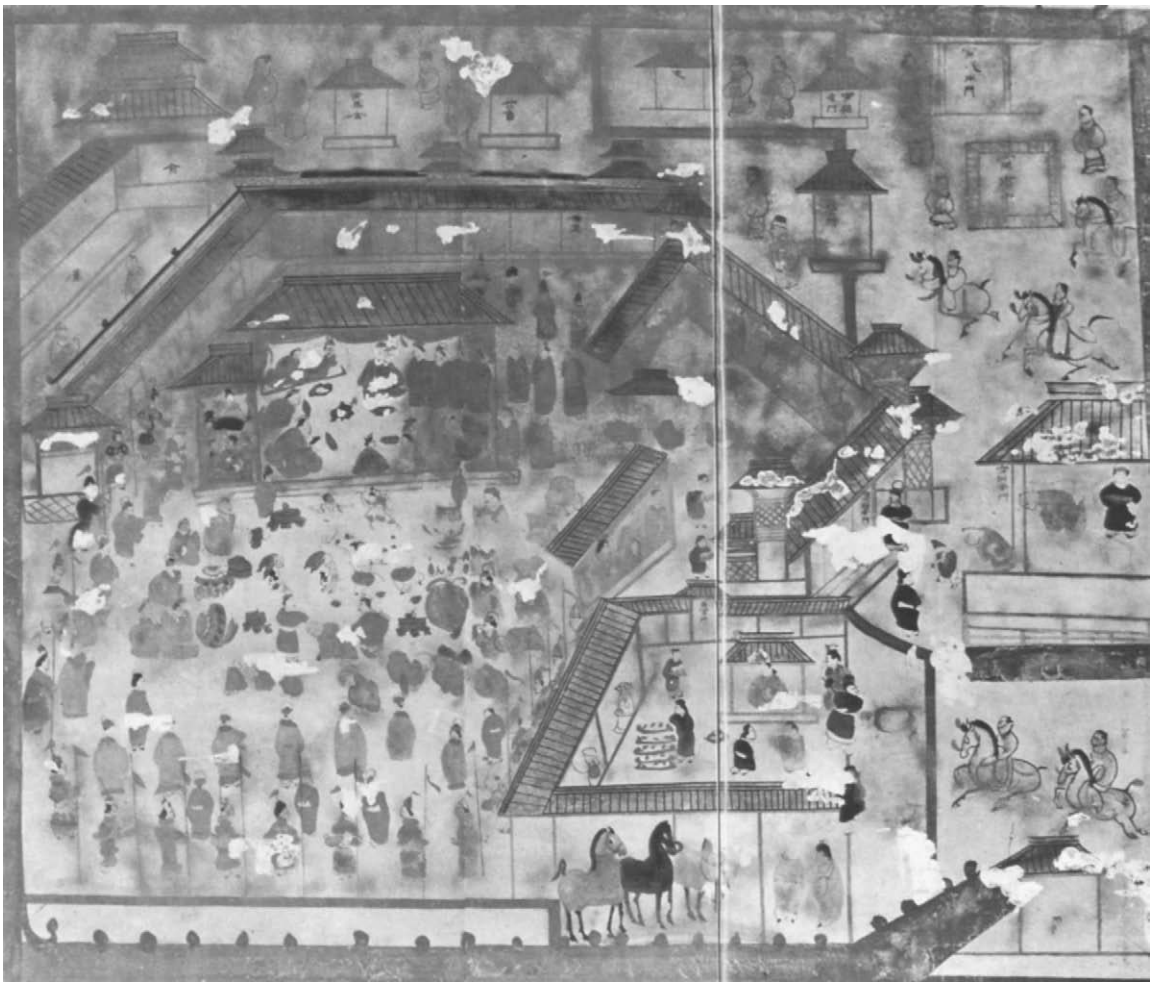
the surface of the two-dimensional picture plane. Archaic pictorial representations beginning in the fifth century B C (fig. 4) show figures presented frontally as discrete images, organized either along a single ground line or piled up and distributed evenly over the picture surface. Objects that are farther away from the picture plane are shown directly above those that are nearer, so that "above" is to be read as "behind." One major pictorial discovery for positioning figures in space was the use of diagonal lines arranged as parallelograms to represent sides of a floor mat, a piece of furniture, or a building. By the Eastern Han, in the late second century, as seen in a wall painting in Helingol, Inner Mongolia (fig. 5), an enclosed city wall creates a bird's-eye view of a bounded three-dimensional space for rows of piled-up figures and buildings. Henceforward, the rendering of architectural settings and furnishings enabled artists to depict objects and figures, both indoors and out, in persuasive spatial relationships.

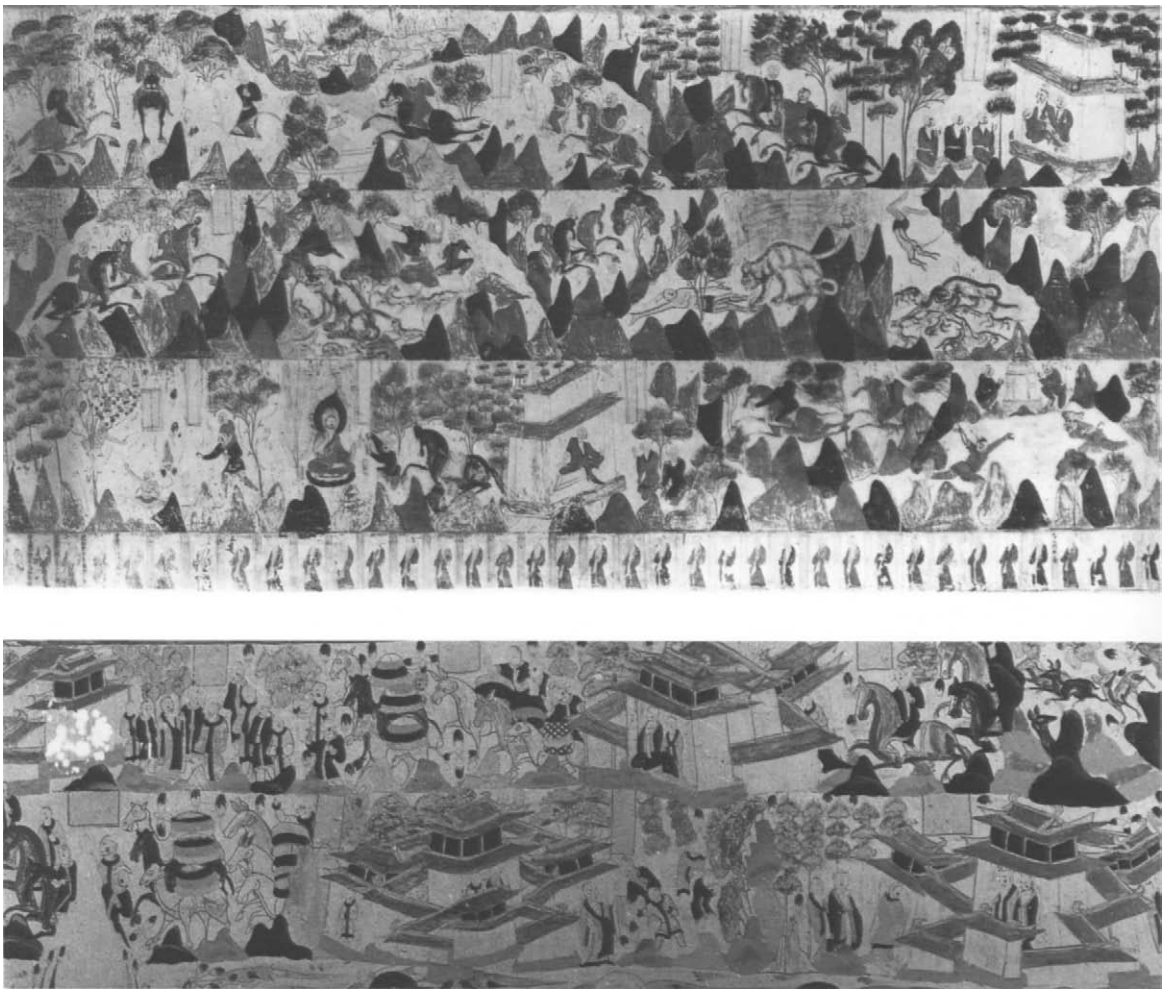
Before the adoption in the eighteenth century of a Western-style linear perspective, with a single vanishing point, Chinese painters developed a technique of isometric perspective based on direct observation, using diagonal lines that are either parallel to each other or fan out, without converging toward a vanishing point.[24] During the Six Dynasties period, from the third to the sixth century, painters experimented with both architectural and mountain motifs (figs. 6, 7) to create space cells for figures to inhabit. By elevating the view to a bird's-eye perspective, the painter was able to show the interior of a building as well as the broad panorama of a wide vista.

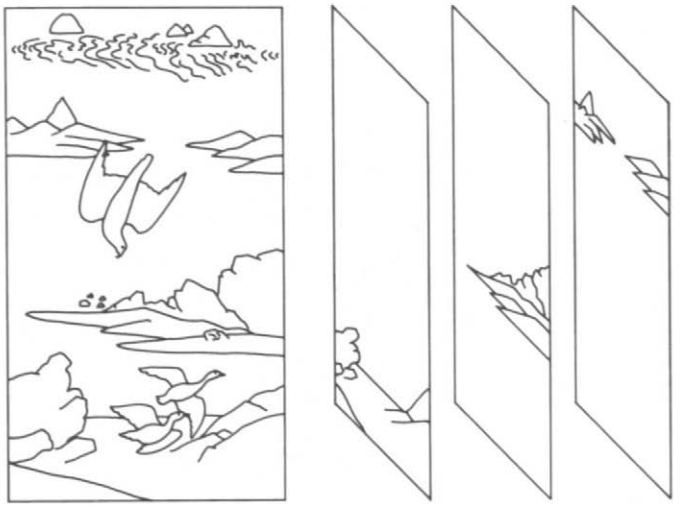
Another device that evolved in early landscape painting was the use of overlapping triangles to suggest recession in space. *Hawk and Ducks* (figs. 8a, 8b), a painting on a lute plectrum guard dating to the eighth

Figure 4 (above) Drawing of painted scenes of banqueting and hunting on a round box. Detail. Eastern Zhou dynasty (770–256 B.C.), early 5th century B.C. Polychrome lacquer on wood with bronze fittings, h. 6 in. (15.2 cm), w. 9 in. (22.9 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Promised Gift of Robert Rosenkranz. Drawing by David Ta-Wey Liu.

Figure 5 (opposite) Wall painting, Eastern Han dynasty (25–220), late 2nd century, from a tomb in Helingol, Inner Mongolia







century, in the Shōsō-in Treasury, presents series of overlapping sloping mountains, with each sequence going in a single direction limited to three or four steps, after which the chain breaks, jumps to a higher level in the picture plane, and starts again. In this compartmentalized treatment of space, the foreground, the middle distance, and the far distance occupy three separate levels on the picture plane, each tilted at a different angle. This treatment is exemplified in one panel of a recently discovered wall painting of a six-panel landscape screen (fig. 9) from a tomb in Fuping County, Shaanxi Province, dating to about the eighth century.[25] The steeply rising mountain view is depicted in three stages. In the first a mountain path is framed by overlapping slopes that lead rightward from the bottom of the picture. In the second the path turns in the

Figure 6 (opposite, top) *Mahasattva Jataka*, Northern Zhou dynasty (557–581), mid-6th century. Wall painting from Cave 428, Dunhuang, Gansu Province

Figure 7 (opposite, bottom) Wall painting, late 6th century, from from Cave 296, Dunhuang, Gansu Province

Figure 8a (above, left) Unidentified artist (8th century), *Hawk and Ducks*. Painting on a lute plectrum guard. Shōsō-in Treasury, Nara

Figure 8b (above, right) Diagrams of fig. 8a showing additive mountain motifs receding in three separate stages

middle distance, with sloping mountain forms stepping first to the left, then to the right. And in the third, toward the top of the painting, a river is framed by overlapping mountain forms that twist again to the left.

The landscape elements in *Riverbank* are organized in precisely the same way, with sloping curves from two sides of the mountain path forming a series of interlocking V-shaped space pockets that twist and turn into distant space (fig. 10). Cahill's description of "what must be a distant river [that] turns imperceptibly into a road with people walking on it" is a misreading of the scene. The passage in question repeats the compositional device seen in the Tang screen painting (fig. 9). The zigzag mountain path in the valley leads the eye upward into the distance; the path ends by the banks of a river, and the river extends the eye into the far distance as it winds its way through space. In both instances the additive, compartmentalized, interlocking V-shaped space pockets reflect the conceptual approach seen in Tang and early Song landscape painting.

In stating that "concealing mist … would be anachronistic in so early a work," Cahill ignores the well-known textual evidence that credits Dong Yuan with the invention of evening light and reflection in early

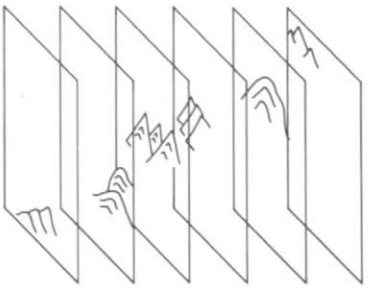
Figure 9 (opposite) One panel from a wall painting of a six-panel landscape screen, ca. 8th century. From a tomb in Fu-ping County, Shaanxi Province

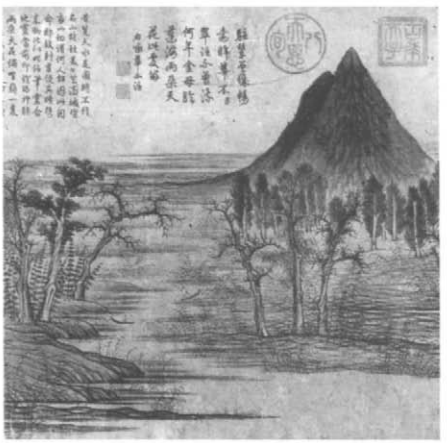
Figure 10 (above) Detail, fig. 1: Attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), *Riverbank*

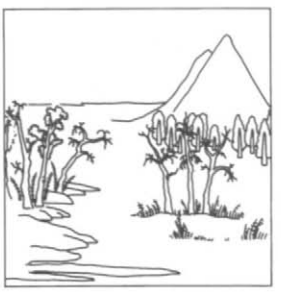
Chinese landscape painting. Describing the work of Dong Yuan and his follower Juran (active ca. 960–95), the Northern Song writer Shen Gua (1030–1093) wrote that "paintings by Dong Yuan and Juran should best be seen at a distance, because their brushwork can be sketchy.... If one examines [a work] close up, it does not seem remarkable, but if one looks at it from a distance one can vaguely see a village in the obscure depths of the picture's evening light, while the peaks of the distant cliffs seem to reflect the color [of the setting sun]."[26] In the upper part of *Riverbank* (fig. 11), while the main mountain peaks on the left disappearing into the mist "seem to reflect the color [of the setting sun]," the peaks over the distant valley at the right, rendered in sketchy, blurry brushwork, dissolve artfully into the surrounding mist at their base.

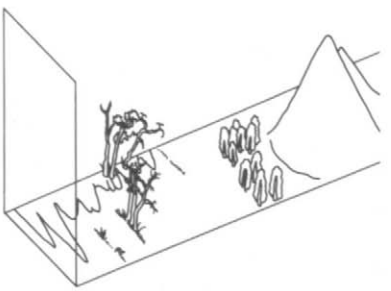
Some years ago I proposed that, between the eighth and fourteenth centuries, the mastery of spatial representation in Chinese landscape painting evolved in three stages.[27] In the Tang and early Northern

Figure 11 Detail, fig. 1: Attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), *Riverbank*









Song, from the eighth to the early eleventh century, space is compartmentalized (fig. 8a): individual elements, each a discrete image viewed frontally, are seen one by one, and organized on an additive basis. By the end of the Northern Song, in the late eleventh and through the twelfth century, unconnected silhouetted forms are ranged continuously through space, unified by mist or the atmosphere that surrounds them, as seen in Li shi's (Master Li; active ca. 1170) *Dream Journey through the Xiao and Xiang Rivers* (figs. 12a, 12b). Finally, during the Yuan, in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the spatial integration of landscape elements is achieved through foreshortening and by the addition of a receding ground plane, as used by Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322) in *Autumn Colors on the Qiao and Hua Mountains* (figs. 13a, 13b). The forms are perceived as connected masses, the technique of fused brushwork suggesting forms seen through atmosphere.[28]

12a	**12b**
13a	**13b**

Figure 12a Li shi (active ca. 1170), *Dream Journey through the Xiao and Xiang Rivers.* Detail. Handscroll, ink on paper, 13 × 158 ⅞ in. (33 × 403.6 cm). Tokyo National Museum

Figure 12b Diagrams of fig. 12a showing overlapping mountain motifs receding in a continuous sequence

Figure 13a Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322), *Autumn Colors on the Qiao and Hua Mountains,* dated 1296. Detail. Handscroll, ink and color on paper, 11 ⅛ × 36 ⅜ in. (28.3 × 92.4 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

Figure 13b Diagrams of fig. 13a showing landscape elements arranged along a continuously receding ground plane

In *Riverbank*, the distant peaks shrouded in mist remain additive and compartmentalized. The mountain forms, built up with softly rubbed but tactilely exacting modeling strokes and a graded ink wash, diminish in size and clarity as they dissolve in surrounding mist. By the late eleventh century, as seen in Guo Xi's (ca. 1000–ca. 1090) *Early Spring* (fig. 14), spatial continuity is suggested through a modeling technique that explores the impression of a diffused atmosphere. In Guo Xi's painting (fig. 15), the thickening and thinning outlines of forms and modeling strokes, in values ranging from transparent blue gray to charcoal black, are applied one on top of the other so that the ink tones run and fuse together to create a wet, blurry surface. In drawing trees, Guo alternates between dark and light ink tones, effectively suggesting an enveloping veil of mist. Compared with the zigzag shorelines in the deep distance of *Riverbank* (fig. 10), which are flat silhouettes piled up vertically on the picture plane, the distant shorelines on the left side of *Early Spring* (fig. 15) recede in a foreshortened perspective. Like Dong Yuan, Guo Xi was famous for depicting light in his paintings, with landscape forms emerging from and receding behind dense, wafting mists. Unlike European landscape painting since the seventeenth century, where light emanates from a fixed outside source and is an external organizing principle, light in both *Riverbank* and *Early Spring* emanates from

Figure 14 Guo Xi (ca. 1000–ca. 1090), *Early Spring*, dated 1072. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 62 ¼ × 42 ⅝ in. (158.3 × 108.1 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

within the forms, which are constructed as a harmony of alternating patterns of dark and light, texture strokes and ink wash, concavity and convexity. The absence of light as an external organizing principle in Chinese painting and the construction of landscape forms as a harmony of alternating patterns of brush and ink and dark and light may be seen to reflect the Chinese view of the universe as characterized by spontaneous creation and alternations of phenomena without an external creator.[29]

Figure 15 Detail, fig. 14: Guo Xi (ca. 1000–ca. 1090), *Early Spring*, dated 1072

Figure 16 Wen Zhengming (1470–1559), *Landscape after Wang Meng*, dated 1555. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 52 ¾ × 14 ⅛ in. (133.9 × 35.7 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

When we reach the Ming and Qing periods, we find landscape painters less concerned with the representation of nature than with the reinterpretation of ancient styles. In this exploration, as they turned increasingly to calligraphic brushwork, they focused on problems of surface organization and decorative pattern. In *Landscape after Wang Meng* (fig. 16), by Wen Zhengming (1470–1559), dated 1555, in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, we see that the very complexity of details demands new organization through pattern and stylization. The piling up of elements on the vertical picture plane harks back to the archaic use of a bird's-eye perspective (figs. 6, 7).

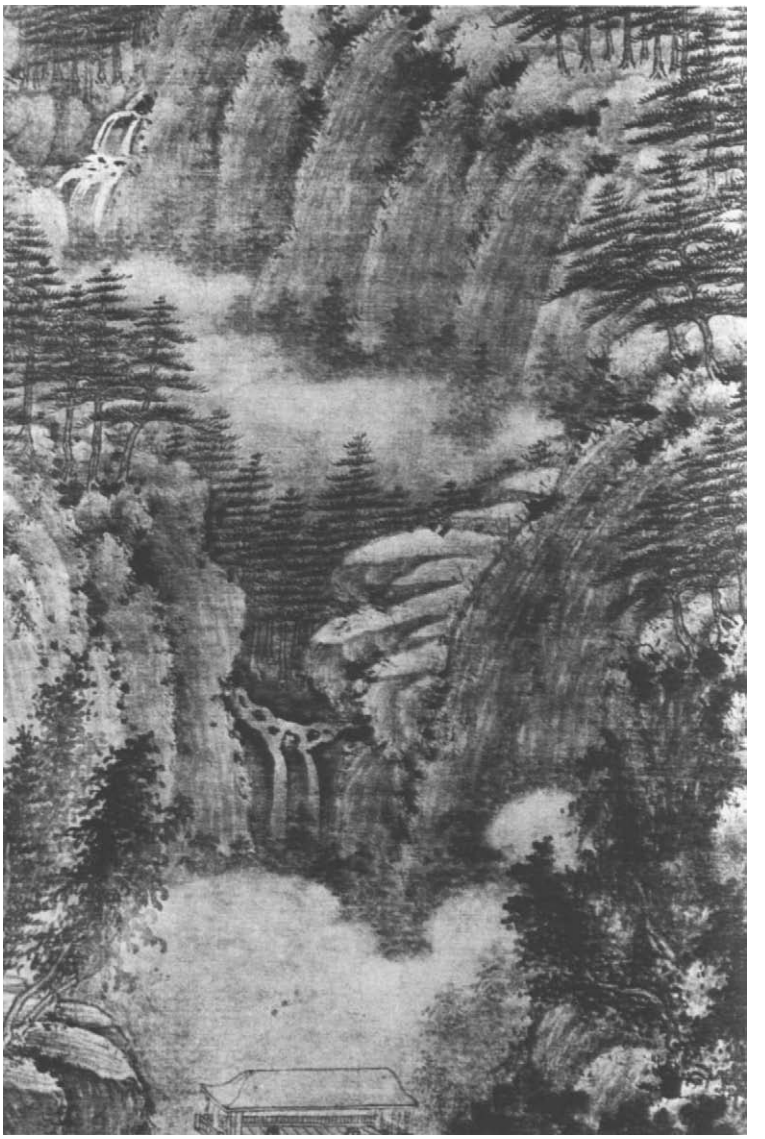
It was a work that we date to the early Qing period, *Myriad Ravines with Wind in the Pines* (fig. 17), with a typical early-Qing dragon-vein composition,[30] that the modern painter Zhang Daqian used as his compositional model in making a forgery of Juran's *Dense Forests and Layered Peaks* (fig. 18), now in the British Museum. According to Fu Shen, Zhang used a photograph of *Myriad Ravines*, which he obtained in early 1951, as the model for the composition, while for the details he relied on his familiarity with two other well-known Juran attributions, *Seeking Dao in the Autumn Mountains*, in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, and *Living in the Mountains*, in the Saito Collection, Japan, both of which can be dated stylistically to the Ming period.[31] Once the forgery has been exposed, Zhang's hand becomes embarrassingly evident. For all his dash and presence as a skilled painter, Zhang as a forger imitating an early style can only interpret and transform ancient conventions and techniques through the visual structures of his own time. He uses such well-worn Juran brush idioms as round calligraphic hemp-fiber texture strokes and large round moss-dots, but he builds his forms as though from a copybook.[32] The entire picture is flat and uninspired, a retreading of the early-Qing dragon-vein composition. Compared with details in *Myriad Ravines* (figs. 19a, 20a), Zhang's brushwork in *Dense Forests* (figs. 19b, 20b) is fluent but flat, vibrant but slick. He uses ink wash to create Western-style chiaroscuro, with light shining externally from one direction to enhance the overall effect, a technique that dates his painting to the twentieth century. Significantly, Zhang's modern forgery of Juran, who was a follower of Dong Yuan, has nothing to do with either the form or the content of *Riverbank*, a work we attribute to Dong Yuan.

Where Chinese Art Is History

An examination of the present state of Chinese art history reveals a tangled skein of debate over methods and aims. First, there was the question, originally posed by John Pope in 1947, of whether Chinese art should be the domain of Sinology or art history.[33] Although Pope rightly concluded that "the Sinologist

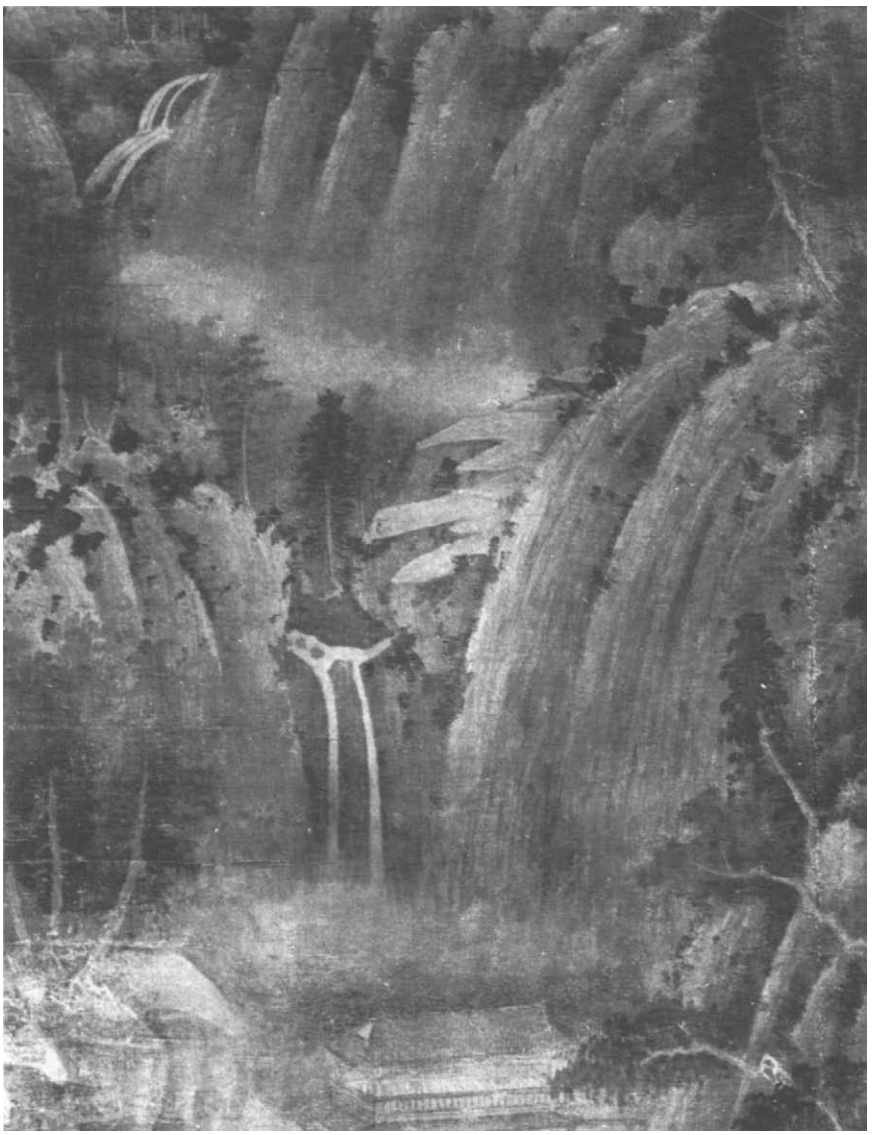
Figure 17 Unidentified artist (late 17th century), after Juran (active ca. 960–95). *Myriad Ravines with Wind in the Pines.* Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 79 × 30 ⅞ in. (200.7 × 77.2 cm). Shanghai Museum

Figure 18 Zhang Daqian (1899–1983), formerly attributed to Juran (active ca. 960–95). *Dense Forests and Layered Peaks,* ca. 1951. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 72 ¾ × 29 in. (184.7 × 73.8 cm). British Museum, London



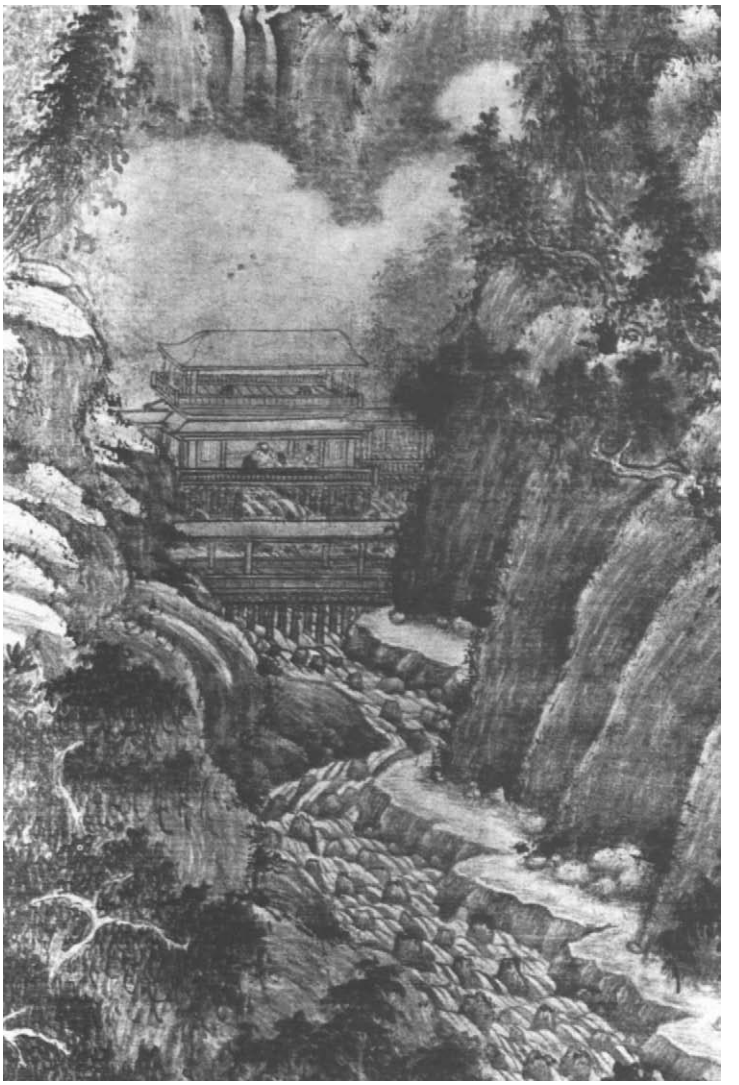
[must] take the trouble to train his eye by the firsthand study of many objects, and the art historian [must] take the trouble to equip himself with the tools of Sinology," he implicitly questioned whether Western stylistic analysis was applicable to Chinese art when he observed that "the assumption that because [one] was a trained art historian, [one] could examine the available material and write the history of *any* art proved ill founded."[34]

Figure 19a Detail, fig. 17: Unidentified artist (late 17th century), *Myriad Ravines with Wind in the Pines*



In his critique of formal analysis, Wu Hung has contrasted the Western stylistic analysis of images on ancient monuments with the traditional Chinese antiquarian approach to the study of ancient inscriptions. Wu writes: "From the first, the studies of Western art historians differed from those of traditional Chinese antiquarians ... [who] considered that the value of the inscribed cartouches surpassed that of the pictures."[35] When he criticized modern stylistic analysis of early Chinese painting as "having taken the evo-

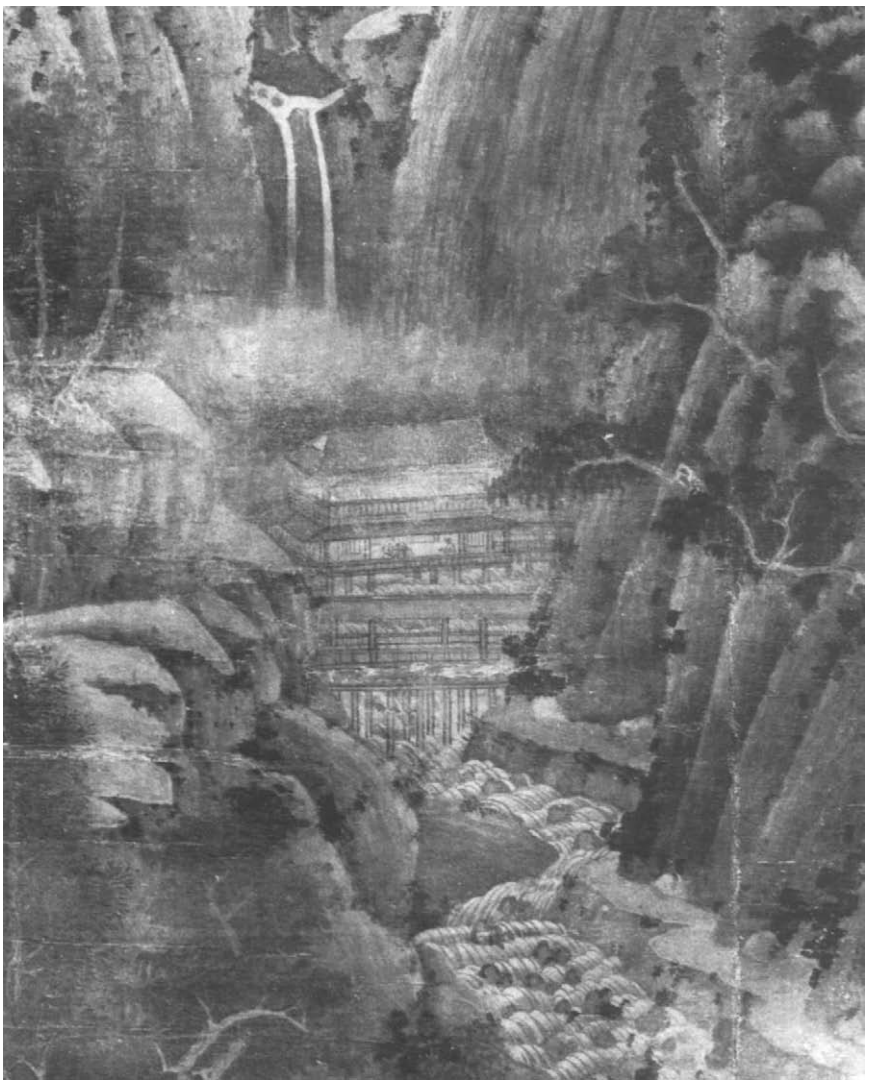
Figure 19b Detail, fig. 18: Zhang Daqian (1899–1983), *Dense Forests and Layered Peaks*



lution of Western painting as a model" and proposed to "'revolutionize' traditional formal analysis,"[36] Wu unwittingly provoked a debate about "cultural insiders" and "other scholars."[37]

The more important issue is that it was precisely this shift from the antiquarian approach to the study of ancient inscriptions to the formal analysis of the visual evidence of the images that marked the beginning of the modern scholarly discipline of art history.[38] Around the turn of the century, Aldolf Michaelis explained the advantages of stylistic analysis in describing archaeologically recovered art objects: "Instead

Figure 20a Detail, fig. 17: Unidentified artist (late 17th century), *Myriad Ravines with Wind in the Pines*



of depending upon a scaffolding supposed to be firm, because [it is] derived from literary tradition, but really flimsy and scanty, we now have a structure rich in form and color.... The work of art has a language of its own, which it is our task to understand and explain."[39]

Modern stylistic analysis stakes claim to universal validity by treating the formal characteristics of an image as solutions to generic problems of delineation, modeling, and composition. The methods and techniques art historians employ to analyze art forms are independent of the culture or the period that produced

Figure 20b Detail, fig. 18: Zhang Daqian (1899–1983), *Dense Forests and Layered Peaks*

those forms. It is no accident that the introduction of modern stylistic analysis coincided with the expansion of the history of visual arts to embrace non-traditional subjects including crafts, decorative art, and non-Western arts. Wu Hung, of course, correctly urges that we not misinterpret Chinese art by applying evolutionary theories based on the Western post-Renaissance model. Thus, it is all the more important that the stylistic development of Chinese painting be understood on its own terms, and that stylistic analysis as a scholarly discipline be expanded and applied to images from all non-Western cultures.

Finally, the question of who should command the field of art history — the Sinologist or the art historian — goes back to the long-standing debate between the philologist, whose inquiry is rooted in words and history, and the art historian, whose inquiry is based on visual evidence of the images. In his 1993 book *History and Its Image: Art and the Interpretation of the Past*, Francis Haskell has vividly described what he calls "the discovery of the image" from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century and the role played in this discovery by European numismatists, antiquarians, and archaeologists. Not until the nineteenth century did the history of art come to focus on interpreting the arts as an "index of society." In this, stylistic change came to be perceived as symptomatic of cultural transformation.[40] In the chapter entitled "The Deceptive Evidence of Art," Haskell describes the failed efforts of European scholars to use visual evidence of the arts as a key to recapturing the past. Although he touches only lightly on the German tradition and its influence on the development of the history of styles, one might note that Hegel's teleological conception of history survived among some early-twentieth-century Western writers on Chinese art, such as Ludwig Bachhofer, particularly the view that stylistic change manifested a change in zeitgeist, or collective spirit.

What can Chinese art tell us about Chinese history? If *Riverbank* is indeed a product of tenth-century China, it manifests the environment that shaped it, and as such it carries a significance beyond what historical records can convey. By embedding the image in its original social, cultural, and material context, we may attempt to reconstruct the historical conditions that produced it.

Between the fall of the Tang dynasty in 907 and the founding of the Northern Song in 960, during the period known as the Five Dynasties and the Ten Kingdoms, North China was ruled by a succession of ephemeral dynasties, none lasting more than sixteen years, while Central and South China were partitioned among regional military commanders into more than a dozen coexisting kingdoms. The Southern Tang kingdom (937–75), which ruled much of the lower Yangzi River delta region from its capital in Nanjing, was a prosperous and relatively stable haven from unrest. There, in the mid-tenth century, under the patronage of two rulers, Li Jing (r. 943–61) and Li Yu (r. 961–75), a renaissance of art and culture took place.

The end of the Tang dynasty, in the early tenth century, is considered a major watershed in Chinese history. While the Tang had ruled its extensive empire by delegating power to regional military commissioners, the succeeding Song dynasty established a centralized bureaucracy staffed entirely by scholar-officials. The founder of the Song, Taizu (r. 960–76), shown here in an official portrait (fig. 21), was a military officer and had little interest in Confucian learning. Proclaimed emperor by soldiers under his command in 960, Taizu conquered the central Yangzi valley in 963, Sichuan in 965, and Guangzhou in 971, annexing all but two remaining independent states before he died in 976.

The kingdom of the Southern Tang was founded by Li Sheng (r. 937–43), an adopted son of Xu Wen, a powerful general of the kingdom of Wu (902–37), whose throne Li Sheng eventually usurped. Claiming

Figure 21 Unidentified artist (second half of the 10th century), *Portrait of Song Taizu* (r. 960–76). Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 75 ¼ × 66 ⅞ in. (191 × 169.7 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

descent from the Tang emperor Xianzong (r. 806–20), Li Sheng considered his own royal house heirs to the glory of the Tang. Sheng's grandson Li Yu became the ruler of the Southern Tang in 961, was captured by the Song army in 975, and died in captivity three years later in the Song capital, Bianjing. In contrast to the martial Song emperor Taizu, Li Yu, meek and scholarly in demeanor, was known for excessive, luxurious living and as a composer of lyric songs.[41]

The momentous shift in the tenth century from a society ruled by hereditary privilege, one that automatically conferred official status on sons of officials, to a society governed by a central bureaucracy of commoners was accomplished by the rise of a new scholar-official class selected through a system of civil examinations. As ruler of the Southern Tang, Li Yu, who was both a learned Confucian scholar and a devout Buddhist, embarked on a campaign to build schools and promote the civil examination system.[42]

After his ignominious surrender to the Song, Li Yu was severely criticized by Song scholar-officials for his indolent and licentious living, even as his talent as a lyric poet was grudgingly acknowledged.[43] The Northern Song scholar-artist Su Shi (1037–1101) commented on Li's well-known poem "In Disarray," written on the eve of his surrendering his state:

This forty-year span, my home and my country,
A thousand miles wide of mountains and rivers.
Phoenix pavilions and dragon towers once reached up to the skies,
Jade trees and branches formed misty vines;
How would I know about war and destruction!

Suddenly, I return [*north*] *as a captive servitor,*
My waist thin and my hair white, I am wasting away.
Most unbearable, on this day of hasty leave-taking from my ancestral temple,
While court musicians sing songs of farewell,
I wipe my tears before my palace maidens.[44]

Su Shi writes: "He should have cried grievously outside the nine temples of his royal ancestors and apologized to his people for his failings before departing, but instead he was wiping his tears before his palace maidens and listening to the songs of his musicians!"[45]

Blessed with material prosperity and having no real political or military ambitions, the ruling elite of the Southern Tang indulged in an indolent and irresponsible lifestyle, building extravagant palaces and filling them with vast numbers of women attendants, musicians, and entertainers. *In the Palace* (fig. 22), after

Zhou Wenju (active ca. 943–75), in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and *The Night Entertainment of Han Xizai* (fig. 23), after Gu Hongzhong (active ca. 943–75), in the Palace Museum, Beijing, are among the surviving works that reflect both the artistic glory of the Southern Tang court and the opulent lifestyle of the ruling elite. *Scholars of the Liuli Hall* (fig. 24), a late-thirteenth-century copy of a handscroll by Zhou Wenju, which represents the Tang scholar-official and poet Wang Changling (active mid-8th century) hosting a literary gathering in his garden in Nanjing, reflects the emergence of a new literary society in the late Tang and Five Dynasties, in which Confucianists, Daoists, and Buddhists mingled freely.

Figure 22 (top) Unidentified artist (active early 12th century), after Zhou Wenju (active ca. 943–75), *In the Palace*, before 1140. Detail. Handscroll, ink and touches of color on silk, 10 ⅜ × 57 ½ in. (26.5 × 146 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Purchase, Douglas Dillon Gift, 1978

Figure 23 (bottom) Unidentified artist (12th century?), after Gu Hongzhong (active ca. 943–75), *The Night Entertainment of Han Xizai*. Detail. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 11 ¼ × 132 ⅛ in. (28.5 × 335.5 cm). Palace Museum, Beijing

Riverbank (fig. 1), by contrast, is a painting about reclusive living, a subject that echoed ancient Confucian ideals. Reclusion, the deliberate non-participation in government affairs by scholar-officials, was considered a political act.[46] After the fall of the Tang many scholar-officials, rejecting political involvement, retired to the mountains. The theme of reclusion was popular in both North and South China. It is exemplified in the anonymous *A Chess Party in the Mountains* (fig. 2), datable to about 940–85, and *The Lofty Scholar Liang Boluan* (fig. 3), by Wei Xian, a colleague of Dong Yuan in Nanjing. *Lofty Scholar* was the leftmost panel of a six-panel screen that once decorated a Southern Tang palace hall. There is reason to believe that *Riverbank*, too, was the left panel of a horizontal screen composition, similarly executed for the Southern Tang court.[47]

The monochrome landscape of *Riverbank* represents a new genre and a radical departure from Tang figural painting as well as the fully colored style of the Tang palace tradition continued in Zhou Wenju's *In the Palace* and Gu Hongzhong's *The Night Entertainment of Han Xizai*. Also, unlike monumental landscape compositions by such leading eleventh-century masters as Fan Kuan (active ca. 990–1030) and Guo Xi (fig. 14), which are characterized by a heroic, epic style more representative of the imperial taste of the Northern Song emperors, *Riverbank*, a political landscape, is suffused with memory and imagination.

Indeed, the art and literature of the Southern Tang is characterized by a deep, melancholic longing for the past, and it is this melancholy that so dramatically pervades the majestic landscape of *Riverbank*. The passages of lush, moist southern Chinese landscape in the painting evoke, in their descriptive lyricism, the song-poem of Li Yu. A mountain path runs behind the pavilion into the hills, disappearing into a misty river valley in the deep distance (fig. 11). Wild geese fly into the darkening sky. And the journey continues beyond the distant rivers, leading far away to the sojourner's homeland in China's lost northern plains.

Visual representation, far from being a transparent medium for capturing objective reality, involves choices with distinct ideological and political implications.[48] Although *Riverbank* depicts the rich diversity of mountain and tree forms in nature, the rendering of nature in the painting does not replicate real landscape. Many of Dong Yuan's contemporaries painted and wrote about paintings like *Riverbank*. One of them was the landscape painter and theorist Jing Hao (ca. 870–930) who, writing about "divining the emblems [*xiang*], or archetypes, of objects and capturing the 'truth' [in landscape painting],"[49] believed that the painter could discover in nature the moral order that had been lost in the human world. The complex mountain forms in *Riverbank* echo Jing Hao's detailed description of "mountain peaks with pointed tops … flat tops … round tops, and ranges with connected peaks,"[50] and Jing's belief that "the [forms] of the

mountains and rivers are mutually generative, their breath forces causing one another to grow,"[51] a belief reflecting the Neo-Confucian philosophy that defined learning and self-cultivation as "the investigation of things leading to the perfection of knowledge." There is in *Riverbank* a wide range of different species of trees—pines, cypresses, deciduous paulownias—all beautifully depicted as magnificent botanical specimens, "each different from the other in form and character."[52] Pine trees, Jing Hao wrote, "possess the virtuous air of a superior gentleman [*junzi*]." The shape of a great pine tree, as Jing described it, is noble and grand, its needles remaining green throughout the harsh winter. Like a great man, the tree "may bend [as it grows], but will not appear crooked ... even when its lower branches bow down to the earth, they never touch the common ground." Indeed, for the Neo-Confucian philosopher, just as the great pine was the lord of the mountains, the recluse scholar-artist was now the sovereign of the moral universe.

This connection with morality served as the artist's personal confirmation of selfhood during a time of trouble. Unlike in the Western tradition, as Gombrich has described, in which painting has been pursued as a science,[53] Chinese painters attempted to grasp the expressive nature of the image. A Chinese painter links his pictorial representation through calligraphic brushwork to his own physical self. In *Riverbank* the artist depicts a gathering storm gusting across the landscape with violently stretched trees and turbulent waves energized by an expressive calligraphic brushwork, brilliantly transforming his representation of reclusive life, metaphor for a safe haven in a threatening world, into an embodied image of the artist's self.

Figure 24 Unidentified artist (active late 13th century), after Zhou Wenju (active ca. 943–75), *Scholars of the Liuli Hall.* Detail. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 12 ⅜ x 49 ½ in. (34 × 15.7 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Gift of Sheila Riddell, in memory of Sir Percival David, 1977

Style and Art History

If the foregoing shows the rewards of a historical approach to *Riverbank*, the visual evidence of *Riverbank* offers an even greater contribution to our understanding of early Chinese art history. It is well known that figure painting as a genre peaked during the Tang dynasty, to be succeeded by the development of monumental landscape painting during the early Northern Song. *Riverbank* affords us a picture of the period between these two defining chapters of Chinese art history.

The late Tang and the short-lived Southern Tang of ninth- and tenth-century China are generally perceived as constituting a period of political and social turmoil, of moral decadence and artistic decline. In *Riverbank*, however, we see an unprecedented engagement with complex natural forms that was never again matched in later landscape painting. The faces of the mountains, gouged and hollowed out by natural forces, are conceived as wholes, divisible from within, constructed in a harmony of alternating yin and yang patterns of solid and void, convex and concave; boulders of different shapes and descriptions, all spectacular but never unnatural or contrived in appearance, seem to grow out of each other, giving form to streams and pools of gushing water. The development of naturalistic representation and spatial realism in *Riverbank* signals the beginning of a period that witnessed the most brilliant scientific and technological achievements in Chinese history.[54] Beginning in the late tenth century, the Neo-Confucian "investigation of things" stimulated the objective exploration of nature (even though the phrase does not imply a modern scientific method)[55] and spawned, in addition to monumental landscape painting, many new, realistic genres such as architectural and flower-and-bird paintings. By 1300, with the emergence of literati landscape painting in the early Yuan period, there was a shift toward calligraphic self-expression, and the objective representation of nature never returned as a dominant theme in Chinese painting.

In interpreting the visual evidence of a work of art, there can be no purely formal approach to style for we must deal with both the form and the expressive intent of the work. Although *Riverbank* inherits the compositional schemata, and therefore the visual structure, of a Tang landscape screen, as seen in the recently discovered tomb painting in Fuping County (fig. 9), its profound conception of the landscape as a diagram of cosmic "truth" has transformed the Tang composition into a new art form. Its patient engagement with a rich diversity of natural forms, painted with a sincerity and rigor unsurpassed even by Fan Kuan or Guo Xi, illuminates for us today the meaning and significance of the textual evidence of the early landscape treatises of Jing Hao and Guo Xi.

By contrast, Zhang Daqian, a popular artist of early-twentieth-century China, painted only what he knew best.[56] Like the renowned seventeenth-century painter Wang Hui (1632–1717) before him, Zhang, in

imitating an ancient style, would first master the brush idiom associated with the style and then animate it with his own bravura brushwork, turning it into a dramatic extravaganza.[57] If we compare his forgery of Juran's *Dense Forests and Layered Peaks* with *Riverbank*, for all Zhang's natural affinity for flamboyance and virtuoso brushwork, what he could not imitate was the ancient master's tireless and obsessive search for representational "truth."

1. For a sampling of the debate over the aims and methods of art history, see Henry Zerner, ed., "The Crisis in the Discipline," *Art Journal* 42, no. 4 (Winter 1982).

2. Svetlana Alpers, "Is Art History?" *Daedalus* 106, no. 3 (Summer 1977), pp. 1–13.

3. Ibid., p. 7.

4. Craig Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China* (London: Reaktion Books, Ltd., 1997), p. 9.

5. Craig Clunas, *Art in China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 10.

6. Max Loehr, "Some Fundamental Issues in the History of Chinese Painting," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 23, no. 2 (February 1964), pp. 185, 187. In conducting stylistic analysis, which is related to hermeneutic thinking, the critic is forever caught in a methodological circle of having to generalize about individual facts on the basis of a theory, which can be correctly formulated only by those who have fully grasped these facts. E.H. Gombrich has discussed the problem as follows: "The paradox of the historian's position seems to me precisely that the cherished particular can only be approached on a spiraling path through the labyrinth of general theories, and that these theories can only be mapped out by those who have reached the particular." See Gombrich, "Art and Scholarship," *College Art Journal* 1704 (Summer 1958), p. 34.

7. James Cahill, "Some Aspects of Tenth Century Painting as Seen in Three Recently-Published Works," in *Guoji Hanxue huiyi lunwenji* (Proceedings of the International Sinological Conference) (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan, 1981), figs. 1, 2, 15.

8. Ibid., pp. 4, 14.

9. Loehr, "Some Fundamental Issues," p. 191. Based on an analysis of the content, the "changing nature of the style" in history, Loehr proposed a periodization of Chinese painting history into three phases: (1) Ornamental art (Neolithic through Zhou), when style was "the formal substance"; (2) Representational art (Han through Southern Song), when style served as an instrument to recover or capture reality; and (3) Supra-representational art (Yuan to Qing), when the objective representation of Song was discarded for subjective expression (Yuan), when the style of the past began to function as subject matter (Ming and Qing). See Loehr, "Phases and Content in Chinese Painting," in *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Chinese Painting* (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1970), p. 286–97. In defining each phase as determined by its content, however, Loehr gave no historical stylistic description. Loehr's periodization thus dealt only with the changing content, and not with period styles, in Chinese painting.

10. James Cahill, "Authenticity Issues Re-emerge in Chinese Painting Studies," *Lotus Leaves* (San Francisco: Society for Asian Art) 1, no. 1 (Fall 1997), p. 5. I have dealt with Cahill's comment on *Riverbank*'s "spongy, ambiguous forms" in Maxwell K. Hearn and Wen C. Fong, *Along the Riverbank: Chinese Paintings from the C.C. Wang Family Collection* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999), p. 21.

11. Cahill, "Authenticity Issues Re-emerge," p. 5.

12. Martin J. Powers, "Unit Style and System: A Preliminary Exploration," *Integrated Studies of Chinese Archaeology and Historiography*, no. 4 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1997), pp. 751–52.

13. See Wu Hung, *The Wu Liang Shrine: The Ideology of Early Chinese Pictorial Art* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), pp. 50–56.

14. Ibid., pp. 51–52.

15. Wu Hung, *Monumentality in Early Chinese Art and Architecture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 265.

16. See Ludwig Bachhofer, *A Short History of Chinese Art* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1946). For Heinrich Wölfflin's "Grundbegriffe," see Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History*, trans. M.D. Hottinger (New York: Dover Publications, 1932).

17. See the review of Bachhofer's book by Benjamin Rowland, Jr., *The Art Bulletin* 24 (1949), pp. 139–41.

18. Gombrich, *The Sense of Order: A Study in the Psychology of Decorative Art* (London: Phaidon Press, Ltd., 1979), p. 210.

19. In my review of Cahill's book *The Compelling Image: Nature and Style in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Painting* (*The Art Bulletin* 68, no. 3 [September 1986], p. 508), I wrote: "Cahill's 'new modes of analysis' mask an unwillingness (or inability) to be specific about stylistic descriptions. He speaks of 'structures of meaning' and 'aesthetic structures,' but never attempts a rigorous analysis of the form relationships and visual structures (the way forms are *seen* and organized) in paintings that would lead to a better understanding of the successive changing visual structures in history."

20. Meyer Shapiro defines the description of a style in terms of "three aspects of [a work of] art: form elements or motifs, form relationships, and qualities (including an all-over quality which we may call the 'expression')." However, "form elements or motifs, although very striking and essential for the expression, are not sufficient for characterizing a style. The pointed arch is common to Gothic and Islamic architecture, and the round arch to Roman, Byzantine, Romanesque, and Renaissance buildings. In order to distinguish these styles, one must also look for features of another order and, above all, for different ways of combining the elements in search for a new effect or solution of a new problem." See Meyer Shapiro, *Theory and Philosophy of Art: Style, Artist, and Society* (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1994), pp. 54–55.

21. George Kubler, *The Shape of Time* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962).

22. Cahill "Authenticity Issues Reemerge," p. 5.

23. See Hearn and Fong, *Along the Riverbank*, p. 51.

24. For a description of Chinese architectural paintings, see Fu Xinian, "Zhongguo gudai de jianzhu hua" (On Architectural Paintings of Ancient China), *Wenwu*, no. 3 (1998), pp. 75–94.

25. See *Kaogu yu wenwu*, no. 4 (1997), with a color illustration of two panels of the screen. I am indebted to Mr. Liu Yunhui of the Shaanxi Cultural Relics Bureau, who made available to me a print of the photograph reproduced here.

26. Shen Gua's comments on Dong Yuan and Juran are translated in Oswald Sirén, *Chinese Painting: Leading Masters and Principles*, 7 vols. (New York: Ronald Press, 1956–58), vol. 1, p. 209; for the Chinese text, see Zhu Zhuyu, ed., *Tang Song huajia renming cidian* (Dictionary of Tang and Song Painters) (Shanghai: Xinhua Book Co., 1958), p. 289. The comment quoted here has often been cited as an early testament to Dong Yuan's treatment of atmospheric diminution and light as seen in two of the best-known attributions to Dong, *Wintry Groves and Layered Banks* and *The Xiao and Xiang Rivers*.

27. See Wen C. Fong, et al, *Images of the Mind: Selections from the Edward L. Elliott Family and John B. Elliott Collections of Chinese Calligraphy and Painting at The Art Museum, Princeton University* (Princeton: The Art Museum, Princeton University, 1983), pp. 20–22.

28. See Wen C. Fong, "Toward a Structural Analysis of Chinese Landscape Painting," *Art Journal* 28, no. 4 (Summer 1969), pp. 388–97; and Fong, "How to Understand Chinese Painting," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 115, no. 4 (August 1971), pp. 282–92.

29. See Joseph Needham, with Wang Ling, *Science and Civilization in China*, vol. 2, *History of Scientific Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), pp. 286–87.

30. See Fu Shen, *Challenging the Past: The Paintings of Chang Dai-chien*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1991), pp. 189–92; also Xu Bangda, "Connoisseurship in Chinese Painting and Calligraphy: Some Copies and For-

geries," *Orientations* 19, no. 3 (March 1988), p. 54–62, fig. 11. For the typical early-Qing dragon-vein composition, see Hearn and Fong, *Along the Riverbank*, pp. 43–46; n. 72.

31. See Hearn and Fong, *Along the Riverbank*, p. 52; the painting in the Saito Collection is reproduced in fig. 46.

32. See ibid., p. 51.

33. John A. Pope, "Sinology or Art History: Notes on Method in the Study of Chinese Art," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 10, no. 3/4 (December 1947), p. 417.

34. Ibid., pp. 388–89.

35. Wu Hung, *The Wu Liang Shrine*, p. 50.

36. Ibid., p. 51; and Wu Hung, *Monumentality*, p. 14.

37. See Robert Bagley's review of Wu Hung's *Monumentality* in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 58, no. 1 (June 1998), pp. 221–56, and Wu's unpublished but widely circulated response to Bagley's review.

38. See my attempt to place traditional Chinese antiquarian studies in the perspective of modern art history methods, in "The Study of Chinese Bronze Age Arts: Methods and Approaches," in Wen C. Fong, ed., *The Great Bronze Age of China* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1980), pp. 20–34.

39. Aldolf Michaelis, *A Century of Archaeological Discoveries*, trans. Bettina Kahnweiler (London: John Murray, 1908), p. 307.

40. Francis Haskell, *History and Its Images: Art and the Interpretation of the Past* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), pp. 217–35.

41. The Song emperor Taizu is said to have remarked about the recently captured former Southern Tang ruler: "What a wonderful Hanlin academician he would make!" See Ye Mengde, *Shilin yanyu* (Words from the Stone Forest), in *Siku quanshu*, 863: 572; quoted in Chen Baozhen, "Yishu diwang Li Houzhu" (The Artist-Emperor Li Houzhu), in *Meishushi yanjiu jikan* (Studies in Art History), no. 5 (Taiwan: National Taipei University, 1998), p. 61.

42. Beginning in 952, the Southern Tang state had graduated a total of ninety-three *jinshi*, or "presented scholars," thirty-eight of them received their degrees in early 975, just four months before the invasion of the kingdom by the Song army. See Chen Baozhen, "Yishu diwang Li Houzhu," p. 43.

43. See Kang-I Sung Chang, *The Evolution of Chinese Ts'u Poetry: From Late T'ang to Northern Sung* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 63–106.

44. Ibid., p. 85.

45. See Chen Baozhen, "Yishu diwang Li Houzhu," pp. 66–67.

46. For a general discussion of the subject, see Frederick W. Mote, "Confucian Eremitism in the Yuan Period," in Arthur F. Wright, ed., *The Confucian Persuasion* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960), pp. 260–61.

47. See Hearn and Fong, *Along the Riverbank*, pp. 12–19.

48. See Hayden White, *The Content of Form* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Paperbacks ed., 1990), p. ix.

49. Jing Hao, *Bifaji* (Notes on Brush Method), in Zhongguo hualun leibian, ed. Yu Jianhua, vol. 1 (Hong Kong, 1973), p. 605; see also Kiyohiko Munakata, *Ching Hao's "Pi-fa-chi": A Note on the Art of Brush* (Ascona, Switzerland: Artibus Asiae, 1974), p. 12.

50. Jing Hao, *Bifaji*, p. 607; see also Munakata, *Ching Hao's "Pi-fa-chi,"* p. 14.

51. Jing Hao, *Bifaji*, p. 607; see also Munakata, *Ching Hao's "Pi-fa-chi,"* p. 12.

52. Jing Hao, *Bifaji*, p. 607; see also Munakata, *Ching Hao's "Pi-fa-chi,"* p. 14.

53. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (Washington, D.C., and New York: Pantheon Books, 1960), pp. 320–21.

54. For an account of Chinese scientific achievements in the Song period, see Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954), vol. 1, pp. 134ff.

55. See Wen C. Fong, *Beyond Representation: Chinese Painting and Calligraphy 8th–14th Century* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992), p. 75.

56. See Wen C. Fong, "Remembering Chang Dai-chien," in *Proceedings of the International Conference on the Poetry, Calligraphy, and Painting of Chang Dai-chien and P'u Hsin-yu*, 1993 (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1994), pp. 17–43.

57. For Wang Hui's activities as a forger, see Wen C. Fong, et al, *Images of the Mind*, pp. 187–92.

Robert
E.
Harrist,
Jr.

Connoisseurship: Seeing and Believing

The papers collected in this volume have the distinction of being among the last words on the connoisseurship of Chinese painting to be published in the twentieth century. The debates they reflect might suggest that the field of Chinese painting studies is in alarming disarray. Is it still impossible for scholars to tell a tenth-century work from a modern forgery? Addressing this dilemma, Wen Fong points out that "because the history of Chinese painting is still a relatively young discipline, it is possible for different critics to arrive at contradictory assessments of the same work."[1] But wildly disparate opinions about the origins of works of art are common also in fields that are "older" than Chinese painting, such as Italian art. Witness, for example, the contentious debate over the attribution to Michelangelo of a statue long on view just down Fifth Avenue from The Metropolitan Museum of Art.[2] We need not apologize, therefore, for our difficulties in reaching agreement about the origins (or historical significance) of old paintings. Although few would deny that scholarship of the past fifty years has greatly clarified the history of Chinese painting and has settled many problems in the areas of connoisseurship and attribution, perhaps we should say of our field, as Clifford Geertz once said of the field of anthropology, "that progress is marked less by a perfection of consensus than by a refinement of debate. What gets better is the precision with which we vex each other."[3]

Robert E. Harrist, Jr. served as the discussant for the afternoon session of the symposium.

Opposite Du Jin (active ca. 1465–ca. 1509) *Enjoying Antiquities*, detail. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 73 ⅞ × 49 ⅝ in. (187 × 126.1 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

Connoisseurship and Its Discontents

Differences of connoisseurial opinion bring to mind a story recorded by E.H. Gombrich in *Art and Illusion*, his magisterial study of representation and the psychology of vision. In the early nineteenth century a group of young art students positioned themselves in front of the same view of Rome and pledged to draw as faithfully as possible exactly what they saw before them. At the end of the day, when the students compared the results of their collective exercise in recording visual reality, they were surprised by the great differences in their drawings.[4] The moral of Gombrich's story is not so much that different artists see differently, a phenomenon that would be extremely difficult to prove, but that they represent what they see in ways that reflect their individual artistic personalities and their training. Applied diachronically to the history of art, this same principle explains, in Gombrich's famous theory, how painters of different periods and places have employed historically and culturally determined schemata in order to render images of the three-dimensional world on a two-dimensional surface.

Connoisseurs seem to work with schemata of their own. Like artists trying to depict the same view, connoisseurs standing in front of the same painting frequently describe very different perceptions, which are shaped by their own training and experience and, more elusively, by their temperament. Thus, after careful study, Sherman Lee concludes that *Riverbank* (Fong, fig. 1), attributed to Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s), is "a modern pastiche all too familiar to many of us and unworthy of serious consideration by our serious colleagues."[5] James Cahill is convinced the painting is a forgery by the twentieth-century painter Zhang Daqian (1899–1983). Hironobu Kohara also argues that the painting and a letter ostensibly by the modern painter Xu Beihong (1895–1953) that would support its authenticity are clever deceptions by that same master forger.[6] Qi Gong states that "the idea that *Riverbank* is a forgery made by Zhang Daqian is, of course, ludicrous, and not worthy of further discussion."[7] Wen Fong and Shih Shou-chien accept the painting as an authentic work of the tenth century, and Maxwell Hearn offers a carefully argued technical report to support an early date for the painting.[8] Adequate explanation of the differences in these scholars' interpretation of the same painting would require extensive intellectual or psychological biographies of each, containing revelations that perhaps we can look forward to when they write their memoirs. For now, we cannot say why they see as they do; we can only try to make sure we understand what they are telling us. Obviously, not all of them are right, for unlike the different pictures of the same view of Rome described by Gombrich, none of which could really be considered wrong, conclusions about the attribution and dating of paintings must be either correct or incorrect, close or way off. Yet, barring the announcement of some sensational new archaeological discovery—let us say, a tenth-century tomb containing a close copy of

Riverbank that also bore an inscription stating that it was based on a painting by Dong Yuan—or the deployment of some new technology establishing irrefutably the painting's date, the only information we have for settling the question of when *Riverbank* was made comes from what our eyes tell us and from what connoisseurs help us to see by translating their perceptions into words.

Problems of Knowledge, Language, and Representation

The notion that there is no such thing as an innocent eye is a commonplace of art-historical discourse; but this loss of innocence results not only from what we have seen but also from what we have heard and read—what Stephen Little calls the "catechism" produced by the mechanisms of academe, the museum, and the art market.[9] Like a change in the lighting of a gallery, or a shift of vantage point produced as a spectator moves, the words of one viewer can change radically what another viewer perceives. Any who doubt the power of a master rhetorician to alter, at least temporarily, how one sees a familiar work of art should sample the confoundingly brilliant essay by Gombrich "proving," nonsensically, that one of the prophets on the Sistine Chapel ceiling was painted by Raphael rather than by Michelangelo.[10] Just as a descriptive title or label shapes the way a viewer responds to a painting, statements by authorities as eminent and as eloquent as Sherman Lee or James Cahill or Wen Fong become part of the experience of seeing a painting. A viewer who believes himself independent in his judgments naturally resolves to "make up his own mind," testing the statements made by others against the evidence of his own eyes. But even for an assertive viewer trained to look critically at works of art, or at any other visual phenomena, sorting out what one actually sees from what one has been prompted to believe is an extraordinarily difficult mental feat. This is why Rudolf Arnheim has argued that "once a work is suspected of being a fake, it becomes a different perceptual object." Equally important, and sobering, is Arnheim's reminder that "[u]nder such conditions, even a bona fide original may exhibit suspicious features."[11]

The task of the connoisseur is made more difficult by the notorious instability of the language in which works of art are discussed. As Michael Baxandall has pointed out, we do not see linearly, and "the linear form of our discourse is curiously at odds with the form of its object, whether this is considered to be the work of art itself or our experience of it."[12] A cluster of especially slippery terms recurring in many contexts in this collection of papers refers to the representational goals of Chinese painters. The authors write of images that look "natural," "unnatural," or "naturalistic"; they discuss "representational flaws," "accuracy," and "verisimilitude." As familiar as these terms may seem, their value depends entirely on the precision with which they are used. Fong zeroes in on this problem, stating that "mimetic representation of nature, or

naturalism, is of itself ahistorical. Because the rendering of nature changes in the course of history and in different cultures, the way a critic sees it today may not be the way the painter saw it. Therefore, our task is to place what we see in a historical context."[13] As an addendum to this statement, one might point out that not only is it our job to place what we see in a historical context, but it is also our inescapable fate to do so: inevitably, and usually without our awareness that it is happening, our perceptions of works or art, and of everything else, always take place within a historical context determined by the vicissitudes of our lives, education, and experience of the world. In theory, what separates the connoisseur or art historian from others without training in the history of styles is the ability to see historically, to locate and to explain as precisely as possible the place of works of art within the context of the past.

Ears, Natural and Unnatural

Fundamental questions concerning the history of representation arise in Wan-go Weng's paper on Chen Hongshou (1599–1652), which focuses on two paintings, one, *A Tall Pine and Daoist Immortal* in the National Palace Museum, Taipei (Weng, fig. 2), which Weng rejects as an autographic work by this artist, and another, entitled *Landscape*, in the Metropolitan Museum (Weng, fig. 6), which he accepts. Weng uses evidence from the calligraphy and content of inscriptions, which I will not address here, to impeach the authenticity of the painting in Taipei. He also cites flaws such as the drawing of the ear on the larger figure, which he judges to be "unnatural," taking as a standard for Chen's approach to rendering this motif the ear of a figure in a wood-block illustration. Weng also contrasts the three-dimensional tree trunks and "naturalistic" foliage in the Metropolitan painting with what he characterizes as the "cardboard-like tree trunks and rubber-stamped bark and foliage" in the Taipei painting. The term "natural" turns up in his analysis of the brushwork in the Metropolitan painting which, he writes, is executed with "variety, vitality, and natural rhythmic flow."[14]

What do these uses of the term "unnatural," "natural," or "naturalistic" signify? The ear of the Taipei figure (Weng, fig. 10) could be judged unnatural, perhaps, if it is compared with ears on real human heads. As a feat of representation, it is unnatural if judged according to the expectations we bring to a drawing by Leonardo. But within the context of Chen Hongshou's artistic practice, is the offending Taipei ear any more an anatomical oddity than the ear on the figure in the Metropolitan painting (Weng, fig. 7), which looks as much like a oddly shaped rubber flap as it does a part of a human head? Similar questions can be raised about the perceived "naturalism" of the foliage in the Metropolitan painting. While the rendering of

the leaves in this work is less insistently patterned than in the Taipei painting, the foliage in both works might reasonably be judged highly unnatural in comparison with paintings by Southern Song court artists or by Ming painters such as Zhou Chen (died ca. 1536) or Qiu Ying (ca. 1495–1552).

Concerning "natural" brushwork, a rigorous critic voicing post-structuralist views would argue that there is no such thing: the use of a brush to draw forms in a painting is not natural but instead is governed by historically contingent artistic and cultural norms. If natural brushwork is understood to refer to the representational function of brush-drawn lines, then the Metropolitan painting might be considered quite odd. For instance, strokes beginning with "nail-head" shapes descend from the figure's left shoulder in strongly two-dimensional patterns: rather than suggesting the fall of drapery, they remain independent, abstract lines. Similar strokes begin at the figure's waist and meander downward in jagged rivulets of ink. The approach to drawing fabric in this painting differs greatly from that seen in other works by Chen Hongshou, such as a self-portrait (fig. 1), also in the Metropolitan's collection. In that painting, the artist translates cloth into a schematized language of rounded, fluid brush strokes, governed by laws of art rather

Figure 1 Chen Hongshou (1599–1652), *Self-Portrait*, ca. 1627. One leaf from *Figures, Flowers, and Landscapes*, a joint album by Chen Hongshou and Chen Zi (1634–1711), ink and color on silk, 10 ¾ × 13 ¼ in. (27.3 × 33.7 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Promised Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Wan-go H.C. Weng

than of gravity, yet the lines still refer, however indirectly, to the forms of real fabric, rising and falling in irregular creases and folds. Does the difference between these two examples of Chen's brushwork arise from the different scale of the two paintings—*Landscape* is 235.6 centimeters in height, *Self-Portrait* only 27.3 centimeters? If, as seems likely, the larger painting is a workshop production supervised by Chen while the self-portrait is from his hand alone, should they be judged by different standards of naturalism?

Rhetorically, Weng's paper is a rebuttal of an interpretation of Chen Hongshou offered by James Cahill, who has argued that Chen intentionally distorted representational conventions to produce images that metaphorically expressed his own personal unhappiness and discontent. Even if one disagrees with Cahill's interpretation, it has the virtue of attempting to account for what most viewers see as the startling originality of Chen Hongshou. His style has been characterized as strange, ironic, and bizarre, responses evoked by visual effects in Chen's painting that the concept of naturalism does not and cannot explain.

Figure 2 "Lady and a Table," 924. Wall painting from the tomb of Wang Chuzhi, Quyang, Hebei Province

Originals, Copies, and Mistakes

In his paper on Du Jin (active ca. 1465–ca. 1509), Stephen Little challenges James Cahill's statements about the relationship of three versions of the same composition, *Enjoying Antiquities*, preserved in its most complete state in a painting in the National Palace Museum, Taipei (Little, fig. 1). The fundamental problem in this case is a familiar one in the connoisseurship of Chinese painting: sorting out originals from copies. Owing to the appearance in the Taipei painting of passages he considers representationally unconvincing, such as an illogically drawn balustrade and a tripod depicted with only two legs, Cahill judges the painting to be a copy and attributes these lapses to the copyist's lack of interest in rendering three-dimensional objects. Little counters by pointing out similar passages in other paintings by Du Jin and argues that the Taipei painting is a genuine work by this artist. The other versions of *Enjoying Antiquities*, Little believes,

Figure 3 "Painted Screen," 924. Wall painting from the tomb of Wang Chuzhi, Quyang, Hebei Province

may also be by Du Jin, completed, as the Taipei painting itself may have been, with the help of assistants. Little's methodological disagreement with Cahill hinges on a conviction "that verisimilitude ... is not a useful criterion in judging the authenticity of any of Du Jin's academic-style paintings." Du Jin was not, he continues, "preoccupied with a high degree of representational accuracy in his paintings."[15] In passing, I might note that judging representational accuracy proves to be a useful criterion in Little's discussion of two nearly identical fan paintings attributed to Qiu Ying (Little, figs. 29, 30). Concerning these works, Little argues convincingly that the painting in which the tree trunks "better convey the illusion of three-dimensionality" is more likely from Qiu's own hand.[16] In spite of their different conclusions about the different versions of *Enjoying Antiquities*, Cahill and Little share the view that such oddities as the two-legged tripod constitute pictorial flaws. Citing Richard Barnhart, Little also suggests that these passages might be the work of "a less accomplished assistant" more prone, he implies, to committing such errors.[17]

Such inconsistent approaches to the rendering of forms can no doubt help us to sort out the hands of different artists. But just as Wan-go Weng's use of the term "natural" seemed to call for further discussion, the concept of representational mistakes raises a host of intriguing questions. To determine that a painted image is right or wrong would seem to require that we establish at the outset what counted as representational accuracy within any given period or artistic context. Yet within a single period, even within a single work of art, we sometimes find conflicting evidence for how painters grappled with the task of representing three-dimensional forms. In a wall painting from the recently discovered and richly painted tomb of Wang Chuzhi, dated 924, the edge of a table seems to begin as a three-dimensional shape but terminates as a flat surface (fig. 2)—a monstrosity if judged by the rules of perspective observed in fifteenth-century Italian painting. But in another mural from the same tomb (fig. 3), a four-legged stand on a square base is represented through techniques of foreshortening that are much closer to those used by Renaissance painters in Europe. Which image is more correct in the context of tenth-century Chinese painting? Which should guide our assessment of other paintings attributed to that period? Chinese painters did make mistakes, but the criteria for spotting them may have been very different from our own. For example, in the early twelfth century, the Song emperor Huizong (r. 1101–25) pronounced a painting of a peacock unsatisfactory simply because it depicted the bird raising the wrong leg as it prepared to step up on a cane stool.

In order to frame this issue in a historical context relevant to the debates of Stephen Little and James Cahill, it would be helpful to know what a Ming-dynasty viewer would have considered a mistake. Once we are alerted to passages such as the oddly drawn balustrade in *Enjoying Antiquities*, similar "mistakes" begin to turn up in works by even the most brilliant Ming artists. To cite examples from just one famous

painting, Tang Yin's (1470–1523) *Tao Gu Presents a Poem* (fig. 4): could a spouted wine pot in Suzhou during the Ming dynasty really have been as lopsided as the one heated by the young servant in the lower left? Could an elaborate stand holding a candle really have had near its base a weirdly asymmetrical bulge? Could a post in a garden railing really have looked so much like the work of a drunken carpenter? And, most alarmingly, could the left thumb and little finger of a courtesan, wrapped around the neck of a *pipa*, really have resembled the elongated and boneless appendages Tang Yin painted? Mistakes, perhaps, judged

Figure 4 Tang Yin (1470–1523), *Tao Gu Presents a Poem*, ca. 1515. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 66 ½ × 40 ¼ in. (168.8 × 102.1 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

by the representational norms seen in drawings by his great contemporary Raphael, but not, it seems, by the standards according to which his contemporaries judged Tang Yin, regarded as one of the most illustrious artists of his time.

Confronted with this scholarly debate over which among multiple versions of a painting is the original and which are copies, an observer might well ask: what's the point? If the differences among the paintings lie only in such things as the edges of banana leaves or the representation of the leg of a tripod, how urgently do we need to know which is from Du Jin's hand and which might be the work of a copyist? Little interprets the Taipei painting of men examining antiques as an expression of Du Jin's commitment to Confucian values embodied in the study of the past, and notes, surely correctly, the immense art-historical and cultural significance of the painting. Would any of these statements cease to be valid if it were somehow established that the painting, as Cahill once suggested, is a copy by Qiu Ying? And since, in traditional hierarchies of Ming artists, Qiu Ying is a more illustrious master than Du Jin, might not the value of the painting actually be increased? Although the slightest perceptible variation between an original and a copy may, as Nelson Goodman has argued,[18] result in aesthetic differences between the two, within what range of visual variation do historically significant differences emerge? How dissimilar from an original can another work be and still be considered a copy of it? These questions, like so many raised by the connoisseurship and attribution of paintings, swiftly carry us beyond the competence of the art historian and into the domain of the philosopher.

Two Views of the Apricot Garden

The concepts of original and copy have little relevance to the paintings studied by Maxwell Hearn in his paper on *Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden* (Hearn, "An Early Ming Example of Multiples," figs. 1, 2). The version of this painting in the Zhenjiang Municipal Museum, which Hearn attributes to Xie Huan (ca. 1370–ca. 1450), appears to have been painted first. The Metropolitan version came later, though probably not long after the event it depicts, a gathering hosted by Yang Rong (1371–1440) that took place in Beijing in spring 1437. Since multiple versions of paintings depicting literati gatherings of this kind were common, others who attended that party may have commissioned their own versions as a record of the event—all depicting the same people and the same site, and all completely authentic works of fifteenth-century painting. Although related to it visually in many ways, the Metropolitan painting is in no sense a replica or reproduction of the Zhenjiang scroll. While the placement of the principal figures and some of their poses are similar, the artist, as Hearn suggests, seems to have been "charged with making his own

interpretation of the event."[19] And even though the Metropolitan artist may have seen the Zhenjiang scroll, or perhaps another version of it, he freely introduced pictorial inventions of his own that in no way lessened the value of the painting as a souvenir of the gathering.

From the point of view of the patron(s) and original viewers of the Metropolitan painting, the question of how the Metropolitan artist would have known the Zhenjiang version would have been relatively unimportant. It is possible that the artist studied the painting carefully, but the Zhenjiang version was not treated as an authoritative model; the visual information it preserved, like Yang Rong's description of the event and Xie Huan's painting of it, served only as a general guide in depicting the assembled guests in the Apricot Garden.

Hearn is probably correct in judging the Metropolitan scroll to be the weaker of the two paintings. In some ways, however, it is more visually sumptuous than the version in Zhenjiang. Furniture, vases, planters, and scholar's knickknacks are more varied and elaborately patterned; the surfaces of garden rocks are more pitted and irregular. Some of the most conspicuous differences between the two versions appear in the men's costumes. In the Zhenjiang version Wang Zhi, seated next to Yang Shiqi, and Qian Xili, seated at the far left, wear robes with rank insignias that are omitted in the Metropolitan painting. Wang Ying, dressed in light blue in Zhenjiang, wears pale green in New York. These sartorial variations recall the old Chinese philosophical and linguistic conundrum: is a white horse a horse? Is Wang Ying in blue the same as Wang Ying in green? Was the significance of the differences in costume detectable by a fifteenth-century viewer? Further research on well-documented Ming dress regulations likely will shed light on this issue.

In spite of the remoteness from the mundane world that the idyllic garden setting set implies, the significance of the gathering and pictorial records of it were highly political. In his postface, Yang Rong explains that the pleasure enjoyed by his guests was a gift bestowed by the emperor, who had recently instituted a policy of giving officials a holiday on the first and fifteenth of each month. "Even though [this gathering and painting were done] as a token of gratitude for imperial favors that we hope to repay by praising this time of reposeful happiness," Yang Rong writes, "we must still remain on guard against idle excesses."[20] The emperor Yingzong was, in fact, only ten years old. It was the Three Yangs—Yang Shiqi (1365–1444), Yang Pu (1372–1446), and Yang Rong—all present in the garden, who guided the administration of the empire; they, not the boy ruler, were responsible for the peace and good government that made possible their day of leisure.

One aspect of Hearn's research on the colophons attached to the two scrolls might yield new insights into the task of evaluating the authenticity of seals. Although the colophons appended to the Metropoli-

tan scroll are not exact replicas of the originals — the spacing of the characters, for example, is different in all but Wang Zhi's colophon — the copyist took care to produce a reasonable approximation of the calligraphic styles of the various writers. The process of replicating the colophons also involved producing facsimiles of seals of the writers, which differ, in most cases, only slightly from the originals. Passing into the hands of later forgers, the facsimiles no doubt became valuable tools for lending authority to invented colophons and inscriptions, and for confounding connoisseurs.

Reading *Riverbank*

The enterprise of sorting out originals from copies addressed by Stephen Little and Maxwell Hearn is a matter of precise fine tuning in comparison with the problem of dating *Riverbank*. Simply put, Fong, Shih, and Hearn all compare *Riverbank* with works of the tenth century to argue that it dates from that period; Cahill uses some of the same comparisons to argue that it does not, while Lee and Kohara echo his conclusions. Do these radically different opinions about *Riverbank* arise solely from the idiosyncrasies of these connoisseurs, or is there something about the painting itself that breeds confusion? Does the real mystery of *Riverbank* derive not from its suspect provenance but from the approach to representation displayed in the painting?

Although Fong and Shih argue that the brushwork and modeling of forms are consistent with works from the tenth century, most attempts to date *Riverbank* have focused on motifs in the painting and on its compositional structure. Thatched buildings overlooking the rippled surface of a river or lake, foreground trees drawn with sharp contrasts of light and dark, misty views of distant scenery, and lively narrative detail in *Riverbank* do evoke memories of various paintings believed to date from the tenth century, including Zhao Gan's (active ca. 960–75) *First Snow along the River* (Shih, fig. 8), widely accepted as an authentic work from around 960–70, and *Wintry Groves and Layered Banks* (Shih, fig. 7), long believed to be a good example of Dong Yuan's style, though possibly a copy made after his lifetime. Beyond these easily spotted — and easily replicated — motifs, the pictorial structure and representation of landscape forms in *Riverbank* are far more difficult to place in the history of Chinese painting. Recognized works of tenth-century landscape vary so greatly that a skillful art historian could use them to argue for many different and conflicting visions of what painting in this period was really like, but one trait that artists of tenth-century paintings seemed to share was that of composing landscapes in ways that would guide the viewer's eye through pictorial space. This intention is apparent in *A Chess Party in the Mountains* (Fong, fig. 2), a hanging scroll discovered in a

tenth-century tomb in Liaoning Province. The ground plane at the bottom of the painting, framed by tree-clad embankments, is clearly defined by the placement of pine trees and three walking figures. The figures approach a passageway behind a middle-ground bluff that will lead them up to a pavilion framed by the central peak and by another mountain on the left. The spires of remote mountains loom in the distance.

Although the two paintings have otherwise little in common, *Wintry Groves and Layered Banks*, like *A Chess Party in the Mountains*, displays a highly legible landscape composition. In this large hanging scroll, the eye moves easily from the foreground sandbar, to the earthen embankment and bamboo-sheltered house in the middle ground, then across the water to the hills and marshland above. Paths, bridges, buildings, and trees function not only as parts of the scenery but also as pictorial markers strategically placed by the artist to indicate the relative positions of landscape forms. The result is a fictive space governed by a carefully controlled structural logic.

In *Riverbank*, as in other tenth-century landscape compositions, the artist arranges in an orderly sequence the foreground embankment, diagonally thrusting rocks on the other side of the river, and the buildings beyond. But the landscape itself erupts into a roiling field of visual ambiguities. Some of these pictorial effects are addressed by Sherman Lee and by James Cahill in several counts of his "indictment." Consider in particular the area on the left of the composition around the small waterfall cascading into a sequence of ponds. The U-shaped rims of the ponds rise on the right to join an eroded bluff. The connection between these formations, as well as that between the fissures of the lower part of the bluff and the light-toned land on top of the bluff, challenges the viewer's eye. Are the lighter vertical passages to be read as receding, foreshortened shapes or as jagged contours parallel to the picture plane? Another strikingly ambiguous passage occurs in the upper right of the painting: is the towering peak a continuation of the landform below, bordered by the diagonal line of the road, or is it part of another formation rising from the point where the road meets the zigzagging river? One of the most confusing passages appears in the middle ground. The large rock rising upward diagonally toward the right, which partially blocks the view of the hermit's retreat, dissolves into a passage of pale ink in which the rock and the architecture seem to coexist in the same indeterminate space. Just to the left, setting off the lighter tone of a tree trunk, is a large area of dark ink: is this amorphous shape a rock, a dark cloud, or something else?

Representational ambiguities certainly appear in tenth-century landscape paintings. A geographer or mapmaker attempting to diagram the topography depicted in the Liaoning hanging scroll would find this an impossibly frustrating task: like an architectural drawing that does not "square up," the placement of the landscape forms does not accord with the principles of geology. It is impossible, for example, to say exactly

where the base of the central peak is located in relation to the middle-ground bluff or whether the small, flat-topped boulder in the lower right is parallel to the picture plane or tilted at an angle. But these ambiguities are counteracted by the overall structure of the painting, which is anchored visually by large, legible divisions of the landscape. Similar effects appear in the great monuments of Song landscape painting, such as Guo Xi's (ca. 1000–ca. 1090) *Early Spring* (Fong, fig. 14). The frequently noted disjunctions between areas of landscape in this work reveal the artist following his own advice (recorded in the *Linquan gaozhi* [*Lofty Ambitions among Groves and Streams*]),[21] namely, masking the geological continuities between forms in order to increase the visual effects of spaciousness and height; but these ambiguities are framed and held in check by the bold silhouettes of the larger configurations of the landscape. It is the absence of unifying compositional devices in *Riverbank* that make the painting so different from works dated securely to the tenth and eleventh centuries. Passages that might have helped to structure the landscape, such as the paths in the upper right, actually increase its instability. In addition to the much discussed "road that turns into a river," the central section of the path on which a figure in a straw raincoat walks is sealed by rock formations painted in such a way that it is impossible to tell which form overlaps which.[22]

Riverbank differs from the various tenth-century works with which it has been compared in that visual ambiguity seems to be a fundamental pictorial principle rather than an incidental element in the painting. Many of these effects are produced by the artist's use of light and dark in ways that obscure rather than clarify the shapes of landscape formations. In the faceted cliffs rising upward diagonally in the center of the painting, just above the hermit's retreat, patterns of light and dark cause the forms of the landscape to jump back and forth in space. Even more perplexing is the artist's handling of the relationship between the peak on the right and the mountains in the far distance. Because the tonalities of ink used for the distant mountain and foliage are exactly the same as those used for the peak, which should lie somewhere in the middle distance, the two planes seem to merge, collapsing pictorial space in this passage in a manner more typical of Ming than of Song painting. Contrast this passage in *Riverbank* with the painting of peaks in the upper left of Wei Xian's (active ca. 960–75) *The Lofty Scholar Liang Boluan* (Fong, fig. 3), dated to the tenth century, in which different tonalities of ink indicate the relative positions of the mountains. Even in a work from two centuries earlier, a painting on a lute plectrum guard in the Shōsō-in (Shih, fig. 12), the pictorial challenge of distinguishing near, middle, and far distance is addressed with greater clarity.

This reading of the representation of landscape in *Riverbank* leads to several possible conclusions: I am misinterpreting what I see and the painting fits in the context of tenth-century landscape; I am correctly interpreting what I see and our understanding of tenth-century painting must be amended to incorporate

the representational practices found in *Riverbank*; I am correctly interpreting what I see and *Riverbank* is not a tenth-century painting. The third conclusion, which I am inclined to accept, obviously raises a host of new questions. If not tenth century, when? If not Dong Yuan, who? While the debate framed by these symposium papers would seem to force upon us a choice between dating the painting to the tenth century or the twentieth century, between judging it an early masterpiece or a modern forgery, future studies will surely explore the very great likelihood that the real origins of the painting lie somewhere else within the spacious continuum of one thousand years that separates the lifetime of Dong Yuan from that of Zhang Daqian. Awaiting such research, which could have enriched the symposium discussion, I believe that respectful agnosticism, more easily tolerated by the academic art historian than by the collector or curator, may be the most appropriate response to the mystery of *Riverbank*.

If proof of the authenticity of *Riverbank* should come to light, how would this revelation change our understanding of the history of Chinese painting? As Shih Shou-chien notes, when compared with paintings that have been attributed to Dong Yuan for many centuries, *Riverbank* "stands virtually alone."[23] Admitting the painting to the canon of tenth-century painting would require that we find some way to come to terms with the style of this new, anomalous work.

But once that was settled, once the painting was assimilated into a new history of pictorial styles, what should we do next? After the authenticity of the painting had been proved, there would remain wide-open debate about its significance in the original cultural and art-historical context in which it was produced. This conclusion is apparent from a close reading of the papers by Fong and Shih, who accept the tenth-century date. Both scholars address the meaning of the painting, and both associate the image of the man sitting in the pavilion with the theme of reclusion. Fong detects in *Riverbank* "a deep, melancholic longing for the past" and interprets the waterside retreat as a safe haven in a threatening world, signified by a "gathering storm gusting across the landscape with violently stretched trees and turbulent waves."[24] Shih's reading of the painting stresses its cozy domesticity and defines its thematic focus as the "family life of a recluse."[25] The fantastic imagery of the landscape symbolizes, in Shih's view, not a melancholy or threatening domain but "an idealized world within the hermit's mind."[26]

Not only do their readings of the landscape differ in subtle but significant ways, but Fong and Shih also approach the issue of artistic creativity from different perspectives. Ultimately, in Fong's view, the painting, though produced for the Southern Tang court, is an "embodied image of the artist's self." Shih says nothing about the status of *Riverbank* as a work of artistic self-expression; he links the significance of *Riverbank* not to the artist's self but to the tastes of its patrons, Southern Tang rulers who were attracted to the idea

of living as hermits.[27] These different readings of *Riverbank* offered by Fong and Shih may not be as hard to reconcile as the assessments of the work's origins voiced by Fong and Cahill, but they do illustrate that even if the question of authenticity could be resolved, interpretations of the painting would remain in flux.

* * *

The historian Carlo Ginzburg discerns in the methodology of the connoisseur the same principles that underlie the work of the hunter, the detective, the medical diagnostician, and the psychoanalyst.[28] All depend on skill in reading clues, tracks, and traces; they rely on the ability to discern in the configuration of the visible and known phenomena that are unseen and hidden: the identity of a thief, the etiology of a disease, or the hand of an artist. These quests for hidden knowledge of various kinds, including our attempts to establish the origins of disputed early paintings, strangely parallel age-old attempts to find an answer to the question discussed by several old gentlemen in a story by the great *New Yorker* writer Joseph Mitchell. Although the following passage concerns mysteries far deeper than those posed by *Riverbank*, the wisdom it voices might be of value to all of us who practice connoisseurship and attribution. When asked if he believes in a reward beyond the grave, in other words, heaven or hell, one man, Bethea, replies:

> "No, sir ... I can't say that I do."
>
> "Well then," [said his friend Hugh], "what makes you go to church so steady? You're there every Sunday in the year, Sunday school *and* sermon."
>
> "Hugh," said Bethea, "it don't pay to be too cock-sure."[29]

The papers in this volume have advanced the study of Chinese painting by examining a host of intriguing issues, but we are many Sundays away from resolving all the problems of connoisseurship that still confront us. In the face of these challenges, it is important to keep in mind that, although it would not make a banner headline or a juicy "Talk of the Town" item, the real news in our notoriously difficult field may be that through the labors of countless scholars a consensus of opinion does exist concerning the attribution and dating of a huge corpus of paintings. It is the contested works that keep the field vital by forcing us all — believers, doubters, and agnostics — to look and argue more carefully and to ponder with fruitful self-reflection the foundations of the discipline to which we have devoted our lives.

1. Wen C. Fong, "*Riverbank:* From Connoisseurship to Art History," in the present volume, p. 260.

2. For conflicting views of this attribution, see K. Weil-Garris Brandt, "A Marble in Manhattan: The Case of Michelangelo," *Burlington Magazine* 138 (1996), pp. 644–59, and James Beck, "Connoisseurship: A Lost or a Found Art? The Example of a Michelangelo Attribution: 'The Fifth Avenue Cupid,'" *Artibus et Historiae* 37 (1998), pp. 9–38.

3. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 29.

4. E.H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*. The A.W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts, 1956. 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 63.

5. Sherman Lee, "*Riverbank:* A Recent Effort in a Long Tradition," in the present volume, p. 82.

6. Hironobu Kohara, "Notes on the Recent History of *Riverbank*," in the present volume, pp. 69–72.

7. Qi Gong, "On Paintings Attributed to Dong Yuan," in the present volume, p. 90.

8. See, in the present volume, Fong, "*Riverbank:* From Connoisseurship to Art History"; Shih Shou-chien, "Positioning *Riverbank*"; and Maxwell K. Hearn, "A Comparative Physical Analysis of *Riverbank* and Two Zhang Daqian Forgeries."

9. Stephen Little, "Du Jin's *Enjoying Antiquities:* A Problem in Connoisseurship," in the present volume, p. 216.

10. E.H. Gombrich, "The Rhetoric of Attribution—A Cautionary Tale," in Richard Woodward, ed., *Reflections on the History of Art* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1987), pp. 91–96.

11. Rudolf Arnheim, "On Duplication," in Denis Dutton, ed., *The Forger's Art: Forgery and the Philosophy of Art* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1983), p. 244.

12. Michael Baxandall, "The Language of Art Criticism," in Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell, eds., *The Language of Art History, Cambridge Studies in Philosophy and the Arts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 72–73.

13. Fong, "*Riverbank:* From Connoisseurship to Art History," p. 263.

14. Wan-go Weng, "*A Tall Pine and Daoist Immortal:* An Examination of a Painting Attributed to Chen Hongshou," in the present volume, p. 177.

15. Little, "Du Jin's *Enjoying Antiquities:* A Problem in Connoisseurship," pp. 201–202.

16. Ibid., p. 212–213.

17. Ibid., p. 203.

18. Nelson Goodman, "Art and Authenticity," in Dutton, ed., *The Forger's Art*, p. 100.

19. Maxwell K. Hearn, "An Early Ming Example of Multiples: Two Versions of *Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden*," in the present volume, p. 250.

20. Ibid., p. 223.

21. Translated in Susan Bush and Hsio-yen Shih, *Early Chinese Texts on Paintings* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 169.

22. This passage was pointed out by Maxwell K. Hearn in a lecture at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, October 3, 1999. His interpretation of the significance of this passage differs from my own.

23. Shih, "Positioning *Riverbank*," p. 133.

24. Fong, "*Riverbank:* From Connoisseurship to Art History," pp. 286, 287.

25. Shih, "Positioning *Riverbank*," p. 134.

26. Ibid., p. 138.

27. For an excellent discussion of the possible relationship between *Riverbank* and a representation of an imperial hermitage on Mt. Lu, see Howard Rogers, "Tung Yuan Chronicle," *Kaikodo Journal* 12 (Autumn 1999), pp. 83–86.

28. Carlo Ginzburg, "Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm," in *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), pp. 96–125.

29. Joseph Mitchell, "Mr. Flood's Party," in *Up in the Old Hotel* (New York: Vantage Books, 1993), p. 432.

Glossary

Bai Juyi (772–846) 白居易
baimiao 白描
Banji tuanshan tu (*Lady Ban Holding a Fan*) 班姬團扇圖
Baoluntang ji 寶綸堂集
Bashiqi shenxian tu (*Eight-seven Immortals*) 八十七神仙圖
Beiming tu (*North Sea*) 北溟圖
Beiyuan 北苑
Beiyuan shansi fuyun tu (Mountain Temple and Drifting Clouds in the Manner of Dong Yuan) 北苑山寺浮雲圖
bifa 筆法
Bifaji 筆法記
Binghu qiuse tu (*Two Vases with Chrysanthemums*) 冰壺秋色圖

Caotang tu (*Ten Scenes of a Thatched Hut*) 草堂圖
Cengyan congshu tu (*Dense Forests and Layered Peaks*) 層巖叢樹圖
chen 臣
Chen Hongshou (1599–1652) 陳洪綬
Chen Hongxu 陳洪緒
Chen Qiong (1440–1506) 陳瓊
Chen Rentao (J.D. Chen) 陳仁濤
Chen Xun (1385–1462) 陳循
Chen Zhanghou gong xiang (*Portrait of Chen Hongshou*) 陳章侯公像
Cheng Minzheng (1445–1499) 程敏政
Chenghua (Ming emperor, r. 1465–87) 成化
chou 丑
Chujiang tu (*A River in Chu*) 楚江圖
cunfa 皴法

Dafengtang mingji 大風堂名跡
Dafengtang yizeng mingji tezhan tulu 大風堂遺贈名跡特展圖錄
Dai Jin (1388–1462) 戴進
daibi 代筆
Damo liudai zushi tu (*Six Patriarchs of Chan*) 達摩六代祖師圖
Danqiu Ke Jiusi zhang 丹丘柯九思章
Daoguang (Qing emperor, r. 1821–50) 道光
dazhe 大者
dazongbo 大宗伯
Dong Qichang (1555–1636) 董其昌
Dong Yuan (active 930s–60s) 董元(源)
Dongtian shantang tu (Pavilions on the Mountain of the Immortals) 洞天山堂圖
Du Jin (active ca. 1465–ca. 1509) 杜堇
duanjuan 短卷
Dunhuang 敦煌
Eryuan pipa tu (*Two Gibbons in a Loquat Tree*) 二猿枇杷圖

Fan Kuan (active ca. 990–1030) 范寬
Fang Dong Yuan Huayang xianguan tu (*Immortals' Dwellings at Huayang*) 倣董源華陽仙館圖
fantou 礬頭
Fengyu guizhou tu (*Returning by Boat in a Rainstorm*) 風雨歸舟圖
Fu Bi (1006–1087) 富弼
Fu Sheng shoujing tu (*Fu Sheng Transmitting the "Shujing"*) 伏生授經圖
Fuping xian 富平縣
fushi 副使
Fuyu shanju tu (*Dwelling in the Floating Jade Mountains*) 浮玉山居圖

Gaoshi tu (*The Lofty Scholar Liang Boluan*) 高士圖
Gaozong (Song emperor, r. 1127–62) 高宗
gongbu shangshu 工部尚書
Gongting yishu de guanghui 宮廷藝術的光輝
Gongzhong tu (*In the Palace*) 宮中圖
Gu Hongzhong (active 943–75) 顧閎中
Gu Kaizhi (ca. 345–ca. 406) 顧愷之

Note Alphabetization of this glossary is word by word, with hyphens counting as blank spaces. Apostrophes and diacritical marks are ignored in the alphabetization.

Guan Tong (active ca. 907–23) 關仝 (同)
Guan Yu qinjiang tu (*Guan Yu Captures an Enemy General*) 關羽擒將圖
guangeti 館閣體
Guanshan mixue tu (*Winter Landscape*) 關山密雪圖
Guiqulaici (*Returning Home*) 歸去來辭
Guishe tu (*Tortoise and Snake*) 龜蛇圖
Guo Ruoxu (active ca. 1070) 郭若虛
Guo Xi (ca. 1000–ca. 1090) 郭熙
Guohua tang 國華堂
gushi 故事
Guxian shiyi tu (*Poems by Ancient Worthies*) 古賢詩意圖

Han Ang (active early 16th century) 韓昂
Han Gan (active 742–56) 韓幹
Han Huang (723–787) 韓滉
Han (Bohan) Shizhen 翰 (伯翰) 世楨
Han Xizai Yeyan tu (*The Night Entertainment of Han Xizai*) 韓熙載夜宴圖
Han Zhuo (active ca. 1095–ca. 1125) 韓拙
Hangong chunxiao tu (*Spring Morning in the Han Palace*) 漢宮春曉圖
Hanlin chongting tu (*Wintry Groves and Layered Banks*) 寒林重汀圖
Hongzhi (Ming emperor, r. 1488–1505) 弘治
Houyuan fushi chen Dong Yuan hua 後苑副使臣董元畫
Huajian (Mirror of Painting) 畫鑒
Huashi (History of Painting) 畫史
huayi 畫意
Huang Daozhou (1585–1646) 黃道周
Huang Gongwang (1269–1354) 黃公望
Huizong (Song emperor, r. 1101–25) 徽宗
Hushan qingxiao tu (*Clear Morning over Lakes and Mountains*) 湖山清曉圖

Jia Sidao (1213–1275) 賈似道
Jiahe songyin tu (*The Queen Mother of the West Flying on a Crane*) 駕鶴松陰圖
Jiajing (Ming emperor, r. 1522–66) 嘉靖
Jiang Biwei 蔣碧微
jiangshan gaoyin 江山高隱
Jiangti wanjing tu (*Along the Riverbank at Dusk*) 江隄晚景圖
Jiangxing chuxue tu (*First Snow along the River*) 江行初雪圖
jiehua 界畫
Jin Cong (1447–1501) 金琮
Jin Gui (1464–1520) 金桂
Jin Nong (1687–1763) 金農
Jin Shan 金山
Jing Hao (ca. 870–930) 荆浩
jinshi 進士
jinyiwei qianhu 錦衣衛千户
Jiuge (*Nine Songs*) 九歌
Jiyue tu (*Sacrifice to the Moon*) 祭月圖
Juran (active ca. 960–95) 巨然
junzi 君子

Kangxi (Qing emperor, r. 1662–1722) 康熙
Ke Jiusi (1290–1343) 柯九思
Kemu zhushi tu (*Bamboo, Old Trees, and Rock*) 窠木竹石圖
Keshi Jingzhong 柯氏敬仲

Lanting xu (Preface to the Orchid Pavilion Gathering) 蘭亭序
Laozi 老子
Li Bian (Li Sheng; Southern Tang emperor, r. 937–43) 李昪
Li Cheng (919–967) 李成
Li Dongyang (1447–1516) 李東陽
Li Gonglin (ca. 1041–1106) 李公麟
Li Jie (ca. 1124–after 1191) 李結
Li Jing (Southern Tang emperor, r. 943–61) 李璟
Li shi (Master Li; active ca. 1170) 李氏
Li Shimian (1374–1450) 李時勉
Li Sixun (651–716) 李思訓
Li Yu (Li Houzhu; Southern Tang emperor, r. 961–75) 李煜 (李後主)
Li Zai (died 1431) 李在
Li Zuoxian 李左賢
Liang Hong (Boluan) 梁鴻 (伯鸞)
Liang Kai (active first half of the 13th century) 梁楷
Liang Shimin (active early 12th century) 梁師閔
Liao Jingwen 廖靜文
Lidai minghua ji (Record of Famous Paintings in Successive Dynasties) 歷代名畫記
Lin Bu (967–1208) 林逋
Linquan gaozhi (Lofty Aims in Forests and Streams) 林泉高致
Liu Daochun (active 1057–59) 劉道醇
Liu Daoshi (active late 10th century) 劉道士

Liu Haisu (1896–1994) 劉海粟
Liu Jue (1410–1472) 劉玨
Liu Jun (active ca. 1475–ca. 1505) 劉俊
Liu Songnian (active ca. 1175–after 1195) 劉松年
Liulitang renwu tu (*Scholars of the Liuli Hall*) 琉璃堂人物圖
Longmian 龍眠
Longmian shanzhuang tu (*Dwelling in the Longmian Mountains*) 龍眠山莊圖
Longsu jiaomin tu (*Residents of the Capital City*) 龍宿郊民圖
Lu Hong (active ca. 713–42) 盧鴻
Lu Shihua (1714–1779) 陸時化
Lü Ji (ca. 1430–ca. 1504) 呂紀
Lü Wenying (1421–1505) 呂文英
Luohan tu (*Luohan Seated Before a Screen*) 羅漢圖

Ma Lin (ca. 1180–after 1256) 馬麟
Ma Yuan (active ca. 1190–1225) 馬遠
Magu tu (*The Goddess Magu*) 麻姑圖
Maihuolang tu (*Peddler with Bird Cages*) 賣貨郎圖
Maitō Seisen 内藤晴川
Maolin diezhang tu (*Dense Groves and Layered Peaks*) 茂林疊嶂圖
Meixia hengqin tu (*Playing the Qin under a Plum Tree*) 梅下横琴圖
Mengxi bitan (Notes Written at Mengxi) 夢溪筆談
Mi Fu (1052–1107) 米芾
Mi Youren (1074–1151) 米友仁
Ming Chengzu zuoxiang tu (*Portrait of the Yongle Emperor*) 明成祖坐像圖
Ming Xiaozong zuoxiang tu (*Portrait of the Hongzhi Emperor*) 明孝宗坐像圖
Minghua lu (Record of Ming Dynasty Paintings) 明畫錄
mingji 名跡
Mulü tu (*A Donkey for Mr. Zhu*) 募驢圖

Najian tu (*Remonstrating with the Emperor*) 訥諫圖
Ni Zan (1306–1374) 倪瓚
Ningcheng tu (*Painting of Ningcheng County*) 寧城圖
Nüle tu (*Female Musicians in a Garden*) 女樂圖

Ouyang Xiu (1007–1072) 歐陽修

Pang Yuanji (1864–1949) 龐元濟
Peiyue xianxing tu (*The Poet Lin Bu Wandering in the Moonlight*) 陪月閒行圖
pima 披麻
pingdan tianzhen 平淡天真
Pu Ru (Pu Xinyu; 1896–1963) 溥儒 (溥心畬)

Qian Xili (born 1374) 錢習禮
Qian Xuan (ca. 1235–before 1307) 錢選
Qianlong (Qing emperor, r. 1736–95) 乾隆
Qianziwen (*Thousand Character Essay*) 千字文
Qiaohua qiuse tu (*Autumn Colors on the Qiao and Hua Mountains*) 鵲華秋色圖
Qiaosong xianshou tu (*A Tall Pine and Daoist Immortal*) 喬松仙壽圖
Qinglan feipu tu 晴嵐飛瀑圖
Qiu Ying (ca. 1495–1552) 仇英
Qiu Zhu (active mid-16th century) 仇珠
Qiulin tu (*Autumn Grove*) 秋林圖
Qiushan wendao tu (*Seeking Dao in Autumn Mountains*) 秋山問道圖
Qu Ding (active ca. 1023–56) 屈鼎

ronglu dafu 榮祿大夫

Sachui bensheng (*Mahasattva Jataka*) 薩埵本生
Sanfuzi tu (*The Three Worthies of Wu*) 三夫子圖
Sanjiao tu (*Three Religions*) 三教圖
Shang Xi (active second quarter of the 15th century) 商喜
Shanju naliang tu (*Pleasant Summer in a Mountain Retreat*) 山居納涼圖
Shanju yixing tu (*A Chess Party in the Mountains*) 山居奕興圖
Shanshui tu (*Landscape*) 山水圖
Shao Bao (1460–1527) 邵寶
shaofu 少傅
Shaoxing 紹興
shaozhanshi 少詹士
Shen Gua (1030–1093) 沈括
Shen Zhou (1427–1509) 沈周
Sheng Mou (active ca. 1330–69) 盛懋
Shengchao minghua ping 聖朝名畫評
Shenzong (Song emperor, r. 1068–85) 神宗
Shi Jian (1434–1496) 史鑑
Shi Zhong (Xu Duanben; 1437–ca. 1517) 史忠 (徐端本)

shidu xueshi 侍讀學士
shijiang xueshi 侍講學士
Shinü tu (*Women in a Palace Garden*) 仕女圖
Shiqu baoji (Treasured Boxes of the Stony Moat) 石渠寶笈
Shuhua Jianying 書畫鑒影
Shuicun tu (*Water Village*) 水村圖
Shuihu yezi (*Illustrations from "The Romance of the Water Margin"*) 水滸葉子
Shuixian lamei tu (*Narcissus and Plum Blossoms*) 水仙蠟梅圖
Shujing 書經
siyin 司印
Song Taizu zuoxiang tu (*Portrait of Song Taizu*) 宋太祖坐像圖
Songshi 宋史
Su Shi (1037–1101) 蘇軾
Su Shi lixiang tu (*Portrait of Su Shi*) 蘇軾立像圖
Sun Duoci 孫多慈
Sun Keyuan 孫可元

taigeti 臺閣體
Taishang duguan tu (*Laozi Passing the Barrier*) 太上渡關圖
Taizu (Song emperor, r. 960–76) 太祖
Tang Hou (early 14th century) 湯垕
Tang Yin (1470–1523) 唐寅
Tao Gu zengci tu (*Tao Gu Presents a Poem*) 陶穀贈詞圖
Tao Yuanming (Tao Qian; 365–427) 陶淵明 (陶潛)
Tao Yuanming xiang (*Portrait of Tao Yuanming*) 陶淵明像
Taohuayuan ji (Record of the Peach Blossom Spring) 桃花源記
Taoliyuan tu (*The Garden of Peach and Pear Trees*) 桃李園圖
Tianshuijun shoucang shuhua yinji 天水郡收藏書畫印記
Tongyin qinghua tu (*Conversation in the Shade of Wutong Trees*) 桐陰清話圖
Tuhua jianwen zhi (Experiences in Painting) 圖畫見聞誌

Wanhe songfeng tu (*Myriad Ravines with Wind in the Pines*) 萬壑松風圖
Wanhe tu (*Myriad Ravines*) 萬壑圖
Wang Changling (active mid-8th century) 王昌齡
Wang Chuzhi (died 924) 王處直
Wang Duo (1592–1652) 王鐸
Wang Hui (1632–1717) 王翬
Wang Jiqian (C.C. Wang; born 1907) 王季遷 (己千)
Wang Meng (ca. 1308–1385) 王蒙
Wang Qihan (active ca. 961–75) 王齊翰
Wang Shen (ca. 1036–after 1104) 王詵
Wang Shimin (1592–1680) 王時敏
Wang Shizhen (1526–1590) 王士貞
Wang Wei (701–761) 王維
Wang Xizhi (ca. 303–ca. 361) 王羲之
Wang Ying (1376–1450) 王英
Wang Yuan (active ca. 1310–50) 王淵
Wang Yuan (1862–1908) 王緣
Wang Zhi (1379–1462) 王直
Wang Ziqing (active ca. 1290–1310) 王子慶
Wangchuan tu (*Wangchuan Villa*) 輞川圖
Wangu tu (*Enjoying Antiquities*) 玩古圖
Wei Xian (active ca. 960–75) 衛賢
Weiguo Gong (Duke of Wei) 魏國公
Weijiang tu (*The Wei River*) 味江圖
weiqi 圍棋
Wen Zhengming (1470–1559) 文徵明
Wenzong (Yuan emperor, r. 1328–29, 1330–32) 文宗
Wu Dacheng (1835–1902) 吳大澂
Wu Hufan (1894–1968) 吳湖帆
Wu Kuan (1435–1504) 吳寬
Wu Wei (1459–1508) 吳偉
Wu Zhen (1280–1354) 吳鎮
Wu Zongyuan (died 1050) 武宗元
wugu 無骨
wutong 梧桐
Wuzhong 吳中

Xi'an tu (*Riverbank*) 溪岸圖
Xia Gui (active ca. 1195–1230) 夏圭
Xiajing shankou daidu tu (*Awaiting the Ferry at the Foot of Summer Mountains*) 夏景山口待渡圖
Xiang Yuanbian (1525–1590) 項元汴
Xiangshan jiulao tu (*The Nine Elders of the Mountain of Fragrance*) 香山九老圖
Xianzong (Tang emperor, r. 806–20) 憲宗
Xiao Xiang 瀟湘
Xiao Xiang tu (*The Xiao and Xiang Rivers*) 瀟湘圖
Xiao Xiang woyou tu (*Dream Journey through the Xiao and Xiang Rivers*) 瀟湘臥遊圖
Xiao Yi 蕭翼
Xiao Yi zhuan Lanting tu (*Xiao Yi Seizing the Lanting Manuscript*) 蕭翼賺蘭亭圖

Xiashan tu (*Summer Mountains*) 夏山圖
Xiashan yinju tu (*Dwelling in Seclusion in Summer Mountains*) 夏山隱居圖
Xiashan yuyu tu (*Summer Mountains Before Rain*) 夏山欲雨圖
Xie Huan (ca. 1370–ca. 1450) 謝環
Xie Zhiliu (1910–1997) 謝稚柳
Xingcaoshu zishu shijuan (*Four Poems in Semi-cursive Script*) 行草書自書詩卷
Xingyuan yaji tu (*Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden*) 杏園雅集圖
Xisai yule tu (*Fishing Boats on a Broad River at the Foot of Xisai Mountain*) 西塞漁社圖
Xishan lanruo tu (*Temple among Streams and Hills*) 溪山蘭若圖
Xishan xinglütu (*Travelers amid Streams and Mountains*) 溪山行旅圖
Xiwangmu 西王母
Xiyuan yaji tu (*Literary Gathering at the Western Garden*) 西園雅集圖
Xu Beihong (1895–1953) 徐悲鴻
Xu Boyang 徐伯陽
Xu Daoning (ca. 970–ca. 1051/52) 許道寧
Xu Lin (1462–1538) 徐霖
Xu Qin (active late 17th century) 徐沁
Xu Xi (active 943–75) 徐熙
Xuande (Ming emperor, r. 1426–35) 宣德
Xuande huangdi chuxing tu (*The Xuande Emperor on an Outing*) 宣德皇帝出行圖
Xuanhe 宣和
Xuanhe huapu (Catalogue of the Imperial Painting Collection during the Xuanhe Era) 宣和畫譜
Xuanhedian bao 宣和殿寶

Yan Wengui (active ca. 970–1030) 燕文貴
Yan Zhenqing (709–785) 顏真卿
Yanlan chongdie tu (*Mists and Layered Ranges*) 煙嵐重疊圖
Yang Pu (1372–1446) 楊溥
Yang Rong (1371–1440) 楊榮
Yang Shiqi (1365–1444) 楊士奇
Yang Wanjun (1917–after 1985) 楊宛君
Yang Wujiu (1097–1169) 楊無咎
Yaqu zuiyin tu (*Drinking and Singing at the Foot of a Precipitous Mountain*) 崖曲醉吟圖
Ye Gongchuo (1881–1968) 葉恭綽
Ye Maotai 葉茂臺
Yi Yuanji (died ca. 1064) 易元吉
Yingzong (Ming emperor, r. 1436–49, 1457–64) 英宗
Yixin (1833–1898) 奕訢
Yongle (Ming emperor, r. 1403–24) 永樂
Yue 越
Yufu tu (*Fishermen*) 漁父圖
Yuncang yusan tu (*Mountains after Rain*) 雲藏雨散圖
Yunshan tu (*Cloudy Mountains*) 雲山圖
Yunyan guoyan lu (Record of What Was Seen as Clouds and Mists) 雲煙過眼錄

Zaochun tu (*Early Spring*) 早春圖
Zhang Daqian (1899–1983) 張大千
Zhang Muhan 張目寒
Zhang Shanzi (1882–1940) 張善子
Zhang Yanyuan (ca. 815–after 875) 張彥遠
Zhang Zeduan (active 11th century) 張擇端
Zhao Gan (active ca. 960–75) 趙幹
Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322) 趙孟頫
Zhao Yan (died 923) 趙彥
Zhao Yuqin (late 13th century) 趙與懃
Zhao Zuo (ca. 1570–after 1633) 趙左
Zheng Xia (1041–1119) 鄭俠
Zheng Xiaoxu (1860–1938) 鄭孝胥
Zheng Zhong (active 1612–48) 鄭重
Zhengde (Ming emperor, r. 1506–21) 正德
Zhenghe 政和
Zhepai 浙派
Zhi Yong (ca. late 6th century–early 7th century) 智永
Zhiniao shuiqin tu (*Hawk and Ducks*) 鷙鳥水禽圖
zhitou 指頭
Zhou Chen (died ca. 1536) 周臣
Zhou Dongcun 周東村
Zhou Jing (1440–1510) 周經
Zhou Mi (1232–1298) 周密
Zhou Shu (*jinshi* 1404) 周述
Zhou Wenju (active ca. 943–75) 周文矩
Zhu Gang (died 1398) 朱綱
Zhuyuan shouji tu (*Birthday Celebration in the Bamboo Garden*) 竹園壽集圖
zuoshuzi 左庶子

Photograph Credits

All photographs of *Riverbank*, in the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, are by Malcolm Varon. Photographs of *Dense Forests and Layered Peaks*, in the British Museum, London, are by Bruce Schwarz, The Photograph Studio, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Photographs reproduced from published sources are listed below:

James Cahill

Fig. 3: Kao Ling-mei, ed. *Chang Dai-chien's Paintings*. Hong Kong: The East Society, 1967, pl. 20.
Fig. 4: Christie's Hong Kong. "Fine 19th and 20th Century Chinese Paintings," April 28, 1996, no. 243.
Fig. 5: Fu Shen. *Challenging the Past: The Paintings of Chang Dai-chien*. Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1991, pl. 39.
Fig. 7: J.D. Chen (Chen Rentao). *Zhongguo hua tan di Nanzong sanzu* (The Three Patriarchs of the Southern School of Chinese Painting). Hong Kong: The Union Syndicate, 1955, pl. 4.
Fig. 9: Sotheby's Hong Kong. "Fine Modern and Contemporary Chinese Paintings," October 29, 1992.
Fig. 10: Sotheby's New York. "Fine Chinese Paintings," June 2, 1987, no. 2.
Fig. 11: *Liu Haisu Gallery Collections*. Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1996, pl. 2.
Fig. 18: James Cahill. *The Distant Mountains: Chinese Painting of the Late Ming Dynasty, 1570–1644*. New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1982, pl. 50.

Robert E. Harrist, Jr.

Figs. 2 and 3: Hebei Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Baoding Municipal Office of Cultural Relics. *Wudai Wang Chuzhi mu* (The Tomb of Wang Chuzhi of The Five Dynasties). Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1998, color pls. 22 and 24.

Maxwell K. Hearn

"An Early Ming Example of Multiples"
Fig. 17: Huai'an Museum of Jiangsu Province and Group for the Authentication of Ancient Chinese Paintings and Calligraphy, eds. *Huai'an Ming mu chutu shu hua* (Paintings and Calligraphy from a Tomb of the Ming Dynasty in Huai'an). Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1988, pl. 4.
Fig. 18: Liaoning Provincial Museum. *Liaoning sheng bowuguan cang hua ji* (Collection of Paintings in the Liaoning Provincial Museum). Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1962, p. 16.
Fig. 19: Richard M. Barnhart, et al. *Painters of the Great Ming: The Imperial Court and the Zhe School*. Dallas: Dallas Museum of Art, 1993, fig. 121.
Fig. 26: Editorial Committee of the Collected Works of Chinese Art, ed. *Ming dai huihua* (Paintings of the Ming Dynasty), in *Zhongguo meishu quanji: Huihua pian 6* (The Collected Works of Chinese Art: Vol. 6, Paintings). Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1988, pl. 81.

Stephen Little

Fig. 3: *Kaikodo Journal* 5 (Autumn 1997), fig. 9.
Figs. 21 and 26: The National Palace Museum, Taipei. *Qiu Ying zuopin zhan tulu* (An Exhibition of Works by Qiu Ying). Taipei: Guoli gugong bowuyuan, 1989, pls. 11-1 and 12.
Fig. 24: The National Palace Museum. *Wu pai hua jiushi nian zhan* (Ninety Years of Wu School Painting). Taipei: Guoli gugong bowuyuan, 1975, pl. 72.
Fig. 28: Harada Kinjiro, *Shina meiga hokan* (The Pageant of Chinese Painting). Tokyo: Otsuka kogeisha, 1936, pl. 577.

Qi Gong

Fig. 1: *Gugong shuhua tulu* (Illustrated Catalogue of Painting and Calligraphy in the Palace Museum). Vol. 1. Taipei: Guoli gugong bowuyuan, 1989, p. 77.
Fig. 3: Richard M. Barnhart, *Marriage of the Lord of the River*. Artibus Asiae Supplementum 27. Ascona, Switzerland: Artibus Asiae, 1970, fig. 4.

Issues of Authenticity in Chinese Painting

Papers prepared for an international symposium organized by The Metropolitan Museum of Art in conjunction with the exhibition *The Artist as Collector: Masterpieces of Chinese Painting from the C.C. Wang Family Collection*

Editors Judith G. Smith, Wen C. Fong Contributors James Cahill, Wen C. Fong, Robert E. Harrist, Jr., Maxwell K. Hearn, Hironobu Kohara, Sherman Lee, Stephen Little, Qi Gong, Shih Shou-chien, Jerome Silbergeld, Wan-go Weng

ISBN 0-87099-928-1