

**CONSOLING FRUSTRATED SCHOLARS:
A COPY OF A PARTING GIFT BY WEN ZHENGMING**

by

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ABSTRACT

Farewell in the Garden is a Qing dynasty (1644-1911) copy of a parting gift painted by Wen Zhengming (1470-1559) for his student Wang Chong (1494-1533) to mark the occasion of Wang Chong's visit before he left to write the civil service examination. In addition to this painting, three other versions bearing similar poetic inscriptions exist. These four paintings present an intriguing riddle and opportunity to consider copies as works worthy of scholarly attention. The compelling scene of farewell between teacher and student who both failed the examinations numerous times resonated with audiences who empathized with their disappointments. A longing to serve in the government is visible when these paintings are considered in relation to earlier literati art. The sketch-like traces of a ledge that is in all of the copies except *Farewell in the Garden*, hint to the visual possibility of this scene being situated on a shore. Wen Zhengming, through his subtle lines, alludes to this powerful site of parting which is frequently depicted in literati landscape painting and associated with scholar officials and men of merit.

This thesis situates *Farewell in the Garden* and its copies within the wider tradition of literati painting through the theme of service. Government service, as a Confucian ideal, and as a recurring theme in literati painting, transforms in appearance over time, reflecting political, economic, and philosophical shifts. In the Ming dynasty, the ideal of service is manifest and demonstrated in the continued *pursuit* to serve in office, and the garden, reminiscent of the locations depicted in literati painting, becomes a suitable setting for this enactment. I argue that this parting scene of Wen Zhengming and Wang Chong came to implicitly represent the commitment to serve in government. The cogent Confucian ideal demonstrated by teacher and student is the unyielding

determination to serve, and it is this very sentiment or quality in the copies of the farewell painting – the tenacious *endeavour to be of service* – that is at once consoling and persuasive.

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DEDICATION

To my parents, Chin Hua Li & Fan Nung Li

獻給我的父母: 李錦華和曾番穠

Zoe Li
李佩瑜

CHAPTER I: Introduction and Methodology

1.1 Points of Departure

In the painting *Farewell in the Garden*, two men seated on a ledge are seen conversing together as two servants approach them quietly from the right (Figure 1).¹ Empty space in the foreground leads to a cluster of three trees in the center of the composition. Roots and rocks indicating the staggered placement of trees also effectively convey a gentle, upwardly tilting ground plane. The servants appear closer to the viewer while the two men, by being placed diagonally to the left of a fourth tree, appear farther away. On the top left corner of this painting is an inscription identifying the two seated men as Wen Zhengming (1470-1559) and his student, Wang Chong (1494-1533) (Figure 2). It records that this painting was a parting gift to mark the tenth day of the tenth month in 1531 when Wang Chong came to take leave before writing the civil service examination in the capital city.²

Farewell in the Garden is one copy among four known extant versions of the same painting presented by Wen Zhengming to Wang Chong as a parting gift. The other copies include: *Pure Conversation in Green Shade*, 1523 in Taipei, *Farewell at Halting Clouds Lodging*, 1531 in Berlin, and *Lofty Scholars with Pines and Rocks*, 1531 in Tianjin (Figures 3-5).³ Every painting except for *Pure Conversation in Green Shade* (Taipei) bears the same

¹ *Farewell in the Garden* is a Qing dynasty copy. Currently, it is in the collection of the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. Canada and can be located by ID No. N1.242 and Accession No. 1819. It was acquired on December 5, 1960 by purchase from Trans-Nation Emporium in Vancouver, British Columbia.

² For a translation of the inscription see Appendix A.

³ For the purposes of this study, the term "*Farewell* paintings" will be used to refer to the four copies collectively. When a specific version of the painting is being analyzed, the exact title of the painting and its location will be used. When the original painting that was presented to Wang Chong by Wen Zhengming is discussed, it will be referred to as the original painting. A fan entitled, *Tasting Tea in the Pure Shade*, 1528

poem and inscription which describes the occasion of Wang Chong's leave-taking. The four *Farewell* paintings present an intriguing riddle and opportunity to consider the value of copies as works worthy of scholarly study. Who would want a copy of a painting intended for someone else? Why is the inscription that specifies artist, recipient and event also desired? To date, no scholarship has considered reasons for the reproduction of this composition and a study of all four paintings together has not been attempted.

Farewell in the Garden and its copies feature the subject of civil service examinations; however, given the known numerous failed attempts by both Wen Zhengming and Wang Chong to pass the examinations, the theme is more specifically the *pursuit* of government service. The goal of this thesis is to situate *Farewell in the Garden*, a personal gift, and its copies within the wider tradition of literati painting through the theme of service. I will argue that service, as a Confucian ideal, and as a recurring theme in literati painting, transforms in appearance over time, reflecting political, economic, and philosophical shifts. In the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), the ideal of service is manifest and demonstrated in the continued pursuit to serve in office, and the garden, reminiscent of the wilderness of mountains and rivers, the traditional locations depicted in literati painting, becomes a suitable site for enactment.

Chapter two identifies the issue of the copy and the challenge it presents to western scholarship in Chinese painting. An overview of approaches in selected studies

also exists with a similar composition (Figure 6). For a discussion on the fan see Edwards, *Art of Wen Cheng-ming*, 104. Edwards notes the composition of conversing scholars among a tall pine, three deciduous trees and an old cypress is transposed from the fan to *Farewell at Halting Cloud Studio* (Berlin). See his discussion on 112. As I will elaborate in chapter five, the centrality of the servants in the *Farewell* paintings is significant and so this fan which differs in its depiction of the servant will not be considered in this analysis.

of literati painting will underscore why a study on Wen Zhengming, an artist who was widely copied, is especially suited to exploring perspectives flexible enough to gauge the value of copies. Recent scholarship by Anne Clapp and Craig Clunas on Wen Zhengming, particularly their readings on one of the farewell paintings, will serve to mark where this investigation begins. A collective study of the four farewell paintings, situated historically and in relation to other works, can potentially expand definitions of originality and in turn, increase the worth of copies as objects for study.

Wen Zhengming and Wang Chong's desire for bureaucratic office stems from a long tradition and cultural expectation of educated elites to govern. Since the eighth century, the *shi* class, or educated elites, traditionally sought and held government posts. As I will elaborate in chapter three, over time the *shi* identity became so thoroughly intertwined with government service that membership into this elite group hinged on being an official or being born into a family of bureaucrats. Literati painting, or art by scholar officials, which gained momentum during the Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), expressed the political sentiments of the *shi* by means of subject, composition and style. I will propose that literati paintings also reflect the opportunities for the *shi* to hold office: the rise of monumental landscape paintings of the Song dynasty correspond to the implementation and imperial support of the bureaucratic recruitment system, and during the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), a period when the *shi* were disenfranchised, paintings frequently depicted scenes evoking reclusion. In the Ming dynasty, the *shi* are defined by fierce competition for government office and their limited opportunity to serve is expressed in *Farewell in the Garden*. I will argue that by observing the

opportunities of the *shi* class to hold office, a thematic continuity connecting *Farewell in the Garden* to the wider tradition of literati painting emerges.

Chapter four examines the political, economic and philosophical shifts particular to the Ming dynasty and relates these shifts to the *shi*. Ming dynasty elites shared common frustrations stemming from competing for office and serving in a volatile political climate at court. I argue that these “frustrated scholars” are the audience for copies of the farewell painting because failure at examinations and the desire for bureaucratic office were subjects immediately recognizable to them.⁴ An account of Wen Zhengming’s life focusing on his pursuit of office and early retirement will show that his trials were typical of the experiences endured by many other educated elites. Wen Zhengming was a renowned cultural figure of the Ming dynasty, excelling in poetry, painting and calligraphy, and Wang Chong was also notably distinguished in these arts.⁵ However, their cultural accomplishments were mediated by their numerous failed attempts to pass the examinations: Wen Zhengming failed ten times while Wang Chong failed eight times. The experiences of Wen Zhengming and Wang Chong, viewed from a historical perspective, are indicative of larger social, economic and political conditions in the Ming dynasty. The *Farewell* paintings seem to centre on the career ambitions of one individual, Wang Chong, but the appeal of these paintings lie in how they encapsulate and speak to the experiences particular to Ming dynasty elites.

⁴ This is a term borrowed from Shih Shou-Chien who identified the “frustrated literati.” See Shih Shou-Chien, “The Landscape Painting of Frustrated Literati: The Wen Cheng-Ming Style in the Sixteenth Century,” in *The Power of Culture: Studies in Chinese Cultural History*, ed. Willard J. Peterson et al. (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1994), 218-246.

⁵ Wang Chong’s attempt to pass the examinations in 1531 also resulted in disappointment and tragically, that was his last chance at success as he died two years later. For more on the accomplishments of Wang Chong see Marc F. Wilson and Kwan S. Wong, *Friends of Wen Cheng-Ming: A View from the Crawford Collection* (New York: China institute in America 1974), 98-99. See also James Cahill, *Parting at the Shore: Chinese Painting of the Early and Middle Ming Dynasty, 1368-1580* (New York: Weatherhill, 1978), 244-5.

The rise of Wang Yangming's Neo-Confucian teachings after the 1520's coincides with the production date of Wen Zhengming's parting gift for Wang Chong. The popularity of Wang Yangming's teachings during this time warrants consideration of his ideas as the audience of the *Farewell* paintings would have been informed by them. Key philosophical shifts – the unity of knowledge and action, and the emphasis on the sincerity of the will – increased pressure for educated elites to overtly demonstrate their virtues. In the historical and philosophical context of the Ming dynasty, I will argue Wen Zhengming and Wang Chong's repeated attempts to pass the civil examinations actively demonstrated the ideal of service, signifying the comprehension and possession of this quality.

Chapter five turns to a visual analysis of the *Farewell in the Garden*, assessing it in relation to its copies and comparing it to another copy of a parting gift, Shen Zhou's (1427-1509) *Catalpa Trees*, 1481 (Figure 7).⁶ Again, as in the *Farewell* paintings, *Catalpa Trees* includes an inscription identifying the recipient and occasion of the original painting, and curiously, the inscription also describes how a later recipient requested this copy two years after the event. The desire for a copy of the original painting by Shen Zhou to his friend suggests that parting gifts, although personal and specific in function, was meaningful to an external audience. Collectively, these reproductions of parting gifts indicate that copies were desired for their subject matter and were satisfying because they sufficiently transmitted the subject and theme of the original.

The significance of *Farewell in the Garden* relies on the knowledge of motifs, brushstrokes and compositions of earlier literati landscape painting. Wen Zhengming

⁶ Richard Edwards dates *Catalpa Trees* to 1481. See Richard Edwards, *The Art of Wen Cheng-Ming, 1470-1559* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1976), 41.

took careful measures to explicitly and subtly mobilize the tradition of literati painting in his gift to Wang Chong. I will argue a critical reading of the farewell paintings relies on an understood association of the shore as a symbolically powerful space of scholar officials. The concretely defined ledge in *Farewell in the Garden* which appears only as traces in the other copies is the decisive clue connecting copies of Wen Zhengming's parting gift to the shore and in turn, to the wider tradition of literati painting.

1.2 Service in Henri Lefebvre's Theory of Moments

A central concept in this thesis is the Confucian ideal of "service" as it is imagined in the Chinese cultural memory and as it is redefined by opportunities to serve in government. A conspicuously observable form of "service" is employment in office and understandably, the desire to hold office as another form of "service" may seem objectionable, as one cannot be in service if one never holds office. However, I will propose that the desire and commitment to serve, especially while enduring adversity, has social value by inspiring others on a similar path, and who may as a result of this encouragement, ultimately be of benefit to others through official positions or otherwise. This proposal will be further expanded upon in chapter three and four through examining the history of the bureaucratic examination system and the *shi* class where I will argue that in the Ming dynasty, the *pursuit* of service merits inclusion as a form of "service."

At this point, as a theoretical method to extend the definition of "service," it is expedient to consider Henri Lefebvre's "Theory of Moments." Lefebvre's theory postulates a process by which meanings transform, emphasizing that change occurs

when one's imagined and lived sense of a concept encounters another's experience of these concepts.⁷ A main focus of this thesis is on how the ideal of "service" as represented in paintings change over time, reflecting the historical conditions of each period. Paintings referencing earlier themes, styles and compositions evince comprehension of the previous discourse of "service" as presented in past works. The *Farewell* paintings, situated in relation to earlier paintings, demonstrate a new representation of "service" that is the synthesis of past concepts of "service" with new experiences of it that are particular to the Ming dynasty.

For Lefebvre, the term "moment" corresponds to the *sense* of a given word in general and common usage or its lived *content*.⁸ "Moments" are as much "essences" as they are attributes and modalities of "being."⁹ For the purposes of this study, a single kind of "moment" or "essence" can be used interchangeably with the term concept. Communication and transformation of a "moment" or concept occurs through discourse which in the example of literati painting, appears in the nuances of visual form and thematic content. Communication presupposes all levels of experiences as well as the tensions and conflicts of those levels.¹⁰ So while a "moment" can be named by a given word such as "service," each person has a different level or range of experience of it that depends on their encounters of it, whether they have performed it, and the extent of their enactment of it.

These varying levels of experience result in a semantic field that is characterized by relative movements and relative stabilities. Communication is achieved when a

⁷ Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, 340-358.

⁸ Ibid., 351.

⁹ Ibid., 349.

¹⁰ Ibid., 341.

certain alignment, or recognition, between the emotion expressed by one and the emotion aroused in another occurs.¹¹ This process of recognition depends on a generalized and shared understanding of a state of being, but arguably, more important is the effort or willingness to allow one's definition, or experience, to expand and enfold another's definition. Communication is achieved when a two-fold recognition of otherness occurs, that is of both the self and of the other – fusing the known with the unknown. Concepts are then sufficiently modified to reference a newly synthesized meaning. Through this process of change, which can be thought of as the closing of the differences between lived experiences, what Lefebvre terms, "something," remains, and it is this "something" that is the "moment" or the essence of the concept.¹²

Applying Lefebvre's theory of the "moment" to the concept or ideal of "service" has two results. Firstly, the concept of "service" has a generalized definition through Confucian philosophy, and educated elites are familiar with it through their education and upbringing, performing it privately in their daily interactions with others and publicly through government service. The bureaucratic recruitment system directly affects the concept of "service" as civil service examinations were based on standardized Confucian classics.¹³ In preparing to write examinations, elites received a standardized education which becomes the basis for shared generalized definitions of cultural and intellectual

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., 342.

¹³ The civil service examinations tested knowledge of the Four Books (the *Great Learning*, the *Mean*, the *Analects* of Confucius, and *Mencius*) and the Five Classics (*Classic of Changes*, *Classic of Poetry*, *Classic of Rites*, *Classic of History* and *Spring and Autumn Annals*). These texts stressed Confucian moral values of humaneness, righteousness, filial devotion to family, loyal devotion to the ruler, and respect for ritual. At the beginning of the fifteenth century the Yongle Emperor (1402-1424) promulgated the *Great compendia*, official versions of the texts and commentaries for the Four Books and Five Classics. See Willard Peterson, "Confucian Learning in Late Ming Thought," in *Cambridge History of China Volume 8: The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644, Part 2*, ed. Denis Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 709 and 712.

concepts. Competition in the recruitment system also determines opportunities for educated elites to live the experience of “service” as office holders. Secondly, the sense of “service” represented in paintings by scholar officials changes over time and it does so through the lived experience of artists enfolding the lived experiences of past artists. More specifically, change occurs every time an artist incorporates the style and composition of a past artist to synthesize a new expression that then achieves a measure of stability. A generalized definition of “service” and historical context are critical components and parameters in defining the experience of “service.” The emphasis, however, should remain on the factor propelling change – the willingness to meet and engage past experiences of “service” and the expression of its synthesis in literati painting.

In chapters three and four, I will argue that the concept of “service” shifts over time and demonstrations of it change in relation to historical context. I will apply Lefebvre’s term “moment” to the concept of *shi* to analyze how the *shi* class changes from the Tang to the Yuan dynasty: the social composition of the *shi* class alters as the criteria of belonging to the *shi* class changes. As will be discussed, the concept of “service” is related to the shifting criteria defining the *shi* class which is affected by opportunities to serve in government. The use of Lefebvre’s “Theory of Moments” is to conceptualize how the terms “service” and *shi* shift over time, and it is to underscore that the understood meaning of “service” in literati painting is largely dependant on the levels of experience or range of encounters the viewer has of it.

As I will discuss later, Confucian thought has included reclusion or withdrawal from society as a form of social critique. Literati painting clearly reflects two forms of

service – active and withdrawal – but scholarship on the *desire to serve* has not yet been attempted. I propose *Farewell in the Garden* reflects a form of service particular to the Ming dynasty, a form demonstrated by constant pursuit of bureaucratic service and is rendered more evident from the failure to achieve it. I will argue on one level, this image of Wen Zhengming and Wang Chong in the *Farewell* paintings offered a measure of solace to those who failed examinations and were frustrated by being denied office, and on another level, the *Farewell* paintings compelled viewers to persevere in their own endeavours to be of service.

1.3 Defining the Continuously Original

For this thesis which considers copies as works worthy of scholarly attention, a precise definition of originality is necessary. Collectively, an analysis of the four *Farewell* paintings resting solely on the social-historical significance of their subject matter does not adequately modify the disparity of value between the original painting given to Wang Chong and copies of it. At the heart of a thesis based on a later reproduction of an original, there must be a justification for studying a specific copy and proof that it offers a unique contribution other copies do not. Parameters refining the definition of originality for this discussion will frame how each type of painting – original and copy – can be considered original.

Jack W. Meiland's concept of the "continuously original" builds upon Leonard B. Meyer's definition of originality.¹⁴ Meiland's definition places a greater emphasis on the experiences of the audience:

"Perhaps Meyer could argue that what makes these paintings and musical works great is that they reveal new aspects of the world *each time* a person sees or hears them. That would make these works *continuously* original and presumably help to preserve his thesis. Meyer describes an original work as embodying a vision by the artist, whereas a continuously original work may embody no particular vision but instead generates new visions through interaction between itself and its audience."¹⁵

Meiland's definition of originality does not apply to a painting simply because it exists rather, it is contingent on the historical significance of the painting; moreover, it applies to a work only when the result of an interaction between it and the audience is meaningful. The quality of being continuously original, a value that is determined by the experience of the audience, is pivotal: a work is original if it can cause the viewer to see things previously unseen. I will argue in chapter five that among the four copies, *Farewell in the Garden* (Vancouver), by its differences from the other three *Farewell* paintings, has the greatest potential for being continuously original.

¹⁴ Jack W. Meiland, "Originals, Copies, and Aesthetic Value," in *The Forger's Art: Forgery and the Philosophy of Art*, ed. Denis Dutton (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 115-130. For Leonard B. Meyer's full discussion see Leonard B. Meyer, "Forgery and the Anthropology of Art," in *The Forger's Art: Forgery and the Philosophy of Art*, ed. Denis Dutton (Berkeley: U of California Press, 1983), 77-92.

¹⁵ Meiland, "Originals, Copies, and Aesthetic Value," 120.

CHAPTER II: Wen Zhengming within Literati Art History

2.1 *The Copy in Literati Painting*

Chinese literati painting is a genre well suited for reconsidering the aesthetic and social value of copies as the very practice and production of literati art entail a process of copying. Thus, it may be preferable to avoid simply ascribing value to original works and little or none to copies, and instead, to recognize a range of values which is reflected in the variety of terms for copies as well as technical and cognitive skill levels required for each type.¹⁶ The methods required to produce paintings affect the perceived value of the final product and as a result, not all copies weigh equally as each type satisfies a different purpose.

Farewell in the Garden (Vancouver) can be classified as a *lin ben* or transcript copy. *Lin ben* is a method used to copy calligraphy or painting with the intent to reproduce the “spirit, appearance and composition” of originals.¹⁷ Transcription requires a proficient understanding and execution of brushstrokes, ink, colour and composition, and copyists strive to eliminate their own individual style while avoiding precise imitation.¹⁸ Transcript works do not necessarily replicate the original exactly; transcripts by famous master hands focus on reproducing the spirit of a work rather than accurate outline and composition.¹⁹ The characteristics of transcription can be observed by a comparison of the tall pine tree on the far right of each of the *Farewell* paintings. The pine trees in *Lofty*

¹⁶ For a detailed description of four terms and characterizing technical methods see Renkai Yang et. al, *Genuine and Fake Illustrated Dictionary of Chinese Calligraphy and Paintings in Every Dynasty* (Shenyang: Shenyang Liaoning Picture Press, 1997), 6-118. The four terms include: *mo ben* for copy; *lin ben* for transcript; *fang ben* for imagined reproduction; and *zao ben* for “extreme fake.”

¹⁷ Ibid., 18.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Scholars with Pines and Rocks (Tianjin) and *Farewell at Halting Clouds Lodging* (Berlin) are most closely alike: the outline of the tree is similar, the branches bend at the same perpendicular angles, and the leaves are equally dense in texture of brushstrokes. In contrast, this same tree in *Farewell in the Garden* (Vancouver) and *Pure Conversation in Green Shade* (Taipei) is noticeably distinctive in outlines, branch shapes, and by a relative sparsity of brushstrokes articulating leaves. A disparity in leaf texture is even more apparent by a comparison of the second tree from the right in *Farewell in the Garden* (Vancouver) with the same tree in the other paintings. The relative latitude in the execution of outline and brushwork of *Farewell in the Garden* (Vancouver) suggests that this painting was not desired as an exact replica of the original. Moreover, this liberty denotes that the core appeal of this painting is its subject matter and theme rather than its aesthetic of accurate technical execution.

For a study of the four *Farewell* paintings, a social-historical approach is best suited to uncover the significance of an image depicting two specific people at an event. There exists a variety of approaches in the field of Chinese painting studies ranging from traditional connoisseurship to social-historical. To properly situate a study of the four *Farewell* paintings among the existing scholarship on Chinese painting, and particularly this study of Wen Zhengming among others, it will be useful to review key publications in the field. An overview of the general developments in scholarship on Chinese painting, with an emphasis on the issue of the copy and recent work on Wen Zhengming, will serve to mark where this study accords with the field in general or departs from the other directions on this subject.

2.2 Approaches in Chinese Painting

Most pressing in early western scholarship on Chinese painting were issues of authenticity and chronology. In the late 1940's, there was a growing awareness that some Song and Yuan paintings purchased earlier in the century by western museums were actually later copies of the Ming or Qing period.²⁰ These purchases and the misattribution of dates prompted scholarship to place a greater importance on accurately re-evaluating dates in order to provide a foundation for the field. The dilemma was clearly articulated by 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."²¹ In other words, the field needed a relatively stable chronological framework composed of firmly dated art that could then serve as a basis for other methods of analysis.

As a solution, Wen Fong, in a series of articles in the 1960's, proposed a method of analysis based on the structural qualities of painted forms.²² Wen Fong departed from traditional connoisseurship methods relying on brushwork, categorical identification, signatures, seals, and a subjective mode of analysis that included intuiting the "vitality" of paintings, and instead, used a structural analysis that examined the consistency of ground

²⁰ For a discussion of these trends on Ming painting studies see Ellen Johnston Laing, "The State of Ming Painting Studies," *Ming Studies* 3 (Spring 1977): 9-25.

²¹ Max Loehr, "Some Fundamental Issues in the History of Chinese Painting," *Journal of Asian Studies* 23 no. 2 (Feb. 1964): 187.

²² Wen Fong, "Toward a Structural Analysis of Chinese Art," *Art Journal* 28 (1969): 388-97; "Chinese Painting: A Statement of Method," *Oriental Art* 9 (1963): 73-78; and "The Problem of Forgeries in Chinese Painting," *Artibus Asiae* 25 (1962): 95-141.

planes, modes of spatial recession and organization of brushstrokes.²³ Wen Fong's method of structural analysis continues to be widely influential in studies of Chinese painting.

In the late 1950's, James Cahill offered another method of study that marked the beginning of a social art historical approach in the field. Cahill argued for a Confucian painting theory, positing that a moral value and purpose could exist in a work of art if a man could communicate his good character through it, and these qualities are then perceived and emulated by a viewer.²⁴ By focusing on the virtuous quality and expression of an artist, Cahill emphasized individuality; however, he added a social aspect to this by maintaining that a second Confucian imperative, a sense of community and kinship, which stemmed from shared values within the literati tradition, was fostered and continued as each successive generation read and viewed cultural works of their friends and predecessors.²⁵ Cahill's Confucian painting theory remains a strong foundation underlying scholarship in the field.

In the 1970's scholarly works by Cahill and Susan Bush considered social class objectives as factors informing art theory and practice.²⁶ The division of artists into categories such as professional and amateur was further addressed and complicated by Cahill's book, *The Painter's Practice*.²⁷ In that publication, Cahill reveals that literati artists,

²³ Jerome Silbergeld, "Chinese Painting Studies in the West: A State-of-the-Field Article," *Journal of Asian Studies* 46 no. 4 (Nov. 1987): 853.

²⁴ James Cahill, "Confucian Elements in the Theory of Painting," in *The Confucian Persuasion*, ed. Arthur F. Wright (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1960), 124.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 125-29.

²⁶ Susan Bush, *The Chinese Literati on Painting: Su Shih (1037-1101) to Tung Ch'i-Ch'ang (1555-1636)* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971); Cahill, *Parting at the Shore*, and his *Hills Beyond a River: Chinese Painting of the Yuan Dynasty, 1279-1368* (New York: Weatherhill, 1976).

²⁷ James Cahill, *The Painter's Practice: How Artists Lived and Worked in Traditional China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 77. Cahill notes that art-historical formulation of artist lineages were invoked to

like professional ones, were involved in commodity production and exchange for social and financial gains. Cahill showed that amateur artists did not always work alone, observing that some employed “ghost painters” to meet demands for their paintings.²⁸ Since the publication of this book, the literati artist has been situated in social and historical context, and in the next section, this approach will be discussed further in relation to studies of Wen Zhengming’s farewell painting to Wang Chong.

2.3 Studies of a Farewell Painting

Anne Clapp and Craig Clunas, leading scholars on Wen Zhengming, have both written on *Farewell at Halting Clouds Lodge* (Berlin). The following investigation will examine their approaches and readings of this painting to firstly, situate their analyses among wider scholarly trends in Chinese painting and secondly, serve as footing from which this study will build upon. The work of another scholar, Shih Shou-Chien, who attributes the popularity of Wen Zhengming’s landscape paintings to the promotion of it by Ming dynasty frustrated scholars, will also be assessed.

In Anne Clapp’s book, *The Art of Wen Cheng-Ming*, she comprehensively portrays him in his varied roles as scholar, art historian, and artist.²⁹ Clapp’s scholarship is punctiliously attentive to his stylistic and compositional techniques in relation to past models and her work remains crucial to a study of Wen Zhengming. In her visual analysis of Wen Zhengming’s paintings, she meticulously substantiates what he

establish the writer or his favourite painter’s privileged place in art history. Also see his article, “Tang Yin and Wen Zhengming as Artist Types: A Reconsideration,” *Artibus Asiae* 53 no. 1/2 (1993): 222-48.

²⁸ Wen Zhengming’s pupil Zhu Lang is said to have painted works for him that he would then sign. Cahill, *Parting at the Shore*, 217.

²⁹ Clapp, Anne de Coursey, *Wen Cheng-Ming: The Ming Artist and Antiquity* *Artibus Asiae Supplementum* 34 (Ascona: Artibus Asiae Publishers, 1975).

borrowed, from whom, his deliberate modifications, and most importantly, his solutions to aesthetic issues.³⁰ According to Clapp, *Farewell at Halting Clouds Lodge* (Berlin) is outstanding among the corpus of Wen Zhengming's works because it is the first revelation of his capacity to convey a subjective experience through paint.³¹ Wen Zhengming has captured a mood – the “mute emotion” of two friends sitting wordlessly in anticipation of the ensuing lonely days.³² Clapp further points out that the significance of the painting “depends as much on the event as on the nature of the visual forms.”³³ As I will argue later, this subjective mood, which was legible to viewers who knew the biography of Wen Zhengming and Wang Chong, exuded not just parting sentiments but also alluded to bureaucratic hopes and disappointments.

In Clapp's formal analysis of *Farewell at Halting Clouds Lodge* (Berlin) she compares it to an earlier work by Wen Zhengming, *The Yincui Pavilion*, 1520 (Figure 8).³⁴ According to Clapp, the “program and motifs” in the farewell painting are similar to *The Yincui Pavilion*, but are formally innovative because they are reduced, abbreviated, and intensified.³⁵ In *Farewell at Halting Clouds Lodge* (Berlin) she observes:

“...[Wen Zhengming] makes a drastic reduction in the number of motifs. The sky is left void and the ground all but empty. Earth and air merge somewhere in the invisible distance, creating a vague, indeterminate space which is neither depth nor surface but both simultaneously.”³⁶

In chapter five, I will expand on this “indeterminate space” noted by Clapp by arguing firstly, this handling of space is reminiscent of an earlier work, *Catalpa Trees* by Shen

³⁰ Johnston Liang, “The State of Ming Painting Studies,” 12.

³¹ Clapp, *Wen Cheng-Ming*, 49.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., 50. Clapp discusses Wen Zhengming's execution of the tree motifs as being inspired by Zhao Mengfu's undated *Scholars Playing the Qin in the Woods*.

³⁵ Ibid., 49-50.

³⁶ Ibid.

Zhou, and secondly, it was a compositional strategy to link this scene to natural landscape, and to encourage the projection of self as participant in the scene.

In Craig Clunas' book, *Elegant Debts: The Social Art of Wen Zhengming*, he extensively covers the life and work of the artist from the multiple subject positions of family members, peers, teachers, pupils and patrons.³⁷ Clunas' contribution lies in his emphasis on the effects of social networks on Wen Zhengming's art production and circulation. Using Marcel Mauss' concepts on gift exchange from 1925 and Arjun Appadurai's writings on gift giving and commodity status from the mid-1980's as methodological frameworks, Clunas reveals the complex ways in which the movement of paintings, presented as gifts, fostered reciprocity and maintained or deepened social relations.³⁸ It becomes apparent that paintings by Wen Zhengming, within the context of reciprocity, functioned to solidify his relationships with others.

In Clunas' analysis of *Farewell at Halting Clouds Lodging* (Berlin), he proposes that this painting reflects hierarchical Confucian relationships and values.³⁹ The two principal figures, Wen Zhengming and Wang Chong, are respectively host and guest, older and younger friends, teacher and student.⁴⁰ Clunas further observes that a Confucian hierarchy of relations is clearly established by posture and clothing.⁴¹ Inequality is coded by the figure of Wen Zhengming as host: his slightly bigger size, more erect posture, and in contrast to the young gesturing man, his composed bearing associated him with

³⁷ Craig Clunas, *Elegant Debts: The Social Art of Wen Zhengming, 1470-1559* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004).

³⁸ Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1967) and Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3-63. For Clunas discussion of Mauss and Appadurai see Clunas, *Elegant Debts*, 10-13.

³⁹ Clunas, *Elegant Debts*, 145

⁴⁰ Craig Clunas, "Artist and Subject in Ming Dynasty China," in *Proceedings of the British Academy (1999 Lectures and Memoirs)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 51.

⁴¹ *Elegant Debts*, 145

authority and a higher status.⁴² The servants, dressed in short jackets and trousers rather than long robes of the upper class, are deferential in posture which further accentuates the elite status of the two seated men.⁴³

Clunas' study of art works as objects that circulate in systems of social networks has significantly advanced a social art historical approach. As a gift from Wen Zhengming to Wang Chong, Clunas proposes that the painting is a reminder to the student of his teacher's dense networks of patronage and of Wen Zhengming's ability to help him advance in the social world.⁴⁴ However, for this discussion of four copies of the same painting, two questions remain unanswered: what purpose does a copy serve and who does it serve? Clunas' reading of *Farewell at Halting Clouds Lodging* (Berlin) does not extend fully to copies of it because his study is premised on an authentic original painting, one that directly affected the lives of Wen Zhengming and Wang Chong. Clunas has published three of the *Farewell* paintings, noting their frequency, but has not attempted to specifically address them collectively.⁴⁵ This thesis will draw on the excellent work by Clunas to begin an investigation on why copies of the *Farewell* paintings were produced and why these works were pertinent to viewers beyond the artist and recipient.

Another scholar that has laid considerable groundwork for this thesis is Shih Shou-Chien. In an article on Wen Zhengming's landscape paintings produced after his retirement from office, Shih has analyzed how the "deep-involute" compositions of

⁴² Clunas, "Artists and Subject in Ming Dynasty China," 54.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ In Clunas, *Elegant Debts*, 106 for *Farewell at Halting Clouds Lodging* (Berlin); 175 for *Pure Conversation in Green Shade* (Taipei); and 176 for *Lofly Scholars with Pines and Rocks*, (Tianjin). Clunas observes that Wen Zhengming's paintings were frequently reproduced and speculates that his name may have operated like a trademark to guarantee a "certain quality" for the purchaser. See his discussion on 173.

these works expressed melancholic sentiments that would resonate with frustrated scholars.⁴⁶ Shih has pinpointed the spring of 1527, the year after Wen Zhengming's retirement, as the beginning of a mode of cultural life dominated by "frustrated literati" who shared a common frustration from the difficulties in advancing or remaining in government.⁴⁷ Many of these frustrated scholars knew Wen Zhengming and were empathetic to his sentiments as they had experienced personally the same disappointments of examination failure and forced or voluntary early retirement.⁴⁸

Wen Zhengming's "deep-involute" landscape paintings are characterized by twisting and crowded mountains that exuded a palpable tension and restless rhythm.⁴⁹ *A Thousand Cliffs Vying in Splendor*, 1548-1550, is an example of a "deep-involute" composition where crowded, piled mountains create a tension that projects Wen Zhengming's desperate, disillusioned mood (Figure 9).⁵⁰ Bulky, angular rocks and cliffs delineate a penetrating depth and spiraling motion that conveys the complex sentiment of reluctant retreat.⁵¹ According to Shih, the goal of this painting was to "realize profound thought, to stir certain emotions and ultimately to transform a landscape into a sentient, self-referring statement for himself and his intimate friends."⁵² These landscape paintings of disillusionment and frustration with worldly affairs encapsulated the experiences of the frustrated scholars and rose in popularity among them.⁵³

⁴⁶ Shih, "The Landscape Painting of Frustrated Literati: The Wen Cheng-Ming Style in the Sixteenth Century," 218-246.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 233.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 234-6.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 225.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 230.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., 231.

⁵³ Ibid., 239.

At the bottom right corner of *A Thousand Cliffs Vying in Splendor* are three human figures, two seated men are conversing together as a servant approaches (Figure 10). As pointed out by Cahill, this scene of “sitting-by-the-water” in a natural landscape appears in an earlier work by Wen Zhengming, *Lofty Leisure Beneath a Sheer Cliff*, 1519 (Figure 11).⁵⁴ As will be discussed later, men seated by water is a convention associated with the idea of Xie Youyu’s “mind reclusion” through paintings of him in this mode by Gu Kaizhi (c.344-406) and Zhao Mengfu (1254-1322). Wen Zhengming knew this scene well and he included it as a strategy to nuance his landscapes with the concept of reclusion. As pointed out by Cahill, the sitting-by-the-water scene in *A Thousand Cliffs Vying in Splendor* differs from the conventional means of depicting it because it draws the viewer into sharing a particular experience.⁵⁵ This particularizing of a scene showing men seated by water is continued in the *Farewell* paintings and it is masterfully heightened by extraction and isolation. The small scene of men seated by water in *A Thousand Cliffs Vying in Splendor* and *Lofty Leisure Beneath a Sheer Cliff* is extracted, enlarged and presented by Wen Zhengming as the principal scene in the *Farewell* paintings. Surrounding landscapes in the *Farewell* paintings are eliminated to focus the viewer’s attention on the isolated episode of human figures; however, a comprehension of the reference to reclusion is expected and depends on knowledge of this scene as being previously located among the larger landscapes of mountains and rivers.

A Thousand Cliffs Vying in Splendor uses the sitting-by-the-water convention to project the subject position of the recluse and it appealed to frustrated scholars who understood and empathized with the stance of withdrawal. In the *Farewell* paintings, the

⁵⁴ Cahill, *Parting at the Shore*, 237-8.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 238.

scene of men seated on a ledge is mobilized for another purpose: while it still relays and draws on the concept of seclusion, it is powerfully inverted for a different effect – it represents the recluse Wen Zhengming sending his student off into the world of politics. This scene is layered with references to landscapes of frustration and withdrawal, and through association the *Farewell* paintings becomes a powerful scene of departure for Wang Chong. Shih has convincingly demonstrated that frustrated scholars were drawn to Wen Zhengming's "landscapes of seclusion" because his "deep-involved" compositions expressed somber sentiments familiar to them. I would argue that the *Farewell* paintings also referenced these sentiments of failure and frustration, however, they differ in one crucial respect – it is a hopeful scene that advocates for active service.

The above overview of scholarship on Wen Zhengming shows that a social-historical approach which considers the life and biography of the artist from different perspectives is productive. However, as the scholarly value of a copy has not been sufficiently assessed, Wen Zhengming's work is perhaps ideal for exploring the potential of copies to contribute meaningfully to studies of Chinese painting. During Wen Zhengming's own lifetime forgeries of his works were already circulating to an astounding degree. Wang Shizhen (1526-1590) who wrote "Biography of Master Wen" in the latter part of the sixteenth century noted the widespread forgery of Wen Zhengming's work was such that only twenty percent of the works circulating were genuine.⁵⁶ Today, the corpus of works attributed to Wen Zhengming – currently over 400 – continues to present an exigent challenge to authentication attempts.⁵⁷ Exacerbating the difficulty of task is that Wen Zhengming was a teacher and many of his

⁵⁶ Clunas, *Elegant Debts*, 166-7.

⁵⁷ Clapp, *Wen Cheng-Ming*, 35.

students instructed in his style excelled at his techniques and compositions.⁵⁸ And Wen Zhengming's own mastery of traditional techniques and forms with his constant artistic experimentation throughout his lifetime makes it especially challenging to chronologically locate his works with certainty.⁵⁹

Another challenge to dating Chinese paintings from the Ming period is that Wen Zhengming is but one artist among many who was copied profusely. In Suzhou, where he resided, the phenomenon of copying intensified to such an extent that the term *Suzhou pian*, or Suzhou fake, emerged to denote the fake paintings from this area.⁶⁰ The phenomenon of copying resulting in countless reproductions, which artists themselves purportedly could not differentiate from their own works, demands for a re-evaluation of copies as work worthy of serious art historical study.⁶¹ The misattribution of a copy as an authentic work does destabilize the chronology of historical markers, but if a copy is recognized as a copy, it becomes another kind of marker – it indicates subjects and themes that resonate with particular groups in specific periods. The study of copies is necessary for expanding subject positions as the focus on authentic art reinforces a hierarchical system of values that is inclined to validate only readings of people who interact with original works. For the *Farewell* paintings, a method of inquiry framed by a preference for the authentic would terminate in the conclusion that the original painting alone is meaningful, and only as it affected the lives of Wen Zhengming and Wang Chong. Yet clearly, by their very existence, copies of the *Farewell* paintings must have been

⁵⁸ Ibid., 39

⁵⁹ Ibid., 37.

⁶⁰ Ellen Johnston Laing, "'Suzhou Pian' And Other Dubious Paintings in the Received 'Oeuvre' Of Qiu Ying." *Artibus Asiae* 59, no. 3/4 (2000): 269.

⁶¹ There is a story of Shen Zhou who unwittingly purchased copies of his own work. See Cahill, *Parting at the Shore*, 94.

meaningful to many others as well. The *Farewell* paintings thus provide an opportunity to reconsider the significance of this particular mode of representation by reproduction.

CHAPTER III: Pursuit of Service

3.1 *The Shi from the Tang to Yuan Dynasties*

For many centuries, government service was the primary route to upward social mobility. A brief history on the changing criteria that define the *shi*, a socio-political class, from the Tang to Song dynasties will show how the bureaucratic recruitment system affected the social composition and attitudes of this class.⁶² The following section will then relate their opportunities to serve in government to subjects and themes in paintings by scholar officials. Peter Bol has investigated the history of ruling elites in China from the seventh to thirteenth century and he identifies the *shi* as members of the elite whose expected social role was to govern.⁶³ Bol maintains *shi*, as a concept, is a constructed idea: *shi* is redefined whenever the criteria – birthright, office holding, access to culture, and property ownership – defining men as *shi* changed. Consequently, membership into the *shi* class is gained by having the qualities and satisfying the standards particular to the historical context.⁶⁴

From the Tang to Yuan dynasties, the three essential criteria for defining men as *shi* were access to culture, birth into a clan with a pedigree of bureaucrats, and holding office. During this period, pedigree remained the primary basis to high office but from the Song dynasty onward, the bureaucratic examination system initiated a change whereby culture outweighed birth and education became the route to obtaining coveted

⁶² Willard Peterson notes that the term *shi* was translated into English via Latin in the seventeenth century as "literati." Peterson, "Confucian Learning in Late Ming Thought," 711.

⁶³ Peter Kees Bol, *This Culture of Ours: Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992).

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 32.

posts.⁶⁵ During the early Tang dynasty, political leadership was an oligarchy of great clans from the northwest.⁶⁶ A clan, comprised of families descending from a common ancestor, maintained its pedigree through a shared genealogical record of office holders and prestigious marriages. Branches of the clan failing to obtain office or arrange prominent marriages could be omitted from family records.⁶⁷ The Tang bureaucratic system was conducive to assisting successive generations of the great clans to keep civil service as occupations because office holders could place their descendants in government positions.⁶⁸

After nearly a century of warfare, the founders of the Song dynasty promoted civil values by placing governance in the hands of a civil bureaucracy.⁶⁹ Bol argues that the Song emperors, eager to centralize authority, supported the *shi* because they drew power from a central authority and were traditionally committed to civil culture.⁷⁰ At the turn of the eleventh century, during the reigns of Taizong (r.976-997) and Zhenzong (r.997-1022), more candidates passed examinations than the known total of civil officials, and the bureaucracy doubled under the reign of Renzong (r.1022-63).⁷¹ The increase in the number of bureaucrats indicates that recruited officials were not primarily from families of gentry status. The imperial backing of the bureaucratic recruitment system resulted in greater social mobility that altered the social composition of the *shi* class, and in turn, would later de-emphasize birth as a criterion for membership.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 33.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 36.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 39.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 41.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 52.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., 55. See 57 for the table of "Number of Civil Officials vs. Number of Degrees Granted 997-1067." See also Alfreda Murck, *Poetry and Painting in Song China: The Subtle Art of Dissent* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center for the Harvard-Yenching Institute, 2000), 30.

It will be useful to continue Bol's work beyond the Song dynasty to analyze how criteria defining the *shi* changes during the Yuan dynasty. The *shi* were discriminated against by the Mongol rulers who preferred to appoint high level government positions to Mongols and other non-Han Chinese such as the Uighurs and western Asians. The bureaucratic examination system was also discontinued until 1315. This policy of discrimination decreased opportunities for the *shi* to serve in government and consequently, lessened the importance of holding office as a criterion for elite status. The Mongol reign also posed a moral dilemma to China's educated elite who were groomed for bureaucratic office but were averse to serving a foreign ruler. Some, like the Southern Song prime minister Wen Tianxiang (1236-1283), chose death over submission while others, such as Zhao Mengfu, accepted government positions offered to him. The reluctance to serve a foreign ruler combined with prejudicial treatment led many of the *shi* to turn to eremitism, an idea of voluntary withdrawal from society as an act of protest and resistance.⁷²

The limited opportunities to serve in the Yuan dynasty, which redefined the criteria of the *shi* class also, arguably, marked a shift in the definition of "literati artist" – it was becoming a term that could refer to an artist who lived in retirement or reclusion. As noted by Susan Bush, in contrast to the Song scholar artists who tended to be government officials, many of the best known scholar painters of the Yuan lived in retirement.⁷³ As will be discussed in the next section, this condition of limited prospects

⁷² See Fredrick W. Mote, "Confucian Eremitism in the Yuan Period," in *The Confucian Persuasion*, ed. Arthur F. Wright (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1960), 209. For a concise historical overview of reclusion in Chinese history see Li Chi, "The Changing Concept of the Recluse in Chinese Literature," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 24 (1962-1963): 234-47.

⁷³ Bush, *The Chinese Literati on Painting*, 118.

to serve in government experienced by the *shi* finds expression in the subject and composition of Yuan dynasty literati paintings.

3.2 Service in Literati Art

Since the Tang dynasty, the *shi* ranked at the top of the hierarchical social order and in the Song dynasty, they achieved unprecedented prestige, becoming leaders of elite culture through painting, poetry and calligraphy. The rise of literati painting during this time correlates to the rise in power of scholar officials. The development of monumental landscape painting, which flourished from the late tenth century to the early twelfth century, parallels the influence of the examination system and corresponds to the rise in social and political status of bureaucratic officials.⁷⁴ Monumental landscape painting reinforced the hierarchical Confucian social structure by representing a universal vision of a harmonious social order. Examples of landscape paintings suited to this purpose are Guo Xi's (c.1000-1090) *Early Spring*, 1072 and Fan Kuan's (990-1020) *Travelers Amid Streams and Mountains*, dated after 1123 (Figures 12-13). In these landscapes, the central mountain is considered the "host peak" while secondary mountains are its "subjects."⁷⁵ Both paintings visually alluded to and reinforced an imperial social order where the emperor was surrounded by his loyal subjects in a harmonious relationship.⁷⁶

A second purpose of monumental landscape painting was to provide visual means for mental escape through carefully arranged compositions of natural elements –

⁷⁴ Wen Fong, "Monumental Landscape Painting," *Possessing the Past* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996), 121.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 127.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

mountains, trees, rocks and rivers – in space. In Guo Xi's treatise on painting, *Lofty Ambition in Forests and Streams*, he discusses spatial composition: high distance is the perspective peering from the base of the mountain up to the top; deep distance views the mountain frontally and peers into its depth; and level distance begins at a nearby mountain to gaze beyond distant ones.⁷⁷ According to Guo Xi, landscape paintings served those at court by offering scenes for visual escape, transporting officials away from worldly affairs to streams and ravines. He evaluated landscape paintings according to the level of enjoyment it could provide – ranking ones that one could ramble or dwell in above those for walking through or gazing on.⁷⁸

Towards the end of the Northern Song, the perspective and subject matter in monumental landscape painting starts to shift. Beginning in the late eleventh century and early twelfth century, the figure of a scholar meditating appeared in landscape painting.⁷⁹ Formerly attributed to Fan Kuan, *Sitting Alone by the Stream*, dated to the early twelfth century, can be considered a transitional work marking the shift from monumental landscapes of mountains to scenes that more frequently included human figures set in them (Figure 14).⁸⁰ A detail of *Sitting Alone by the Stream* portrays a lonely pensive figure seated on the shore, reflecting and hinting to the world of introspection and withdrawal that would continue in the art of the Southern Song and Yuan dynasties (Figure 15).⁸¹ The convention of a human figure meditating on the shore is later taken up by Yuan dynasty painter, Zhao Mengfu, who would use it to allude to reclusion. In chapter five, I

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Osvald Sirén, *The Chinese on the Art of Painting: Texts by the Painter-Critics, from the Han through the Ch'ing Dynasties* (Mineola: Dover Publications, Inc., 2005), 44. See also Wen Fong, "Monumental Landscape Painting," 130-131.

⁷⁹ Wen Fong, "Monumental Landscape Painting," 136-7.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 137.

⁸¹ Ibid.

will return to this space by the shore that is occupied by contemplative figures, and will demonstrate how the composition of space in the *Farewell* paintings evokes these symbolic scenes of the past.

Zhao Mengfu, a descendant of a Song emperor, was considered by some to be a traitor when he agreed to serve the Mongol government. Zhao reconciled his career choice by expressing the stance of *chaoyin* or “recluse at court” in his paintings.⁸² The concept of *chaoyin* was based on the Confucian idea that a person could be externally engaged in a political career while preserving internally the mentality of the recluse who was spiritually removed from the contamination of public life.⁸³ Painted by Zhao Mengfu while he was engaged at court, *The Mind Landscape of Xie Youyu* is premised on the idea of internal reclusion (Figure 16). This theme of the recluse at court allowed Zhao Mengfu to communicate his conflicted feelings between service and reclusion, engagement and withdrawal, and active and contemplative life.⁸⁴ The depicted seated man is the Eastern Jin official Xie Kun (280-322), a historical figure famous for preserving the purity of his mind while at court. In this “space cell” created by the surrounding trees, the recluse Xie Kun gazes upon the water and sits on a tiger skin, the traditional symbol of wild, uncorrupted nature.⁸⁵ As noted by Wen Fong, “the pose, the

⁸² For a history of eremitism in early philosophical texts see Aat Vervoorn, *Men of the Cliffs and Caves: The Development of the Chinese Eremetic Tradition to the end of the Han Dynasty* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1990), 19-73. For a history of the practice and portrayal of recluses see Alan J. Berkowitz, *Patterns of Disengagement: The Practice and Portrayal of Reclusion in Early Medieval China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

⁸³ James Cahill, “The Yuan Dynasty,” in *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 144. For the different terms of reclusion which include *shiyin* for retirement in the city and *zhongyin* for middle retirement see Li Chi, “The Changing Concept of the Recluse in Chinese Literature,” 243. Li connects the trend of retirement to the Mongol conquest, 243-44.

⁸⁴ Wen C. Fong, “The Yuan Dynasty: The Rise of Self-Expression,” in *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*, ed. Wen C. Fong (Princeton: Art Museum, Princeton University, 1984), 102.

⁸⁵ Shou-Chien Shih, “The Mind Landscape of Hsieh Yu-yu by Chao Meng-Fu,” in *Images of the Mind*, 238

flowing stream, the space cell, and the overall soft-toned backdrop of the mountain all contribute to an otherworldly atmosphere of peace and purity, representing the hermit's aloof spiritual state – his 'mind landscape.'" ⁸⁶ *The Mind Landscape of Xie Youyu* uses the historical past and Confucian thought to offer a form of service that could justify employment under a foreign government. The concept of "service" as represented by Zhao Mengfu is enriched by association with the idea of reclusion. Subject, style, and composition are effectively mobilized to achieve one purpose – the proposal of internal reclusion as the basis for an active form of service.

This chapter has shown how the definition of *shi* changes in relation to the opportunities, or lack of them, to serve in government office. During the period when the examination system became the primary means of recruitment, literati art gained momentum; consequently, the themes and subjects in literati painting reflect the experiences of the *shi* as scholar officials. Monumental landscape painting during the Song dynasty expressed and met the needs of the actively serving official, offering them a coherent cosmic social order as well as visual means to mentally escape from it. In the Yuan dynasty, as opportunities for office were limited by politics, the theme of reclusion and withdrawal increasingly appeared in literati painting. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to include more detailed examples correlating the experiences of the *shi* class from the Song to Yuan dynasties to themes of service depicted in literati painting; however, the premise of this correlation, as I will argue in chapter five, situates the desire to serve by Ming dynasty elites as a continuation of the theme of service.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

CHAPTER IV: Wen Zhengming and the Ming Dynasty

4.1 *The Shi in the Ming Dynasty*

In the Ming dynasty, the *shi* class became increasingly frustrated by the competition for government positions and the perils of holding office in a precarious political climate. The following detailed study of the bureaucratic recruitment system during the Ming dynasty will demonstrate that the social pressures and disappointments endured by Wen Zhengming and Wang Chong were disheartening experiences familiar to many of their contemporary peers. The historical conditions specific to the Ming dynasty – economic growth resulting in increased competition from the merchant class for government posts, a volatile political climate characterized by purges and sudden dismissals, and the rise of Wang Yangming’s Neo-Confucian philosophy which united knowledge and action – all created a feeling of disillusionment amongst the *shi*. The term “frustrated scholar” will be used to refer to educated elites who were defined by one or all of the following experiences: the pressures of being expected to pass the civil service examinations, the pressures of office holding, and sudden dismissal or early retirement.⁸⁷

This discussion continues to extend Peter Bol’s work to analyze how the *shi* are redefined during the Ming period. The *shi*, particularly those residing in the Suzhou geographical region, were affected by dramatic population growth, economic explosion,

⁸⁷ Clunas and Shih identify many of the “frustrated literati” in Wen Zhengming’s immediate circle that met disappointment: Wang Chong who failed the *jinshi* eight times between 1510 and 1531; Cai Yu who failed the provincial exam fourteen times between 1492 and 1531; Lu Shiming who sat the *juren* nine times between 1495 and 1519 before passing, and the *jinshi* three times between 1520 and 1526; and, Lu Xu had nine tries before success in 1518. See Shih, “The Landscape Painting of Frustrated Literati,” 234-6 and Clunas, *Elegant Debts*, 73.

and a wider availability and circulation of knowledge.⁸⁸ Occurring in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the composition of the *shi* class began including more men from merchant backgrounds.⁸⁹ A bureaucratic office was attractive for many reasons, such as tax and corvée labour exemptions, but it was especially coveted because it led to social status and prestige. The primary way merchants entered into the *shi* class was by obtaining a bureaucratic post through the examination system. Another means of attaining elite membership was by gaining and wielding knowledge previously exclusive to traditional elites, such as art appreciation and collection, which became readily available through the abundant and variety of publications in print.⁹⁰

The success of Wang Chong's family in achieving upward social mobility through education and bureaucratic office is an example of economic growth facilitating the rise of the merchant class in political and cultural power. Although Wang Chong was unsuccessful, his brother, Wang Shou, passed the *jinshi* exam in 1526 and served as an official.⁹¹ Wang Chong's father, Wang Qingfu, was a prosperous merchant who according to Wen Zhengming, was different from other merchants in that he accumulated ancient vessels, calligraphy and painting for his own pleasure.⁹² The Wang family exemplifies how the wealth of the merchant class could propel the next generation socially upward. The merchant class had means to provide thorough educations for their sons and purchase cultural objects for study and appreciation. The

⁸⁸ For a history of Suzhou from 560 BCE to 1367 CE see Michael Marme, "Heaven on Earth: The Rise of Suzhou, 1127-1550," in *Cities of Jiangnan in Late Imperial China*, ed. Linda Cooke Johnson (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 17-46.

⁸⁹ Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1998), 156-7.

⁹⁰ Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1991).

⁹¹ Clunas, *Elegant Debts*, 144.

⁹² Clunas, *Elegant Debts*, 142.

accomplishments of the Wang brothers indicate how the social composition of the *shi* class begins to include men from merchant backgrounds. Wang Shou attained bureaucratic status for his family while both brothers circulated among Suzhou cultural elites. The wealth of merchant families assisted their entry into elite status and it also sharply increased the competition for bureaucratic posts.

Civil service examination statistics indicate a high success rate of candidates from merchant backgrounds. The bureaucratic recruitment system was comprised of three examination levels – provincial, metropolitan, and imperial – occurring every three years.⁹³ At the provincial level, over 4,000 candidates regularly appeared in the capitals of the thirteen provinces which totals to 52,000 hopefuls per year.⁹⁴ At the metropolitan level an average of 1000-2000 wrote the examinations and the number of successful graduates fluctuated from thirty-two to 472.⁹⁵ Over the course of the Ming dynasty, metropolitan degrees were granted to an average of ninety people every three years; this final number in relation to the outset of 52,000 candidates attests to the ferocity of competition and difficulty of task.⁹⁶ In Ping-ti Ho's study of the social composition of metropolitan or *jinsshi* degree holders, he reports that with the exception of three years, distinguished families – those from a bureaucratic family – failed to produce more than ten percent of the *jinsshi* at each examination.⁹⁷ In the overall average for the entire Ming-Qing period, they accounted for only 5.7 percent of the total

⁹³ The cycle of recruitment began between 1368 and 1371 but was suspended until 1384-5. The sequence was conducted ninety times and produced a total of 24,874 metropolitan graduates. See Charles O. Hucker, "Ming Government," in *Cambridge History of China Volume 8: The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644, Part 2*, ed. Denis Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 38.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 36. A list of thirteen provinces can be found on 12.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 38-39.

⁹⁷ Ping-ti Ho, *The Ladder of Success in Imperial China: Aspects of Social Mobility, 1368-1911* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), 147. For a discussion on upward and downward social mobility as indicated by statistics see 92-167.

candidates.⁹⁸ These statistics prove that distinguished families despite having advantages did not dominate the *jinshi* degrees, indicating that other groups from non-bureaucratic families, such as the merchant class, achieved a greater measure of success.

Competition for bureaucratic posts was only one factor shaping the experiences of Ming dynasty elites. During this period, officials in government were disillusioned and frustrated by the volatile political climate which frequently resulted in death sentences, beatings, dismissals, and demotions. The first Ming emperor, Zhu Yuanzhang (1328-1398), was suspicious of officials and notoriously purged tens of thousands from their posts. At the beginning of the dynasty, within a span of seventeen years from 1376 to 1393, some 10,000 officials were dismissed, 30,000 disappeared, and 25,000 put to death.⁹⁹ Wen Zhengming was keenly cognizant of the dangers of serving in office as the careers of many of his immediate friends were abruptly or unjustly terminated, and as his own retirement has been linked to political controversy at court.¹⁰⁰

4.2 Wen Zhengming's Pursuit of Bureaucratic Office

Wen Zhengming came from a family of bureaucrats and his success as a third generation degree holder would have solidified a bureaucratic pedigree for the Wen family (Figure 17). His grandfather, Wen Hong (1426-1479), was the first to achieve a

⁹⁸ Ibid., 147. For statistics on the social background of metropolitan candidates from 1371 to 1904 see *Table 9 Social Composition of Ming-Ching Chin-Shih* on 112-113.

⁹⁹ Valerie Hansen, *The Open Empire: A History of China to 1600* (New York: Norton, 2000), 376. On one occasion 107 officials of the central government were sentenced to kneel outside of the palace gate for five successive days. Some officials were stripped naked and flogged with bamboo poles, sometimes to death. See also Hucker, "Ming Government," 28.

¹⁰⁰ Shih, "The Landscape Painting of Frustrated Literati," 234-5. Shih proposes that Wen Zhengming's retirement was directly related to the "Great Ritual Controversy." An account of this can also be found in Clunas, *Elegant Debts*, 81.

juren degree in 1465; his father, Wen Lin (1445-1499) was the first to receive the *jinshi* degree in 1472; and his uncle, Wen Sen (1464-1525), also obtained the *jinshi* degree in 1487.¹⁰¹ This pedigree of qualified office holders in the Wen family and his desire to continue it must have weighed heavily in Wen Zhengming's decision to keep writing the examinations. Wen Zhengming eventually did receive an appointment at the Hanlin Academy in 1523, but he obtained it through his social connections and not through the examination system.¹⁰² His insecurity and sorrow stemming from his failure to earn even the lowest degree haunted him for the rest of his life, finding expression in his paintings, poetry and personal letters.

It was in the spring of 1523 when Wen Zhengming was in the capital city preparing to write yet another civil examination that he received notice of his appointment at the Hanlin Academy. In a series of nine letters to his family written during this time, Wen Zhengming describes the trials of traveling to the city and his personal insecurities and anxieties.¹⁰³ In the sixth letter written just after he was appointed to office, he confides his self-doubt to his son:

"I worry that I have not accomplished anything. I am frustrated. Now I have received an official position, but I talk this way! If it weren't the true situation – but it must be only between us: father and sons."¹⁰⁴

The position at the Hanlin Academy which involved compiling the history of the previous era was highly coveted as it led to posts in the grand secretariat. This

¹⁰¹ Clunas, *Elegant Debts*, 20, 72.

¹⁰² Lin Jun, a senior official who was a family friend of Wen Zhengming's wrote a recommendation letter to Li Chongsi, another official, who in turn would recommend Wen Zhengming as a student in the National University Beijing in 1522. This status allowed him to bypass the provincial (*juren*) examination and write the higher metropolitan (*jinshi*) examination. Clunas draws on the work of Shih Shou-chien and speculates that it was people such as Lin Jun who helped Wen Zhengming obtain an appointment. See Clunas, *Elegant Debts*, 75-79.

¹⁰³ The nine letters were written from Beijing from the third to the sixth month of 1523. They are published in Edwards, *The Art of Wen Cheng-Ming*, 86-92.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 90.

prestigious post, typically appointed to the top three metropolitan graduates, was appointed to Wen Zhengming who did not pass one examination, and as a result, perhaps unsurprisingly, he would encounter the resentment of other Hanlin Academy officials. He Liangjun (1506-1573), a compiler of Wen Zhengming anecdotes, records the opinions of two officials:

“When Master Hengshan [Wen Zhengming] was in the Hanlin, he was greatly resented by Yao Lai [*jinshi* 1523] and Yang Weicong [b.1500]. They once said bluntly to a number of people, ‘Our office is not a painting workshop, so why allow a painter in it?’”¹⁰⁵

Yao Lai and Yang Weicong’s disparaging remark, referring to Wen Zhengming as a painter craftsman, indicate that his cultural accomplishments in painting, poetry and calligraphy did not guarantee him the respect of his colleagues; indeed, this remark suggests that Wen Zhengming’s inability to pass even the lowest examination factored into his colleagues’ opinion of him. For Wen Zhengming, success at the examinations was not merely a means for office, it was a measure of his self-worth. In a comment by Wen Zhengming recorded in his biography, he regrets laments on his inability to win a degree:

“Ever since I was a young man I have devoted myself to writing, hoping to establish a career in government service. But I have not been able to win even one degree. How can I now have the temerity to remain here any longer, especially when I have nothing to do and am still being paid a salary?”¹⁰⁶

Eventually, Wen Zhengming requested early retirement from his post and withdrew from his duties in 1526. Even after holding a prestigious position he continued remarking on his unworthiness, still modestly referring to himself as a student. In the fourth verse

¹⁰⁵ Clunas, *Elegant Debts*, 125 and 158.

¹⁰⁶ Cahill, *Parting at the Shore*, 216.

of *Improvised on Horseback To Say Good-bye to Those Who Are Seeing Me Off – Ten Poems*,

Wen Zhengming writes:

“This man of leisure for twenty years
has been a robber of empty reputation:
dare I claim that in the past
I had no real desire for this life?
For “patching His Majesty’s robe” and
“inscribing on the bell” there are many worthy officials:
such glory was not intended for a mere student like me!”¹⁰⁷

Interestingly, in this poem he refers to himself as a “robber of empty reputation.” During the Ming dynasty, the decision to withdraw from court was complicated by the perception that people often sought office solely to “seek empty reputation.” Timothy Brook has observed that starting in the 1520’s, officials were skeptically aware that not everyone was genuinely committed to serving in government, and that some sought office only for the status a title conferred.¹⁰⁸ The political and educational ethos of the elite was changing and it resulted in a decline in commitment to state service in favour of withdrawal.¹⁰⁹ According to Brook, it was not difficult court politics that triggered this shift, but the demographic and economic effects of commercialization which decreased the chances of entering civil service, and increased reliance on patron-client networks and factions.¹¹⁰ Liao Ji, a Minister of Personnel in 1524, laments on the trend of insincere office holders:

“During the reigns of earlier Ming emperors, those qualified to hold office were not as numerous as they are today, and their customs were simple and pure. They were devoted to their proper vocation, not fraudulently clever or pursuing empty fame. The state could rely on them, and so

¹⁰⁷ Jonathan Chaves, *The Columbia Book of Later Chinese Poetry: Yuan, Ming, and Ch’ing Dynasties* (1279-1911) (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 225-227. For the complete poem see Appendix A.

¹⁰⁸ Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 312-316.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 313.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 314.

political affairs were properly handled and the people were at peace. As of the Zhengde era, however, many gentry sought empty reputations. Few have actually been meritorious officials. Whether it is because they judge office to be inconsequential, or will not work hard at their vocation, or feel that established authority gives them no elbow room, they all make excuses about having to return to private life on grounds of ill health. Even some of those who have taken up office foolishly ask to abandon their posts.”¹¹¹

Liao Ji was disheartened by wavering or pretentious commitment to service and by people who pursue official posts without intent to effectively govern. People like Liao Ji perceived a difference between genuinely committed office holders and disingenuous ones. This awareness complicates the concept of the recluse and the act of withdrawal as a form of social critique: unwarranted or easy abandonment of bureaucratic duty becomes questionable. Moreover, this awareness of a difference between those with genuine desire to serve from those who sought empty reputations is relevant to a reading of the *Farewell* paintings. Wen Zhengming and Wang Chong, in their determination for office – which is demonstrated by their many attempts to pass civil examinations throughout their lives – exemplify genuine intentions.

4.3 The Unity of Knowledge and Action in Neo-Confucianism

The rise of Wang Yangming's (1472–1529) Neo-Confucian teachings greatly affected attitudes towards government service during the Ming dynasty. A central philosophical shift – that action is required to apprehend and demonstrate knowledge – arguably, made it paramount to obtain a government post as proof of understanding and having moral virtue. This action-oriented principle of Neo-Confucianism further

¹¹¹ Ibid., 312-3.

exacerbated competition because it entreated educated elites to demonstrate a commitment to be socially engaged. Given the limited opportunities to serve in office, I propose that one form of action becomes the *persistent pursuit* of service; the intention to serve is demonstrated by writing examinations, and repetition of attempts renders the commitment to serve more evident. In the context of this philosophical shift that required action, the *Farewell* paintings, which represent two men with a history of writing examinations, can thus be considered as records of the persistent pursuit to be of service.

Neo-Confucianism is a term commonly applied to the two revival periods of Confucian philosophy and political culture that was led by Zhu Xi (1130-1200) in the Song and by Wang Yangming in the Ming dynasty. Zhu Xi's teachings were hugely influential in shaping elite intellectual thought and conduct because civil examinations were based on his authoritative commentaries of the Four Books and Five Classics. Wang Yangming's ideas were initially criticized for deviating from the imperially sanctioned versions of Neo-Confucianism; however, his ideas gained momentum from 1529 to 1554.¹¹² The original farewell painting was produced by Wen Zhengming during the rise of Wang Yangming's philosophy, therefore it is pertinent to consider his ideas as audiences desiring the *Farewell* paintings likely encountered and were informed by Wang Yangming's teachings.

Considering the theme of bureaucratic service in the *Farewell* paintings, Wang Yangming's concept of the unity of knowledge and action is relevant.¹¹³ Contrary to

¹¹² Peterson, "Confucian Learning in Late Ming Thought," 708 and 716.

¹¹³ Wang Yangming can also be considered a frustrated scholar as he failed the civil examinations twice. He received the *juren* at the age twenty-one however, he failed the *jinshi* examination twice before passing

earlier concepts by Zhu Xi that posited knowledge as occurring before action, Wang believed knowledge and action were inseparable:¹¹⁴

“Knowledge in its genuine and earnest aspect is action, and action in its intelligent and discriminating aspect is knowledge. At bottom the task of knowledge and action cannot be separated... My idea that true knowledge is what constitutes action and that unless it is acted on it cannot be called knowledge.”¹¹⁵

Wang Yangming's doctrine of the investigation of things delivers another key philosophical change. In contrast to Zhu Xi who placed the investigation of things before the sincerity of the will, Wang Yangming believed that the sincerity of the will was the foundation on which investigation and action is based upon.¹¹⁶ Therefore, action begins as soon as there is the will or the desire to do it.¹¹⁷ Wang Yangming's extension of knowledge required absolute sincerity of the will which in turn is equated with a sense of righteousness that entails vigorous and active effort.¹¹⁸ The widespread popularity of Wang Yangming's Neo-Confucian concepts uniting knowledge and action increased social pressure on educated elites to demonstrate their ideals by some form of observable action. Consequently, given the limited opportunities to serve in government in the Ming dynasty, one overt form of demonstrating the ideal of service is the repeated attempts to pass civil examinations.

at the age of twenty-eight. See Frederick Goodrich Henke, trans., *The Philosophy of Wang Yang-ming* (New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1964), 7-8.

¹¹⁴ Wing-tsit Chan, trans., *Instructions for Practical Living and Other Neo-Confucian Writings by Wang Yang-Ming* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), xxxv.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, xxxv, 93.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, xxxi.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, xxxvi.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, xxxviii.

CHAPTER V: Turning to Farewell in the Garden

5.1 Service in the Garden

At a glance, it seems odd to compare the *Farewell* paintings which depict an intimate garden scene, to literati landscape paintings, larger scenes typically set in the wilderness, and yet, a continuity exists when considering these paintings through the theme of “service.” The site of the garden, rich with a history of cultural association, allude to landscapes in the wilderness and hints to a particular form of “service” that is evocative of reclusion. Since the Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE), the site and image of the garden was interpreted through painting, poetry and prose as the symbol of contemplative life.¹¹⁹ The most famous of these is the fourth century *Lan Ting* garden that was associated with the famous calligrapher and virtuous scholar ideal, Wang Xizhi (303-361). In the Northern Song dynasty, the space and concept of the garden started to become an extension of the identity of its owner.¹²⁰ Portraits of real people in named sites as well as generic images of hermits all incorporated the garden setting as a suitable environment for a learned and cultured person.¹²¹ The physical spaces of gardens composed of buildings, ponds and plants were perceived as property of the owners, but also as self-representation and aspirations of these men in spatial and architectural form.¹²² Ideas on gardens in Northern Song writings and images of them in paintings, like Li Gonglin's *Mountain Villa* from the eleventh century, developed the concept that a

¹¹⁹ Clapp, *Wen Cheng-Ming*, 45.

¹²⁰ Robert E. Harrist, Jr., “Art and Identity in the Northern Sung Dynasty: Evidence from Gardens,” *Arts of the Sung and Yuan*, ed. Maxwell K. Hearn and Judith G. Smith (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art 1996), 147. Also see his article “Site Names and Their Meanings in the Garden of Solitary Enjoyment.” *Journal of Garden History* 13, no. 4 (Nov. 1993): 199-212.

¹²¹ Harrist, “Art and Identity in the Northern Sung Dynasty: Evidence from Gardens,” 147.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 151.

distinctively named garden, thatched hut or studio were components of self-representation, projecting the owner's identity into the larger social world.¹²³ Later during times of social upheaval in the Yuan dynasty, this genre of painting depicting images of gardens, retreats, and studios came to signal private environments, likening it to the minds of the owners.¹²⁴

Beginning in the fifteenth century, in the Suzhou, the city where Wen Zhengming and Wang Chong resided, the pace of garden building and portraits of them grew in frequency to the effect of altering the format of paintings and initiating a new term for this genre.¹²⁵ The short handscroll format known as *biehaotu* or "alternative name picture" which commemorated a garden and its owner became so popular that Zhang Chou, a contemporary art historian writing in 1606, considered this it as the defining genre of the Ming period.¹²⁶ The *Farewell* paintings easily belong to the *biehaotu* genre as the inscriptions specify that the site of parting is located on Wen Zhengming's property at his Halting Cloud Studio.

The rise of garden building and culture in the Ming dynasty transformed this site into a space in which class boundaries could be negotiated. Wealthy merchants and land owners frequently commissioned portraits and literary records of their estates because

¹²³ Ibid., 158.

¹²⁴ Ibid. Richard Vinograd observes that the trend of landowners commissioning portraits of their properties began in the Yuan dynasty and that these "landscapes of property" can be considered a genre in literati landscape paintings. See Richard Vinograd, "Family Properties: Personal Context and Cultural Pattern in Wang Meng's *Pien Mountains* of 1366," *Ars Orientalis* 13 (1982): 1-29.

¹²⁵ Craig Clunas, "The Gift and the Garden," *Orientalism* 26, no. 2 (Feb. 1995): 41-4. Jan Stuart observes that the rise of garden culture in the Ming dynasty affects subject matter, brushstrokes as well as format. See Jan Stuart, "Ming Dynasty Gardens Reconstructed in Words and Images," *Journal of Garden History* 10, no. 3 (1990): 165.

¹²⁶ Clunas, "The Gift and the Garden," 44.

they understood the potency of the garden as a symbol and site for elite enactment.¹²⁷

The scene of Wen Zhengming and Wang Chong together is suggestive of the permeability of class boundaries in the garden: Wen Zhengming who comes from a landowning bureaucratic family is socializing intimately with Wang Chong who comes from a merchant background. Wang Chong is thus situated in an elite space and his social status is elevated by being depicted in the garden.

Clunas proposes that in the Ming dynasty, the garden through its reference to natural landscape was associated with eremitism, and this connection transformed the garden, which was often located in the city, into a site to perform withdrawal from society.¹²⁸ The garden was a powerful site because it was the space where a person could accumulate moral authority by enacting withdrawal, invoking the virtues associated with the recluse.¹²⁹ Wen Zhengming as the retired official depicted in a garden setting is thus positioned as a recluse, and it is the space that lends him moral authority. The *Farewell* paintings also reference the spaces of reclusion by its very composition: the absence of man-made architecture facilitates the mental relocation of this scene from the city to the wilderness of nature.

Apart from the natural setting of *Farewell in the Garden*, the brushwork and composition is related to landscape paintings by another means: these paintings, although small in scale and intimate in setting, manage to function in the capacity of a landscape painting by providing elements that support contemplation and visitation. The careful execution of brushwork in the *Farewell* paintings is one method that operates to

¹²⁷ Anne De Coursey Clapp, "The Sources of Wen Cheng-Ming's Style," in *The Art of Wen Cheng-Ming, 1470-1559*, ed. Richard Edwards (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1976), 9. See also Antonia Finnane, *Speaking of Yangzhou: A Chinese City, 1550-1850* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Centre, 2004), 201.

¹²⁸ Craig Clunas, *Fruitful Sites: Garden Culture in Ming Dynasty China* (London: Reaktion Books, 1996), 107.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 106-7

engage and hold the viewer's attention. Meticulous brushwork and concentrated surface texture is one characteristic feature of Wen Zhengming's style, and this quality is most visibly apparent in *Lofty Scholars with Pines and Rock* (Tianjin). The surface texture of controlled brushwork, seen in the fastidious rendering of the tree foliage and bark, offers a variety of luxuriant dots and fibrous lines that effectively prolongs visual consumption.¹³⁰ The composition of the *Farewell* paintings operates similarly to those in landscape paintings in that space is purposefully constructed to invite the viewer into contemplation of the scene. The open foreground permits access to Wen Zhengming and Wang Chong, and encourages the projection of self to sit among them. Another path of approach, weaving between trees, is suggested by the corporeally embodied route taken by the servants.

A comparison of all the *Farewell* paintings together shows that the amount of space allotted to the servants in *Farewell in the Garden* (Vancouver) and *Pure Conversation in Green Shade* (Taipei) noticeably exceeds the room in *Farewell at Halting Clouds Lodging* (Berlin) and *Lofty Scholars with Pines and Rock* (Tianjin) paintings (Figures 18-21). The servant holding a box who is centrally placed in the composition merits special attention. The four paintings differ in the amount of space allotted to this figure and this discrepancy warrants a closer introspection of the space itself.

The use of tree trunks as a framing technique to create space cells is a convention Wen Zhengming has used in his earlier works such as a section from *The Pliant Orchid Living-room*, 1529 and *Cascading Waterfalls in the Pine Ravine*, 1527-31 (Figures 22-23). In these two paintings, Wen Zhengming adeptly uses tree trunks to

¹³⁰ See Cahill's analysis of richly textured Yuan and Ming dynasty landscape paintings that prolong a viewing experience in this manner. Cahill, *Parting at the Shore*, 86.

frame figures, directing the viewers gaze to focus on them. The construction of space cells is a convention that appears in earlier paintings such as the previously discussed *The Mind Landscape of Xie Youyu* by Zhao Mengfu. In *Lofty Scholars with Pines and Rock* (Tianjin), the vertical frame of two trunks tightly encloses and spotlights the servant holding a box. The purposeful creation of a space cell for this figure in the centre of the composition indicates that he is crucial to a reading of the painting.

The intermittently spaced trees effect a sequential reading running from right to left. The tree trunks segment time and the servants being placed between them represent stages on a path that eventually concludes at the scene of friends parting. The servants suggest a narrative of phases: while the first servant walks empty handed, the second one holding a box is in the act of serving, and the final scene is sitting among friends. Tight space, especially in relation to the servant holding a box, when read metaphorically, may represent the constraints, perhaps from the pressures of writing examinations or while in government service. The servant who is spotlighted by a space cell, arguably, can stand for both attainment and confinement of office. The narrative can also be read as a cyclical one that recurs: the servant on the right prepares to step into challenges, the second servant is in service enduring hardships, and finally the two seated men represent the return home or perhaps another parting to begin the process again.

5.2 Traces of a Ledge

A comparison of the four *Farewell* paintings thus far has revealed slight differences among them in execution of outline, density of brushwork and composition

of space. There remains one outstanding difference among them – a clearly defined and shaded ledge appears in *Farewell in the Garden* (Vancouver) that does not appear in this manner elsewhere. This ledge in *Farewell in the Garden* (Vancouver) is the most worthwhile feature among the paintings and it is the basis that qualifies this particular work as being a continuously original one. The ledges in the other paintings are all relatively undefined in two ways: the far outlines of the ledges fade into the distance while parts of the near outlines of the ledges are hidden by the base of a low-lying cypress tree (Figures. 24-27). The ledge in *Farewell in the Garden* is unique because it is the only one that clearly defines the ledge in volume and space. Yet it is precisely this concrete outlining and grey colouring that is awkward because the blending of foreground with sky is interrupted. In contrast, the ledges in the other *Farewell* paintings are mere lines stretching thinly toward the distance, and it is these sketch-like traces that hint to another landscape, leaving open for the viewer, the visual possibility of a place by the shore.

In *Farewell in the Garden*, this ledge then, serving as an allusion to a shoreline, relies on the viewer's familiarity with the symbolic space of the shore, one that is frequented by the retired scholar official or recluse sitting on the bank, gazing into the distance. The shore in literati painting is a populated space of recluses, from Tao Yuanming, to Xie Youyu, the small huts of Ni Zan, and the fisherman of Wu Zhen. It would seem that traces of a ledge come to represent Wen Zhengming's gentle tidings of hope that his student may reach this other shore, one inhabited by scholar officials, and by extension, the frustrated scholars of the Ming dynasty may reach it as well. It is the traces of a ledge, visible in all the *Farewell* paintings except the Vancouver version, which

speaks of the subtle longing for government service in this painting. However it has only been through the examination of the solid ledge in *Farewell in the Garden* (Vancouver) that has led to the uncovering of meaning behind the purposeful undefined spaces in the other versions.

5.3 A Copy of *Catalpa Trees*

The composition of space in the *Farewell* paintings, what Anne Clapp describes as “indeterminate space,” is reminiscent of the floating space seen in *Catalpa Trees*, a painting by Wen Zhengming’s teacher, Shen Zhou.¹³¹ A sense of expansiveness is achieved through avoiding hint of horizon which results in the merging of foreground with sky.¹³² Again, as in the *Farewell* paintings, the staggered placement of trees in *Catalpa Trees* also suggests a ground plane that recedes into the distance. A further sense of depth is achieved by the small size of human figures who seem, by contrast to large trees in the foreground, to stand at a considerable distance away. The convention of framing by tree-trunks is also used to enclose the human figures, drawing attention to these two men and the occasion of this painting.

Shen Zhou originally painted *Catalpa Trees* as a parting gift to commemorate the departure of his friend, Liu Xianzhi, but only this copy that he painted again by

¹³¹ Richard Edwards has compared *Catalpa Trees* with *Farewell at Halting Clouds Lodging* (Berlin). He notes that these paintings are similar in that they are scenes of “scholarly meeting” and portraits of old trees. See Edwards, *The Art of Wen Cheng-ming*, 42.

¹³² This handling of space appears in another of Wen Zhengming’s paintings, *Strolling in the Moonlight in the Central Courtyard*, 1532, which was produced the year after his parting gift to Wang Chong. The wet brushwork in this painting also resembles the quality of brush in *Catalpa Trees* (Figure 28). The spatial and stylistic execution of *Strolling in the Moonlight in the Central Courtyard* is close to *Catalpa Trees* which suggests that Wen Zhengming may have drew upon a work by Shen Zhou to compose the floating space seen in the *Farewell* paintings.

special request is extant. The two men seen at a distance between two trees are Shen Zhou and Liu Xianzhi, and they are at the ancestral shrine of a famous Song dynasty minister Fan Zhongyan (989–1052), among three catalpa trees said to have been planted by the minister himself. This copy of *Catalpa Trees* is significant because it represents an earlier instance of someone desiring a parting gift that marks a specific occasion between two other people. The catalpa trees are the central subject in the painting and their qualities are praised in two poems written by Shen Zhou and Zhou Ding that are included on the top portion of the painting.¹³³ An inscription also by Zhou Ding (1401–1487) on the top left specifies that the original painting was a parting gift as well as the circumstances of Shen Zhou painting it again:

[Qi Nan] [Shen Zhou] once accompanied [Liu Xianzhi] of [Liaoyang] on a trip to the Temple of Fan to look at the three catalpa trees by the outer wall. He then did a painting of them as a farewell gift for Liu, and I wrote three [Tang]-style regular poems. It is now two years since that occasion, and [Ming Ji] has called to ask me to write the old phrases again so that he can request another painting of the subject from [Qi Nan].¹³⁴

As recorded, the unknown Ming Ji requested Zhou Ding's poem and then the painting, but instead of asking for a painting featuring himself or only the trees, it is meaningful that he has requested the specific parting scene between Shen Zhou and Liu Xianzhi that occurred two years ago.¹³⁵ Ming Ji's request for a copy of *Catalpa Trees* indicates that personal parting gifts could be desired for their subject matter by audiences outside of the occasion for which they were done; moreover, it indicates that in copies of

¹³³ See Appendix A for Shen Zhou's poem and Zhou Ding's inscription.

¹³⁴ Richard Barnhart, *Wintry Forests, Old Trees: Some Landscape Themes in Chinese Painting* (New York: China Institute in America, 1972), 49.

¹³⁵ According to Richard Edwards, this copy of *Catalpa Trees* was requested by Zhou Ding, however, the inscription seems to suggest that it is actually the unknown Ming Ji who requested it. See Richard Edwards, *The Field of Stones: A Study of the Art of Shen Chou (1427-1509)* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1962), 34.

parting gifts, artist and recipient become meaningful subjects and their identities add to the appeal of the paintings.

The *Farewell* paintings and *Catalpa Trees* all belong in the *song bietu* or farewell genre and the reproduction of these works indicates the popularity of this genre in the Ming dynasty. During the fifteenth and sixteenth century in Suzhou, the farewell genre commemorating the departure of a friend became increasingly popular as the exchange of parting gifts became more frequent.¹³⁶ Xu Youzhen (1407-1472) from Suzhou recognized this trend at the time:

“The custom of seeing off friends by composing poems for them has come down from ancient days. But now, it has become ever more popular. Making pictures (for the occasion) when seeing friends off was rare in the past, but now it is something new and frequently done.”¹³⁷

The *Farewell* paintings represent the convergence of two genres that were immensely popular in Suzhou during the Ming dynasty – the *biehaotu* and *song bietu*. The combination of two genres in one painting richly layers the *Farewell* paintings by sustaining two methods of interpretation where one focuses on Wen Zhengming and the other on Wang Chong. As previously discussed, *biehaotu* are portraits of property in relation to its owner, consequently assessing the *Farewell* paintings under this genre would direct attention to Wen Zhengming, owner of the mentioned site, Halting Cloud Studio; and a reading of these paintings as a *song bietu* would obviously orient the focus onto Wang Chong. More significant is that the two human subjects are each represented by a genre corresponding to their current phase in life and suited to their

¹³⁶ Wilson and Kwan S. Wong, *Friends of Wen Cheng-Ming*, 33.

¹³⁷ Ibid. Xu Youzhen was the grandfather of Zhu Yunming (1460-1526), a master calligrapher from Suzhou.

immediate purpose, and that the hybridity of these two genres renders the format of the *Farewell* paintings as uniquely representative of the Ming dynasty.

CONCLUSION: A Copy of Endurance

Farewell in the Garden (Vancouver) was acquired in 1960, shortly after the beginning of serious study of Chinese painting by western scholars. As a Qing copy of Wen Zhengming's painting, it has been a good point of departure for delving into the recurring issues of authenticity that surround the copy, and for testing methods of approach, such as Lefebvre's "Theory of Moments," that emphasize the observation of process and change. In the early years of western scholarship, investigations concerning the authenticity of paintings were much needed to establish a chronological framework. Efforts of this type remain valuable to the field, continue to be of interest to many, and have provided the groundwork for later social-historical approaches to emerge.

The paintings of Wen Zhengming pose daunting challenges to efforts of authentication because he was known for a mastery and versatility of styles. He had painters to ease his work load, he instructed many students in his styles and many excelled at them, and he was widely copied during his own lifetime as well as in later periods. For these reasons, an authentication study to seek which extant *Farewell* paintings, if any are by his hand, provides only a fleeting satisfaction. Rather the provocative challenge, as this thesis has argued, is to explore the reasons for their production and the issues and desires that may have fueled their commission or ready purchase.

After reading the inscription on the *Farewell* paintings which reveals that the purpose of the painting was to mark the occasion of Wang Chong's leave-taking to write yet another examination, the theme of pursuing a bureaucratic post is too obvious to ignore. As I have noted, both teacher and student, as documented in biographies and

anecdotes, were well known for repeatedly failing examinations. My analysis of the four *Farewell* paintings has dealt with the underlying theme of failure and has treated it as the cause that lends to the compelling qualities of the paintings. Who would want a copy of the *Farewell* paintings and what significance would it have for them? To properly answer these questions, this thesis has considered the bureaucratic recruitment system and more importantly, historical changes in the group who traditionally filled governing roles, the *shi* class. In the Song dynasty, government office, a key marker of elite identity, became attainable by people outside of the gentry after the implementation of the examination system for recruitment. From this point onwards and culminating in the Ming dynasty, the boundaries between the educated elites and merchant class became increasingly permeable. As I have pointed out, in the Ming dynasty, especially in the Suzhou region, the increase in economic trade and explosion of print enabled wealthy merchant families to readily acquire the necessary knowledge to write examinations and for elite identity performance. At the same time, a dramatic population growth in Suzhou and the rise of the merchant class made competition fierce. It was this group of people, the frustrated scholars, who felt the pressures of writing examinations, and met failure on one or more occasions who desired a copy of Wen Zhengming's *Farewell* paintings.

A comparison of the *Farewell* paintings with Shen Zhou's *Catalpa Trees* has shown that a copy of a painting that was originally dedicated to someone else could be wanted by another. Indeed, an outsider to the original occasion could find meaning in a work intended as a personal gift to someone else and done to record a specific event. This suggests that alongside themes, people directly connected to a painting – artist and

recipient – could become symbolically meaningful, especially if they were well known cultural elites such as Wen Zhengming and Wang Chong. The number of the extant versions of the *Farewell* paintings, and the dating of the Vancouver version to the Qing dynasty, suggest that this composition of Wen Zhengming and Wang Chong had come to represent a concept that was recognizable to their contemporary peers and to viewers in subsequent times.¹³⁸

One of the main goals of this thesis has been to situate the *Farewell* paintings, which was a personal parting gift, within the wider tradition of literati painting. I have argued that the composition of the *Farewell* paintings, particularly the effective use of space, invites the viewer into the scene, offering an occasion to sit among friends who shared similar bureaucratic hopes and heartaches. The composition which appears to float in space serves another function by refusing to define immediate landscape or architectural surroundings beyond the enclosed scene. This “indeterminate space” allows viewers to imagine this scene as being situated somewhere beyond Wen Zhengming’s Halting Cloud Studio in the wilderness of natural landscape.

A critical discovery linking the personal gift by Wen Zhengming to the larger literati landscape painting tradition has been made through observing undefined spaces. The sketch-like traces of a ledge that is in all of the *Farewell* paintings except *Farewell in the Garden*, hint to the visual possibility of this scene being situated on a riverbank or shore. Wen Zhengming, through his subtle lines, alludes to this powerful site of parting which is frequently depicted in literati landscape painting and associated with scholar

¹³⁸ Interestingly, the purchase of *Farewell in the Garden* (Vancouver) was advised by the previously referenced Ping-ti Ho, author of *The Ladder of Success in Imperial China: Aspects of Social Mobility, 1368-1911*. Ho was a Chinese history professor at UBC (c.1950-1962.) He had an extensive knowledge of Chinese history and culture so it is very likely that he recognized the theme of bureaucratic aspiration and disappointment in this painting.

officials. A longing to serve in the government as an official is visible when the *Farewell* paintings are considered in relation to the compositions of earlier literati art. The visual reference to the shore in a farewell painting for the occasion of writing the civil examination makes this painting symbolically auspicious, and it expresses Wen Zhengming's high hopes for Wang Chong's success. It is this visual reference of symbolic auspiciousness and hope, stemming from an understood association of this space on the shore with successful officials and men of merit, that appealed to the wider audience of frustrated scholars.

The discovery of this symbolic space by the shore was made more visibly apparent through a comparison of the four paintings, but it was *Farewell in the Garden* (Vancouver) that was the catalyst for a scrutiny of this space. The contribution of the copy in Vancouver is that an analysis of it has resulted in linking a specific parting gift to the wider tradition of literati painting. Arguably, for this reason, it fulfills Jack W. Meiland's criteria of originality by being a work that is continuously original. Meiland states that while an original work embodies a vision by the artists, a continuously original work "may embody no particular vision but generates new visions through interaction between itself and its audience."¹³⁹ While the farewell painting that was exchanged between Wen Zhengming and Wang Chong is original because it embodied Wen Zhengming's vision, it is only the copy in Vancouver that has the quality of continuous originality as it has led to a new understanding of all the *Farewell* paintings and their compositional and thematic relation to the wider tradition of literati art.

¹³⁹ Meiland, "Originals, Copies, and Aesthetic Value," 120.

As previously discussed, active service in a bureaucratic role is related to the emergence of monumental landscape painting in the Northern Song dynasty. These paintings affirmed the ideal of service by their intended function: representing a harmonious ordered world and serving as landscapes of escape for officials. Yuan dynasty literati painting continued this landscape tradition and while scholar officials were divided in their decisions to hold active office, and some paintings pointedly evoked reclusion, literati paintings still thematically featured the Confucian ideal of service to society.

The *Farewell* paintings, when viewed as being connected through Lefebvre's concept of "moments," reference past expressions of "service" that were previously understood, experienced, and represented in paintings. In the *Farewell* paintings, the ideal of reclusion is evoked through the natural setting of the garden and yet, the desire to actively serve in office is evinced by means of the inscription and the figures depicted. Active service is also alluded to by the ledge which signals the landscapes of the outer world, the spaces favoured by Song and Yuan literati artists. The *desire to serve* as a form of "service," which is made evident by the occasion of Wang Chong's leave-taking to write the civil examination, is situated among both active and reclusive forms of "service." Considered in this manner, traces of a ledge represents in paint the desire to serve in office and the *Farewell* paintings represent a newly synthesized expression of "service" that is a complex amalgamation of past and present forms of it as interpreted in literati painting.

I have argued that the persistence to serve in government by Wen Zhengming and Wang Chong is the most meaningful theme in the *Farewell* paintings. As I have

shown, during the Ming period, historical and political circumstances increased the numbers of candidates writing exams and limited opportunities to serve in office. In the context of the Ming dynasty, this parting scene of Wen Zhengming and Wang Chong came to implicitly represent the Confucian ideal and commitment to serve in government. The cogent ideal demonstrated by teacher with student, through two lifetimes characterized by continued attempts despite repeated failure, is the unyielding determination to pursue service. And it is this very sentiment or quality in the *Farewell* paintings – the tenacious *endeavour to be of service* – that is at once consoling and persuasive.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

POEMS AND INSCRIPTIONS

Poem and inscription on *Farewell in the Garden* (Vancouver):

春來日，雨兼風
雨過春歸綠更穠
白首已無朝市夢
蒼苔時有故人蹤
意中樂事樽前鳥
天際修眉郭外
峰可是別離能作態
尚堪老眼送飛鴻

履仁將赴南雍過停雲館言別輒
此奉贈辛卯五月十日徵明

Translation:

Spring brings days of wind and rain,
Rains pass, spring goes, and greens grow intensely.
An elderly man no longer dreams of court affairs,
Although mosses often bear prints of old friends.
An old longing for this happy occasion of wine jar set before birds.
Like trimmed eyebrows, the skyline hints to scenery beyond,
But with departure is peril
And yet, these enduring old eyes send a flying swan off.

Wang Chong is going to Nanjing and stopped at Halting Cloud Studio to say farewell.
And so I used this painting as a gift. Dated 1531, fifth month, tenth day.

Poems and inscriptions on *Catalpa Trees*.¹⁴⁰

Top right inscription by Shen Zhou:

Lord Fan with his own hands planted these 'trees of a thousand years,'
Fittingly his descendants have nurtured with care.
Time after time the falling leaves have turned with the ages,
Again and again the fine spring has come from the earth.
I hope like [Ji Zha] that these precious trees will be protected:
After reading [Zhuangzi] I realize what valuable timber they are!
And so for you, sir, I have sketched their images;
Hot sun, wind and rain alarm only lesser plants.

(signed) [Shen Zhou] of [Changzhou]

Top left inscription by Zhou Ding:

[Qi Nan] [Shen Zhou] once accompanied [Liu Xianzhi] of [Liaoyang] on a trip to the Temple of Fan to look at the three catalpa trees by the outer wall. He then did a painting of them as a farewell gift for Liu, and I wrote three [Tang]-style regular poems. It is now two years since that occasion, and [Ming Ji] has called to ask me to write the old phrases again so that he can request another painting of the subject from [Qi Nan].

¹⁴⁰ Barnhart, *Wintry Forests, Old Trees*, 49.

*Improvised on Horseback To Say Good-Bye to Those Who Are Seeing Me Off – Ten Poems*¹⁴¹

1.

Beneath the Shrine of the Three Loyal Ones
the sunset light is clear:
how many times, my feelings at this station
as I said good-bye to friends!
Today, all of you are saying good-bye to me:
you probably are feeling what I felt back then.

2.

In the past when I saw friends off
I'd think of going home myself—
my homesick thoughts would fly a thousand miles
every day and night.
Looking back, the last three years,
how many partings here?
The only difference is that now
tears need not dampen my robe.

3.

Wishing to try retirement, I requested release from duty;
my white robes have not been stained by a single speck of dust.
You gentlemen have plenty of real feeling:
coming to see off, not an official,
but a retired man of leisure!

4.

This man of leisure for twenty years
has been a robber of empty reputation:
dare I claim that in the past
I had no real desire for this life?
For "patching His Majesty's robe" and
"inscribing on the bell" there are many worthy officials:
such glory was not intended for a mere student like me!

5.

I remove my court gown and part from the Emperor's precincts
to make my way through Five Lake's misty waters
in a little boat!
Friends, don't look upon me as a man becoming an immortal:
I was old and sick, without ability, and simply had to quit!

¹⁴¹ Chaves, *The Columbia Book of Later Chinese Poetry*, 225-227.

6.

All of you are seeing me off, east of the Emperor's city;
sitting on horseback, we pass wine cups,
braving the north winds.

Do not complain that the willows are so withered
it's hard to pluck a good branch:
there is plenty of springtime spirit
right here in these cups of wine!

7.

The wine of parting flowed and flowed,
flooding the fork in the road!
Now the drinking is done, and we have no choice
but to go our ways, east and west.
There is only the setting sunlight which stays with me:
full of feeling, it follows my horse's hoofs all the way down the road.

8.

Floating clouds and worldly affairs:
both are insubstantial.
Once out of the city gates,
all my worries cease.
There are only my feelings for friends left behind
which will not go away:
along the southern bank of Twin Canals
I keep looking back.

9.

I sit on horseback at Twin Bridges,
the sun about to set.
Dust and sand blow like fog, hiding my baggage carts.
From here, my tracks will be lost in Chiang-nan,
south of the Yangtze River,
and I'll only see green mountains, never a grain of sand!

10.

For three years I sadly listened
to the bells of Eternal Joy Palace—
my soul in dream would flit about to the east of Five Lakes.
Now suddenly, I find myself here in this little boat:
I open my eyes, but still feel I'm dreaming that old dream!

Appendix B

FIGURES

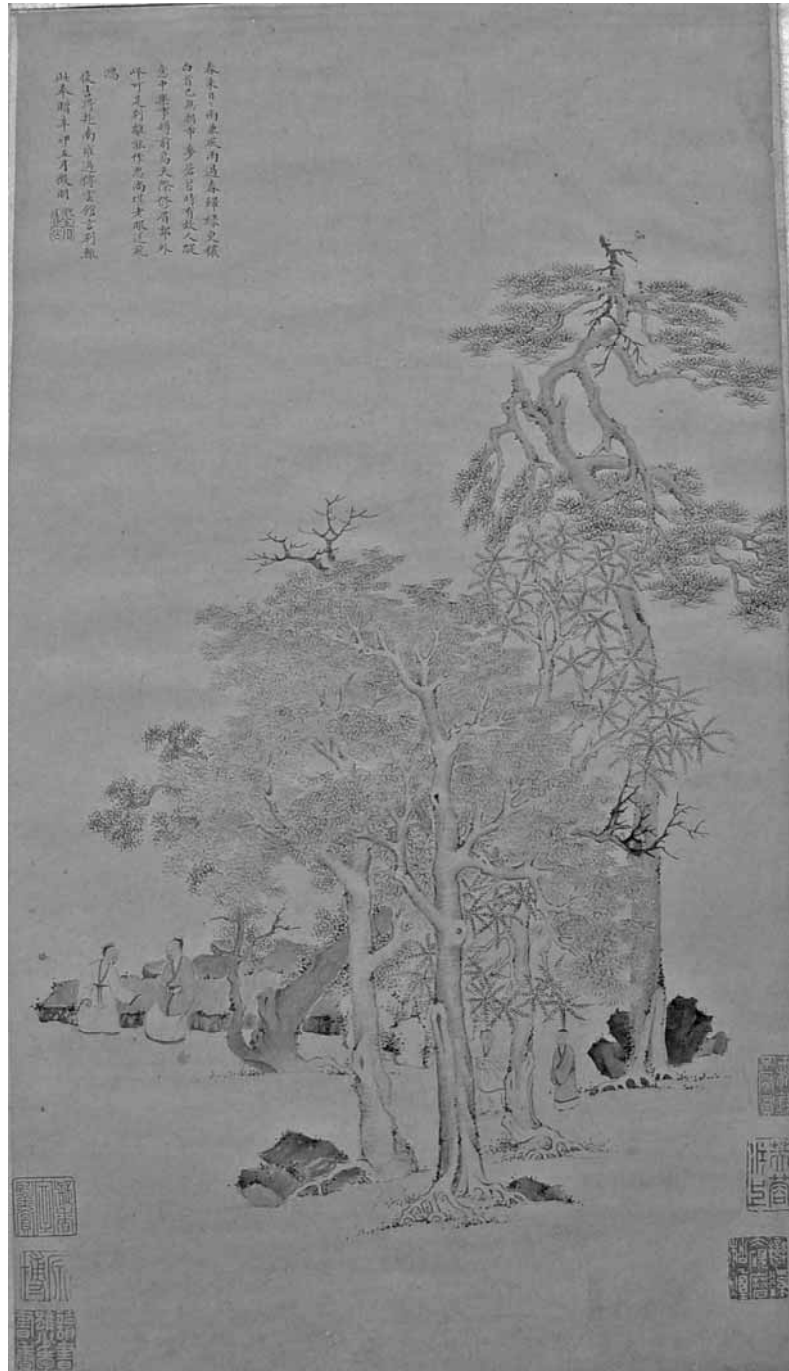


Figure 1. Wen Zhengming, *Farewell in the Garden*, Qing dynasty, hanging scroll, ink and colour on paper, 56 x 31.8 cm. Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver, Canada.

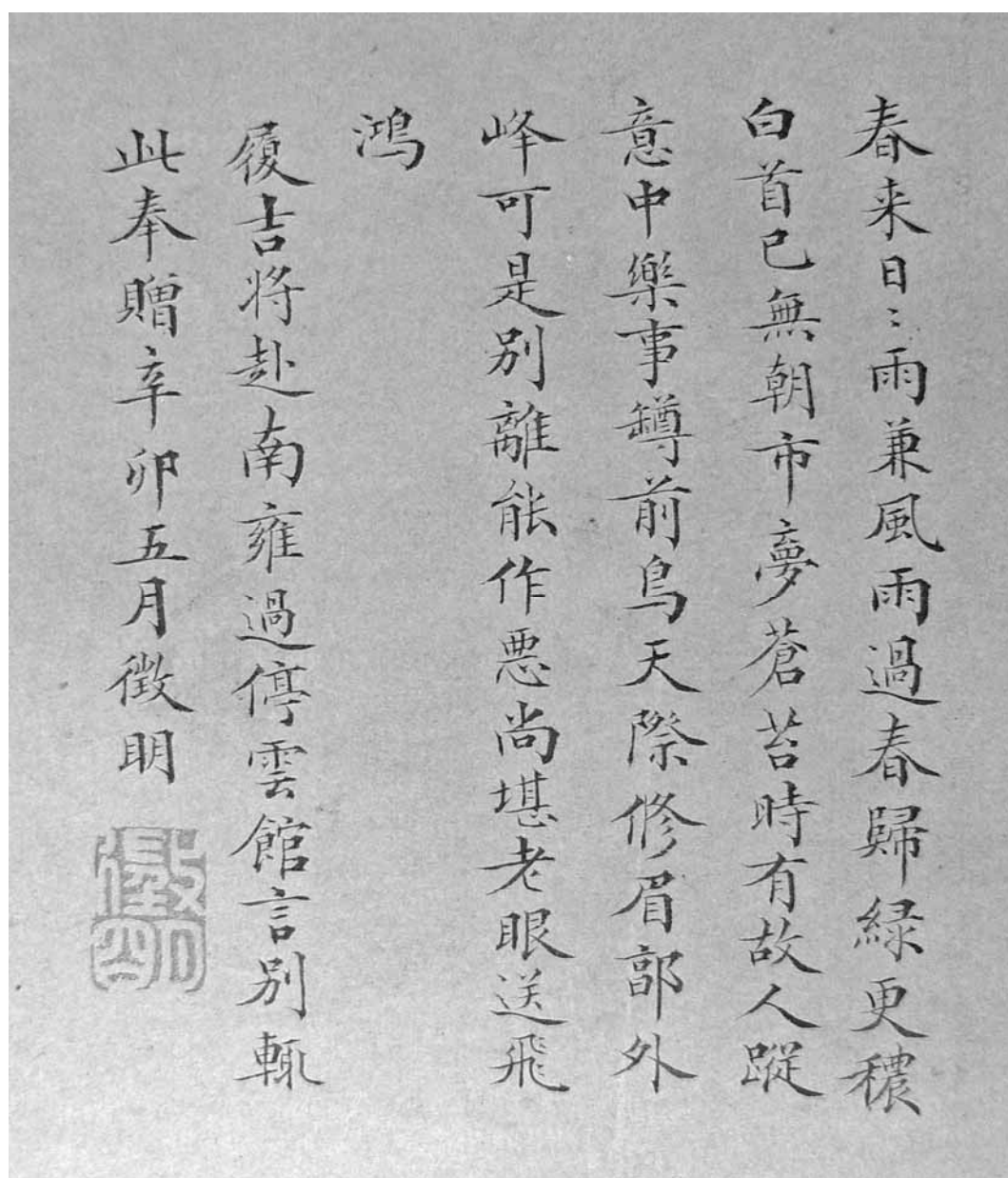


Figure 2. Detail of inscription in *Farewell in the Garden* (Vancouver).



Figure 3. Wen Zhengming, *Pure Conversation in Green Shade*, 1523, hanging scroll, ink and colour on paper, 53.4 x 26.9 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.



Figure 4. Wen Zhengming, *Farewell at Halting Clouds Lodging*, 1531, hanging scroll, ink and colour on paper, 52 x 25.2 cm. Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Berlin, Germany.



Figure 5. Wen Zhengming, *Lofty Scholars with Pines and Rocks*, 1531, hanging scroll, ink and colour on paper, 60 x 29.2 cm. Tianjin Museum of Arts, Tianjin.



Figure 6. Wen Zhengming, *Tasting Tea in the Pure Shade*, 1528, folding fan, ink on gold paper, 17.3 x 48.2 cm. Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Berlin, Germany.



Figure 7. Shen Zhou, *Catalpa Trees*, 1481, hanging scroll, ink on paper, 100.7 x 40.8 cm. Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, U.S.A.

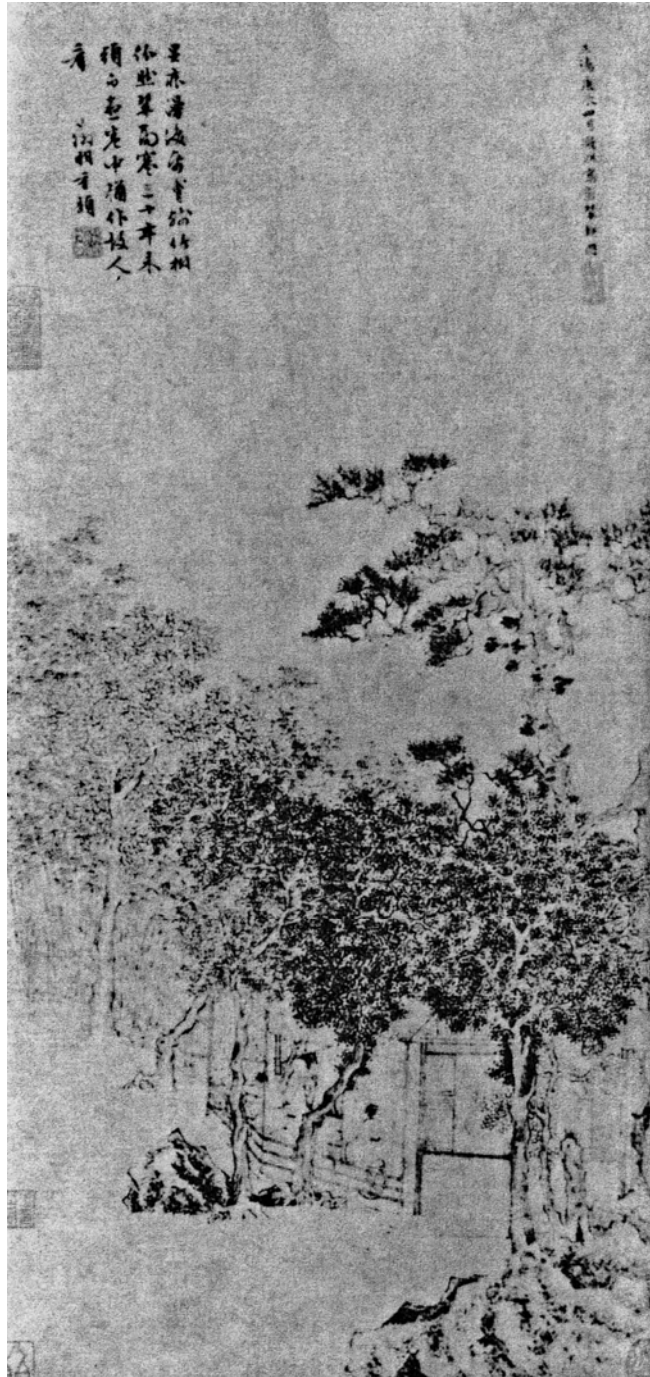


Figure 8. Wen Zhengming, *The Yincui Pavilion*, 1520.



Figure 9. Wen Zhengming, *A Thousand Cliffs Vying in Splendor*, 1548-1550, hanging scroll, ink and colour on paper, 132.6 x 34 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.

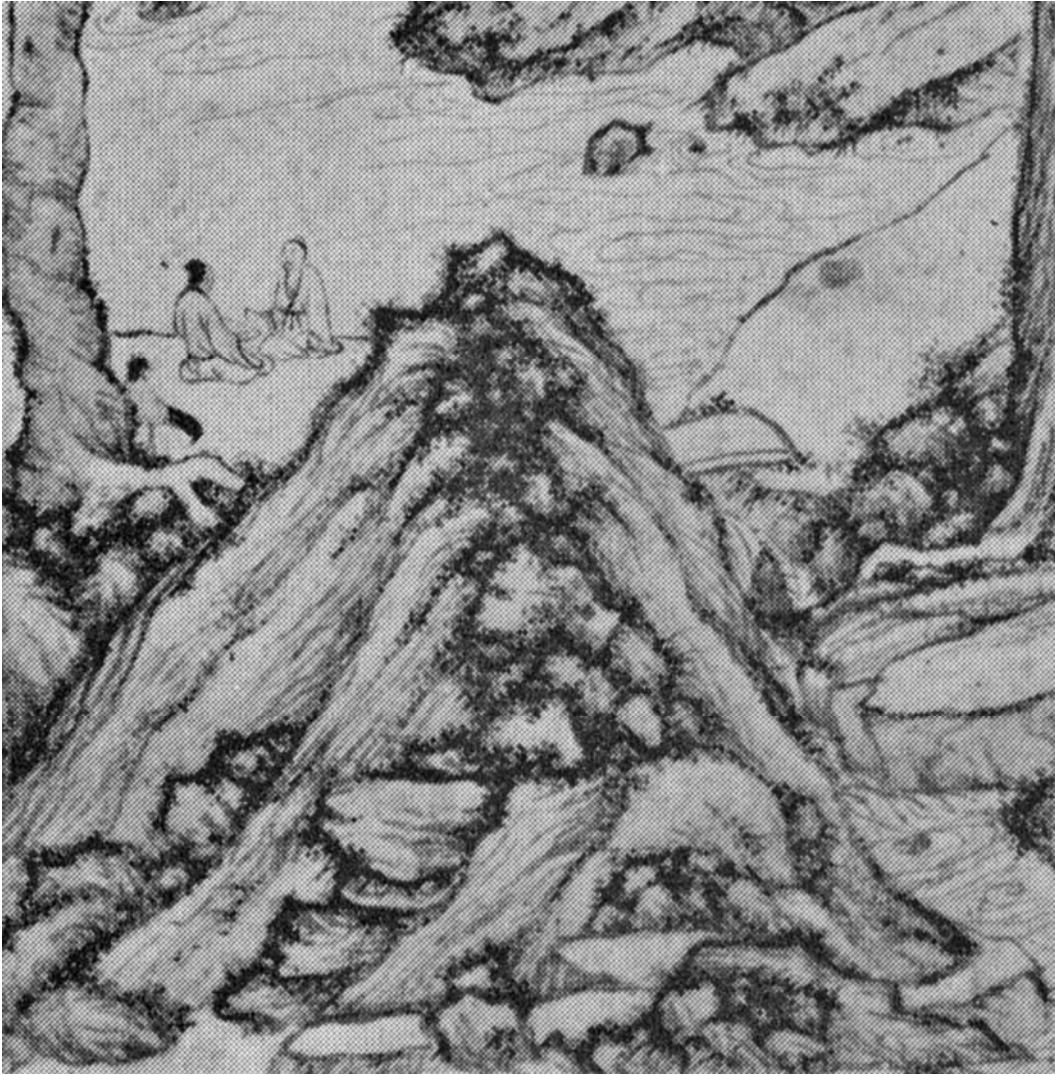


Figure 10. Detail of *A Thousand Cliffs Vying in Splendor*.

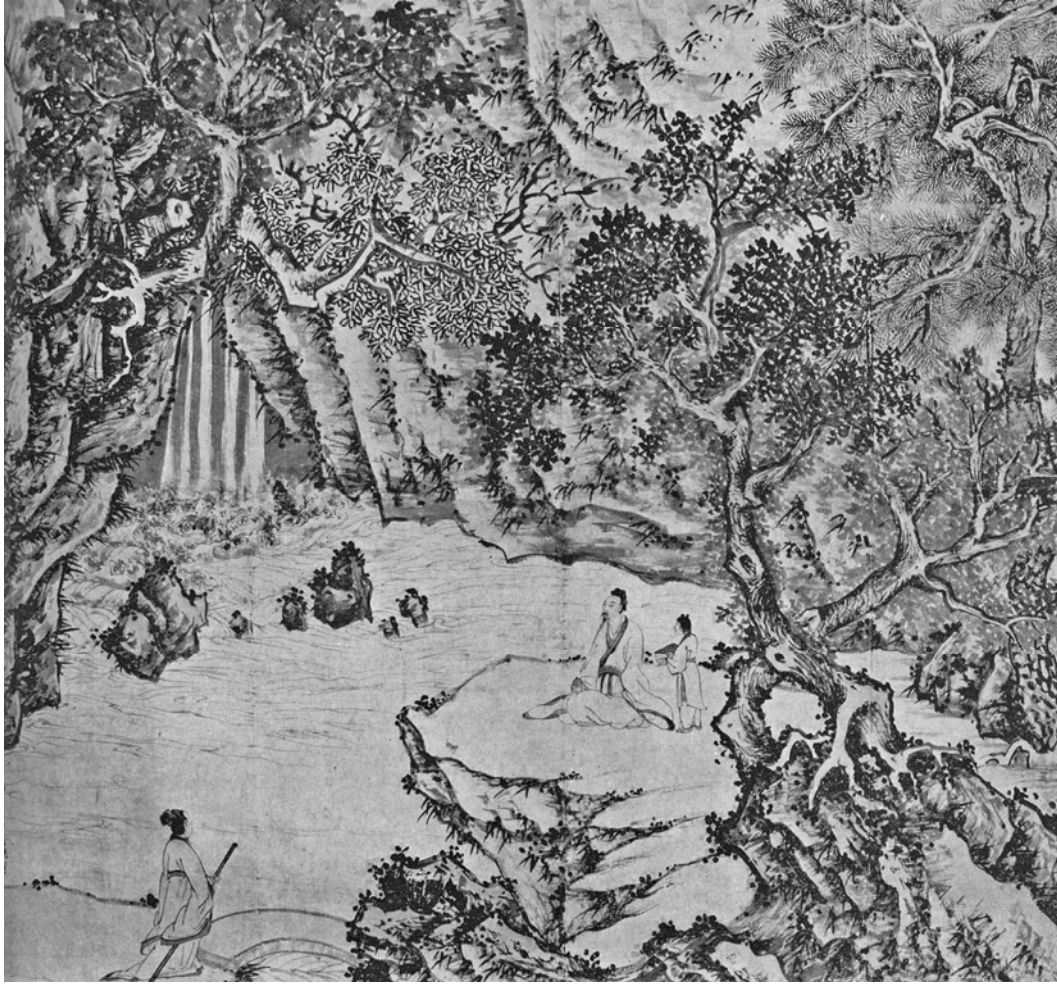


Figure 11. Detail of Wen Zhengming, *Lofty Leisure Beneath a Sheer Cliff*, 1519, hanging scroll, ink and colour on paper, 148.9 x 177.9 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.

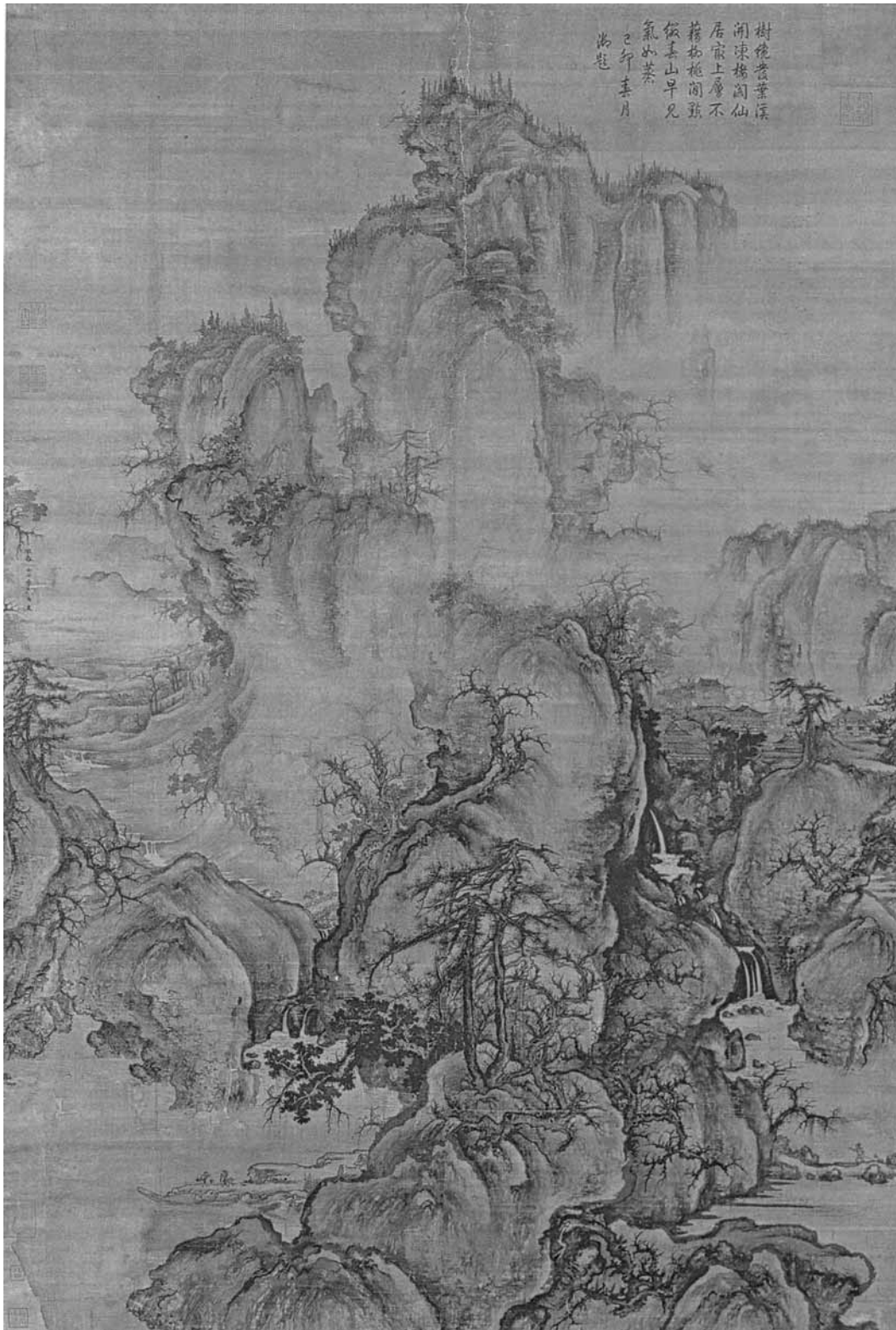


Figure 12. Guo Xi, *Early Spring*, 1072, hanging scroll, ink and colour on silk, 158.3 x 108.1 cm. National Palace, Museum, Taipei.



Figure 13. Fan Kuan, *Travelers Among Mountains and Streams*, after 1123, hanging scroll, ink and colour on silk, 2.06 m x 103.3 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.



Figure 14. Anonymous, formerly attributed to Fan Kuan, *Sitting Alone by a Stream*, early 12th c, hanging scroll, ink and colour on silk, 156.1 x 106.3 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.



Figure 15. Detail of *Sitting Alone by a Stream*.



Figure 16. Zhao Mengfu, *The Mind Landscape of Xie Youyu*, c. 1287, handscroll, ink and colour on silk, 27.4 x 117.0 cm. Princeton Art Museum, Princeton, U.S.A.



Figure 17. Anonymous, *Portrait of Wen Zhengming*, undated, album leaf, 1 of 8, ink on paper, 39.0 x 31.5 cm.



Figure 18. Detail of servants in *Farewell in the Garden* (Vancouver).



Figure 19. Detail of servants in *Pure Conversation in Green Shade* (Taipei).

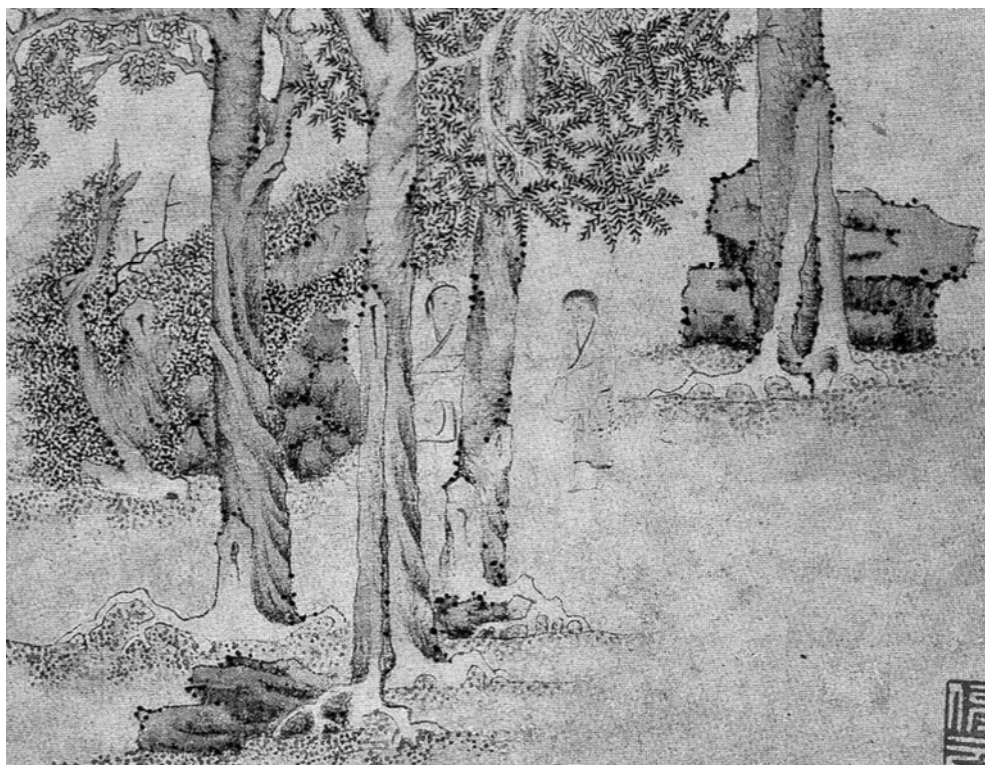


Figure 20. Detail of servants in *Farewell at Halting Clouds Lodging* (Berlin)



Figure 21. Detail of servants in *Lofty Scholars with Pines and Rocks* (Tianjin).

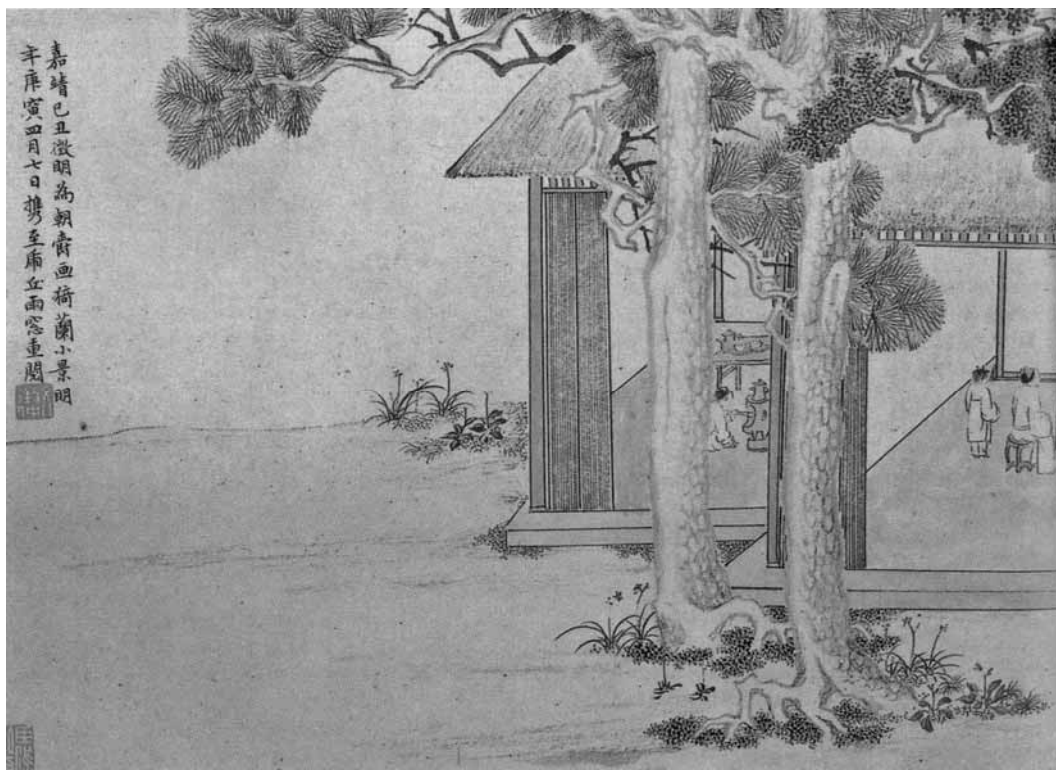


Figure 22. Wen Zhengming, section from *The Pliant Orchid Living-room*, 1529, handscroll, ink on silk, 26.3 x 67 cm, Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 23. Wen Zhengming, *Cascading Waterfalls in the Pine Ravine*, 1527-31, hanging scroll, ink and colour on paper, 108.1 x 37.8 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.



Figure 24. Detail of ledge in *Farewell in the Garden* (Vancouver).



Figure 25. Detail of ledge in *Pure Conversation in Green Shade* (Taipei).



Figure 26. Detail of ledge in *Farewell at Halting Clouds Lodging* (Berlin).



Figure 27. Detail of ledge in *Lofty Scholars with Pines and Rocks* (Tianjin).



Figure 28. Wen Zhengming, *Strolling in the Moonlight in the Central Courtyard*, 1532, hanging scroll, ink on paper, 149.6 x 50.5 cm. Nanjing Museum.

Appendix C

GLOSSARY

<i>biehaotu</i>	別號圖
Cai Yu	蔡羽
<i>chaoyin</i>	潮隱
Dong Qichang	董其昌
Fan Kuan	范寬
Fan Zhongyan	范仲淹
<i>fang ben</i>	仿本
<i>fu</i>	賦
Gu Kaizhi	顧愷之
Guo Xi	郭熙
He Liangjun	何良俊
Ji Zha	季札
Jiahe	嘉禾
<i>jinshi</i>	進士
<i>ju ren</i>	舉人
Li Chongsi	李充嗣
Li Gonglin	李公麟
<i>liangzhi</i>	良知

Liaoyang	遼陽
<i>lin ben</i>	臨本
Lin Jun	林俊
Liu Xianzhi	劉獻之
Lu Shiming	陸世明
Lu Xu	廬煦
Ming Ji	明吉
<i>mo ben</i>	摹本
Nanjing	南京
Ni Zan	倪瓚
Renzong	仁宗
Shen Zhou	沈周
<i>shi</i>	士
<i>shiyin</i>	市隱
<i>song bietu</i>	送別圖
Songjiang	鬆江
Suzhou	蘇州
<i>Suzhou pian</i>	蘇州片
Taizong	太宗
Tao Yuanming	陶淵明
Wang Chong	王寵

Wang Meng	王蒙
Wang Qingfu	王清夫
Wang Shizhen	王世貞
Wang Shou	王守
Wang Xizhi	王羲之
Wang Yangming	王陽明
Wen Hong	文洪
Wen Jia	文嘉
Wen Lin	文林
Wen Sen	文森
Wen Tianxiang	文天祥
Wen Zhengming	文徵明
Wu Kuan	吳寬
Wu Zhen	吳鎮
Xie Kun	謝鯤
Xie Youyu	謝幼輿
Xu Youzhen	徐有真
Yang Weicong	楊維聰
Yao Lai	姚涞
<i>zao ben</i>	造本
Zhang Shicheng	張士誠

Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫

Zhenzong 真宗

zhongyin 中隱

Zhou Ding 周鼎

Zhu Xi 朱熹

Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋

Zhu Yunming 祝永明