WU WEI (1459-1508) AND LU ZHI (1496-1576): THE URBAN HERMITAGE VERSUS THE PEACH BLOSSOM SPRING

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on two early and middle Ming (1368-1580) artists and deals with the role of Chinese historiography in the perpetuation of the dichotomy between the so-called "professional" and the so-called "scholar-amateur" artist. While traditional Chinese historical and biographical sources are an invaluable tool for the sinologist, including the Chinese art historian, the convention adopted by Chinese historians of casting subjects into standard characterized roles has contributed to this dichotomy and resulted in the ongoing debate over the value of the professional artist in China. Historically, Chinese critics and collectors have made a distinction between professional and amateur artists. The traditional Chinese critical bias has been in favour of the scholar-amateur artist. In fact, in much critical literature there is a stigma attached to professionalism in painting.

The major initial Western studies of Chinese painting represented a continuation of the traditional Chinese dichotomies. More recently, various kinds of positions have been taken up by Western scholars. James Cahill suggests that a correlation can be made between an artist's painting style and social and economic factors (such as lifestyle, formal training, means of livelihood, demands of patrons, and so on). Richard Barnhart instead defends the professional artist: He believes that Cahill perpetuates the bias in favour of the amateur artist, and that a correlation between an artist's style and social and economic factors is not useful, being too restrictive and general. Their debate was taken up in a series of letters, and this debate has continued down to the present.

Some of the most recent Western interpretations attempt to try to break down the earlier dichotomies, and my research supports this interpretive trend. In this context the thesis examines the life and works of
two relatively minor artists of the Ming dynasty, the "professional" artist Wu Wei (1459-1508) and the "scholar-amateur" artist Lu Zhi (1496-1576). I discuss the Chinese biographical tradition and have translated the appropriate texts and biographies. Then by examining the paintings themselves in the context of the two artists' environments -- Wu Wei in Beijing and Nanjing and Lu Zhi in Suzhou -- I show that both of these artists enjoyed the freedom of working in a wide variety of different painting traditions. Early and middle Ming painting criticism is also examined, in addition to the influence of Late Ming (1580-1644) painting criticism and its effect on our perception of Chinese artists.

In terms of style, aesthetics, and intellectual outlook, Wu Wei and Lu Zhi may, at first, appear to stand at opposite poles. However, my study of the life circumstances of Wu Wei and Lu Zhi reveals that they share surprisingly similar backgrounds, concerns, and views on their artwork. In addition, an examination of the works of these two artists suggests that a greater fluidity of style and of subject matter existed in the early and middle Ming period than one would expect from the theories based on Late Ming criticism. In other words, the distinction between professional and scholar-amateur artists is overdrawn: Wu Wei and Lu Zhi do not fit neatly into the later understandings of accepted categories or roles, nor do their paintings entirely accord with the theories originating in the Late Ming Period.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Authorization

Abstract ................................................................. ii

Table of Contents ....................................................... iv

List of Figures ............................................................. v

Acknowledgement .......................................................... viii

Chapter

I. Introduction ............................................................. 1

II. A Discussion of Traditional Chinese Historiography
    and its Relationship to Chinese Art History and Criticism .......... 13

III. A Social and Cultural History of Nanjing and Suzhou ................. 24

IV. Wu Wei and Lu Zhi: Life and Times .................................. 53

V. Artistic Works .......................................................... 107

    Conclusion .................................................................. 125

Illustrations .................................................................. 133

Bibliography .................................................................. 148

Appendix I: Translation of Material Related to Wu Wei .................. 159

Appendix II: Translation of Material Related to Lu Zhi .................. 175

Appendix III: Chinese Texts ............................................... 185

Biographical Form
LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 1. Wu Wei: "Two Immortals." Hanging scroll, ink on silk. Shanghai Museum. 133
Source: James Cahill, Parting at the Shore: Chinese Painting of the Early and Middle Ming Dynasty, 1368-1560 (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1978), pl. 44.

Fig. 2. Lu Zhi: "Portrait of Tao Yuanming," 1523. Album leaf, ink and colours on paper, 32.4 x 23.8 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei. 134
Source: Cahill, Parting at the Shore, pl. 119. Reproduced in colour in Ninety Years of Wu School Painting (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1975), pl. 9.

Fig. 3. Wu Wei: "Lady Carrying a Pipa." Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 125.1 x 61.3 cm. The Indianapolis Museum of Art. 135
Source: Cahill, Parting at the Shore, pl. 47.

Fig. 4. Guo Xu: "The Lute Song." Hanging scroll, ink on paper. Palace Museum, Beijing. 136

Fig. 5. Wu Wei: "Winter Landscape with Travelers." Hanging scroll, ink on silk, 242.6 x 156.4 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei. 137
Source: Cahill, Parting at the Shore, pl. 45.

Fig. 6. Wu Wei: "The Pleasures of Fishermen." Section of a handscroll, ink and colours on paper, 27.2 x 243 cm. Ching Yuan Chai Collection. 138
Source: Cahill, Parting at the Shore, colour pl. 6.

Figs. 7a-d: Wu Wei: "Ten-thousand Li on the Yangzi," 1506. Sections of a handscroll, ink and light colours on silk, 27.8 x 976.2 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing. 138
Source: Mingdai gongting yu Zhepai huihua xuanji [A Selection of Ming Dynasty Court Paintings and Zhe School Paintings] (Beijing: Wen Wu Publishers, 1983), fig. 72.

Fig. 8. Wu Wei: "Fishing Boats on a River." Hanging scroll, ink and colour on paper, 270 x 174.4 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing. 139
Source: Zhongguo huihua shi tu lu, p. 537.
Fig. 9. Lu Zhi and Qiu Ying: "Zhong Kui," 1544. Hanging scroll, ink on silk, 141 x 36.3 cm. Private Collection, New York. Source: Stephen Little, "The Demon Queller and the Art of Qiu Ying (Ch'iu Ying)," Artibus Asiae 47 (1985): fig. 1.

Fig. 10. Lu Zhi: "Autumn Colours at Xunyang," 1554. Section of a handscroll, ink and colours on paper, 22 x 100 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Source: Cahill, Chinese Painting (Geneva: Skira, 1960), p. 133.


Fig. 12. Wu Wei: "Portrait of the Courtesan Wu Lingchun." Handscroll, ink on paper, 27.5 x 93.9 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing. Source: Zhongguo huihua shi tu lu, p. 536.


Fig. 14. Lu Zhi: "Cloudy Peaks and Forest Valleys," 1552. Hanging scroll, ink and colours on paper, 85.5 x 46 cm. Shanghai Museum. Source: Edmund Capon and Mae Anna Pang, Chinese Painting of the Ming and Qing Dynasties: 14th-20th Century (Victoria: International Cultural Corporation of Australia Ltd., 1981), cat. no. 18.


Fig. 16. Lu Zhi: "Planting Chrysanthemums." Hanging scroll, ink and colours on paper, 106.5 x 27.4 cm. The Art Museum, Princeton University. Source: Richard M. Barnhart, Peach Blossom Spring: Gardens and Flowers in Chinese Paintings (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1983), No. 27.
Fig. 17. Attributed to Dong Yuan: "Dragon Boat Festival." Hanging scroll, ink and colours on silk, 156 x 160 cm. National Palace Museum, Taibei. Source: James Cahill, Hills Beyond a River: Chinese Painting of the Yuan Dynasty, 1279-1368 (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1976), pl. 91.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Historically, Chinese critics and collectors have made a distinction between professional and amateur artists. Professional artists are described as those who had formal, technical training and who painted as a means of livelihood with no literary pretense. Amateur artists, on the other hand, are described in the literature as scholar-officials, intellectuals who had no formal training in painting and who painted as an avocation, as a means of personal expression. The traditional Chinese critical bias has been in favour of the scholar-amateur artist. In fact, in much critical literature there is a stigma attached to professionalism in painting. A principal issue to be addressed in this thesis, which focuses on two early and middle Ming (1368-1580) artists, is the role of Chinese historiography in the perpetuation of the dichotomy between the so-called "professional" and the so-called "scholar-amateur" artist. While traditional Chinese historical and biographical sources are an invaluable tool for the sinologist, including the Chinese art historian, it is my contention that the convention adopted by Chinese historians of casting subjects into standard characterized roles has contributed to this dichotomy and resulted in the ongoing debate over the value of the professional artist in China.

A further related issue to be addressed is the influence of Late Ming (1580-1644) painting criticism, which picks up on the dichotomy between the "professional" and the "scholar-amateur" artist, which crystallized in the 11th century, and further amplifies it. Our view of Chinese painting is filtered through the ideas of late Ming critics such as Dong Qichang (1555-1636), for it is their theories which came to colour our perception and
furnish us with an art-historical and critical framework. As a result, the study of early and middle Ming painting has been hindered by a reliance on the categorizations devised by these critics and by the dichotomy set up between terms such as "Northern School" versus "Southern School," "Zhe School" versus "Wu School," and "professional artist" versus "scholar-amateur artist." Professional artists in the Ming period are generally associated with the Zhe School, while the scholar-amateur artist is associated with the Wu School.

The early and middle Ming period is seen to have been dominated by two major groups, professional court artists and the so-called Zhe School of Dai Jin (1388-1462) and his followers in the Hangzhou area, and the so-called Wu School of Shen Zhou (1427-1509) and Wen Zhengming (1470-1559) in the Suzhou region. The term Zhe School is a very loose appellation and came to include not only Dai Jin and his immediate followers, but early Ming court painters working in Beijing and professional artists working in Nanjing in general. Zhe School artists are believed to have based their work upon Southern Song (1127-1279) painting models, particularly those of the Southern Song Academy, and to have produced large, decorative, impersonal and highly finished works, although they might also employ a rougher and more cursive type of brushwork. They concentrated on figure painting, literary and historical themes, and birds and flowers. Artists of the Wu School are viewed as having revitalized Yuan (1279-1368) painting models. Artists included in this group produced a more personal, informal art form, their subject matter consisting of pure landscape, depictions of local scenery or the gardens and houses of friends, and subjects which often had political and moral overtones, such as bamboo, rocks and old trees. While the above sorts of labels and grouping may have
some value and validity, I believe that a rigid adherence to them denies and obscures the interactions between the artists of this period and the resulting cross-fertilization of ideas and stylistic exchanges.

The major initial Western studies of Chinese painting, such as John C. Ferguson's *Chinese Painting*, published in 1927, tend to represent a continuation of the traditional Chinese dichotomies. More recently, different kinds of positions have been taken up by Western scholars. James Cahill (in *Parting at the Shore: Chinese Painting of the Early and Middle Ming Dynasty, 1368-1580*) suggests that a correlation can be made between an artist's painting style and social and economic factors (such as lifestyle, formal training, means of livelihood, demands of patrons, and so on). Richard Barnhart instead defends the professional artist (in "The 'Wild and Heterodox School' of Ming Painting" in Bush and Murck's *Theories of the Arts in China*). He believes that Cahill perpetuates the traditional class bias in favour of the amateur artist, and that a correlation between an artist's style and social and economic factors is not useful, being too restrictive and general. Their debate was taken up in a series of letters, published as *The Barnhart-Cahill-Rogers Correspondence, 1981*. This debate has continued down to the present. Using what I consider to be a modified Cahillian approach, I intend to push beyond the traditional Chinese dichotomies outlined above. As noted earlier, Chinese historical material is a major source of these dichotomies, for due to the convention of stereotyping which is characteristic of classical Chinese historiography, the biographical material (from which is drawn much of what is said about socio-economic factors) is often unreliable. Therefore, while I believe that social and economic factors can have an important influence on determining an artist's
style, caution must be exercised in making strict correlations between the two.

The thesis focuses on the life and works of two relatively minor, and therefore manageable, artists of the Ming dynasty, Wu Wei (1459-1508) and Lu Zhi (1496-1576). Wu Wei, who was 37 years older than Lu Zhi, was a "professional" artist who worked in both Nanjing and Beijing. During his lifetime he was widely acclaimed, enjoying the patronage of the Beijing court and the patronage and esteem of the wealthy merchants of Nanjing, in addition to that of some of the leading scholar-bureaucrats of the time. He painted figures and landscapes and was proficient in a number of different painting styles. His figure painting can be divided roughly into two categories, works executed in a careful and exact manner and works exhibiting very animated and bold brushwork. He was labelled as a follower of Dai Jin and as an artist of the Zhe School. Wu Wei was eventually to die at the age of 49 (50 sui) -- from the excesses of overdrinking, it was later said -- and this factor was to contribute to his later disapprobation by the Chinese critics.

Lu Zhi, a "scholar-amateur" painter from the Suzhou region, was known as a poet, essayist and painter of landscapes and flowers. He is generally regarded as an artist of the Wu School. Typically for an artist of his period, Lu Zhi incorporated elements from a variety of different painting traditions into his artwork. In contrast to Wu Wei, whose preferred place of residence was the city of Nanjing, Lu Zhi, particularly in his later years, led the life of a scholar-recluse, avoiding the drinking parties given by rich patrons and friends. A passage in the Wusheng shishi describes him: "He was unrestrained by social etiquette and sought righteousness. When he received an endowment, he took it and gave it to his younger brother. With
respect to several qing of fertile land, he dispensed with it in its entirety and used [the money] to build an ancestral hall. People extolled his filial piety and friendship." Lu Zhi appears to have been a respected artist, regarded as competent and proficient, but never seems to have been the recipient of wild acclaim -- or disclaim, for that matter.

These two artists may be introduced by a comparison of two works: Wu Wei's "Two Daoist Immortals" (fig. 1) and Lu Zhi's "Portrait of Tao Yuanming" (fig. 2). Wu Wei depicts two of the Eight Immortals of Daoist legend at the moment prior to their crossing of the sea. The nearest figure is probably that of Li Tieguai, a Daoist magician, who was said to have inhabited the body of a lame beggar, his body having been burned by his disciples (who believed him to be dead) while he was away on a spirit journey. The painting is done in ink on silk and is in a hanging scroll format. Unfortunately, no measurements are provided with the reproduction. There are no visible seals, signatures, or inscriptions.

Compositionally the work relates to what had become a standard Zhe School formula (which Cahill suggests originated with Dai Jin) -- a combination of the sort of diagonally oriented work popular in the late Song with the Ming preference for a central focus (here the central focus is provided by the figure of Li Tieguai, the positioning of his body also creating the major diagonal movement). The remainder of the compositional elements are arranged vertically and horizontally in a close relationship to the outer edges of the scroll (in this case along the right hand side and top of the painting, respectively).

The most striking thing about this work is the bold, energetic, expressive brushwork. Wu Wei is perhaps best known for this looser, rougher brushmode. The lineament, which varies in width, often changes
directions suddenly, animating the figures and creating a sense of immediacy. This is particularly apparent in the figure of Li Tieguai, who is portrayed crouched down, staring intently into the distance, his tensed body caught at the moment before he steps off into the water to be borne across the waves on his iron crutch. Cahill notes that the movement of the brush serves "chiefly to convey kinesthetically the energy of the artist's hand, at some sacrifice of descriptiveness," and yet the unrestrained roughness of the brushwork is entirely appropriate here, conveying the boldness of the figures and the tattered beggar's garb of Li Tieguai. It is the sort of quickly brushed bravura or virtuoso performance which came to be associated with the Tang artist Wu Daozi (act. 720-760), often referred to in Chinese critical literature as the "Painter Sage."

The abbreviated treatment of the landscape elements, used to frame the figures and indicate setting, is reminiscent of Chan paintings, recalling (as Cahill observes) certain works by Liang Kai (fl. mid-13th century). The brushwork too relates to that found in paintings by Liang Kai, who, like Wu Wei, became associated with the artist Wu Daozi. Cahill also notes the relationship between this work and a painting of Li Tieguai by the Yuan artist Yan Hui (active c. 1300), who specialized in Buddhist and Daoist figures, pointing out the similarities in the drawing of the drapery, and in the tension of the poses of the figure. (In my opinion, however, Wu Wei's work is much more abbreviated and animated.)

While Wu Wei depicts a Daoist theme, Lu Zhi evinces the notion of Confucian eremitism in his portrayal of the Six Dynasties poet Tao Yuanming (365-427), who resigned from his job as a scholar-bureaucrat to live the life of a recluse, due to the corruption and instability of the government of the time.
With a single exception, none of Wu Wei’s extant works is dated,11 and the majority have only a brief inscription or signature. By contrast, Lu Zhi generally dated his works, and included lengthy inscriptions or poems. The poems and paintings tend to complement one another and together express something neither expresses alone. Lu Zhi’s "Portrait of Tao Yuanming" is dated 1523 and is his earliest dated work. It is a small album leaf measuring 34.2 x 23.8 centimeters, executed in ink and light colour on paper. It bears two inscriptions by the artist and seven visible seals (four belonging to Lu Zhi). The inscriptions describe the circumstances surrounding the inception of the work. The first inscription begins: "On an autumn day Nanlou gave me a chrysanthemum. Mr. Shenyu has brought it to my retreat at Zhixing Mountain. A turn of the head and fifty years [have passed! And yet the ink and paper are like new. This indeed is "preserving the superfluous" [shenyu]! So I have inscribed it again for him. Lu Zhi.12

Tao Yuanming is shown in three-quarter view seated amongst the roots of a pine tree, holding a bunch of chrysanthemums in his left hand. Clumps of chrysanthemums also grow near the poet’s feet. The pine and chrysanthemums are his usual attributes -- the pine because it symbolizes moral rectitude, chrysanthemums because Tao grew them in his garden and was particularly fond of them.

As in the painting by Wu Wei, the composition combines a central focus (in this case a nearly central focus) with a one-corner format, the trunks of the pine trees and rocks creating a vertical movement on the right side of the work, while the branches of the pine trees create a horizontal
movement across the top of the painting. Here, however, the landscape and vegetative motifs are depicted in much more detail, filling a greater proportion of the available space, and while the strongest diagonal movement in Wu Wei’s painting is created by the tensed figure of Li Tieguai, shown at the moment before he is about to project himself across the waves, its counterpart in Lu Zhi’s work is provided by the steep slope of the embankment, which introduces an element of instability, creating the impression that Tao Yuanming will at any moment come tobogganing down the slope.

The use of the dry, crumbly, intense black ink, referred to as jiao mo or roasted ink, is characteristic of Lu Zhi, although he uses it more sparingly in his later works. One can find the same sort of crumbly texture, in general, in works by both Shen Zhou and Wen Zhengming, but Lu’s brushwork is, on the whole, more dissolved. The restrained, yet fluid brushwork is in marked contrast to that employed by Wu Wei.

The two paintings are entirely different in mood. Wu Wei’s work can be described with adjectives such as dynamic and extroverted. The terms virtuoso or bravura are also appropriate, and suggestive of a performance of some kind. The animated brushwork generates a sort of excitement, and the sense of immediacy is heightened by the depiction of the figures on the surface of the picture plane, having the effect of a direct confrontation between the viewer and the image, and, by implication, the artist. Lu Zhi’s work, on the other hand, can be described as restrained and introverted. The brushwork, while skillful, is far more subtle and deliberately done. It reveals an inner strength, but at the time there is a sense of fragility and delicacy here as well. The viewer must come close to this work, and this effect is heightened by the subtlety of the brushwork and colouration, but
also by the treatment of the figure, proportionately smaller than those depicted by Wu Wei, and placed higher up, creating a sense of distance, and impelling the viewer into the painting.

That Lu Zhi strongly identified with Tao Yuanming is evident by the frequent allusions, both direct and indirect, to the poet in his works. Like Tao, he is said to have disliked people in high positions, refusing to have anything to do with them. And rather than serve office, he lived an impoverished life, retiring in his fifties to live as recluse in a house at the base of Mount Zhixing. The notion of retreat or escape is common in his paintings, both in theme and mood. As Cahill observes, "Tao's virtues and way of life correspond so well to Lu Zhi's that we may suppose this to be another double image, an idealized self-portrait as well as an image of the ideal on whom the Ming scholar-recluse modeled himself." This painting can be seen in a way as a manifesto, as a statement of an attitude towards life.

Akin to Lu Zhi's painting and following on the idea of Cahill, Wu Wei's work too may be seen as a "double image" or "self-portrait." Wu's best known sobriquet was Xiaoxian or "Small Immortal." Richard Barnhart has suggested that the attitude of a number of Ming artists towards painting (including that of Wu Wei) can be seen as reflective of a Daoist, as opposed to a Confucian, "ideal of art." Barnhart quotes Zhang Qi's comments on Wu Wei: "In the evening sun among the red leaves he sits along/Throwing aside the Confucian classics to read Daoist books." Barnhart also observes that the "largest single group of identifiable images in the figure paintings of Wu Wei and his follower, Zhang Lu, is formed of the pantheon of popular Daoist immortals: Lao Zi, Li Tieguai, Liu Haixian, Dongfang Shuo, The
Immortal of the Northern Sea,' and the assorted images of the mythological imagination."\textsuperscript{14}

Stylistically, aesthetically, and intellectually speaking, therefore, Wu Wei and Lu Zhi may, at first, appear to stand at opposite poles. However, I intend to discuss them together in juxtaposition as a way of dealing with the issues outlined above. Some of the most recent Western interpretations attempt to try to break down the traditional Chinese dichotomies, and this thesis will support this interpretive trend. A study of the life circumstances of Wu Wei and Lu Zhi reveals that they share surprisingly similar backgrounds, concerns, and views on their artwork. In addition, an examination of the works of these two artists suggests that a greater fluidity of style and of subject matter existed in the early and middle Ming period than one would expect from the theories based on Late Ming criticism outlined above. The artists themselves, in fact, do not fit neatly into the later understandings of accepted categories or roles, nor do their paintings entirely accord with the theories originating in the Late Ming period. In other words, actual practice diverged from what was to become orthodox theory.

Chapter Two of the study begins with a discussion of the Chinese biographical tradition and the difficulties of interpretation. Translations of the appropriate texts and biographies related to Wu Wei and Lu Zhi are examined in Chapter Four and in context throughout the thesis; they are included in their entirety in the appendices. Ming painting criticism and its effects on our perception of artists is also considered. While Wu Wei and Lu Zhi may have shared similar backgrounds and attitudes, the ambience of Nanjing was very different from that of Suzhou and the ways in which these two artists expressed themselves, I believe, was shaped by their
context. The urban and cultural history of Nanjing and Suzhou is therefore considered in Chapter Three. In the remaining chapter the focus then moves to the paintings themselves, which show that both of these artists enjoyed the freedom of working in a variety of different traditions.

1 Throughout this thesis I have used the pinyin romanization system for Chinese names and terms. To maintain consistency throughout, I have changed the original Wade-Giles in quotations to pinyin. I have, however, retained the original orthography for authors and titles as they are published.

2 See also, Richard Barnhart, "Yao Yen-ch'ing, T'ing-mei, of Wu-hsing," Artibus Asiae 29 (1977): 105-23.

3 A qing equals approximately fifteen acres.

4 See Appendix II, no. 7.


6 Ibid., p. 104.


8 See Cahill, Parting at the Shore, p. 104.

9 See Barnhart, "Survivals, Revivals, and the Classical Tradition of Chinese Figure Painting," p. 169.


11 Cahill writes that "none of his surviving works are dated (with a single exception)," referring to a handscroll in the Shanghai museum dated 1484. See Cahill, Parting at the Shore, p. 100, plate 48. He has since had an opportunity to examine this painting and no longer accepts it as a work by Wu Wei. See Cahill- Barnhart-Rogers Correspondence, 1981 (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1982), p. 9. More recently, a handscroll by Wu Wei dated 1506 has been exhibited and reproduced. This work will be discussed in Chapter Five.

12 Translated by Louise Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih (1496-1576)" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1979), p. 311. According to
Yuhas, Shenyu was the zi of the official Li Zhaoxiang, a native of Shanghai who served in the Board of Works at Nanjing.


CHAPTER TWO

The fundamental concepts of traditional Chinese historiography differ from those of modern western historiography. It is therefore essential in dealing with the biographical writings which constitute a major portion of Chinese historical literature that we understand the function of Chinese historiography and be cognizant of the difficulties involved in the interpretation of this vast resource.

Chinese biographical materials are highly diverse and were written for a variety of purposes, but they are basically didactic and commemorative in function. While biographies could have a minatory function, more commonly they were meant to serve as models of proper conduct and to instill Confucian attitudes in future generations. Traditional Chinese biographical writings may be divided into three general groupings: historical biographies, commemorative writings or social biographies, and chronological biographies.

Of these three general groupings, the chronological biography or nianpu is a comparatively recent biographical form which developed during the Song dynasty (960-1279). In its application of the annalistic approach to history, the nianpu provides a chronological account of the subject's life. According to Denis Twitchett, of all of the various Chinese biographical forms, the nianpu is perhaps the most closely related to the Western scholarly biography. However, Twitchett stresses, the nianpu, like the annalistic history style upon which it is based, is essentially a concise sequence of dated events and no effort is made to connect or interpret these events in any way. The nianpu can therefore be seen as biographical data rather than as biography itself. Since nianpu make up a very small portion of the total extant biographical materials, and (to my knowledge) there are
no extant nianpu dealing with the lives of either Wu Wei or Lu Zhi, for the purposes of this thesis I am primarily concerned with the problems of interpretation of the historical and commemorative or social biography.

The historical biographical tradition can be traced back to Sima Qian's Shi ji, the first of the twenty-four Standard Dynastic Histories, which was completed in ca. 90 B.C. The arrangement of the Shi ji, consisting of the imperial chronicles based on the events of the court followed by groups of liezhuan or illustrative biographies, was to provide the basic framework for all future Standard Histories (zhengshi). The form of the biographical portions of this work is believed to have ultimately been derived from ancestral cult memorial inscriptions. Accounting for over half of the total space in the Standard Histories, the biographies provide information on approximately fifty thousand subjects. The official biographies contained in the Standard Dynastic Histories are intended to illustrate moral issues. They are generally arranged in categories such as principled officials, oppressive officials, famous statesman, filial sons, imperial concubines, virtuous wives, literary figures, recluses, and so on.

The compilation of the history of the preceding dynasty into a Standard Dynastic History was regarded as the duty of the successive dynasty. From the Tang period (618-907) until the end of the Qing dynasty in 1911, official history (with a single exception)² was compiled by the groups of scholar-officials who staffed the History Office.

The purpose of this imperially sponsored official historiography was to maintain continuity by establishing a predecessor-successor relationship and by conferring on the new dynasty the orthodox line of succession. As Liansheng Yang comments, this sort of "justification was particularly desirable because the major dynasties in the period came to power mostly
by conquest or revolution." Official historical writings were also intended to provide precedents and models of behaviour for future generations of officials. Embodied in the official histories are pairs of recognized conflicting principles which can be traced back to antiquity and are related to the pervasively dualistic Chinese view of the world -- notions such as "truthful record" versus "appropriate concealment" and "praise and blame" versus objective account. The history recorded in the official histories is extremely limited in that it is history written by the official class for the official class, and the biographies included in the Standard Dynastic Histories are predominantly those of scholar-officials.

Also included in the category of the historical biography are the numerous privately compiled historical texts and local histories or gazetteers. These contain a wealth of biographical material. However, they are permeated with the same underlying principles and are arranged in much the same way as the Standard Dynastic Histories.

The greater portion of extant biographical material is commemorative writing or social biography. Commemorative biographies served a ritual or social function in that they were related to ancestral cult use and were intended to record, commend, and extoll the virtues of a deceased family member or close personal friend. The models for these types of writings can be traced back to the Eastern Han (25-220), although ultimately they are related to the commemorative writings found carved on the bronze vessels of the Shang (ca. 1600 - ca. 1100 B.C.) and Zhou (ca. 1100 B.C. - 221 A.D.) dynasties. After the Han dynasty, ritual and social biographies came to be preserved in wenji or collected works and literary anthologies.

A major type of commemorative writing related to ancestral cult use is the tomb inscription or epitaph. The tomb inscription was intended as a
formal report made to the ancestors by the clan members in order to announce the virtues and the accomplishments of the deceased. There are two basic types of tomb inscriptions or mubei: The muzhi (grave record) and the mubiao (grave notice). The muzhi, which was inscribed on a stone tablet and buried with the coffin in order to identify the remains in the event that the grave was later disturbed, was a brief biography, the intent of which was to laud the virtues of the deceased. The mubiao was analogous to the muzhi and was inscribed on stone and erected in front of the grave. In the case of a person of elevated rank, the mubiao (referred to as a shendaobei) was erected on a stele located on the avenue leading to the tomb. A ming or formal poem in praise of the deceased was commonly found inscribed after the tomb inscription.

In addition to tomb inscriptions there were also lei (eulogies to the dead), aici (elegies), zansong (funerary odes), jiwen and diaowen (funerary orations). The jiwen, which was addressed directly to the deceased, was usually biographical in nature and composed in verse. It often functioned in a ritual in which it was written on paper and then burned.

Commemorative or social biographies were also included in family records or jiazhuan (family histories). These records were meant to be preserved and cherished by the relatives of the deceased. In addition, special biographical forms or documents called xingzhuang (Accounts of Conduct) were developed. These could be used by the relatives of the deceased in order to supply material to the writer of the epitaph or to argue a case for the inclusion of the deceased in the local gazetteer or Standard History or for the awarding of posthumous titles and other honors.

Commemorative biographies could be written by a friend or teacher of the deceased, an individual who owed a personal debt to a family member
or friend, or an individual employed for the occasion. As Nivison observes: "An intricate network of social obligations compelled the Chinese literatus to write biographies of many kinds, just as it obliged him to write poems, letters, birthday salutations, and prefaces to other men's books." In the event that the writer did not know his subject personally, the family would provide him with the necessary material. Not all family members were given elaborate commemorative biographies. Commemorative biographies, like official biographies, had a didactic function and only the most meritorious clan members were given extended memorials.

In addition to historical, commemorative, and chronological biographies, other important biographical sources include diaries, biographical prefaces and autobiographies, as well as texts of Buddhist and Daoist hagiography.

Despite their diversity, the various types of Chinese biographical sources form a unified literary tradition. They are intimately related to one another and share a number of formal features. There is a common format for nearly all of the various types of biographical writings. The arrangement of the official biography and the biographical portion of the tomb inscription, for example, are virtually identical. They each begin with the subject's full names and style names, place of origin, and particulars on noteworthy immediate ancestors. This information is followed by details of the subject's career and, if he was a literary figure, possibly by quotations from his writings. In the epitaph or tomb inscription this account is then followed by the ming, while in the official biography it is followed by the enumeration of posthumous honors, notes regarding the sons of the deceased (if they were in any way notable), and by the historian's closing remarks.
Various material was used to augment this information. According to Denis Twitchett, in his essay entitled "Problems of Chinese Biography:"

These particulars are often followed by some formulaic incident or incidents -- not necessarily historical -- designed to demonstrate how the subject's character had clearly manifested itself even in his childhood. These formulas...are indications of the character-type to which the historian assigned his subject, and symbolize the lifelong consistence of character and conduct which the historian sought to establish. 8

David Nivison, commenting on historical biographical material, makes a similar observation when he writes that these formulas or anecdotes were meant to indicate the subject's character and are "often stereotyped and quite false." He continues: "This portrait of character conceives of the man as falling into a type, at most realizing potentialities present from birth, but never exhibiting a dynamic and changing personality." 9

In general, privately compiled biographies tend to be less limited than official accounts in that they were not restricted in length. Further, since the private biographer was generally a friend or acquaintance of the deceased or had access to personal records and literary effects, privately compiled accounts are generally more detailed, immediate and vivid in their effect. 10 However, the material found in the historical biographies was, for the most part, based upon records composed by private individuals and was often drawn directly from tomb inscriptions, family histories or the Accounts of Conduct. In addition, the basic, underlying concepts of commemorative or social biography were not so very different from those of historical biography. As Twitchett points out, the "private biographer wrote from essentially the same Confucian standpoint as the official historian and shared the official-centered interests common to the whole
class of scholar-officials." As a result, it is often difficult to make a clear distinction between commemorative and official historical biography.

The task of the biographer, regardless of whether he was writing an historical or social biography, was to establish the subject's general character, and he did this by casting him in a standard, conventionalized role. Given that the intended audience of the biography was likely to be cognizant of the true facts, the biographer, who was accountable to 'all-under-heaven' and future generations, was unlikely to resort to actual invention. It was here that the principle of 'appropriate concealment' could be applied. Twitchett explains: "The chief source of distortion lay in the selection of material for inclusion, and the exclusion of facts that showed the subject in an unfavorable light or that did not accord with the author's general interpretation of his subject's character as a consistent example of a specific and recognizable type." In some cases the biographer would resort to recording information which did not coincide with his overall characterization elsewhere in the history, occasionally even in the biography of some other subject.

To a certain degree, of course, the traditional Chinese historian's concern for conventionalized categories and stereotypes is related to the importance of role selection and role playing in a Confucian society. It was common for individuals to adopt a particular role and to deliberately identify themselves with and model their behavior after a figure or figures from the past. Adopted by one man after the other throughout the centuries these roles accumulated layer upon layer of ever increasing associations. To adopt a particular role was to signal the adoption of a particular attitude and, in Wright's words, "was to evoke in the minds of one's contemporaries images and recollections of all those who had created
and developed that role" in the past. While Wu Wei appears in some ways to have patterned himself after Tang artists such as Wang Mo, who came to be classified as artists of the yipin or "untrammeled" class, Lu Zhi, as noted earlier, clearly identified himself with the poet-recluse Tao Yuanming.

An early choice of role model was encouraged. Parents and relatives employed a number of devices to assess a child's natural talent and tendencies. For example, in a custom dating back to the sixth century, a child on his first birthday was required to choose from a variety of objects, each object symbolizing a particular profession. His selection was viewed as an indication of his inherent abilities and future career. The appropriate exemplars were then brought to the child's attention and through formal education and discipline he could then be moulded to fit the desired role.

Given the relationship of Chinese historiography to Confucian society, it is necessary for the sinologist to determine to what degree the sorts of conventionalized roles that are portrayed were simply attributed to the subjects by the Chinese biographer or to what extent, if any, they were deliberately adopted and played out by the subjects during their lifetimes.

Traditional Chinese historiography is severely limited. It was written by and for a small elite and tells us little if nothing of the lives of those who did not belong to the official class. History, seen as something which was meant to function in the present, was worked and shaped and held up as a mirror. Chinese historiographical material is concerned with moral, literary, scholarly and official achievements. The biographies contained within this material were intended to illustrate how the deceased functioned in a particular public role and were not meant to be fully rounded explorations of the individual's personality.
The same sorts of limitations and underlying principles can be seen to apply to historical writings on Chinese art. Writers of art history, like the writers of official history or social biography, were essentially writing from a Confucian point of view. They were operating under the same terms of reference and shared the same motives and preoccupations. Painting histories are organized in much the same way as the formal official histories discussed earlier, with the biographies of artists occupying the major portion of available space. Rigid and formalized categories were assigned which tend to obscure the individual achievements and the interactions between artists. Praise and blame were assigned. Lines of predecessor and successor were drawn up and orthodox lines of succession were established. Establishing an orthodox lineage, a practice engaged in by critics such as Dong Qichang, was really no different from the practice undertaken by the official historians of successive dynasties in an attempt to justify their succession. All of this has contributed to the bias directed to professional and court artists or those who did not hold public office.

Traditional historiographical sources reflect the biases of the writer and must be read in the context for which they were written. In terms of biographical material, it is important to take into consideration the compiler of the biography. As noted earlier, privately compiled biographies, like the more official biographies, were generally written from a Confucian point of view; however, they do tend to be more detailed than the official, formal types of biography and as a result they often present a fuller and more reliable picture. Given the limitations of traditional biographical material, non-biographical material such as the writings of the subject himself should also be referred to. In addition, a thorough acquaintance with the times in which the subject lived is essential.
During the course of the summer of 1987 I translated a variety of materials related to Wu Wei and Lu Zhi which will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four and included in the appendices of this thesis. Unfortunately, in the case of Wu Wei there are no extant personal writings to which one can refer. He left no observations on his own creative processes or on painting in general. For Wu Wei I have relied heavily on an account by Xu Binxing which was published in the *Jinling suoshi* compiled by Zhou Hui and published in 1610. Holly Holtz (in a 1975 M.A. thesis on Wu Wei) considers this account to have been written more than one hundred years later than two early sources which deal with this artist, and this, she believes, would "seem to account for the contradictory and at times more elaborate information this later text contains." In fact, while Xu Binxing's account in the *Jinling suoshi* was published one hundred years after Wu Wei's death, it is obvious from its contents that Xu was an intimate friend and contemporary of the artist. In contrast to the section on Wu included in the *Wusheng shishi*, a more formal and official source compiled at the end of the Ming period and published at the beginning of the Qing (1644-1911), which tends to emphasize Wu Wei's wild, erratic behavior and heavy drinking habits, Xu Binxing paints Wu Wei as a sensitive, intelligent and educated man, whose attitude towards his painting was similar to that of Lu Zhi.

Like Wu Wei, Lu Zhi was not a theoretician. For Lu Zhi there are inscriptions and poems on several paintings, and some of these will be considered. In terms of biographical material, I have relied primarily on the accounts of Wang Shizhen (1526-1590), a wealthy scholar-official, collector and literary figure who knew Lu Zhi well in the 1570s. He thus
may have had the same basic relationship to Lu Zhi as Xu Binxing had to Wu Wei.


4For a discussion of these pairs of principles see Yang, "The Organization of Chinese Official Historiography," pp. 46-53.


8Twitchett, "Problems of Chinese Biography, p. 28.


12Ibid., p. 30.


15See Wright, "Values, Roles and Personalities," p. 11.

16The notion of using history like a mirror was another principle of official historiography which goes back to ancient times. See Yang, "The Organization of Chinese Official History," pp. 48-49.

CHAPTER THREE

Many factors entered into the ways in which Wu Wei and Lu Zhi expressed themselves -- general predisposition, training, the availability and range of viable options, and so on. Their immediate environment too had a major influence. The pervading atmosphere of Nanjing was very different from that of Suzhou. Each of these two cities had its own distinguishing cultural traits, determined by historic, economic, and geographic factors as well as by the prevailing social and political climate. The resulting distinctive cultural environments were inevitably to have an effect on the art work produced in them. In order to gain a fully rounded understanding of Wu Wei and Lu Zhi, it is necessary to examine their lives and works within the context of the urban and cultural history of Nanjing and Suzhou.

It may be argued that the cultural differences between Nanjing and Suzhou should not be overstressed. Both cities were located in the Lower Yangzi Delta region, and both benefited from the economic growth which occurred in general throughout the area. In addition, both cities shared in the general cultural dominance of the south over Beijing in the north which occurred at the beginning of the Yuan period, when a split was created between the political and administrative center and the cultural center of the country after the Mongols had made their capital in Beijing, a city far removed from the Yangzi delta region where intellectuals and artists had congregated during the preceding Southern Song Dynasty. Moreover, the two cities were not geographically isolated from one another -- the numerous canals and waterways scattered throughout the region facilitated travel and communication. Nevertheless by the early and middle Ming
periods each city had developed its own peculiar social and cultural personality.

Nanjing's position was derived not from the resources and agricultural productivity of the immediately surrounding areas, but from the importance of its military and strategic position. As a result, the city's role was to change with the changing political climate. The population was a transitory one — particularly during the Ming when the city was the capital and, after 1421, the auxiliary capital of China — and underwent a number of shifts depending on the status of the city at any given time. In addition, the city was rebuilt several times, and each time its form was altered. Suzhou, in contrast to Nanjing, was essentially an economic not a political center. While Nanjing's position was dependent on the vagaries of politics and government, the immense wealth of the area immediately adjacent to Suzhou allowed for a much greater independence and self-sufficiency and contributed to a far greater stability of urban form and growth.

The cultural atmosphere of the two cities too was completely different. Nanjing was important as a center of entertainment and popular culture, particularly after 1421 when the capital was moved from Nanjing to Beijing. It was in its position as a secondary capital after 1421 that the city increasingly came to be associated with entertainment and the performance arts, with pleasure and ostentatious display. Suzhou, in contrast to Nanjing, was predominantly an intellectual center. Intellectuals came to Suzhou to take part in the government literary exams which were held there at the provincial level. The city also became a popular place of retirement for the literati during Yuan dynasty and again later in the Ming. During the early Ming intellectuals were drawn to Suzhou to serve in the government of the rebel leader Zhang Shicheng. While Nanjing came to be associated with a
"pleasure-seeking elite," Suzhou came to be associated with the Chinese notion of an idealized life. As will be discussed in the following chapters, the paintings of Wu Wei and Lu Zhi reflect these cultural differences.

Nanjing is located on the south bank of the Yangzi River in the southwestern region of Jiangsu province. The site is one of rolling terrain and low lying hills interspersed with canals and waterways. To the east lies the alluvial plain created by the delta of the Yangzi. The area is rich in historical associations and there are a wealth of legends concerning it.

The name Jinling ("gold tumulus"), one of Nanjing's many former names, dates from the fifth century B.C. In the third century B.C. the first emperor of a unified China, Qin Shihuangdi, made Jinling the headquarters for one of his commands, but changed the name to Moling ("hay mound"). The Qin emperor, having noticed the auspicious features of the site, was told by his astrologers that a powerful ruler would occupy it some five hundred years later. In addition to changing the name Jinling to the less propitious sounding Moling, he also had canals built and diverted the Qinhuai River through the area in an attempt to protect his descendants from this future threat. During the remaining years of the Qin dynasty and throughout the Han (206 B.C.-A.D. 220), Nanjing was overshadowed in terms of wealth and political importance by two nearby cities -- Suzhou, located near the coast some two-hundred miles downstream and Yangzhou, situated fifty miles to the northeast.

From the end of the Han period onwards, however, Nanjing came to assume a greater political, economic, and cultural role. In 229 A.D., during the Three Kingdoms period, Sun Quan, the ruler of state of Wu, moved his capital to the site and named it Jianye ("established deeds"). The name was later changed to Jiankang ("established well-being"). Sun Quan and his
successors introduced a number of measures to improve the economy of the area including irrigation and the construction of canals. Trading routes were established by sea to foreign countries such as Korea and the South Seas.

In 317 the state of Jin (the major political power at the time) suffered defeat at the hands of invaders from the north. Its rulers seized the city of Jiankang. The site then became the capital of a succession of dynasties referred to as the Southern Dynasties: The Eastern Jin (317-420), the Song (420-479), the Qi (479-502), the Liang (502-557), and the Chen (557-589).

During the period of the Southern Dynasties, the city of Jiankang became a major economic and trading center with links to the South Seas. It boasted over fourteen market places, each market specializing in a particular product such as cattle, horses, salt, and so on. Exotic goods such as pearls, agate, coral, ivory and rhinoceros horns were available as well. In 589 China was reunited under the Sui dynasty (581-618) and the capital was moved north. Jiankang, viewed as a symbol of southern power, was ordered to be destroyed by the Sui conquerer, and a smaller administrative city and military garrison were built to the side of the former site. As Frederick Mote observes: "This was partially a symbolic act, for it was designed both to destroy physically the symbol about which resistance to the Sui might form and to weaken the site's geomantic features." Aided by the great wealth and resources of the Lower Yangzi region, however, the city made a rapid recovery, regaining much of its former importance by the end of the Tang dynasty (618-907). During the Five Dynasties period (907-960) the name was changed to Jinling once more when the city became the capital of a local dynasty called the Southern Tang which governed the present-day provinces of Jiangsu, Anhui, Hunan,
Jiangxi, and Fujian. The city was renamed Jiangning and served as a seat of provincial administration during the Northern Song period (960-1127). For a short period it became the temporary capital of the Southern Song (1127-1279) who renamed it Jiankang. During the Yuan period (1271-1368) the city was called Jingqi and retained some of its former status as a center of political importance, but it was not a great city like Hangzhou or Suzhou to the southeast.

The founder of the Ming dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang (r. 1368-98), who became known as Ming Taizu or, alternatively, by his era-name, Hongwu, seized Nanjing in the spring of 1356 and made it his military base. There, establishing himself as a regional warlord, he continued to participate in military campaigns directed against the Mongols, and at the same time gradually disposed of his Chinese rivals. He changed the name of the city from Jingqi to Yingtian ("in response to heaven"), a name which, as Mote observes, "announced a claim on the Mandate of Heaven." Following the capture of the Yuan capital at Beiping (present-day Beijing), he formally proclaimed himself as first emperor of the Ming dynasty on the first day of the Chinese year in 1368. Nanjing was chosen as the imperial capital.

Zhu Yuanzhang’s choice was a logical one. Since the end of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220), Nanjing had counted amongst China’s most prominent cities. While the nearby cities of Suzhou and Yangzhou had the advantage of locations on the Grand Canal and were central to areas of greater natural resources and agricultural productivity, Nanjing, protected by Purple Mountain and other hills on the south and east and the Yangzi (an even more important transportation route than the Grand Canal) which wound around its northern and western sides, commanded a far superior
strategic position. Nanjing was to become the dominant military and political base of the Lower Yangzi region.

In addition to the city's great strategic and geopolitical importance, as Frederick Mote points out, "by the fourteenth century the rich layers of accumulated historical associations also were a 'real' component of the site we call Nanjing." Nanjing, as was previously noted, was a capital city throughout the Southern Dynasties, a succession of dynasties which, at a time when the country was invaded by aliens in the north, viewed themselves as the guardians of the Chinese civilization.

The city had also been a major cultural center throughout the Six Dynasties period (220-589 A.D.). In particular, it was strongly identified with the Chinese literary tradition. Frederick Mote summarizes:

The great monuments of Six Dynasties literary theory are associated with Nanjing; the golden age of Tang poetry looked directly to antecedents in the Southern Dynasties; and most Tang poets who visited Nanjing wrote nostalgic verse recalling the rich associations of the place. Some of these poems were among the best known of the Tang period, and in later ages were very widely known and were recited even by illiterate commoners. Few places in China could surpass Nanjing in the depth of its literary associations, and no other kind of associations contributed more to the fame and glory of a place in the Chinese mind.

As the capital of the regional Southern Tang dynasty, Nanjing had continued to be identified with the literary tradition. The three Southern Tang emperors were all poets of great distinction, particularly Li Yu (937-78) who is considered to be one of China's major ci poets. Nanjing at this time was also an important artistic city. The artists Dong Yuan and Juran are known to have worked there. The emperor Li Yu supported both of
these artists, and when Li Yu was captured by the Song troops the artist Juran is known to have followed him north.13

Moreover, Nanjing had long been known as an important entertainment center. In the ninth century, the Tang poet, Du Mu, referred to the Qinhuai, a famous canal which meanders through the city, in a poem entitled "Stopping at the Qinhuai:"

The mist embraces icy waters  
The moon embraces gauze;  
Staying the night at Qinhuai,  
Approaching the wine houses.  
The business girls, unknown:  
I mourn my vanished State.  
Separated by the river,  
Still there is singing --  
The flowers in the rear garden.14

Over the years Nanjing had come to be celebrated for its music, dance, and theatrical performances. It was also known for its pleasure quarters. Brothels, winehouses, teahouses, and inns lined the banks of the Qinhuai Canal. The name Qinhuai became synonymous with entertainment and the pursuit of pleasure. The city's reputation as an entertainment center was to become increasingly great, particularly after 1421 when the capital was moved to Beijing. It was in the Qinhuai district that Wu Wei was eventually to settle in the early sixteenth century.

In 1356 when Zhu Yuanzhang took Nanjing, the population was roughly one hundred thousand. In order to avoid opposition, the original inhabitants of the city were expelled and dissident wealthy households from other areas, such as Suzhou, were moved into the capital.15 The practice of mass resettlement was common throughout Chinese history. In this instance it enabled the Ming founder to keep under observation and
punish potential dissidents, but it was also intended to make Nanjing a more refined and affluent city. By the 1380s the population of the city had increased to approximately one million.\textsuperscript{16} The majority of the inhabitants were officials employed by the new central government.

Zhu Yuanzhang began the work of transforming what had been a relatively small Yuan prefectural town into a great imperial city in the year 1366. Work was begun on the enlargement of the city walls and on the building of an inner palace city. The imperial city was located to the east of the old city and housed the residence of the emperor and his household, the family shrines, altars of state, and certain government buildings. The plan for the imperial city built in Beijing in the fifteenth century was largely based upon this Nanjing model. Large numbers of workmen must have been employed, for the construction of the Altars of Heaven and Earth was finished in the eight month of 1367. In the ninth month of the same year, the Temple of the Imperial Ancestors and three main audience halls were completed. While it is known that thousands of artisan households and builders were moved into the city from other areas and that brick and tile factories were set up and stone quarries were opened, little is known of the actual details of the construction process. There are only brief notices in the \textit{shi lu} ("Veritable Records") announcing the commencement or completion of a particular project. Information concerning the planners, builders, building methods, materials, and so on was of no interest to the official Chinese historians and went largely unrecorded.\textsuperscript{17}

Nanjing appears to have been a rather stratified city in terms of social classes. The emperor and his household lived in the imperial city surrounded by the palace walls. The areas immediately adjacent to the imperial city were divided into \textit{fang} or urban wards. As Mote observes,
"each quarter acquired the special flavor of the dialect backgrounds, professional specializations, and other characteristics of its residents...There was a 'Brocade Fang,' a 'Carpenters' Fang' a 'Singers' and Artistes' [sic] Fang,' a 'First Craftmen's Fang,' a 'Second Craftmen's Fang' (on up to the Fifth), and a 'Poor People's Fang.'" According to Mote, "these features of Nanking's demography were still apparent in late Ming times and were commented on even in the nineteenth century."18

The speed at which Nanjing was transformed from a small rebel base to a grand imperial city is truly astounding. Mote writes: "From being the seat of a civil service staff of about 200 officials, Nanking almost overnight became the seat of an imperial bureaucracy staffed by 10,000 civil and 12,000 military officials and by perhaps 50,000 subofficials not ranked in the civil service."19 The Ming founder re-instated the recommendation system, as well as the traditional civil service examinations and established an Imperial University in 1368 which was attended by between 8,000 and 9,000 students, all of whom were on government stipends.

During the Ming, Nanjing continued to be celebrated for its pleasure quarters and rich city life. Yu Huai (1616-1696), in a seventeenth century work entitled "Diverse Records of Wooden Bridge," describes the city:

Jinling [Nanjing] was the place where imperial rulers established their capital; splendid mansions belonging to dukes, lords and the emperor's relatives (stood alongside one another like so many) linked clouds. The descendants of imperial clansmen fluttered about, (wearing) fur garments and (riding swift) horses. Things reached a point where disciples of the wealthy and eminent (and) guests and frolickers from every place all (went about) holding stringed instruments and blowing flutes. When they passed by ordinary establishments, everytime they held banquets there those on the entertainment registers were summoned. With their thin silks emitting
fragrance, (feminine entertainers) filled the glasses and supervised the drinking. Guests were detained or seen on their way; when the wine was exhausted and the chess-games ended, there were fallen earrings and hairpins left behind. It was truly a fairy capital of the world of Desire, a delightful country of soaring Peace.

Brothels, wine houses, inns, and markets flourished outside of the south gates of the city wall and lined both sides of the Qinhuai. When the Ming founder established Nanjing as his imperial city, a Compound of Wealth and Pleasure was built near the Imperial Path Bridge. There, prostitutes and courtesans from all over the country were summoned to take residence.

The presence of large numbers of courtesans contributed to Nanjing's reputation as an entertainment center. A distinction here should be made between prostitutes and courtesans. While prostitutes were generally untrained, courtesans were women who were valued more for their entertainment skills than for their physical charms. Courtesans were trained to assist at banquets, play musical instruments, recite poetry, and sing. Many had literary and artistic abilities and composed poetry and engaged in calligraphy, painting, and book collecting. A number of courtesans, such as Ma Shouzhen (act. 1570/72-1604), became noted painters, calligraphers or poets. Many were accomplished actresses who performed in the popular plays of the day and were capable of playing both male and female roles. While assisting at banquets, courtesans often sang excerpts from popular dramas.

Courtesans received the patronage of persons of high rank, local and visiting officials, and some of the leading intellectuals of the day. The Qinhuai district was located near the Hall of Tribute, the site of the tri-annual examinations for the advancement of official candidates within the
Chinese bureaucratic system, and examination candidates (successful and unsuccessful) flocked to the brothels lining the banks of the Qinhuai to celebrate or to drown their sorrows.\textsuperscript{24}

In addition to the Compound of Wealth and Pleasure, the first Ming emperor also established sixteen multi-storied buildings for official banquets and other forms of entertainment for high ranking persons. These, however, were not limited to official use. Some were located just outside the main gates of the palace city, while others were situated in the area to the south of the city wall. The area adjacent to the south city wall near the banks of the Qinhuai was a bustling, colourful zone where markets, theaters, and amusement houses were situated and prostitutes, storytellers, fortunetellers, acrobats, and jugglers congregated.\textsuperscript{25}

Throughout his reign the Ming founder became increasingly distrustful. He did not draw large numbers of intellectuals into his service in the way that his rival, Zhang Shicheng, did in Suzhou. In fact, he was particularly suspicious of intellectuals and conducted a number of purges which resulted in the deaths of literally tens of thousands of people. The atmosphere of the early Ming court was not conducive to intellectual and literary activities, and Nanjing was not to become a prominent intellectual center until well into the middle and late Ming times. Artistically, the situation appears to have been much the same. Although a Ming Painting Academy, comparable to that of the Southern Song, does not appear to have existed as such, the Ming founder did resume the practice of summoning artists to the capital to serve in the court. Many of these artists participated in the decoration of the palace buildings at Nanjing.\textsuperscript{26} There are numerous stories of unfortunate painters who were beheaded such as Zhao Yuan, who was judged to be "incompetent as a portraitist," and Sheng Zhu, who
insulted the emperor by depicting a Taoist fairy riding upon a dragon. However, by the late fifteenth century Nanjing was to outrank Suzhou as a painting center, and continued to rival it in the early years of the sixteenth century.

The Ming founder’s eldest son and designated successor predeceased him in 1391. Prior to his own death in 1398, the Hongwu emperor then selected a grandson as his successor. His grandson was enthroned at the age of sixteen. The Jianwen emperor was more sympathetic to intellectuals and literary and artistic figures than his grandfather had been. However, his reign was to be short-lived, for his uncle, Prince Yan, who controlled the old Mongol capital in the north at Beiping (“Northern Pacification”) seized power and ascended the throne at Nanjing (then called Yingtian) in 1403. He ruled under the reign title of Yongle (“Perpetual Happiness”) from 1403-1424. It was the Yongle emperor in 1421 who moved the capital north to Beiping, renaming it Beijing (“Northern Capital”) and changing the name Yingtian to Nanjing (“Southern Capital”).

The transfer of the capital from Nanjing to Beijing was probably carried out, at least in part, for strategic reasons as a defense against the Mongols who continued to be a threat in the north. However, despite the suitability of Nanjing as an imperial capital, even the Ming founder had been uncertain of his choice, and during the early years of his reign he sent out his advisors to investigate a number of northern sites which might be more appropriate. Nanjing had been the first capital of a unified China ever to be located in the south. As Frederick Mote explains: “All of the historical precedents for a center of political power in the South were inauspicious from a dynastic founder’s point of view, suggesting division, weakness, and short duration. The urge to ‘return’ to the North was very strong…”
When the Yongle emperor moved the seat of government to Beijing, in 1421, a system of dual capitals was implemented and Nanjing retained an important position as an auxiliary capital. Although duplicate departments and ministries as well as the various subordinate bureaus and functionaries were maintained in both capitals, the offices in Nanjing were reduced both in numbers of staff and in responsibilities. The remaining officials had little work to do and spent much of their time engaged in leisure activities. This applied to the army headquarters as well and the army personnel whiled away their time indulging themselves in drinking parties and scenic tours.30

Nanjing underwent a period of decline and is said to have lost half of its population. The city's pleasure quarters also experienced a brief period of decline, for during the early years of the fifteenth century it was felt that officials were neglecting their duties in pursuit of more pleasurable activities and were prohibited from associating with courtesans and attending banquets. Gradually, however, the restrictions were abandoned and the pleasure quarters were soon flourishing once again.31

It was in its position as a secondary capital that Nanjing began to assume a new role. Frederick Mote explains: "A type of successful official who wanted position and emolument without the responsibilities and competitive juggling for place that characterized Beijing and the court found the trappings of power in Nanjing more preferable to real power in Beijing. It became a more glamorous official environment than it had been, now associated with low-keyed alternative patterns of success in the political sphere and more refined and sybaritic living in the private sphere."32

Nanjing's recovery was brought about by the increases in population, agricultural production, commerce, and wealth which occurred in general throughout the Lower Yantze area in the early sixteenth century. Wealthy
urban commoners were free to display their affluence in grand houses and gardens and to spend money on forms of gaudy entertainment. Increasingly Nanjing came to be associated with a class of "pleasure-loving elite."33

While Nanjing was associated with "a pleasure-seeking elite," Suzhou was associated with a more contemplative style of life. Today, Suzhou as a geographical designation refers to the city in Jiangsu province. Its traditional name, Wu, refers to an entire prefecture or administrative unit -- a small region including dense suburbs, market towns, country villages, gardens, farms, country residences and estates, and rural recreational areas with the city itself bounded by walls at the center.34 As in Nanjing (and other traditional Chinese cities in general) the situation was one which Frederick Mote refers to as a "rural-urban continuum." That is, there was no sharp distinction between country and city activities and attitudes. There was no distinct urban form of dress, architecture or lifestyle.35

Like Nanjing, Suzhou is located in the southern portion of Jiangsu province in the fertile Yangzi delta region. It lies one hundred miles directly southeast of Nanjing; however, the gazetteers describe it as being situated seven stages or roughly two hundred miles away by the water route.36 Fifty miles to the north lies the Yangzi River, while twenty-five miles to the west is Lake Tai, the drainage basin of the lower Yangzi Delta region. The region surrounding Lake Tai benefits from the combination of rich alluvial soil, an abundance of fresh water, and a mild climate with hot wet summers, leading to high crop yields. It is the most fertile rice producing bottomland in all of China.

"Above are the heavenly mansions of paradise, below, Suzhou and Hangzhou" (Shang you tiantang, xia you Su Hang) reads an ancient Chinese
proverb equating Suzhou and Hangzhou with paradise on earth. Webbed with rivers and dotted with lakes, the area surrounding Suzhou is justly famous for its scenic beauty. The countryside is mainly flat (most of Jiangsu province is less than fifty meters in elevation) although a range of hills, the most famous one known as Tiger Hill, is located to the west of the city. Suzhou itself, although an inland city, is often referred to as "the Venice of China," for it is covered with a network of canals emptying into the Grand Canal which runs to the west of the city. Suzhou is also famous for its gardens and is commonly referred to as the "Garden City of China." Garden building reached its height in Suzhou during the Ming and early Qing (1644-1911) dynasties.

Suzhou has had a long history as an important economic and cultural center of southern China. There has never been an individual Chinese city which at any point in time has dominated the entire country economically and culturally. However, Suzhou has come the closest that any one Chinese city could to playing a paramount role in both of these areas. The site has been occupied since the twelfth century B.C., but the city was officially founded in the sixth century B.C. by King He Lu of Wu, who made it his capital. At this time the city is said to have been already as large as it was later under the Song. Like Nanjing, there are a wealth of legends associated with the site. According to tradition, King He Lu was buried on Tiger Hill, along with the swords which symbolized the strength of his kingdom.

Like Nanjing, Suzhou has been a seat of local and regional government since the third century B.C., when Qin Shihuangdi founded the empire and unified all of China. During the Han dynasty, Sima Qian, the compiler of the Shi Ji, visited the city and was impressed by its beauty. During the Three Kingdoms period at the beginning of the third century A.D., Sun Quan, the
ruler of the state of Wu, resided at Suzhou for a short while before transferring his capital to Nanjing. Throughout the Southern Dynasties Suzhou played a subordinate role to Nanjing, which at that time was both the economic and the cultural center of Lower Yangzi region. However, during the Sui dynasty Nanjing was ordered destroyed. Suzhou, came to assume a greater importance at this time and continued to develop throughout the Tang and Five Dynasties periods.

It was during the Song dynasty that Suzhou was to become one of the great cities of China, suffering only a slight setback when the city was looted by the Jin armies in 1128. Since that time it has maintained a stable rate of growth and throughout the last seven or eight centuries has remained one of the major cities of the Lower Yangzi region. During the Song the city was referred to as Pingjiang fu. In 1072 a Japanese Buddhist monk named Seijin visited Suzhou and wrote in his diary: "All the government palaces and residences are similar in grandness and extent to those in Hangzhou. The commerce in the markets is beyond imagining. There are 360 large stone bridges, for on east and west, on south and north, there are canals all about."^{40}

An engraving of a map carved in stone depicting Suzhou as it appeared in 1229 is still in existence today. It shows the city, which is located on a north-south axis, rectangular in shape and enclosed by walls which in turn are surrounded by a canal. The area within the walls is criss-crossed by a series of canals. The population of the city in 1229 has been estimated at approximately 300,000.^{41} A comparison of a rubbing of this stone engraving and an aerial photograph of the city taken in 1945 attests to an extraordinarily stability of urban form.^{42} There is only one major change, and that is the removal of an inner-city wall surrounding the
government buildings which in the 1350s became associated with the Zhu Yuanzhang's rival, Zhang Shicheng. The Ming founder ordered their destruction in 1368.43

As was noted in the introduction to this chapter, Suzhou was essentially an economic not a political center. Its stability of form and steady growth can be attributed to the immense wealth of the immediately surrounding area. In its stability of urban form and growth the city differs from Nanjing. Nanjing is located on the western edge of the Lower Yangzi region in an area which is generally poorer and less sparsely settled than the areas adjacent to Suzhou. Unlike Suzhou, Nanjing's position was derived not from the resources and agricultural productivity of the immediately surrounding areas, but from the importance of its military and strategic position. Thus, Nanjing's role changed with the changing political climate. The population underwent a number of shifts depending on the status of the city at any given time. In addition, the city was rebuilt several times and each time the form was altered. As a result, Nanjing has probably the most irregular shape of any of the major cities in China, in contrast to the regular rectangular shape of Suzhou.

Marco Polo visited Suzhou at the end of the thirteenth century and describes it as it was during the reign of Kublai Khan (1215-1295):

Suzhou is a large and fine city. The people are idolatrous and are subject to the Great Khan. They have vast quantities of silk which they use for clothing. Rich and important merchants live in the city, which is very large, having a circumference of sixty miles. It is so densely populated that it would be impossible to count the inhabitants. If the people of Manzi were warlike they would have no difficulty in conquering the world. But instead they are clever traders, men of intelligence and understanding, with many great philosophers and learned
doctors of medicine. They have an enormous number of astrologers and soothsayers.

There are at least 6,000 stone bridges in the city under which one or two galleys can sail. Quantities of rhubarb and ginger grow in the mountains round about -- one Venetian groat will buy sixty pounds of excellent fresh ginger. Sixteen other large and busy trading cities depend on Suzhou.44

By the 1340s and 1350s Suzhou was a great city second only to Hangzhou, the former capital of the preceding Southern Song dynasty, situated eighty miles to the southeast. Located in the most heavily populated area of the country, the population of the single prefecture -- two and a half million according to mid-Yuan figures -- was greater than that of some entire northern provinces.45 (The population of the area within the city walls and nearby suburbs is estimated to have been approximately one-quarter of a million.)46 In contrast, the population of the entire prefecture of Nanjing in the mid-Yuan period was only one million.47

While Nanjing became a popular entertainment center and was celebrated for its music, dance, and local theatre, it was primarily as an intellectual and artistic center that Suzhou gained in prominence. A number of factors contributed to Suzhou's increasing position as a major cultural center, but the accumulation of wealth was of fundamental importance. The basis of Suzhou's wealth was provided by its highly favourable agricultural conditions and abundance of natural resources, in addition to the inexpensive distribution of produce and goods furnished by the readily available water transport. In its location near the point where the Grand Canal, linking Hangzhou to Beijing, crosses the Yangzi, Suzhou became the center of the lower Yangzi drainage system. The benefits derived from a two-phased agricultural revolution -- in the Song period, the introduction of
quick-ripening rice, and after the sixteenth century, the introduction of crops from the New World -- led to the secondary production of luxury goods and to the development of the textile industry in the Suzhou region (initially silk, but after the fourteenth century a growing cotton industry as well) and this resulted in further increases in wealth.\textsuperscript{48}

People were attracted Suzhou for a variety of reasons. An obvious reason of course was the great wealth and beauty of the city and surrounding region. A native of Suzhou, Xie Hui, wrote of it in 1360:

\begin{quote}
Wu [Suzhou] is the metropolis of the southeast. In mountains there are the great sights of Hujiu and Lingyan; in waters there are the rich resources of the three rivers and the five lakes. As for the old houses and ancient gardens, mansions of old families, temples and palaces of Daoists and Buddhists, they are scattered both inside and outside the city walls. The people are rich but honest; their money and taxation are strong but prosperous. Thus high officials and wealthy gentlemen, talented and outstanding personages, and busy travellers and retired people, all enjoy visiting the city or taking up residence here.\textsuperscript{49}
\end{quote}

In contrast to Nanjing, which appears to have been a stratified city in terms of social class, the tremendous wealth of the Suzhou region generated a large middle class and blurred the distinction between the classes in general. According to a 1379 gazetteer: "Suzhou from early times has been known as a populous and flourishing place; the suburbs lying about the city on all sides contain no empty land. Among the people there are no distinctions of aristocratic and lowly, so frequently it is true that all the people have property. As a result their customs are much given to extravagance, and little to the virtue of frugality.\textsuperscript{50}

The excess wealth accumulated by the gentry and merchant classes from agriculture, the textile industry, commerce, and banking was used for
buying land, building estates and gardens, and for the pursuit and support of cultural activities. Writers, painters, and scholars were drawn to Suzhou and were sustained by its great affluence. The leading talent of the region passed through the city, since the government's literary examinations at the provincial level were held there. Those who did not pass the examinations or receive official appointments could find positions as tutors helping others engaged in the same process.51

In addition to Suzhou's affluence, the city had a long history as a place of refuge or retirement for intellectuals. Traditionally, Chinese capitals tended to be the center of both political and cultural activities. This was true of Xianyang, Chang'an, and Luoyang during the Qin and Han dynasties, Nanjing during the Southern Dynasties, Kaifeng during the Northern Song, and Hangzhou during the Southern Song. At the beginning of the Yuan dynasty, however, a split occurred between the political and administrative center and the cultural center of the country when the Mongols made their capital in Beijing. Suzhou had gained a reputation as a center of strong loyalist resistance at the end of the Southern Song when two of its officials, Zhang Shijian and Wen Tianxiang, put up the last line defense there before the Mongols took Hangzhou in 1276. As a result, Chinese loyalist intellectuals often sought refuge in Suzhou. The city became a popular place of retreat or retirement for the literati, particularly during the Yuan dynasty, when Chinese scholars were deprived of governmental positions by the ruling Mongols, but also later in the Ming, when retirement was often preferable to (or safer than) dealing with the intrigues of the court. Retired scholars spent their leisure time practicing painting or calligraphy, collecting books and works of art, hosting or participating in literary
gatherings, and building libraries and gardens. The arts prospered in this environment.\textsuperscript{32}

Intellectuals were also drawn to Suzhou to serve in the government of the rebel leader Zhang Shicheng. In the 1350s when a number of outbreaks of violence and rebellions directed against the Mongol government broke out throughout China, the wealthy Lower Yangzi region became an area of contention as rebel leaders sought to establish their power bases. In March of 1356 Zhang Shicheng, the self-proclaimed Prince Cheng, captured Suzhou one month before Zhu Yuanzhang was to seize Nanjing. Suzhou and Nanjing became rebel power bases set up in direct opposition to the Mongol government and also to each other.\textsuperscript{53}

Zhang Shicheng renamed the city Longping and made it the capital of his Great Zhou dynasty. Suzhou’s largest Buddhist temple was converted into a palace and an administrative structure and court based on the traditional imperial pattern was established. Zhang Shicheng, like Zhu Yuangzhang, was an uneducated man of peasant stock and yet the leading intellectuals and literary and artistic figures of the day were drawn to Suzhou to serve in his government. Frederick Mote explains:

Superficially at least he [Zhang Shicheng] was on the side of right. He had been offered chances to surrender to Zhu Yuanzhang and the Red Turbans, and had refused, and this was even more important in the eyes of the scholar-officialdom class in society. In their eyes the Red Turbans were the most reprehensible kind of scum imaginable -- superstitious rabble-rousers, worthless dregs of society, enemies of the cultural tradition, bandits of the most feared and hated kind. In comparison, Zhang Shicheng was a man who at least pretended to honor the traditional values. He was crude and violent and lacked education, but he aspired to become a true gentleman, a patron of talent, a sponsor of literary endeavors. He had established bureaus of government for the purpose of
encouraging literature, and had appointed men of scholarly interest and literary taste to his staff. Although a salt smuggler turned rebel, he was a man who seemed to be susceptible to influences from the cultured upper classes.\textsuperscript{54}

During the years between 1356 and 1366 Suzhou was probably the wealthiest and most culturally sophisticated city in all of China. Many of the great masters of Yuan painting spent time in Suzhou and the members of an important literary circle, the "Ten Friends of the North Wall," also resided there.\textsuperscript{55}

In 1357 Zhang Shicheng surrendered to the Mongols and made peace with them. He retained his wealth, armies, and territories and accepted the title of Grand Marshall. However, in 1363 he again declared himself independent, this time calling himself the Prince of Wu. During this period he lived in great style and continued to patronize the arts.\textsuperscript{56} In the summer of 1365 Zhu Yuanzhang's Nanjing armies captured portions of Zhang's territories and by June of 1366 Suzhou itself was threatened. The city was under siege by December, and in August of 1367 Zhang was forced to admit defeat and surrendered.\textsuperscript{57} Zhu Yuanzhang, having proclaimed himself as first emperor of the Ming dynasty on the first day of the Chinese New Year in 1368, replaced Zhang Shicheng's officials with his own, renamed the city Suzhou, and reduced its status to that of prefectural city directly responsible to the central government at Nanjing.\textsuperscript{58}

The people of Suzhou and the surrounding areas, however, remained loyal to the memory of Zhu Yuanzhang's most hated rival, Zhang Shicheng. Large numbers of them were subjected to torture, imprisonment, and execution, and the wealthy were taxed at an extraordinarily high rate; in many cases they were forced to resettle elsewhere, some in Nanjing, others in the arid and desolate Huai region to the north. A number of the
members of Suzhou's literary and artistic circles were executed by the first Ming emperor, for the Ming founder was particularly suspicious of the intellectuals who had served Zhang Shicheng. As a result there was no major transference of intellectual and cultural activity from Suzhou to Nanjing at the beginning of the Ming. Suzhou continued to be a leading intellectual center, while Nanjing was better known as center for popular entertainment and culture.

In summary, throughout the Six Dynasties Period (220-589), Nanjing was southern China's major political and cultural center. In particular, it was associated with the Chinese literary tradition. After the Southern Dynasties Nanjing lost its earlier position as a major cultural center. The city was not to regain its former prominence as a major cultural and intellectual center until the late Ming period. During the intervening years, Nanjing derived its importance from its military and strategic position. The role of Nanjing shifted with the prevailing political climate and the city underwent a number of changes. At the beginning of the Ming, Nanjing was extensively rebuilt. Much of the former population was relocated in Yunnan and dissident wealthy households from Suzhou were moved into the capital. By the 1380s the population had swelled to approximately one million. Most of these inhabitants were officials employed by the new central government and were on rotating assignment to the provinces. Officials from all over the country came and went and thus the population was a transitory one. Over the centuries Nanjing had gained a reputation as an entertainment center and had long been an attraction for pleasure seekers. When the court moved to Beijing in 1421, the government offices in Nanjing had a reduced staff and reduced responsibilities. This enabled the remaining officials to devote much of their time to the pursuit of
pleasure. More than ever the city came to be associated with entertainment and the performance arts, with pleasure and ostentatious display.

Suzhou played a subordinate role to Nanjing throughout the Southern Dynasties. However, by the Song period Suzhou was firmly established as one of the great cultural and economic cities of China. Suzhou derived its importance as an economic center and, in contrast to Nanjing, exhibited an extraordinary continuity and stability in terms of its urban form and steady growth. A number of major artists from earlier periods, including Gu Kaizhi, Lu Tanwei, and Zhang Sengyou, were natives of the area. The traditions of Su Dongpo and Mi Fei were also very important. At the end of the Southern Song period Suzhou gained a reputation as a center of resistance to the Mongols and a number of loyalist intellectuals sought refuge there. Like Nanjing, Suzhou had a large leisure class, but its members appear to have sought a more contemplative life and engaged in less ostentatious forms of display. While Nanjing attracted pleasure seekers, particularly after 1421 when the capital was moved to Beijing, Suzhou, especially during the Yuan and late Ming drew a class of retired scholar-officials who devoted their fortunes to activities such as building libraries and garden cultivation.

The painting of Nanjing and Suzhou can be seen to reflect the different cultural atmospheres of the two cities. While Nanjing painting during the Ming was diverse in nature, it can generally be characterized as dramatic, bold and immediate in effect, reflective of the colourful and dynamic Nanjing urban environment. Cahill observes that Nanjing was Suzhou's rival in terms of intellectual and literary activity in the late fifteenth century. He writes: "Leading Nanjing writers did not concentrate so much on the literary forms intended for quiet, contemplative enjoyment or
edification, the poem or the learned essay (although they wrote those too), as on 'performance pieces' -- dramatic lyrics (sanqu) and operas." As Cahill continues, Nanjing painting can be seen to have undergone a parallel development. He characterizes Nanjing painting as "sharing some of the qualities of the genres of literature popular there: a fondness for narrative themes, for the portrayal of human figures and human situations, for effects that can properly be called dramatic."59

Nanjing was a city of change, a city of shifting status and population. During the early and middle Ming period, the artistic community too was constantly changing, for Nanjing, like Beijing, was a transitory place for artists. Not only was the city attractive in terms of its relative comforts and amusements, but it also provided opportunity in the form of the patronage of the large merchant and official classes, in addition to that of the imperial court. Artists representing a wide diversity of backgrounds and working in a variety of traditions were attracted to the city from all over the country. Such an environment encouraged an interchange of ideas resulting in stylistic exchanges. It was not an environment in which artists or their patrons were concerned so much with continuity, with lineages and allegiances, as they were with the immediacy of painting.

The bold, free brushwork and abbreviated forms to be found in much of Wu Wei's painting to some degree may have been adopted in response to the Nanjing urban environment in general, but also as result of the influence of a group of artists who were born or were active in and around Nanjing in the decades before and after 1500 and were slightly older or contemporaries, such as Sun Long (active in the third quarter of the fifteenth century), Shi Zhong (1438-1517), Du Jin (active late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries), Guo Xu (1456-1526), and Xu Lin (1462-1538).
As Cahill observes, all of these men were born or were active in Nanjing or the immediate vicinity, and all were educated, all were known for their eccentric and wild behaviour. Their eccentric behaviour was expressed not only in their bold painting style, but also in inscriptions and in their adopted names or sobriquets — names such as 'Old Fool,' "Pure and Crazy," and so on.  

In contrast to Nanjing painting, Suzhou painting may be described as contemplative and restrained. In general, it is quieter and more intimate than the dramatic and often flamboyant Nanjing painting. The proliferation of dedicatory inscriptions — poems or pieces of prose, often written to commemorate a special occasion — is a common feature of Suzhou painting. Popular themes include the depiction of local scenery and famous sites, scenes depicting country estates or gardens, literary themes, and works in the styles of earlier painting masters.

In contrast to Nanjing, Suzhou was a remarkably stable city. It was a conservative city, a bulwark of Confucianism, and during the Yuan dynasty it came to associated with loyalist sentiments. In the Yuan and late Ming periods it became popular as a place of retirement for the scholar-official class. During the Yuan, artists such as Zhao Mengfu (1254-1322) and Ni Zan (1301-1374) visited the city on a number of occasions. Huang Gongwang (1269-1354) came to live in Suzhou in 1334, while Wang Meng (c. 1300-1385) is known to have lived there during the 1360s. All of these artists exerted a strong influence on Suzhou painting, particularly Zhao Mengfu who reintroduced elements from the styles of Dong Yuan and Li Cheng of the Northern Sung.  

During the middle Ming, Suzhou painting was dominated first by the artist Shen Zhou and later by Wen Zhengming. Both of these artists took what can be described as a modal approach to painting.
Shen Zhou was influenced by the styles of the "Four Great Masters of the Yuan" -- Wu Zhen (1280-1354), Ni Zan, Huang Gongwang, and Wang Meng, while Wen Zhengming, a more eclectic artist, explored the styles of Tang, Song, and Yuan artists. Lu Zhi's paintings were produced in an atmosphere in which continuity and tradition were important, an atmosphere in which artists and their patrons were conscious of and thought in terms of historical lineages and allegiances, and this distinctly contrasts with the situation and career of Wu Wei. The relationship of the works of Wu Wei and Lu Zhi to the painting traditions of their respective urban environments will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

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3See Mote, "The Transformation of Nanjing," p. 120.
4Ibid.
5Ibid.
7Mote, "The Transformation of Nanking," p. 121.
8Ibid., p. 128.
9See Mote, "The Tranformation of Nanking," pp. 121-22 for a more detailed discussion of the importance of Nanjing as a geopolitical site.
11See Mote, "The Transformation of Nanking, p. 123.

14Quoted by Howard S. Levy, A Feast of Mist and Flowers: The Gay Quarters of Nanking at the End of the Ming, annotated translation of Yu Huai's Pan-ch'iao-tsa-chi, 1644 (Yokohama, Japan: By the author, 1966), p. 11.

15See Mote, "The Transformation of Nanking," p. 144.

16Ibid., p. 138.

17Ibid., p. 133.


19Ibid., p. 139.

20Translated by Levy, A Feast of Mist and Flowers, p. 36.

21Levy, A Feast of Mist and Flowers, p. 19.

22See, for example, Eileen Grace Truscott, "Ma Shou-chen: Ming Dynasty Courtesan/Artist" (M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1981).

23See Levy, A Feast of Mist and Flowers, p. 9; p. 12; p. 22.


26See Harrie Vanderstappen, "Painters at the Early Ming Court (1368-1435) and the Problem of a Ming Painting Academy," Monumenta Serica 16 (1957): 315-46.

27Cahill, Parting at the Shore, p. 8. See also Vanderstappen, "Painters at the Early Ming Court," p. 329.

28See Cahill, Parting at the Shore, p. 98.


31See Levy, A Feast of Mist and Flowers, p. 20.


33Ibid.

34The term Wu may also refer to other groupings of prefectures in the Lower Yangzi region or to the entire region itself. See F. W. Mote, The Poet Kao Ch'i (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), p. 16.


36See Mote, The Poet Kao Ch'i, p. 46.
42 Ibid., pp. 40-41.
43 Ibid., p. 39.
45 See Mote, The Poet Kao Chi, p. 42.
46 Ibid.
47 Ibid., p. 46.
48 See Mote, "A Millennium of Chinese Urban History," p. 44.
49 Chu-tsing Li, "The Development of Painting in Soochow During the Yuan Dynasty," p.485-86.
50 Mote, The Poet Kao Chi, p. 44.
51 See Mote, The Poet Kao Chi, p. 56.
52 See Li, "The Development of Painting in Soochow," 486-87; see also Cahill, Parting at the Shore, p. 60.
54 Mote, The Poet Kao Chi, p. 66.
55 See Mote, The Poet Kao Chi, pp. 94-97.
57 Ibid., p. 132.
58 Ibid., p. 138.
59 Cahill, Parting at the Shore, p. 97.
60 See Cahill, Parting at the Shore, pp. 135-36.
CHAPTER FOUR

My objective is to show that situating the works of Wu Wei (1459-1508) and Lu Zhi (1496-1576) within the context of their respective times and environments will yield a more in-depth understanding of these two artists. However, as was discussed earlier, it is necessary to be aware of the dangers of an uncritical adoption of the information contained in traditional Chinese historical writings: Given the nature of this material -- with its focus on moral, scholarly, and official achievements and its intent to assess and apportion blame and praise and to illustrate how a particular subject functioned in a particular public role -- the reader is not provided with a penetrating exploration of the subject's personality or life circumstances, but more commonly with a stereotypical, conventionalized characterization.

In the available literature both Wu Wei and Lu Zhi are portrayed as exhibiting eccentric behaviour. This is not surprising, since Chinese artists were expected to behave in an eccentric fashion.1 The "professional artist," Wu Wei, is characterized as a simple and direct, yet temperamental man, given to violent outbursts and contemptuous of figures in authority. In the later literature in particular, much is made of his wild behaviour and of his fondness for women and alcohol. The "scholar-amateur artist," Lu Zhi, on the other hand, is shown as a morally upright and yet recalcitrant and reclusive figure who desires for nothing more than to withdraw to paint, compose poetry, and cultivate the flowers in his garden retreat. And, to some degree, both artists do appear to have adopted these personae. In fact, it is difficult to determine just to what extent the conventionalized characters that are portrayed are simply attributed to Wu Wei and Lu Zhi by their biographers or to what degree these roles were deliberately played out by these two artists during their own lifetimes.
For Wu Wei we are fortunate in having three early biographical sources: An account published in the *Jinling Suoshi* by Xu Binxing, who was a contemporary of Wu Wei; a tomb inscription written by Zhang Qi shortly after Wu's death in 1508; and a preface to a poem written by Ni Yue (1444-1501).

Unfortunately, I have been able to obtain very little information on Xu Binxing and Zhang Qi. Ni Yue, a native of Nanjing, was a highly respected Confucian scholar and statesman who had an illustrious career in government. His mother died when he was only six years of age and Ni accompanied his father when he was exiled to Xuanfu. He studied both the Classics and administrative works as a youth and in 1462 he was appointed a juren. He became a jinshi two years later at the young age of twenty and was appointed as a bachelor in the Hanlin Academy. In 1475 he was promoted to reader-in-waiting in the Hanlin, and the following year he served as expounder of the Classics. In 1481 he was recommended as a compiler of the *Wenhua dashun*, "a work designed for the instruction of the prince: on the inculcation of learning, the cultivation of virtue, the promotion of proper relationships and the manifestation of good government." He was made a chancellor of the Hanlin in 1483 and in the following year he was appointed tutor to the heir apparent. Three years later he was promoted to junior vice minister of Rites. In 1489 he was appointed senior vice minister and in 1493 he became minister. He served in this high office until 1496 when he was given the title of junior guardian of the heir apparent and posted to Nanjing to serve as minister of Personnel. He was reassigned as minister of War in Nanjing in 1499 and in 1500 was appointed minister of Personnel in Beijing. He died in Beijing sixteen months later. A collection of his writings survive, entitled *Qingqi man gao*. 
All three of the writers of the early textual material dealing with Wu Wei were personal friends of the artist. Xu Binxing’s account was published in Zhou Hui’s Jinling Suoshi [Nanjing Trifles] in 1610. At the end of the narrative Zhou Hui explains that it was written by a Xu Binxing of Fanchang. He, Zhou Hui, had it copied and stored away for over thirty years, only publishing it in response to a later biography written by an official which states that Wu was the descendant of a farming family. It is obvious from Xu Binxing’s statement that he was well-acquainted with Wu Wei, particularly in Wu’s later years. Zhang Qi writes that one month after Wu Wei’s death, his son, Shan, brought an account of Wu’s life (probably a document similar to an Account of Conduct) and asked Zhang to compose a tomb inscription. Ni Yue relates that his preface and accompanying poem were written to commemorate the gathering of a group of friends on the occasion of Wu’s return to the court in Beijing.

Whenever possible I have relied on these early accounts. This, I believe, is especially important in the case of Wu Wei because of the criticism directed towards professional and court artists, particularly during the late Ming period.

Wu Wei, a native of Wuchang (located roughly four hundred miles upstream from Nanjing in present-day Hubei province), was born in 1459. He was also known by his style names or zi, Shiying ("Scholarly and Brave"), Ciweng ("Inferior Old Man"), and Lufu ("Stupid Sage"), and by his alternative name or hao, Xiaoxian ("Small Immortal"). Over the years Wu’s family had produced some scholar-officials of repute. The information contained in the biographical accounts is somewhat contradictory, however. According to Xu Binxing, Wu’s grandfather was highly respected and held office for thirty years. He was the subprefecture magistrate of the Nanyang
district in Yuzhou and later the Daming district in Kaizhou. Zhang Qi, however, writes that Wu’s grandfather was a leader of the gentry who died before he was able to take up a position, and that his great-grandfather, Yue, who was a jinshi, served as the magistrate of the Nanyang prefecture on two occasions. Ni Yue agrees with Xu Binxing, and states that it was Wu’s grandfather who was a prefect.

Zhang Qi does not mention Wu’s father. Ni Yue, however, writes that Wu’s father “was honored as an official.” It is Xu Binxing who provides us with the most information regarding Wu’s father, Gangweng, stating that he was a cultured and learned man who was skilled at calligraphy and painting. “Nowadays,” Xu writes, “the two capitals’ old families often collect his surviving works and consider them to be prized and important.” However, he continues, “Weng’s nature was gay and extravagant. He used alchemy to ruin his family’s economy.” Gangweng died leaving his family penniless, and Wu Wei an orphan at an early age. According to Xu Binxing, Wu arrived in Nanjing at the age of sixteen (seventeen sui) to make his fortune as a painter.

It is apparent from the textual sources that Wu Wei received a standard classical education. Zhang Qi, for example, notes that Wu was “conversant with the major significance of the classics and history.” Ni Yue confirms that Wu was an educated man, writing that he had “the ability to read books and pursue knowledge.” According to Ni, Wu expected to become a scholar but because of the death of his father he had to discontinue his studies and, as a result did not receive an official position. It should be noted that while Wu was forced to discontinue his studies in his youth, the education of Chinese males was begun at an extremely early
age and he would have had considerable exposure to the Confucian curriculum even as a young man.

Little is known of Wu Wei's life before his arrival in Nanjing. (This information would have been of little interest to the Chinese historian.) Ni Yue reports that Wu "wandered aimlessly around the rivers and lakes." According to a later account written in the Qing dynasty, Wu became the study companion or tutor of the son of a provincial official named Qian Xin. Qian, on seeing some of Wu's paintings was greatly impressed. He gave Wu "a brush and paper and generously supported him." The account ends: "As a young man Wu went to Jinling [Nanjing] and subsequently he achieved fame."

If Xu Binxing is correct then Wu Wei would have arrived in Nanjing in the mid-1470s, roughly some fifty years after the capital was transferred to Beijing. Nanjing, as was noted earlier, suffered an initial decline in its role as an auxiliary capital. Although the city's importance in terms of government was reduced, by the time of Wu's arrival there Nanjing was well on its way to recovery as a flourishing trade and entertainment center.

Wu Wei appears to have made a great impression in Nanjing, drawing attention to himself wherever he went. It was while in Nanjing, during the Chenghua period (1465-1487) that Wu made the acquaintance of Grand Tutor Duke Zhu of Cheng, a tutor to the heir-apparent and descendant of Zhu Neng (1370-1406), who served in that same capacity and held the same title, Duke of Cheng, during the Yongle period (1403-25). It was from the Duke of Cheng that Wu Wei received the sobriquet Xiaoxian. According to Xu Binxing, "as soon as the Duke saw Wu he considered him to be extraordinary and said: 'Is this not an immortal?'" Because Wu Wei was a young man at the time he was called Xiaoxian (Small Immortal).
Xu Binxing reports that the Duke invited Wu into his household and treated him with the respect accorded to a "son, younger brother or old friend." The Duke then introduced Wu to other nobleman and high officials, and subsequently the young artist's fame spread. Xu writes that Wu spoke confidently and boldly and was not servile, and yet, at the same time, his behaviour was "dignified" and his attitude "respectful." During his early years in Nanjing Wu appears to have become something of a celebrity figure, for soon all the officials were clamouring for a meeting with him. According to Xu: "Those who begged for an audience day and night would not leave the gate." However, Wu seems eventually to have become somewhat discontented with this role for, Xu continues, "Xiaoxian was certainly only happy with shanren and non-officials. His honest character was secretly like theirs."

The exact circumstances surrounding Wu's motivation for initially going to Beijing remain unclear. Word of his reputation appears to have spread north, for Xu Binxing enumerates a number of high officials who greeted him upon his arrival in there. Once in Beijing, Ni Yue writes that Wu was recommended to the court and summoned to an audience with the emperor. According to Xu Binxing, the emperor Xianzong presented Wu with the cap and sash (guan dai). Zhang Qi writes that the emperor awarded him with a position in the Imperial Bodyguard. According to Charles Hucker, the Imperial Bodyguard was involved "in secret police activities; its officers exercised almost unlimited police and judicial authority, and its prison was a feared torture chamber. The Imperial Bodyguard also provided sinecures for various kinds of palace hangers-on and favorites, including court painters." It is not known to what degree, if any, painters were involved in the activities of the Imperial Bodyguard.
Wu Wei appears to have been dissatisfied with Beijing court life, undoubtedly finding it stifling in comparison to life in Nanjing. The events described in the biographical accounts are somewhat contradictory, but it is clear that, despite the gifts bestowed upon him and liberties that he was allowed, Wu did not want an official position. He was unhappy with his life in Beijing and constantly made excuses to return to Nanjing. Xu Binxing writes that the emperor Xianzong "was going to give [Wu] a banquet and an official position. He wanted him always at his side as an advisor." However, he continues, Wu "persistently begged to decline. Then he obtained his escape and returned again to Nanjing. From this Wu cautioned himself, saying: 'I now am acquainted with holding office.'" According to Ni Yue, the emperor was so pleased with Wu that he increased his endowment. However, Wu did not desire a salaried position and petitioned to return to Nanjing. The emperor did not grant his request. Wu then sought to return to Nanjing "using the pretext of the burial of his parent in his old home town." This time the emperor agreed to his request. Ni continues: "When that was done Wu again came to Nanjing and sought out his old friends. He remained for nearly one year." Zhang Qi writes simply that on the death of the emperor Wu Wei was released from his duties and returned to Nanjing.

A later version of the events embellishes this information and implies that Wu was actually released from his duties as a result of his insolent contemptuous behaviour. According to the Wusheng shishi, which was compiled at the end of the Ming and published at the beginning of the Qing: "Wei came and went in the apartments of the imperial concubines. He regarded the powerful and noble as if they were no better than servants. Furthermore, many of those who sought his paintings were unsuccessful. Thereupon, the powerful and the noble frequently belittled him. After a
short time he was released and returned to Nanjing." There may, in fact, be some truth to this later account, and this is confirmed by an earlier statement by He Dafu (1438-1521) who writes: "The capital's rich and powerful vied with each other to meet and receive Wu. But he was not at all pleased and often abused them with laughter and ridicule."

As will be seen later, there is evidence to suggest that Wu Wei may have balked at the idea of painting on demand. In addition, Xu Binxing, as was noted earlier, writes that Wu was "certainly only happy with shanren and non-officials (yefu)." Wai Kam-ho defines shanren as "self-styled hermits or unofficial scholars," and writes that shanren "could assume any role, ranging from itinerant scholar...to a true hermit." It is possible that the eccentric and contemptuous behaviour which Wu is said to have engaged in while in Beijing may have been deliberate in order to gain a release from his position there (which appears to have been one akin to entertainer or court jester) in order to be among like-minded friends, such as Xu Binxing, in Nanjing who shared a similar education and values.

Nanjing appears to have represented a sort of "urban hermitage" for Wu Wei in its distance from the tensions and dangers of the court in Beijing. Frederick Mote in a discussion on Chinese urban history writes:

One can argue that in a highly normative and highly regularized society such as that of traditional China, those urban conditions of ease, of variety, of anonymity, and of greater personal freedom provided by the city, are the same conditions that encouraged some kinds of deviant expression, of experimentation, of dissidence, occasionally even of genuine creativity. It is likely that, in addition to the patronage of the large merchant and official classes, the colourful and unconstrained atmosphere of the Qinhua district in Nanjing (where Wu eventually settled) afforded him, not only the
companionship of like-minded friends, but also the kind of personal freedom and anonymity which Mote discusses, whereas his official public role as court entertainer in Beijing did not allow this.

Zhang Qi, in his tomb inscription for Wu Wei, writes that Wu "had a great capacity for alcohol. Sometimes he would go for a period of several weeks without eating." Again, the later texts embellish this information. According to an account in the *Wusheng shishi*:

Wei was fond of drinking and had a great capacity for alcohol. Sometimes he would go for a period of ten days [a Chinese week] without eating. While in Nanjing, all the wealthy and powerful daily invited Wei to carouse. And moreover, he liked courtesans. If he was drinking and there were no courtesans, then he was not happy. The wealthy and powerful would vie with each other to gather courtesans as a bait for him. (Appendix I, no. 10).

Wu Wei was summoned back to court during the Hongzhi era (1488-1506) and elevated to the position of company commander in the Imperial Bodyguard. Zhang Qi describes the ensuing events:

The emperor Xiaomiao recalled him to court and had an audience with him at the Bian Dian. The emperor was very pleased and awarded him with the title *jin yi bai hu* and bestowed upon him the *hua zhuang yuan* seal. His favours and bequests daily became greater. He begged to be granted permission to go to Wuchang to sacrifice to his ancestors. It was several months before he returned. He repeatedly stopped over. At Shitou there was a confidential decree ordering him to hasten and return to the capital [Beijing]. A residence on West street was bestowed upon him. After two years had passed he pleaded illness and begged to return [to Nanjing]. He lived on the east bank of the Qinhuai River. In the fifth month of the third year of the Zhengde era [1506-1521] the present emperor sent a messenger to summon him to court. The messenger arrived. Wu Wei had not yet started on his journey before he died. (Appendix I, no. 2).
This portion of the narrative recorded in the *Wusheng shishi* is essentially the same, except for the last line which states in a reproving tone: "The messenger arrived, but Wu Wei had not yet started on his journey when he died of alcohol poisoning. He was fifty years old at the time." The statement that Wu died of alcohol poisoning may be a later distortion of the facts. On the other hand, Zhang Qi does mention Wu's heavy drinking habits and it is possible that he was simply practicing the principle of "appropriate concealment" in not revealing this information in Wu's tomb inscription.

Although the later accounts dealing with Wu Wei tend to focus on and emphasize his wild and reckless behaviour, the earlier accounts also allude to a temperamental side of Wu's nature. Ni Yue, for example, describes Wu as "unrestrained" and "unbridled." He Dafu observes that because Wu Wei had ability, "he flaunted his nature and temper." Li Mengyang (1472-1529) writes that "Mr. Wu was too unrestrained and proud," and makes the often repeated statement that "if people spoke one word in disagreement, he would abruptly hurl his inkstone at them."

It is with regard to Wu's character that Xu Binxing's narrative is particularly interesting, for it is somewhat more personal, detailed, and less conventionalized than the other accounts, and shows another side to the artist. Xu's statements suggest that privately Wu Wei was a learned and sensitive man and that much of his wild behaviour was, in fact, an act put on for the benefit of his public. He writes that the first time that he met Wu Wei he considered him to be nothing more than a dashing young gallant and that it was for this reason -- for Wu's flamboyant and colourful personality -- and no other that noblemen and other people of high rank admired him. Later, Xu met Wu Wei again. On this occasion they spent more time
together and although Xu still did not know Wu very well, he was left with a somewhat better impression. He was particularly impressed with Wu's ability to compose prose and poetry and writes that "those who were able to write prose and poetry competed to be friends with him and be humble towards him." This would indicate that although Wu's extant paintings are not inscribed with his own poetic inscriptions, that he did, like other educated Chinese, take an interest in the writing of poetry.

Statements by Zhang Qi and Ni Yue also confirm that Wu was an educated man who engaged in scholarly discussions and composed poetry and songs. Zhang Qi, for example, writes: "When arguing with people he entered and left the classics and commentaries and many submitted to him." Ni Yue notes that Wu "liked to intone and chant poetry," a statement which suggests that Wu, like the Nanjing artists Xu Lin and Shi Zhong (two artists who will be discussed in connection with Wu in the following pages) may have composed performance pieces such as songs and dramatic lyrics. Ni also records a song sung by Wu at the gathering given for him before his departure for the court at Beijing.

On later occasions Xu Binxing and Wu Wei met frequently and accompanied each other on outings. Xu writes:

It was at that time that we were finally able to have a thorough conversation. He spoke exhaustively about what was in his breast, and I began to be able to search out what was in his mind. The contents of his mind were very great and without limitation! His inexhaustibility was complete!...Concerning ancient and current affairs, there was nothing he didn't know. His judgement of whether people were good or not was always correct. His deportment was great, his affairs fitting, his speech ample yet honest, his character peaceful and distant, great and illustrious, like a hidden gentleman of antiquity. He was able to
be in accordance with the world, on the one hand, and to disregard the world, on the other! (Appendix I, no. 1).

Xu presents a picture of Wu as a man who was privately of a sensitive and learned nature, but who publicly, for political and personal reasons, was required to play a somewhat different role and behave in a more entertaining fashion. He comments that people simply did not really know or understand Wu Wei. Wu, he writes, "was famous for his wild reputation. However, his speech was very guarded and without a reckless flow of words. Therefore, people to a great extent did not know what was contained in his heart."

Xu Binxing's account is also illuminating in terms of Wu's attitude towards his painting. According to Xu, Wu would "occasionally produce a scroll at once and then give it to a person in need. The person would hand it down and sell it off. The wealthy and powerful families would compete to buy it and then say that they obtained it from Xiaoxian. Xiaoxian really did not paint it for these people. Such was his self-respect."

Other sources are also revealing with regard to Wu's attitude towards his painting. Zhang Qi writes of Wu: "Those who sought to patronize him were constantly at his door, but unless they were of the loftiest sort he did not oblige them." The account in the Wusheng shishi, which echoes Zhang Qi, states that "if those who sought his paintings were not the kind of people that he approved of he would not oblige them." According to Ni Yue: "People struggled to treasure Wu's painting. However, it was not his intention. He always said: 'This brush and ink is child's play. It is hardly worth taking seriously.'" Li Rihua (1565-1635) records an inscription on a painting by Wu which reads: "As I passed Baixia [near Nanjing], Liu Zhangshi sought a [painting] to match one of the great Shen's [Shen Zhou]
paintings. I forced myself to paint on it wufu stones and beautiful jades together." The implication here is that Wu does not consider himself to be the equal of Shen Zhou. This sort of attitude towards painting -- the distaste for painting on demand; the disdain for painting for those who were not the "right sort of people" (i.e. those who did not share the same education and values); the notion of painting as a mere game, as child's play; the denigration of one's own ability -- is an attitude which is normally associated with the scholar-amateur artist.

Wu appears to have been largely a self-educated artist and may initially have learned to paint from his father, and also through access to his father's painting collection. Xu Binxing writes that Wu "had his father's style." As noted earlier, the account in the Haiyu hua yuan lue implies that Wu took up painting seriously in response to the encouragement of an official named Qian Xin whose son he was tutoring. Once in Nanjing and later in Beijing, Wu would have been exposed to a wide variety of painting styles. Howard Rogers recounts an interesting detail when he notes that at the time that Wu was living in the household of the Duke of Cheng in Nanjing, the artist Shen Zhou, due to an increase in the taxes on his estate, was engaged in selling not only important early paintings from his collection, but also his own works to the Duke.

Typically, for Chinese sources, some of the comments dealing with painting are not always very revealing. Xu Binxing, perhaps in an attempt to legitimize Wu's painting by connecting him with a tradition or lineage, writes: "People said that Wu's use of ink surpassed that of earlier men's by far, and that his style and rhythm were expressive and excellent and attained directly back to the practices of the ancient artists." According to Zhang Qi, Wu "was good at landscapes and figure painting and all could be
entered into the marvellous (miao) class.” Ni Yue states that at one time Wu based his landscapes upon the methods of Ma Yuan and Xia Gui, possibly implying that Wu changed his painting style. Later sources emphasize Wu's bold style. They label him as a follower of Wu Daozi in terms of his figure painting and mention his use of 'axe-cut strokes' in connection with landscapes. The Huishi beigao states that his baimiao paintings were "particularly excellent."

The most interesting comments are those which actually evoke an image of Wu Wei painting. He Dafu states that looking at one of Wu's paintings "calls to mind the wetted brush sweeping across the plain silk." Li Mengyang remarks that Wu's "surpassing brush like wind and thunder pulled at the ground as it rose." Ni Yue writes:

[Wu] was fond of the brush and paper. Each time he became intoxicated, he became inspired. He gave vent to his ideas with an unrestrained brush and splashing ink. In an instant the painting was finished. He wielded his brush as if it were flying. He looked upon those watching him with disdain. For him it was as if there were nobody there. Even though he stood before nobility and men of high position, he acted naturally...His technical inventiveness was bold and surpassing like a dragon ascending or a phoenix soaring. (Appendix I, no. 3).

One is constantly struck by what Cahill has referred to as the "performance art" aspect of Wu's work.25 A further example is found in an often quoted account of an incident recorded by Li Mengyang who writes:

I recall in a former year when they summoned the painting masters. Mr. Wu of Jiangxia also was with them. Wearing a short coat of coarse material and with a dirty face he had an audience with the emperor. Although his manners were rustic, his carriage and demeanour were unusual. The emperor made him a daizhao26 in the Renzhi Dian [Hall of Humanity and Wisdom]. Once when he was half drunk, he was summoned by the emperor to an audience. He knelt down, overturned the ink,
and trusting his hand he smeared and daubed. In broad daylight the wind and clouds changed and it became chilly and sombre. The emperor smiled and the officials were envious. Marquis and nobles vied with each other to go and see him and begged to behold this painting of the pine dwelling. (Appendix I, no. 5).

A slightly different, and again somewhat embellished, version of this event appears in the *Wusheng shishi*, compiled late in the Ming:

Once when Wu was very drunk he was summoned by [the emperor]. His hair was dishevelled and his face was dirty. Shuffling on worn down black shoes, he staggered along. The court officials supported him in order to have the audience. The emperor laughed and ordered him to paint a picture of pines in the wind. Wei knelt down and overturned the ink. Trusting his hand, he daubed and smeared and wind and clouds arose with a rustling sound on the screen. The attendants were visibly moved. The emperor then sighed and said: "This truly is the brush of an Immortal." (Appendix I, no. 10).

Judging from the above account, the emperor Xianzong was obviously an appreciative audience, and a remarkably tolerant fellow if one compares him to his predecessor, Ming Taizu, who, it may be remembered, beheaded a number of artists for what he judged to be incompetent work or signs of disrespect.27

Zhan Jingfeng's28 description of a group of wall paintings by Wu Wei in a temple in Nanjing confirms this image of Wu as a bold and energetic artist, who was able to work comfortably on a large scale:

In the Longgu Temple in Nanjing there were once four corridor walls painted by Wu Wei. First was Bo Juyi in Chan meditation; second was Su Shi in meditation; third was Bodhidharma crossing the Yangzi; and fourth was Confucius, Lao Zi and Sakyamuni. The walls were over twenty feet wide and more than forty feet high! The figures, objects, mountains, rocks, and trees truly spread irresistibly from earth to heaven! If Ma Yuan or Xia Gui could see them they would be awed. In their paintings, each brushstroke is concentrated and precise; and as
for Wu Wei he totally abandons himself, attacking directly and brushing furiously — and yet there is not a single detail in which the spirit does not soar and the essence penetrate. Only perhaps in the Confucius, Lao Zi, and Sakyamuni was there a slight decline. One can imagine that it was the last one of the four to be done, and that by then both his inspiration and his strength were exhausted...By the end of the Longqing/beginning of the Wanli period [1513 ff.] the walls were in complete ruin; nowadays not even the corridors are there.29

Once more, there is the suggestion of a performance here, of a work so vivid that viewing it evokes the image of Wu Wei working at a furious pace, an image which inspires awe.

A striking aspect of these accounts is the similarity to the descriptions given of the Tang and Song artists who came to be classified as yinpin or "untrammeled." For example, the following discussion of Wang Mo is included in the Tangchao minghua lu (Famous Painters of the Tang Dynasty):

Whenever he wanted to paint a picture, he would first drink wine, and when he was sufficiently drunk, would spatter the ink onto the painting surface. Then, laughing and singing all the while, he would stamp on it with his feet and smear it with his hands, besides swashing and sweeping it with the brush. The ink would be thin in some places, rich in others; he would follow the shapes which brush and ink had produced, making these into mountains, rocks, clouds or water. Responding to the movements of his hand and following his inclinations, he would bring forth clouds and mists, wash in wind and rain, with the suddenness of Creation. It was exactly like the cunning of a god; when one examined the painting after it was finished he could see no traces of the puddles of ink.30

Of the artist Wu Daozi (act. 720-760), Zhang Yanyuan (c. 847) wrote in the Lidai minghua zhi: "Wu loved wine, which stimulated his vital breath. Whenever he wished to flourish his brush, he had to become intoxicated."31 A story is told of the occasion when Wu painted a halo on a divinity inside
the central gate of the Xingshan Si (Temple of Renewed Virtue): "Then all the people of Chang'an, old and young, gentry and commoners, came rushing until the spectators were like a surrounding wall. For the halo, he raised his brush and swept it around with the force of a whirlwind. Everyone said that a divinity must have aided him." Wu Daozi was not actually considered to be an artist of the yipin class. Zhu Jingxuan (c. 840), in Tanchao minghua lu, classifies Wu as an artist of the "Inspired class, Top Grade," although, as Shimada notes, Wu's use of sparse, simple, and bold brushwork was probably a factor in the development of the yipin style.

Wu Wei was not the only Ming artist to have been discussed in terms reminiscent of the descriptions of the yipin artists of the Tang dynasty. Chen Zihe, known as "wine-immortal," was "fond of wine and skilled at painting. After he was drunk he would brandish his brush, making landscapes, figures, flowers and animals, and all were remarkable beyond compare." Of Wu's follower, Zhang Lu, it was said: "When ideas came he would throw up his arms and leap up [to begin]. He used his brush just as Heaven created all things, without stopping from beginning to end." Wang Zhao, who "described his brushwork as free and surging like the sea or the clouds," was said to be "a man of 'powerful physique and great strength,' fond of the military arts and of sword dancing, 'bold, free and ungovernable,' in personality. He drank great quantities of wine through his nose and called it 'elephant drinking.'" Some of these artists were subsequently condemned by late Ming critics and labelled as artists of the "heterodox school of painting."

If Wu Wei can be seen to have been dissatisfied with his life at the court in Beijing, he can also be seen to have been dissatisfied with certain established modes of painting. The bold, free brushwork and abbreviated
forms to be found in much of his work may be taken -- at least in part -- as a search for something new, as well as an expression of dissatisfaction with the more restrained "orthodox modes of painting." Shimada, in his article "Concerning the I-pin Style of Painting," observes the tendency towards "wildness and unrestraint" in the so-called Zhe school and comments:

The yipin style began by emancipating painting from the orthodox mode which conformed to the object in portraying forms' through the use of firm, fine brushwork; it stood in direct opposition to that mode. Whenever there arose a dissatisfaction with orthodoxy in painting, whenever something new was sought outside its pale, in whatever period, something of an yipin nature was apt to be born.37

Shimada goes on to stress that the notion of an "orthodox mode" of painting obviously differed from one age to another, and consequently the styles corresponding to an "yipin type" also varied from period to period.38 Indeed, as Susan Nelson has demonstrated, the term yi underwent a basic change in meaning in post-Song times.39 By the Ming and Qing times the term had come to be associated, not with the Tang artists such as Wang Mo, but rather with the artists Mi Fu (1052-1107) and Ni Zan (1301-1374), and, by implication, with their respective styles.

Many of the early artists classified as yipin were retired officials, recluses, and Daoists. Initially, therefore, the term yi was associated with the notion of retirement from office, and suggested the pursuit of a more relaxed lifestyle far removed from the aspirations, burdens, and protocol of official life. As Nelson observes, however, the rise of scholar painting in the 11th century, in bringing about a separation between the unorthodox brushmodes of the Tang masters and the idea of loftiness, initiated a shift in meaning of the term yi. Nelson writes: "The associations of high-mindedness and independence were now absorbed by the new scholarly
current, along with some of the old techniques of abbreviation. What was left -- the rougher, more eruptive aspects of Tang *yipin* brushwork -- ...soon lost that honorable name." Post-Tang artists working in a bold, unrestrained manner, for example the Chan artists of the Song and Yuan periods or the artists who came to labeled as "wild and heterodox" in the Ming, were either disregarded or viewed with disapprobation.

Nelson notes that the post-Song artists who can be seen to be related to the Tang *yipin* artists, in terms of their use of unorthodox brush modes and their unrestrained manner of working, are rarely described as *yi*. Wu Wei's paintings are generally classified in the more conventional categories of "divine" or "inspired" (*shen*) or "marvellous" (*miao*). However, Xu Qin in the Ming *hualu* does use the term *yi* in connection with Wu Wei in his closing phrase, which I have translated: "Also, he was naturally spontaneous and relaxed." This is an assessment which I take to be positive. Wang Shizhen also uses the term *yi* in relation to Wu. In this instance it is used as an adjective to describe Wu's brushstrokes: "Wu's brushwork was not very planned or thought out, but its uncanny ease [*yi*] and dashing elegance moved people." Wang Shizhen's assessment may not be a positive one, for Wang, as Nelson points out, was a classicist, and although he does categorize Mi Fu and Ni Zan as *yipin* artists, he describes their work as simple and sketchy and concludes that "they were not true masters."

As Nelson points out, while Mi Fu and Ni Zan were widely held to be inimitable, any artist who worked in their styles could "trigger the notion of *yi* in the viewer's mind." It is therefore interesting to note that during the Ming and later times, as a result in the shift of meaning of the term, it was not Wu Wei who evoked the notion of *yi* in the minds of the critics, but
rather Lu Zhi, who on occasion painted "in the styles of" both of these masters.  

Wu Wei may have adopted his bold, free brushwork and abbreviated painting style in part in an attempt to make a deliberate design statement in direct opposition to what he viewed as over-precious intellectualizing. It is also likely, as was noted in the previous chapter, that he developed this mode of painting in response to the relatively unconstrained atmosphere of Nanjing and the fondness of the citizens of that city for the performance arts and dramatic effects in general. The influence of a group of local artists who were active in Nanjing in the late fifteen and early sixteenth centuries, artists such as Sun Long, Shi Zhong, Du Jin, Guo Xu, and Xu Lin, may also have been a factor in this aspect of Wu's style. Like Wu Wei, all of these artists employed unorthodox brush techniques and are known for their eccentric behaviour which was expressed in their assumed names as well as in their paintings. As will be seen in the following chapter, certain of Wu Wei's paintings are done in a manner reminiscent of works by this circle of artists.

Sun Long (b. 1390) was active in the third quarter of the fifteenth century. An artist originally from Piling, some fifty miles southeast of Nanjing, Sun adopted the sobriquet Duchi ("Perfect, or Complete, Fool"). Sun is known for his pictures of flowers and insects done in the mogu or "boneless" manner -- painting done in ink or colour wash without outline.

The artist Shi Zhong (1438-c.1517), a native of Nanjing whose original name was Xu Duanben, took the name Chiweng ("Old Fool") and named his house Wochi ("Fool's Rest"). He is described as a man "of irrespressible nature, who rode around on a buffalo, his feet bare, wearing Daoist robes, with yellow flowers tied to his waist." According to the textual sources
Shi did not speak until the age of seventeen, whereupon within a brief period of time he learned not only to read and write but also to paint and to compose songs and poetry. Shi is reported to have foreseen or (as Cahill suggests) to have determined the time of his own death, and after taking part in his funeral procession died at the pre-appointed hour. His extant works date from the period between 1488 to 1506. While Shi Zhong is known to have painted in a style approaching that of Shen Zhou, his more typical works, such as his "Landscape" in the National Palace Museum and the Boston Museum of Fine Art's "Clearing after Snowfall," both dated 1504, are executed in a somewhat more unorthodox manner.

Guo Xu (1456-after 1526) took the name Chingkuang ("Pure and Crazy"). He was an educated man who resided in Nanjing and may also have been active for a brief period in the court at Beijing. His extant works include two landscapes painted in the style of Gao Kegong and an undated album in the Shanghai museum which contains landscapes in the manner of Shi Zhong, a frog and lotus in a style similar to that of Sun Long, and a figure painting reminiscent of works by Wu Wei and Du Jin, in addition to a hanging scroll executed in baimiao entitled "The Lute Song" (fig. 4).

Du Jin took the name Gukuang ("Antiquated and Crazy"). His dates are unknown, but he is believed to have been active in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries and to have died in 1509. Du Jin passed the jinshi examination but was not offered a high-ranking position because of his low standing in the overall placement. He is known for his unorthodox brush mode as well as for his works done in the more orthodox baimiao and jiehua (boundary painting) techniques. According to the textual sources, Du Jin had a great influence and was widely imitated by later
artists. This, writes Cahill, is a "statement that is confirmed by what we can observe of his influence, especially on the professional masters of Suzhou."52

A native of Nanjing, Xu Lin (1462-1538) took the name Ranxian ("Bearded Immortal"). Xu was admitted to the district school at the age of thirteen. However, he concentrated more on the pleasures offered by the Qinhua district than he did on his studies and was expelled in 1490. He thereupon opened a studio and made enough money with his painting to buy an estate called Kuaiyuan ("Satisfaction Garden") in the entertainment district. Opera and song-dramas, including those composed by Xu himself, were frequently performed there. Xu's extant landscapes are reminiscent of late fifteenth century court style paintings by Dai Jin and Wu Wei.53

Ho Liangjun (1506-1568) describes a "strange" painting by Du Jin owned by Xu Lin:

Once at Xu Lin's house I saw a hanging scroll by Du Jin of the "Thunder Gods." The figures were over a foot high, and there were seven or eight of them in a group. Some held huge axes, others flaming torches, and still others thunderbolts. Their appearances were all strange and old-fashioned, completely lacking in what used to be called "elegant beauty." Certainly a strange work! Xu would hang it in his central hall on the Day of the Dragon-boat Festival, or on the 15th of the 7th month, and startle his guests by saying, "This is Du Jin's Wangchuan tu.54

There is some evidence that Wu had contact with several of these artists. He is said, for example, to have been a friend of Guo Xu.55 He is also said to have painted a double portrait of Xu Lin and Shen Zhou,56 in addition to painting a portrait of Shi Zhong which was inscribed by Shen Zhou.57

In her M.A. thesis on Wu Wei Holly Holtz views this artist as having initiated, or as having been a major influence in, the proliferation of the use
of unorthodox brush techniques in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. To some degree, James Cahill in his book on early and middle Ming painting, also views Wu as being influential in the inception of these brush modes, in addition to serving as a model for certain kinds of eccentric artistic behaviour.58

Whether or not Wu was influential in initiating the use of unorthodox brush techniques is probably now impossible be ascertain. However, the artist Sun Long was painting in a boneless style at the time when Wu first arrived in Nanjing at the age of sixteen. Shi Zhong was twenty-one years Wu's senior. In addition, Cahill notes that the artist Du Jin was regarded as a very influential artist; and yet he writes that Du was "surely influenced by Wu Wei, who was probably some years older." However, according to Cahill, Du's earliest extant work is dated 1465. In 1465 Wu Wei was only six years old. Cahill also writes that when Tang Yin went to visit Du Jin in 1499 that Du was old and poor, as is suggested by a poem which Tang wrote to the artist. In 1499 Wu Wei was only forty years old. All of this suggests to me that Du Jin was in fact several years Wu's senior and may well have influenced Wu Wei. Although there are no early extant works by Shi Zhong or Du Jin, it is quite possible that their use of unorthodox brush modes predates that of Wu Wei. As will be seen in the following chapter, Wu Wei was not a great innovator in that his works are essentially loose adaptations of his models, whether those models are those of Song or Yuan artists or those provided by the works of the early Ming artist Dai Jin. I believe that Wu did not initiate this style of painting; rather, it is more likely that Wu Wei's painting, particularly the works done away from the court at Beijing, reflects a late fifteenth and early sixteenth century Nanjing
attitude toward painting. And this will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

While I am not convinced that Wu Wei can be seen as having initiated the use of unorthodox brushmodes in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, he did, nevertheless, acquire a certain following in Nanjing at the turn of the century, and a number of artists, including Zhang Lu and Jiang Song, are listed as his disciples. Further testimony to Wu's popularity in Nanjing at this time is evidenced by a statement in the Jinling suoshi with regard to the artist Li Zhu: "Li Zhu...as a boy studied painting under Shen Zhou. When his studies were completed, he returned to his home [in Nanjing] and there imitated only the style of Wu Wei, in order to sell his works. The reason was that at that time Wu's paintings were very highly valued in the capital." 59

While Wu Wei's biographers (with the exception of Xu Binxing) cite his "unrestrained" and "unbridled" temperament, Lu Zhi, by contrast, is shown to be righteous and morally correct. The major source of information on Lu Zhi is the biography written at his request in 1571 by the wealthy scholar-official, collector, and literary figure Wang Shizhen (1526-1590). 60 Later texts dealing with Lu Zhi are based upon this early, contemporary source. Additional information on the artist is provided in a number of other writings by Wang including poems and colophons on paintings. Some of these will be discussed in the following pages.

Wang Shizhen was a native of Taicang, located some thirty miles east of Suzhou. He came from a family of distinguished scholar-bureaucrats, and Wang himself was awarded the jinshi degree in 1547 at the young age of 22 sui. He served in an official capacity for the next twelve years, first in Beijing and later in Shandong Province, resigning in 1559 after the
condemnation and subsequent execution of his father. The following years until 1567 were spent at his home in Taicang. During this period Wang began the designing of his gardens which were later to become famous. It was also during this time that he came into contact with Suzhou's intelligentsia. In 1567, on the occasion of the rehabilitation of his father's name, Wang returned to Beijing. Between the years 1568 to 1570 he occupied posts in Daming in Beizhili, Wuxing in Zhejiang, and Shansi, returning home in 1570 due to the illness and subsequent death of his mother. He remained at home until 1573 in observance of the requisite three year mourning period. It was during this time that he came into close association with Lu Zhi. In the following three years from 1573 to 1576 he held a series of posts in the north, but was ordered by imperial order to return home in 1576. In 1588 he accepted a post as right vice minister of War in Nanjing and in 1590, the year of his death, his third petition for retirement was accepted.

Wang spent much of the money derived from the income from his family estates on collecting paintings and books and on building gardens. He was a leading figure in a classicist movement known as the Former Seven Masters and the Later Seven Masters which advocated a revival of ancient styles (gu wen ci yundong). This group took as their model the Qin-Han period for prose and the Han, Wei and mid-Tang periods for poetry. Wang was also a prolific writer. Indeed some thirty titles are attributed to him. Wang Shizhen's writings cover an enormous range of topics, among them literature, painting, calligraphy, history, creative writings, criticism, and scholarly compilations. His writings on art are found in *Yanzhou shanren sibu gao* (176 juan), completed in 1576 and published in 1577, and its supplement, *Yanzhou shanren xugao* (207 juan) edited by his grandson.
and published in the Chongzhen period (1628-1644). Colophons written by Wang on calligraphy, rubbings, and paintings are recorded in juan 129-138 in Sibu gao and juan 160-170 in Xu gao. Juan 155 of Sibu gao (the final chapter of Yiyuan zhiyan) contains comments on the history of painting as well as on individual artists.63

According to the biography written by Wang Shizhen, Lu Zhi64 was born in Meiliang village on Baoshan (Dongting West Mountain), a small island on Lake Tai, located just southwest of Suzhou, in 1496. He was also known by his style name (zi) Shuping and by his alternative name (hao) Baoshanzi. He used the studio names Youzhu ju (Bamboo Dwelling), Yangcheng shuwu (Yangcheng Library), and Xiwan zhai.

Lu Zhi came from a poor gentry family which was even less-distinguished in terms of its official service than that of Wu Wei. In 1428, on the basis of his literary accomplishments, Lu Zhi’s great-grandfather, Lu Xian,65 became a recommended official (a process used in the early Ming to supplement the ranks of government officials by bypassing the examination system).66 He served as a deputy magistrate in Shandong province, retiring in the 1440s to live out the remainder of his life as a farmer, "wandering in the forests and amusing himself with wine and poetry." As Louise Yuhas remarks, "Lu Xian's modest career in government apparently marked the highest level of professional advancement of the Lu family."67

Lu Zhi's father, Lu Ming (1456-1532),68 excelled in literature and music. He passed the prefectural examination and reached the rank of a zhusheng. The holder of a zhusheng degree was entitled to take the provincial examination at Nanjing which was held at three-year intervals. Although a zhusheng was not qualified to hold an official position, he was viewed as a potential official and was, therefore, distinguished from
ordinary commoners. Since a zhusheng was forbidden by law to take part in trade or manual labor, many engaged in tutoring or teaching at village schools in order to survive. A candidate who was successful in the Nanjing examination was awarded the juren degree. A juren was qualified to hold a government office or to take the metropolitan examination which was held at Beijing every three years. Success in the metropolitan examination resulted in the awarding of the jinshi degree, which assured the recipient emolument and a prestigious appointment.69

Lu Ming was employed as a tutor and had a number of students, many of whom were successful examination candidates who eventually held high official positions. He himself, however, failed the provincial examination in Nanjing thirteen times. In 1521, at the age of 66 sui, Lu Ming was awarded the rank of gongsheng, a largely honorary appointment which entitled the bearer to occupy a minor official position without going through the examination system. For seven years he held a post as assistant instructor at the Confucian school in Suichang county, retiring at the age of 73 sui. According to Wang Shizhen, "he was promoted to preside at Leqing to teach, but he did not take the position." For this reason, Wang continues, Wen Zhengming "highly esteemed his moral integrity and wrote the epitaph for his grave." Like his grandfather, Lu Xian, Lu Ming lived out the remainder of his life as a farmer. He died at the age of 77 sui.

Typically, Wang Shizhen provides the reader with few details concerning Lu Zhi's personal life. It is clear that Lu Zhi, like Wu Wei, received a standard Confucian education. Wang writes that as a youth Lu was "outstanding" and "bright" and "assiduously studied the meaning of the classics." Like his father, Lu Zhi passed the prefectural examination and was awarded a zhusheng degree. Wang states that "from the time that he was
at the zhusheng level, among the students he frequently gained distinction." He goes on to note that because of Lu's scholarly abilities, the prefectural officials awarded him a stipend in the form of a rice allowance in order to support his preparation for the provincial examination in Nanjing.

According to Wang Shizhen, Lu Zhi sat for the provincial examination but failed. Failure of the examination was a common occurrence. His father, Lu Ming, as was noted earlier, failed thirteen times. Between the years 1495 to 1522, Wen Zhengming failed ten times; his close friend Wang Chong failed eight times. His sons Wen Peng (1487-1573) and Wen Boren (1502-c.1575) were also unsuccessful in their attempts to pass the provincial examination. As Yuhas observes: "Given the fact that the examination was administered only at three-year intervals, these men spent much of their adult lives preparing for and taking examinations." Wang Shizhen does not state the number of occasions on which Lu Zhi sat for the examination at Nanjing, but he does offer an explanation of sorts for Lu's failure. He writes: "In his heart Lu Zhi liked to write in the style of the ancient writings (gu wen ci). He avoided the fads of the times and thought superior the prose style of the Zuo Zhuan." This explanation may have satisfied Wang Shizhen. Wang, as was noted earlier, was a classicist and advocated a revival of the ancient styles. It was in fact a common excuse for failure. Wen Zhengming also blamed his lack of success on his inability to write in the contemporary style of prose known as the "eight-legged essay," saying: "If I must crawl on hands and knees to conform with the tastes of the time, I cannot do it." As Yuhas comments, "it hardly seems an adequate explanation for repeated -- almost willful -- failure to satisfy the major prerequisite for embarking on an official career, traditionally the only fully appropriate profession for a Confucian scholar."
On the one hand, the successful examination candidate and his family were virtually guaranteed not only prestige and financial reward, but also exemption from labor duty and corporal punishment. As Ho Ping-ti explains, the distinctions between the official class and commoners "extended to practically every aspect of an official's life, from the style of his garments, residence, horse carriage, sedan chair, and number of guards and servants when he was on the road, right down to the minute specifications for his funeral grave."75 On the other hand, aspiring officials would have been well-aware of the climate of tension and political intrigue at court. The punishment for being on the wrong side of one of the numerous power struggles at court varied from simple dismissal or confiscation of property to imprisonment, banishment or even (as in the case of Wang Shizhen's father) execution. Wu Wei, it may be remembered, having gained entry to the court, spent the remainder of his life attempting to gain a release from his position there.

Yuhas may well be correct when she suggests that the real reason behind the examination failures of many of the members of the Suzhou intelligentsia, including Lu Zhi, lay in a disinclination to become involved in political intrigue as well as in a desire to remain in Suzhou, for, in an attempt to avoid nepotism, officials were always given assignments away from their native districts. Yuhas cites the experience of Wen Zhengming as "an instructive example for aspiring scholars of an official career." Following his ten examination failures Wen was appointed a gongsheng in 1522 and went to Beijing in the following year. He was given a position in the Hanlin Academy and spent three unhappy years in the capital. His resignation was finally accepted in the midst of the "Great Ritual Controversy," "one of the most serious conflicts in the Jiajing court and one
which resulted in the imprisonment and flogging of over one hundred officials."\textsuperscript{76}

Wang Shizhen seems to imply that Lu Zhi was not really interested in pursuing an official career. He writes that Lu "mainly wanted to amuse himself and suit his nature and that is all." A number of sources note Lu Zhi's eccentric and reclusive behaviour, and this is confirmed by Wang, who writes, for example, that Lu Zhi "cut off and dispensed with all social intercourse." Lu Zhi would not have been the first Chinese scholar to feign eccentricity or even instability in order to avoid serving office, and thus, like Wu Wei, his eccentric and unsociable behaviour may well have been deliberate in an attempt to gain release from his obligations and responsibilities. It should be noted, however, that Lu Zhi's situation was somewhat different from Wu Wei's in that he appears to have rejected the notion of serving office from the start, while Wu Wei appears to have rejected it only after finding it unsatisfactory.

While Lu Zhi appears to have been unemployed for most of his adult life, supported by his rice allowance in addition to a modest income derived from his family farm, he may, like Wu Wei, have been employed for a brief period of time as a tutor. He writes in an inscription on his earliest known work "Bulbul and Flowering Apricot," dated 1522, that it was painted while he was tutoring in Chenhu.\textsuperscript{77} This statement is confirmed by the opening lines on the second inscription written on "Lofty Traces of Tao Yuanming" which were quoted earlier. Chenhu was a small lakeside town located to the east of Suzhou. As Yuhas suggests, while in residence there Lu Zhi may have met the artist Chen Shun (1483-1544), whose family's long presence in the area had given the town its name.\textsuperscript{78}
While Wu Wei appears to have been dissatisfied with life at the imperial court in Beijing, constantly making excuses to escape to Nanjing, Lu Zhi seems to have increasingly chafed at the notion of a life as an official. Wang Shizhen writes that "because he had been bothered by the position of a zhusheng for so long, Lu Zhi did not wish to get his stipend from the granery and several times he petitioned and asked to resign. But the prefects Lin Maoji, Wen Jingkui, and Wang Daoxing all promoted his talents." The prefects refused to agree to Lu's petitions to be released from the obligations of his grain stipend. According to Wang Shizhen, "they told him not to be troubled at being a zhusheng and to try to receive his grain stipend as before. However, Lu Zhi was not happy and increasingly he wanted to be done with it and to resign."

Wang Shizhen outlines the sequence of events which led to Lu Zhi's eventual appointment as a gongsheng: "It happened that Lu Zhi's younger cousin, Lu Xia, had studied the classics with him. Lu Xia was designated the title of a gongsheng, but he withdrew and did not presume to accept the title first [i.e before Lu Zhi]. The censor subsequently commissioned Lu Zhi as a gongsheng. Lu Zhi persistently declined and did not accept it." The censor then wrote a letter to Lu Zhi praising his actions and encouraging him to accept the award. According to the Wuxian zhi, Lu Zhi and Lu Xia were recorded as gongsheng in 1557. On his appointment as a gongsheng, Lu was finally released from the burden of his official responsibilities and was allowed to retire at the age of 62 sui. Wang Shizhen writes: "To retire from the official world was Lu Zhi's utmost intention. Henceforth he wore the clothing of a retired scholar. He was increasingly determined to reside at Zhixing and did not go out to serve." Yuhas notes that while this incident added to Lu Zhi's reputation of moral rectitude, "at the same time
his initial rejection of gongsheng status, with its automatic elevation in social class, probably contributed to the reputation of eccentricity which was to characterize his later years.  \(^8\)

While Wu Wei appears to have engaged in willful, eccentric behaviour and intoxication, in order to gain a release from his position in Beijing, Lu Zhi, too it seems, particularly in his later years, appears to have behaved in an increasingly eccentric manner in order to attain his personal freedom. It should, however, be pointed out that the types of eccentricity which Wu Wei and Lu Zhi adopted were of very different sorts. Wolfgang Bauer discusses two different ways of obtaining personal freedom in traditional Chinese society: Intoxication and an "indifference toward all the conventions of society," or living close to nature. In contrast to Wu Wei who sought refuge in the hustle and bustle of the Nanjing entertainment district, Lu Zhi, like his model the Six Dynasties poet, Tao Yuanming, sought escape in the garden.

Wang Shizhen describes Lu Zhi's retreat at Zhixing:

In the Jin dynasty a monk named Dun left an old residence on Zhixing. Lu Zhi's hut is at its base. The site is surrounded by clouds and mountains and intersected by flowing streams. There is fertile land and broad fields, suitable for crops and gardens. The gate of his house is low and cannot admit a carriage. Aside from his cramped quarters, the land is entirely planted with famous chrysanthemums -- several hundred thousand in number. There are also rare flowers and trees which originated in the 10,000 li distant Rinan and Cangwu.  \(^8\)

He goes to great lengths to obtain varieties from far and wide. With his own hands he mounds and plants, irrigates and clips them. He is extremely gifted at obtaining their climatic and seasonal cycles. (Appendix II, no. 1).
The relief which Lu Zhi must have felt on finally being released from his duties perhaps are expressed in the lines from Tao Yuanming's poem "Home Again!" ("Guiaulai ce"), written in 405 after his retirement from office:

Back home again!
May my friendships be broken off and my wanderings come to an end.
The world and I shall have nothing more to do with one another...\(^8\)

Tao Yuanming retired in 405 at the age of forty and lived out the remainder of his years as a poor farmer. He spent his leisure time reading books, writing poetry, drinking wine, and tending his garden. His fable the "Peach Blossom Spring," a theme which occurs frequently in Lu Zhi's painting, is, as Barnhart comments, the "locus classicus of the ideal of the garden as timeless paradise."\(^84\)

Wang Shizhen portrays Lu Zhi as a dignified, reserved and taciturn man, who, like Wu Wei, was difficult to get to know. Wang writes that if "one approaches Lu Zhi abruptly, then he is distant and polite. If one approaches him slowly, then he is warm." In another passage in Lu's biography Wang describes Lu Zhi's gracious hospitality to welcome visitors:

At times when favoured guests come to visit, he immediately receives them in his flower garden, brings out homemade wine, cuts honeycomb, boils tender bamboo shoots and fresh fish for them and directs them to the full table. They sing elegant songs and tarry to the end of the day. The guests cannot bring themselves to part. (Appendix II, no. 1).

Unwanted guests, however, were not so welcomely received. Wang writes: "If those who are not his sort of people insist on visiting, he uses a rock to withstand them. If they tap at the door he warns his servant not to acknowledge or respond," words which echo Zhang's Qi's remarks about Wu
Wei: "Those who sought to patronize him were constantly at his door, but unless they were of the loftiest sort he did not oblige them." Wang devotes the final passages of the Lu Zhi's biography to accounts which characterize him as a man who practices the Confucian virtues of honesty, friendship, kindness, filial piety, and brotherly harmony.\(^85\)

While Lu Zhi, unlike Wu Wei, was never the recipient of wild acclaim, his talents were recognized and he was twice honored at local Suzhou festivals. Wang Shizhen writes that the "prefect Cai Guoxi held a ceremony to honor local elders and worthies. He completely sifted out and left the ordinary people. He first received Lu Zhi as an honored guest. Later, Li Shoujian again further wanted to promote and receive Lu Zhi. Lu Zhi esteemed his intentions and once again he went."\(^86\)

Wang Shizhen's writings provide the reader with some insight into Lu Zhi's attitude towards his painting. Wang writes: "Those who beseech and are anxious to buy his paintings come one after the other to his door but decidedly are never able to move him with monetary rewards. If people's thoughts are that which he agrees with then they do not have to wait and often request paintings." Elsewhere in a colophon to Lu Zhi's "Travelling in Dongting" album (no longer extant),\(^87\) Wang remarks that "from far and near people come to gaze at his alley way. Those who hurry him, even if they seek only one water scene or one rock scene, cannot obtain it." Osvald Siren quotes from a source who writes: "A man, who through a friend had obtained a picture by Lu Zhi, sent him some money in return, but the painter refused to accept it with the remark: 'I paint to express my friendship, not to earn money.'"\(^88\)

Lu Zhi's attitude towards painting is remarkably similar to that of Wu Wei and, as was noted earlier, is an attitude normally attributed to the
amateur artist. To produce a work of art on demand was thought to inhibit the act of spontaneous, unpremeditated creation. In reality, the scholar-amateur, like the professional artist, did often paint on request, and occasionally on demand. Another of the myths about the scholar-amateur artist was that he did not profit from his art. In actual fact, however, the scholar-amateur, like the professional artist, did often profit from his art, if in a rather more roundabout and indirect fashion. As Cahill observes, the convention of exchanging gifts was often used between patron and painter in order to avoid the stigma of a cash payment.

The writings of Wang Shizhen also provide the reader with some insight into the relationship between the patron and amateur artist — a relationship which Yuhas defines as a "delicate balance between the collector's desire for paintings and the artist's need to feel that he was providing them of his own free will" — and provide useful information regarding the circumstances underlying the inception of some of Lu Zhi's works.

The two Suzhou-area artists with whom Wang Shizhen had the most contact were Lu Zhi and Qian Gu (1508—after 1574). Yuhas observes that, "Wang Shizhen was no less specific in his requests than one might expect of commissions from professional painters, and these requests included the copying of paintings as well as original compositions." Various copies of ancient paintings were included in Wang Shizhen's collection, many of these were by artists such as Qiu Ying (1498-1552/3), who came to be designated as a professional artist, but a number were by artists such as Lu Zhi and Qian Gu, who were viewed as amateurs. Yuhas writes that "Wang did not, of course, go so far as to dictate the style in which the paintings were done; in fact he often encouraged the artist to make free rather than literal copies."
Nevertheless, in asking Lu Zhi to paint copies of works in his collection, Wang Shizhen certainly shaped the content of the finished work. Moreover, since Lu Zhi would have been well-acquainted with Wang Shizhen's tastes, it is unlikely that he would have painted for Wang in a style which he knew to be displeasing to the collector. Wang Shizhen does not specify method of payment in his writings. According to Yuhas (in the context of Qian Gu) when describing his commissions, Wang generally uses the word ling, the basic meaning of which is "to command" or "to order." As Yuhas concludes: "That some form of exchange was involved seems certain, particularly between a wealthy official and estate-owner like Wang Shizhen, and impoverished, unemployed scholars like Qian Gu and Lu Zhi."93

Yuhas aptly describes the relationship between Wang Shizhen and Lu Zhi as "an informal system of reciprocity beneficial to both the wealthy collector/patron and the impoverished amateur artist."94 The two men probably met in the 1560s, as is evidenced by the earliest datable reference to Lu in Wang's poem of 1565 entitled "Visiting Lu Shuping at Zhixing."95 Their most repeated contacts, however, were in the 1570s. In 1570 Lu Zhi invited Wang Shizhen to visit his garden at Zhixing to view the chrysanthemums. The following year in 1571 Wang wrote Lu's official biography and in return Lu gave him a painting of "The Peach Blossom Spring," which Wang had admired on an earlier visit. In 1572 Lu accompanied Wang and his friends on a boat trip on Lake Tai to the Eastern and Western Dongting Mountains. On their return Wang presented Lu with poems and a record of their trip, and Lu responded with an album of scenes of the Dongting mountains ("Travelling in Dongting"), each scene based upon one of Wang's poems. In a colophon to the album Wang Shizhen writes:
In autumn in the September of 1572 I travelled to Dongting. The elder Lu Shuping at that time also followed all the young people and went. He was 77 years of age, yet his hat and shoes appeared as if flying amid the clouds and vapors. On the day of my return I began to draft a record and several poems in an ancient style in order to give to Mr. Lu to commemorate the occasion. Then in the fifth month of the next year [1573], Mr. Lu came to visit. At that time he produced sixteen scrolls on old paper, each scroll comprising one scene. It was as if he had selected from the scenes of my poems the ones which did not greatly offend [his style] and described them. (Appendix II, no. 3).

The next year in 1574 Lu stayed with Wang and copied Wang Li's "Hua Shan" album for him. Wang Shizhen records these events in a colophon to Lu Zhi's copy of Wang Li's album: "Having written a colophon for Marquis Wu's 'Hua Shan' picture by Wang Andao [Wang Li], I wanted to ask for a copy of it in the hand of Qian Shubao [Qian Gu], but with no result. After a month had passed, Mr. Lu Shuping came to visit. I took out the painting. I though it hard, but because of his old age I attended him until evening and did not dare discuss the business of copying the painting." According to Wang Shizhen, Lu Zhi held the album and after examining it he said: "This venerable one complies with and has been able to meet [the achievements] of Song artists. He has not used the preceding [Yuan] dynasty's weak-wristed techniques." This is a pronouncement which would probably not have displeased Wang Shizhen, given his admiration for Song painters and his dislike for the informality and sketchiness of much of Yuan painting.

Soon after this occasion Wang Shizhen left for the north, but in 1575 he sent a Lu Zhi a poem in honor of his eightieth birthday. In 1576, while passing through Suzhou on his way home, Wang visited Lu who agreed to paint an album of the "great harmony" (tai he). Wang recounts this last
meeting with Lu Zhi in a second colophon for the "Travelling in Dongting" album:

In the guiyou year [1573], I travelled around Lake Tai. The year following the trip Lu did [these] paintings for me. The second year after the completion of the paintings I had returned to my home to avoid slander and went to visit the elder Lu. At the time he was already ill. But he talked enthusiastically about the coming year, when he would paint for me the "great harmony" (tai he), which, when paired with the Taihu [album], would comprise a panoramic view. Shortly thereafter he died. This year Zhongwei [Yu Yunwen] stopped in at my Yanzhou Garden. I took out this album and we contemplated it at length...In the end Lu did not live to eighty-two and will never complete his "Great Harmony View;" it is most lamentable.

There is no indication that Lu Zhi knew the famous collector Xiang Yuanbian (1525-1590), although Xiang collected his works. Xiang was a native of neighbouring Jiaxing and often associated with members of the Suzhou intellegentsia. He owned several pawn shops and through these acquired a number of paintings for his large collection. Among Lu Zhi's extant paintings bearing Xiang Yuanbian's seals is "Streams and Rocks" in the Nelson Gallery. The infamous official Yan Song (1480-1575), "whose possessions were confiscated by the government at the time of Yan's trial for malfeasance in office," owned ten of Lu Zhi's works.

Wai-kam Ho observes that Wang Shizhen was strongly influenced by the ideas of the Cheng-Zhu school of Neo-Confucianism, a school which stressed the importance of external reality as opposed to inward contemplation. He writes:

When Chinese painting was appraised from this standpoint as a parallel development of the Song Neo-Confucianism of the Zheng-Zhu school, the Song tradition was logically and inevitably regarded as the orthodox; and the mantle was passed
on to the Zhe school, which was considered the direct successor of the Southern Song. This was the core of Wang Shizhen’s view of Chinese painting history, manifested explicitly in his many colophons and summed up in his early notes on the arts, the *Yi yuan zhi yan*, and was that of his followers, (e.g. Li Kaixian).¹⁰⁴

Wang Shizhen did greatly admire Dai Jin (the artist later to be credited with the founding of the Zhe school), writing that "in the eyes of real connoisseurs he will be considered the foremost of all Ming painters."¹⁰⁵ He also thought highly of Shen Zhou, however. Of a series of seven landscapes by Dai Jin (which he had mistaken at first for works by Shen Zhou) he wrote "there was not a trace of Qiantang [Zhejiang school] feeling: the work was hoary and untrammelled, quite out of the ordinary run of things. So I knew that this gentleman, as well as Shen Zhou, had learnt every method, and that he was his equal in all marvellous qualities."¹⁰⁶ This remark suggests that Wang was also appreciative of modes of painting other than those derived from Southern Song models.

Nevertheless, while in Lu Zhi’s official biography Wang writes that Lu "selected from the styles of the preceding [Yuan] dynasty’s four greatest artists" (and thus places Lu in the tradition of the Yuan amateur artists), as Yuhas observes, in his more informal writings it is clearly the Song-like qualities that he appreciates most in Lu’s paintings. In his colophon on Lu’s "Travelling in Dongting" album he admires Lu’s ability to capture the formal likeness and the realism of the scenery and writes: "His autumn ambience is outstanding and distinct. His floating skies are like boundless expanses of water. So clearly are depicted the two Dongtings of Lake Tai that he has unfailingly conveyed the spirit. His sublime places at their best, approach those of Li Cheng and Guo Xi. Since Ma and Xia nothing has been seen in this category."
Wang Shizhen's assessment of Lu Zhi's painting styles is less flattering in the discussion of the artist included in the final chapter of *Yiyuan zhiyan* than it is in individual colophons or in Lu's official biography. In the biography, after placing Lu's landscapes in the tradition of the Four Masters of the Yuan, Wang writes: "These paintings are marvellous, heroic, and outstanding and at times he produces innovative ideas. The birds and flowers and bamboo and rocks that he portrays are often heavenly creations. Since Xi and Quan [Xu Xi and Huang Quan]¹⁰⁷ no one else is even discussed." In the section on Lu found in the *Yiyuan zhiyan*, however, Wang compares his bird and flower paintings unfavourably in relation to those of Chen Shun and criticizes Lu for the sketchiness of his landscapes. He writes:

Shuping [Lu Zhi] is good at drawing from life. He has grasped the tradition of Xu and Huang, but his paintings are not as good as Daofu's [Chen Shun's] in their marvellous qualities and are not as true to life. As for his attitude towards landscapes, he is fond of imitating Song artists and from time to time he produces his own ideas. The manner and structure of his landscapes is lofty and sharp-cut. Empyrean thoughts flow layer upon layer, but he cannot avoid exposing his methods. (Appendix II, no. 2).

According to Wang Shizhen, Lu Zhi studied painting with Wen Zhengming and calligraphy with Wen's friend, Zhu Yunming (1461-1527). He is also known to have associated with members of Wen Zhengming's circle. Alice Merrill (Hyland) has shown that Lu Zhi was associated with the artist Wen Jia (1501-1583) eight times (in documented works).¹⁰⁸ The first of such recorded associations was in 1527 (the year in which Wen Zhengming returned from Beijing) when Yuan Gun, a member of a leading Suzhou family, asked Wen Zhengming's friend, Wang Chong (1494-1533), to compile an album of poems and paintings to celebrate the sixtieth birthday of his father, Yuan Zi. Lu Zhi was one of four painters asked to contribute to
the album (the others were Chen Shun, Wen Jia, and Wen Boren). Each artist produced five works depicting local scenery, making a total of twenty paintings in all. Each painting was accompanied by poem. Among the poets were Lu, Chen, the two Wens, Wen Zhengming, Peng Nian (1505-1566) and Cai Yu (d. 1541).

It is possible that Lu Zhi was asked to contribute on the recommendation of Chen Shun who, as was noted earlier, may have met Lu in the town of Chenhu in the 1520s. Lu was also acquainted with Wen Zhengming’s close friend, Cai Yu, who accompanied Wen to Beijing in 1523. Cai Yu’s studio, Xuanxu lou, was located in Xiaoxia Bay on Dongting West Mountain, the site of Lu Zhi’s ancestral home. In 1533 Lu Zhi is recorded as having executed a work depicting Cai Yu’s studio and in the following year he painted a handscroll featuring Xiaoxia Bay which is still extant.

In 1528 Lu Zhi painted a handscroll depicting Tiger Hill to accompany poems written by Zhu Yunming in 1522. While this work is not a “direct link” between Lu Zhi and Zhu Yunming, it does, as Yuhas observes, “demonstrate that Lu was moving at least among collectors who possessed works by the leading calligrapher of the age.” It is likely that Lu Zhi came into contact with Wen Zhengming in 1532 when Wen wrote an epitaph for his father, Lu Ming. Unfortunately this is no longer extant. Three years later in 1535 Lu painted a handscroll to accompany calligraphy written by Wen Zhengming two years earlier in 1533.

Lu Zhi continued to maintain contact with Wen Zhengming and his circle in the 1540s and 50s. In 1540 Wen Zhengming inscribed a "Blue and Green" landscape painting by Lu which, according to Yuhas, is the "only reliable painting by Lu Zhi to bear an inscription by Wen Zhengming." On New Years Eve, 1544 (a date corresponding to January 23) Lu Zhi, Wen Jia,
and Wang Guxiang (1501-1568) gathered at the home of the artist Qiu Ying. This is the only recorded meeting between Lu Zhi and Qiu Ying. Qiu brought out a recently completed painting of the Daoist 'Demon Queller,' Zhong Kui, and in the course of the evening Lu Zhi added a landscape background. Later in the evening the group went to the home of Wen Zhengming, who, on seeing the painting, inscribed a poem at the top by Zhou Mi (1232-1298), the Yuan dynasty collector and critic, and long-time friend of Zhao Mengfu.

Stephen Little suggests that during the 1540s, in particular, Lu Zhi "maintained a rapport" with Wen Zhengming's family, citing as evidence the gathering discussed above, and also Lu Zhi's attendance at a celebration of the Lantern Festival at Wen Zhengming's home in 1547. Little also notes that Lu Zhi was one of the thirteen early-sixteenth-century Suzhou intellectuals to write poetic colophons on Qiu Ying's handscroll, "A Beauty-Thoughts of Spring" (among the other contributors were Wen Jia, Wen Peng, and Wen Boren) and suggests that the colophons may have been written at the same time that the painter-calligrapher Zhou Tianqiu (1514-1595) inscribed the title, "at a celebration of the Double Ninth Festival in 1547."

In 1548 Lu Zhi visited Peng Nian at his studio and produced a flower painting for him. He wrote a colophon for Wen Zhengming's "Snow Scene" in 1551. In 1553 he produced a handscroll to accompany poems written by Wen Zhengming. The inscription to this work contains Lu's earliest reference to Zhixing. It reads:

Wen Taishi's [Wen Zhengming] poems about Tianchi run to several tens of verses. This scroll [of poems] was written for Mr. Jiuchou. Jiuchou's country house is mentioned in them, and therefore he treasures it highly. He asked me to add a painting. I live to the right of Zhixing and from dawn to dusk have sought
relaxation [in the mountains]. Thus I have succeeded somewhat in depicting the appearance [of mountains] emerging from and disappearing into the mists. But how dare my awkward and inferior skill be mounted together with the honored Taishi? [Written on] the 23rd day of the fourth month of the guichou year of Jiajing by Lu Zhi of Baoshan.\textsuperscript{120}

Wen Zhengming's Tianchi poems are no longer extant. Lu Zhi was obviously impressed by them as is evidenced by an inscription on his "Stone Cliffs at Tianchi,"\textsuperscript{121} painted in 1550 in which he writes that the accompanying poems were written the previous year in imitation of Wen's Tianchi poems.\textsuperscript{122} In 1554 Lu painted "Autumn Colours at Xunyang,"\textsuperscript{123} for which Wen Peng wrote out a poem and Peng Nian wrote the title.\textsuperscript{124}

Lu Zhi was also acquainted with members of the Zhang family. The three Zhang brothers Zhang Fengyi (1527-1613), Zhang Xianyi, and Zhang Yanyi (d. 1604), nicknamed the "Three Zhang," were prominent members of the Suzhou literary circle. In 1555, on the "Day of Man" (the seventh day of the first lunar month), Lu Zhi attended a gathering hosted by Zhang Xianyi. Other guests included Wen Zhengming, Wen Jia, and Wen Peng. In the second month of 1555, Zhang Fengyi wrote a colophon for Lu Zhi's "Thatched Hut at Lianchuan,"\textsuperscript{125} while Wen Jia, wrote a lengthy poem, and Wen Zhengming composed the title sheet.\textsuperscript{126} One other occasion is worth noting. In 1563 or 1564 Wen Jia painted "Parting by a River Bank"\textsuperscript{127} for Yuan Zunni on the occasion of his departure for Beijing to take the jinshi examination. Lu Zhi was one of the five additional artists to compose farewell poems which were appended to the painting.\textsuperscript{128}

Yuhas argues against the traditional assumption that Lu Zhi studied painting with Wen Zhengming. She writes:

The traditional assertion that Lu studied painting with Wen Zhengming is apparently based on a comment in a brief eulogy
(xiangcan) composed by Wang Shizhen after Lu’s death: Yu Zhu Wen er xiansheng men, which has been taken to mean that Lu had studied with both Zhu Yunming (in calligraphy) and Wen Zhengming (in painting). While the construction yu—men (literally, “to travel to the gates”) is often used to characterize a pupil-teacher relationship, the lack of any other contemporary record of such an association leaves room for doubt, particularly in view of the fact that Wang Shizhen’s biography of Lu Zhi makes no mention of his teachers. Zhu Yunming’s name never appears in Lu Zhi’s writings (nor is Lu ever mentioned by Zhu), and neither Lu nor Wen Zhengming makes any statement that implies more than a slight acquaintance between them.129

It is possible that Wang Shizhen was simply referring to an informal sort of relationship between Lu Zhi and Zhu Yunming and Wen Zhengming, for it is difficult to understand how Wang, who knew Lu Zhi so well, could be completely mistaken or why he would deliberately try to mislead, particularly in view of his accountability to his audience, an audience which certainly would have been aware of the facts. As Stephen Little notes, elsewhere Yuhas does accept the traditional view that Lu Zhi and Chen Shun had a pupil-teacher relationship, based on a statement by Zhu Yizun in his anthology of Ming poetry (1705), which says that "Shu ping travelled to Daofu’s [Chen Shun’s] gate."130 In any case, while Yuhas goes to great lengths to dispel this traditional view, in the end she cannot deny the tremendous influence of Wen Zhengming that is so apparent in Lu Zhi’s work and in that of other sixteenth century Suzhou artists. As Yuhas writes elsewhere, “virtually all Suzhou painters of the mid-to-late sixteenth century who attained prominence had studied painting with Wen.”131

Yuhas asserts that Lu Zhi was only marginally involved with the Wen set, infrequently participating in the collective handscrolls which were often produced by this group.132 While Lu Zhi may not (as Yuhas asserts) have participated as frequently in the gatherings or activities of Wen
Zhengming’s circle as other members of the group, it is apparent from the above that he was connected with all of its major figures. During much of this time, as Yuhas notes, he would have been engaged in preparing for the provincial examination. In addition, given Lu Zhi’s reclusive nature it is not surprising that he did not frequently engage in group activities. He retired to Zhixing at least as early as 1553, and Wang Shizhen writes that even in his youth Lu Zhi lived in retirement on Baoshan. There is also evidence that Lu suffered from ill health and that this contributed to his reclusive lifestyle. According to Yuhas, Wang Shizhen cites Lu Zhi’s ill health for his unhappiness as a zhusheng. Lu himself refers to his ailing health in an inscription on an album painting (no longer extant) dated 1558:

On an autumn day of the mouwu year of Jiajing [1558] I went for treatment of an illness to a priest’s cottage. I confined myself deep in the mountains and for an entire year did not go into the city. I wandered about among the streams and rocks and did not go beyond the boundaries of Zhixing. Whenever I was feeling well, I would paint a small picture...

In the final analysis Yuhas is forced to admit that “when Lu Zhi did engage in social intercourse he was received among Suzhou’s artistic and intellectual elite.”

Just as Wu Wei’s paintings are reflective of a Nanjing attitude towards painting, as will be seen in the following chapter, Lu Zhi’s paintings are reflective of Suzhou painting. Like Wen Zhengming, Lu was an eclectic artist and explored a wide variety of sources including both Song and Yuan stylistic modes. In addition to the influence of Wen Zhengming, Lu drew upon a number of sources from the Suzhou area including the styles of the artists Huang Gongwang, Wang Meng, Ni Zan, and Shen Zhou. Both Yuhas and Wilkinson point out his debt to Tang Yin and Qiu Ying as well.
In summary, on the basis of the textual material Wu Wei and Lu Zhi appear at first to be complete opposites. The "professional artist," Wu Wei, in his drunkeness and unkempt appearance evokes the image of a Daoist sage, while the "scholar-amateur artist," Lu Zhi, in his upright behaviour and charity towards others evokes the image of the disciplined Confucian. As is often the case, however, opposites are frequently closer than they appear at first glance. Both Wu Wei and Lu Zhi came from families who aspired to the official class but had only modest histories of government service; both artists received a standard Confucian education and in the early stages of their lives were engaged in activities directed towards attaining the goal of the Confucian scholar -- a career in government; both may have been employed for a brief period as tutors.

Both Wu Wei and Lu Zhi appear to have rejected the notion of an official career at an early stage in their lives and, burdened by duties, obligations, and expectations, spent the remainder of their years in an attempt to gain their freedom. While Wu Wei appears to have sought refuge in the entertainment district of Nanjing, Lu Zhi sought escape in his garden retreat at Zhixing. Both artists wrote poetry and took part in literary gatherings, and both painted on commission as well as in friendship and shared a remarkably similar attitude to their painting. As will be seen in the following chapter, both Wu Wei and Lu Zhi explored a wide variety of painting traditions while at the same time their respective styles can be seen to be rooted in the urban painting traditions of Nanjing and Suzhou.

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2 See Appendix I, no. 1.
3 See Appendix I, no. 2.

The *juren* degree was the second of three degrees obtainable in the civil service examinations. The bearer of a *juren* degree was qualified to hold office or could take the metropolitan examination held at three-year intervals at Beijing.

The *jinshi* degree, which was the highest one obtainable in the civil service examinations, assured an appointment in the upper levels of government office.

Wuchang is also sometimes referred to as Jiangxia.

In addition to “inferior,” *ci* also can have the meaning of “next.” According to Xu Binxing, Wu Wei’s father was named Cangweng. It is possible, therefore, that Ciweng has a double meaning and can also be translated as “the next Weng.”


See Appendix I, no. 2.

*Guan dai*. The accoutrements of the scholar.

*Jin yi zhen fu*. Literally “embroidered uniform guard.”


Cahill, Siren, and other scholars have translated this as a seal inscribed “Foremost among Painters.”

See Appendix I, no. 4.

See Appendix I, no. 5.

See Appendix I, no. 8.
Some of the later accounts relate a tale in which Wu takes up painting after a meeting with a Daoist who predicts that he will become famous for his skill. See Appendix I, no. 9.

See Barnhart-Cahill-Rogers Correspondence, p. 16.

Ibid., p. 3.

Official in attendance. Harrie Vanderstappen writes: "Dai Zhao may best be understood as a title given to people who had to be available for service whenever called upon." Harrie Vanderstappen, "Painters at the Early Ming Court (1368-1435) and the Problem of a Ming Painting Academy," p. 326.


According to Richard Barnhart, Zhan Jingfeng was a younger contemporary of Wang Shizhen. See Barnhart, "The 'Wild and Heterodox School' of Ming Painting," p. 389.


Bush and Shih, Early Chinese Texts on Painting, p. 56.

Ibid.

See Shimada, "Concerning the I-p'in Style of Painting -- 1," p. 70.


See Barnhart’s article, "The 'Wild and the Heterodox School' of Ming Painting."


43Ibid., p. 410.
44See Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," pp. 171-231.
45For a more detailed discussion of Sun Long and other artists of this group see Cahill’s discussion in Parting at the Shore, pp. 136-157.
47See Barnhart-Cahill-Rogers Correspondance, p. 25; see also Cahill, Parting at the Shore, p. 140.
48Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 142.7 x 46.1 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei. See Cahill, Parting at the Shore, pl. 67.
50See Cahill, Parting at the Shore, pp. 153-54; pls. 70, 71.
51For examples of works by Du Jin see Cahill, Parting at the Shore, pls. 72 and 73; see also Lee, Chinese Painting, fig. 10.
52Cahill, Parting at the Shore, p. 155.
53See, for example, Cahill, Parting at the Shore, pl. 49.
54Translated by Barnhart, "The ‘Wild and Heterodox School’ of Ming Painting," p. 384. "Wangchuan tu" refers to a famous painting by Wang Wei of his country estate called "Wangchuan Villa" (now known only in the form of copies). Xu Lin’s equation of Du Jin’s painting with Wang Wei’s "Wangchuan tu" -- an "artistic icon" (Barnhart’s terms) of the literati tradition -- is indicative of a rather irreverant attitude to art.
55See Holtz, "Wu Wei and the Turning Point in Early Ming Painting," p. 21. Unfortunately, Holtz does not reveal her source for this information.
56Ibid., p. 22.
57See Cahill, Parting at the Shore, p. 22; see also Holtz, "Wu Wei and the Turning Point in Early Ming Painting," p. 22.
58Cahill, Parting at the Shore, p. 136.
59Translated by Cahill, Parting at the Shore, p. 129.
60"Lu Shuping xiansheng zhuan," in Yanzhou shanren sibu gao, juan 83. See Appendix II, no. 1
61The following information on Wang Shizhen is based upon the account in Goodrich and Fang, eds., Dictionary of Ming Biography, 2:1399-1440.

Unless otherwise noted, the following information on Lu Zhi is drawn from the biography by Wang Shizhen, Appendix II, no. 1.


According to Ho Ping-ti, the recommendation system was a common method of supplementing the ranks of the successful examination candidates. See Ho Ping-ti, The Ladder of Success in Imperial China: Aspects of Social Mobility, 1368-1911 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), p. 216.

Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," p. 22.

Biographical information on Lu Ming is based on material provided by Yuhas. See Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," pp. 22-23; see also Yuhas, "The Landscape Painting of Lu Chih: Part 1," p. 3; and Wang Shizhen's biography of Lu Zhi, Appendix II, no. 1.

See Ho, The Ladder of Success in Imperial China, pp. 26-37.

See Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," p. 34; see also Wilson and Wong, Friends of Wen Cheng-ming, p. 24.

Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," p. 34.

A commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals.


Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," p. 34.

Ho, The Ladder of Success in Imperial China, p. 18.

Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," p. 36.

This work is known only through catalogs. See Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," p. 26.


According to Yuhas, Lin Maoji served from 1553-1556, Wen Jinkui from 1556 to 1559, and Wang Daoxing from 1559-1562. Yuhas notes that the Wuxian zhi (1933) dates the awarding of Lu Zhi's gongsheng title to 1557 and therefore Wang Shizhen may have erred in including Wang Daoxing. See Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," p. 68 note 59.

See Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," p. 44; note 65.
Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," p. 44.

Yuhas writes that Rinan could refer to a town in Yunnan Province or to a number of locations in present-day Vietnam. Cangwu is located in Guangxi. See Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," p. 72, note 73.


See Appendix II, no. 1.

These occasions must have occurred between the years 1566 and 1573. According to Yuhas, the prefect Cai Guoxi served from 1566 to 1573, while the prefect Li Shoujian served from 1569-1573. See Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," p. 48.

See Appendix II, no. 3.

Siren, Chinese Painting, 4:221.


See Cahill, Parting at the Shore, p. 83.


Ibid., pp. 6-7.

Ibid., p. 7.

Ibid., p. 8.

See Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," p. 48.

The image of an immortal.

An album of forty leaves, dated 1383. Twenty-seven leaves are in the Shanghai Museum and thirteen are in the Beijing Palace Museum. See Cahill, Parting at the Shore, pls. 1-2.

At the time that Louise Yuhas wrote her doctoral dissertation, this album was believed to be no longer extant. During a conversation with Kathlyn Liscomb I discovered that the entire album has since resurfaced and is now in the Shanghai museum. Kathlyn Liscomb kindly sent me a reproduction of two of Lu Zhi's album leaves. It is difficult to tell from the photocopied reproduction, but Lu Zhi appears to have produced a faithful, is somewhat sketchy, copy of Wang Li's work.

The trip took place in 1572, not 1573 as Wang writes here.

Translated by Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," p. 51.

See Wilson and Wong, Friends of Wen Cheng-ming, p. 22.
103 See Goodrich and Fang, Dictionary of Ming Biography, 2:990.
104 Wai-kam Ho, 'Tung Ch'i-ch'ang's New Orthodoxy,' pp. 119-120.
105 Cahill, Parting at the Shore, p. 53.
107 Two 10th-century artists who specialized in bird and flower painting. All bird and flower painting is traced back to these two artists. They are seen as representing two different traditions. Xu Xi's paintings are classified as xie yi (paintings which convey meaning), while Huang Quan's paintings are classified as xie sheng (paintings which convey formal likeness). See Barnhart, Peach Blossom Spring, 25-27.
109 See Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," p. 27.
111 "Tiger Hill," 1528. Handscroll, ink and colour on paper, Matsushita Collection, Tokyo. See Yuhas, "The Landscape Painting of Lu Chih: Part 1, pl. 3.
113 "Landscape," 1535. Handscroll, ink and light colour on silk, 35.4 x 108.3 cm. National Palace Museum, Taibei. See Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," p. 32, pl. 5.
114 "Landscape in Blue and Green," 1540. Hanging scroll, ink and colour on paper, 96 x 33 cm. Present whereabouts unknown. See Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," pl. 8.
115 Hanging scroll, ink on silk, 141 x 36.3 cm. Private collection, New York. Little, "The Demon Queller and the Art of Qiu Ying," fig. 1. Two other joint works by Lu Zhi and Qiu Ying are known. One is a late seventeenth or early eighteenth century forgery. Reproduced in Kokka, vol. 254, p. 10. The second work is a now-lost portrait of Tang Yin by Qiu Ying with a landscape background by Lu Zhi, which is recorded in Hu Jitang, Bixiao xuan shu hua lu.
(preface dated 1839), ch.1:14b. (Little, "The Demon Queller and the Art of Qiu Ying," note 261).


117 Little, "The Demon Queller and the Art of Qiu Ying," p. 61.

118 See Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," p. 66, note 54.


120 Translated by Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," p. 43.

121 "The Stone Cliffs at Tianchi," 1550. Hanging scroll, ink and colour on paper, 86 x 46.4 cm. Shanghai Museum. See Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," pl. 16.

122 See Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," p. 69, note 61.

123 "Autumn Colours at Xunyan," 1554. Handscroll, ink and colour on paper, 22 x 100 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. See Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," pl. 22.

124 See Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," p. 66, note 54.


127 Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

128 See Merrill, "Wen Jia and Suchou Literati," p. 4.

129 Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," p. 31.

130 Little, "The Demon Queller and the Art of Qiu Ying," note 209.

131 Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," p. 31.

132 See Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," p. 41.

133 Ibid., p. 33.

134 Ibid.

135 Ibid. p. 45.

136 Translated by Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," p. 45.

137 Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," p. 42.


The degree to which Lu Zhi was influenced by Tang Yin and Qiu Ying remains uncertain in my mind. Yuhas points out the use of features such as the axe-
cut stroke derived from Li Tang and the scalloped brushstroke, in addition to
the use of the blue-and-green manner as evidence of the influence of Tang
and Qiu. However, these features can also be found in the works of Wen
Zhengming. Tang Yin died in 1523 and there is no evidence that Lu Zhi ever
met him. The only recorded meeting between Lu Zhi and Qiu Ying occurred
in 1547. See Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," p. 40; p. 245.
CHAPTER FIVE

Wu Wei and Lu Zhi are more closely linked than initially might be supposed, for there is an odd similarity in their "souls." Both are eclectic artists who select from (in somewhat different ways) a broad range of earlier traditions. (Obviously, although I have been discussing the influence of urban environments, traditions, and so forth, I recognize that the artist's own individual temperament is a major factor in artistic creation.) In this chapter I will discuss their works in terms of three aspects: Subject matter and style, models and traditions, and aesthetic sensibility.

Wu Wei's extant paintings form a highly diverse group in terms of subject matter, quality, and style. Stylistically he moves from a rough, bold, agitated manner, to a more precise outlined style, to a spontaneous explosion of rich fluent brushwork and liquid wash. In addition to references to the Southern Song academic tradition, he selects freely from Tang, Northern Song, Yuan, and contemporary sources. Drawing on the varied artistic experiences and traditions to which he was exposed in both Beijing and Nanjing, he combines features of these in imaginative ways with little or no concern for historical accuracy or "orthodox" lineages.

Lu Zhi, like Wu Wei, is an eclectic artist, although stylistically his extant works reveal a somewhat greater homogeneity, reflecting his comparatively more insular artistic experience in Suzhou. Like Wu Wei he selects from a broad range of past and contemporary sources. In addition to Yuan painting traditions, he draws extensively on Tang, Northern and Southern Song and contemporary Ming sources, in addition to the blue-and-green tradition associated with Zhao Boju (d. c. 1162) (an artist assigned to the Northern School by Dong Qichang). Like Wu Wei, Lu Zhi combines the varied strands of these sources in a free and imaginative way, although --
nurtured by the more "orthodox" Suzhou intellectual climate with its emphasis on historical lineages and allegiances -- he shows a somewhat greater concern for historical accuracy, particularly in his works based on early painting masters.

While Wu Wei produced landscapes and works illustrating historical themes, he is perhaps best known for his figure painting. Figure painting enjoyed a great popularity in general in Nanjing during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Nanjing artists such as Du Jin, Guo Xu, Zhang Lu, and Jiang Song all produced paintings of figures.

Thematically Wu Wei’s figure paintings form a highly diverse group. His subjects include Buddhist and Daoist figures, historical figures, scholars, peasants, fishermen, and courtesans. As was noted earlier, these works can be loosely divided into two categories based on style -- those paintings executed in a fine, careful and exact manner, and those exhibiting very animated, rough, bold brushwork.

The Indianapolis Museum of Art’s "Lady Carrying a Pipa," a hanging scroll on paper, measuring 125.1 by 61.3 centimeters, is an example of Wu Wei’s fine baimiao brushmode (fig. 3). As Cahill observes, Wu’s paintings in the fine line manner such as "Lady Carrying a Pipa" cannot be strictly classified as baimiao, due to the artist’s use of washes and the variations in line width. Cahill believes that this is a "manner of drawing that was probably original with Wu Wei and was to be developed during the next half-century by artists in both Nanjing and Suzhou."\(^1\)

The lady is shown in profile view carrying her lute (pipa), wrapped in a brocade bag, over her right shoulder. The absence of setting, as Cahill observes, heightens the sense of isolation and loneliness.\(^2\) The artist’s sensitive, unlaboured handling of the brush creates a sense of warmth, a
sense of a real person, and this in spite of the rather generalized facial features.

The painting is interestingly related to a hanging scroll executed in ink on paper by Guo Xu (discussed earlier in connection with Wu Wei) which is now in the Palace Museum, Beijing (fig. 4). The painting is entitled "The Lute Song," and Guo has inscribed it with the text of the famous poem of that name by the Tang poet Bai Juyi. The poem was composed in 816 when Bai was serving office in the south. One evening, while saying farewell to a friend at the riverbank, the poet heard the melancholy sound of a lute coming from a nearby boat. The music turned out to be that of an old courtesan whose talents had once had been celebrated in the capital. The sound of her music evoked thoughts of the poet's own long exile from friends and good music in the capital.3

Guo Xu depicts the courtesan standing before the seated figure of the poet Bai Juyi. His depiction of the courtesan is closely related to Wu Wei's "Lady Carrying a Pipa," although the figure portrayed by Guo is stiffer and less detailed than the figure in Wu's painting.

The major portion of Wu Wei's extant figure paintings are executed in a rougher and more dashing brushmode than "Lady Carrying a Pipa," the success of such paintings undoubtedly motivating their production and imitation by later artists. The Shanghai Museum's "Two Immortals" (fig. 1), discussed earlier in connection with Lu Zhi's "Portrait of Tao Yuanming," is a good example of this looser, less formal brushmode.

Wu Wei's extant landscape painting too can be loosely divided into two basic groups: large, decorative landscape scrolls on silk predicated upon the conservative mid-15th-century court style that is thought to have originated with or been popularized by Dai Jin,4 and a less formal landscape
style with references to a variety of sources including those of late-fifteenth-century Nanjing artists.

"Winter Landscape with Travelers" is typical of Wu's conservative, court-related style (fig. 5). Flattened landscape forms are arranged vertically and horizontally along the left side and across the lower portion of the scroll respectively, while diagonal recession is blocked by the mountains located in the mid to upper right portion of the painting. The contours of the landscape forms are delineated with wavering, uneven brushstrokes, the application of interior ink washes of varying intensities providing harsh light and dark contrasts which, as Cahill notes, serve to represent either light and shade or snow and exposed terrain. A traveler accompanied by a servant carrying bundles emerges from behind a rocky outcrop surmounted by trees in the lower left corner of the painting and makes his way towards a snow covered bridge located in the lower right. The figures, like the landscape and vegetative forms, are delineated in a bold, agitated line.

Wu's works in this category are routine, conventional productions and vary in only small details such as in the placement of figures or buildings or in the quality of the brushwork. Wu Wei, as an artist of elevated stature at court (and this position would be strengthened by the frequent gifts bestowed upon him by the emperor in addition to the emperor's tolerant attitude), was barraged by requests for his paintings. The production of such routine, undemanding and uninventive works would have served to satisfy this heavy demand for paintings. Such works, therefore, may represent the type of paintings which Wu Wei produced for conservative patrons while serving in the Beijing court.
Wu Wei's less conservative works include "The Pleasures of Fishermen" (fig. 6), "Ten-thousand Li on the Yangzi" (figs. 7a-b), and "Fishing Boats on a River" (fig. 8). In contrast to the type of landscape described above, all three of these works, in general, exude an exuberance which suggests the sheer joy of painting, and reveal Wu Wei at his best. As such they may represent the type of landscape he painted in the freer atmosphere of Nanjing and elsewhere, away from the constraints and tensions of the court at Beijing.

Like Wu Wei, Lu Zhi was a diverse artist, although his extant works reveal a somewhat greater stylistic homogeneity. In addition to landscapes Lu Zhi produced bird and flower paintings. In fact, while Lu is currently best known for his landscapes, traditional Chinese sources often give precedence to his bird and flower paintings. In contrast to Wu Wei, who is best known for his figure painting, Lu Zhi rarely engaged in figure painting, indeed, his "Portrait of Tao Yuanming" discussed earlier in connection with Wu Wei's "Two Immortals," is his only extant work which can be classified as a figure painting.

Lu Zhi is also known to have produced works with other artists. On New Year's Eve in 1544, during their only recorded meeting, Lu Zhi and Qiu Ying jointly produced a painting of the Demon Queller, "Zhong Kui," a hanging scroll done in ink on silk, measuring 141 x 36.3 centimeters (fig. 9). Qiu Ying painted the figure, while Lu Zhi provided the landscape background. The painting, in the depiction of Zhong Kui as a solitary figure situated on a steeply sloping ground plane, recalls Lu Zhi's "Portrait of Tao Yuanming" painted in 1523.

While Wu Wei's extant landscapes can be divided into two basic types: large conservative court-related paintings and less formal works. Lu Zhi's
extant landscapes are more diverse. In addition to studies in the styles of old masters (particularly the Yuan artists Ni Zan and Wang Meng), he also produced works based on local scenery as well as paintings to record journeys which he took to Mt. Baiyue and Changgan. For a brief period during the latter half of the 1550s he produced a group of paintings which are simple and sparse in their composition and are imbued with a pervading sense of peace and tranquility. Included in this group is one of Lu Zhi’s best-known handscrolls, “Autumn Colours at Xunyang” (fig. 10), which is based upon the poem “The Lute Song” by the Tang poet Bai Juyi, mentioned previously in connection with a work by Guo Xu (which in turn was related to a painting by Wu Wei).

Lu Zhi’s most distinctive type of landscapes, were produced in the 1540s and early 1550s and can be characterized by the depiction of hanging rock curtains penetrated by narrow passageways, cave-like openings, or pockets of space; dramatic adjustments in scale; the use of gem-like colours; jagged rock contours accented by dark dian, the multi-faceted rock surfaces built up from the repetition of thin, angular strokes; and the flat precise, decorative treatment of the tree trunks and foliage. The notion of retreat or retirement is a recurring theme.

Representative of Lu’s best-known landscape style is “The Jade Field” of 1549, a handscroll executed in ink and colours on paper, measuring 24.1 x 136.7 centimeters (figs. 11a-b). “The Jade Field” was painted (perhaps in exchange for treatment) for a prominent Suzhou physician, Wang Laibin (1505-after 1550). Lu Zhi’s accompanying inscription reads:

Cultivating jade knows no season,
Where vast springs water Lantian.
In a thousand years, but a single leaf matures;
The nine-fold transformation, a cycle in a slip of time.
Divinely enriching waters fashion the cinnabar potions;
Elysian jade flowers bring forth purple mists.
Within the empyrean gather all lustrous eminences;
How long have they cast their clear light?¹³

Typically for Lu Zhi, the poem is redolent with layers of meaning and may be understood as describing "practices aimed at producing an elixir of immortality," in addition to "referring to mystical, meditative, and even ecstatic, practices designed to harmonize one's personal forces with the universal forces governing nature." It may also be taken as a comment on Wang's curative skills.¹⁴ The combination of poetry, painted image, and calligraphy (the "Three Perfections") contribute to the introspective quality of Lu Zhi's paintings, creating a kind of complexity that is not found in the works of Wu Wei.

Lu Zhi here creates a fantastic landscape in which a curtain of rock cliffs fills the entire scroll from top to bottom. Into this wall of rock are cut an entrance to a cave; a narrow passageway which opens onto cultivated fields; a broader valley with trees, multi-storied pavilions, and river; and in the closing passage, a narrow gorge with waterfall. Lu Zhi, like Wu Wei was a brilliant colourist. Here, the scroll is painted in delicate tones of blue, green, and ochre which contribute to the ethereal quality of the landscape.¹⁵

Now let us turn to the matter of traditions and models. Wu Wei can be seen to select from a wide variety of models and painting traditions. He produces loose adaptions of his models, showing little or no concern for historical accuracy or "orthodox" lineages, and this I believe reflects not only his own individual temperament, but also the variety of painting traditions to which he was exposed and which he consciously studied in both Nanjing and Beijing.
In "Portrait of the Courtesan Wu Lingchun" (fig. 12), executed in a fine brushmode, the figure is portrayed with a full face and plump figure, and in this feature, in addition to the depiction of the tilted up stool and table which function as props, and in the slumped pose and melancholy expression of the figure evoking a sense of heaviness and malaise, the work is reminiscent of Tang paintings of court ladies such as the late 8th-century artist Zhou Fang's "Palace Ladies Tuning the Lute," or the Palace Museum's "Palace Ladies," in the style of the 10th-century artist Zhou Wenju.

In the "Portrait of the Courtesan Wu Lingchun," as in "Lady Carrying a Pipa," he employs a fine, continuous line which is related to the baimiao style of the Song artist Li Gonglin (1049-1106), a manner of painting which was later revived by Yuan artists traditionally assigned to the scholar-amateur mode of painting, such as Qian Xuan (1235-1301) and Zhao Mengfu. That Wu Wei was familiar with works by Li Gonglin is suggested by an inscription on one of his paintings depicting Tao Yuanming (no longer extant) which states that it was a copy of an original work by Li Gonglin.

Wu's "Immortal of the North Sea," a hanging scroll done in ink and colour on silk (fig. 13), is also painted in a baimiao manner related to Li Gonglin. It is possible that Wu may have based his depiction of this figure on an original work by Li Gonglin or on later transmissions of Li's paintings by Yuan artists. Wu's depiction of a bearded scholar with fluttering robes seated on a tortoise is similar to a depiction of the Lord of the Yellow River in an album leaf attributed to Zhao Mengfu now in the Metropolitan Museum. The figure in the album leaf, however, is executed in pure baimiao, while again Wu Wei's use of brushwork cannot be strictly
classified as baimiao due to the use of an angular line of varying line width, in addition to the application of colour. The Lord of the Yellow River is the subject of the eighth of The Nine Songs (there are actually eleven songs in all) composed by the third century poet and statesman, Qu Yuan. Li Gonglin is believed to have been the first to have portrayed the cycle in the late 11th century and, according to literary evidence, his paintings (which are no longer extant) served as a model for the Metropolitan Museum's album. As Holtz observes, the figure is also related to a depiction of the Lord of the Yellow River by the Yuan artist Zhang Wu.

As was noted in chapter one, Wu's works such as Two Immortals, with their bold brushwork and abbreviated landscape settings are related to paintings by Song artists such as Liang Kai's Huineng Chopping Bamboo, in addition to works by Yuan artists such as Yan Hui, who specialized in Buddhist and Daoist figures. Certain parallels too may be seen in the lives of Wu Wei and Liang Kai. Liang Kai was an Academy artist who painted figures and landscapes as well as Buddhist and Daoist subjects. He was known for his addiction to wine and for his wild and eccentric behaviour and called himself Liang the Wastrel. He was awarded the 'golden girdle,' and, like Wu Wei, he was appointed as a Painter in Attendance at court (daizhao). He refused to accept the appointment, however, and retired to a Chan monastery.

In the large, decorative landscape paintings, such as Winter Travelers with Landscape, Wu Wei can be seen to work within the framework of a standard composition developed and popularized by 15th-century court artists such as Dai Jin. References to the Northern Song Li-Guo tradition can also be found in such landscapes. Holtz observes a similarity between the foreground trees and rocks and towering background mountain in Wu
Wei's "Winter Landscape and Travelers" and the "basic construction" of Guo Xi's "Early Spring," which is dated 1072. However, it should be pointed out that while certain features in Wu's painting, such as the depiction of swelling earth forms and towering mountain peaks, are directly or indirectly related to features of Northern Song painting, a major difference in the Ming artist's conception can be seen in the scale of the figures in relation to their setting. In the monumental landscapes of the Northern Song figures are drawn small and are not readily detectable. Here the figures are drawn significantly larger. They serve to enliven the landscape and have a far greater presence, thus reducing the landscape as landscape.

Wu Wei's "Pleasures of Fishermen" (fig. 6) which depicts the inhabitants of a fishing village engaged in their daily activities is generally discussed in connection with the much larger scroll by Dai Jin entitled "Fishermen on the River." Both works are linked to a tenth-century handscroll, Zhao Gan's "Early Snow on the River," which may in turn be linked to a description of a handscroll attributed to Wang Wei (699-759), titled "Catching Fish."

Wu Wei's "The Pleasures of Fishermen" and Dai Jin's "Fishermen on the River" are both predicated upon the Ma-Xia tradition, although both works are rather relaxed versions of the tradition. Cahill also points out a relationship to certain works by the Yuan artist Wu Zhen. Here, Wu's brushwork is even looser and bolder than that of Dai Jin; the landscape passages are rendered in dissolved, wet strokes, while the figures are delineated with a blunt, dry brush. The use of colour in this scroll reveals Wu to have been a brilliant colourist. I believe, as was suggested earlier, that in addition to the influence of Dai Jin, Wu's association with artists who were active in Nanjing in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries
may have been an important factor in the adoption of this particular aspect of his style. Here, Wu's bold, spontaneous brushwork is related to that found in Shi Zhong's "Landscape"31 and "Clearing After Snowfall",32 both dated 1504, and Guo Xu's "Landscape" in the Shanghai Museum.33 It can also be related to the brushwork in the landscape passages of Du Jin's "Tao Yuanming Viewing a Painting of the Peach Blossom Spring,"34 dated 1500, and "The Poet Lin Pu Wandering in the Moonlight."35

"Ten-thousand Li on the Yangzi," a handscroll, executed in ink and light colours on silk, measuring 27.8 x 976.2 centimeters, is also based upon the Ma-Xia tradition, in addition to more contemporary sources (figs. 7a-b). The theme of this work was a popular one and artists such as Xia Gui,36 Dai Jin, and Zhou Chen are known to have depicted it.37 The painting is Wu Wei's only extant dated work. It was produced during the journey which Wu made to Wuchang on the pretext of offering sacrifices to his ancestors. Zhang Qi (in Wu's tomb inscription) mentions this trip as having taken place sometime during the Hongzhi era (1488-1506). The inscription (see fig. 7b) can be translated: "On the fifteenth day of the ninth month of the eighteenth year of the Hongzhi era [1506], Huxiang Wu Wei, dwelling in a studio in Wuchang prefecture made this."

Compositionally, the use of near and distant views recalls the Song artist Xia Gui's handscroll "A Pure and Remote View of Rivers and Mountains."38 Like "The Pleasures of Fishermen," Wu Wei's "Ten-thousand Li on the Yangzi" gives the impression of a virtuoso and spontaneous performance. At the same time, however, the painting is carefully composed and skillfully produced, as is seen in the rendition of the background mountains executed in a graded ink wash. At times the foreground mountains are textured with loose, ropey brushstrokes similar
to those found in "Fishing Boats on a River" (fig. 8). More frequently, however, Wu Wei here employs flatter, ribbonlike brushstrokes which serve to define blocky outcroppings. This brushwork more closely resembles that employed by Du Jin for the landscape passages of "Tao Yuanming Viewing a Painting of the Peach Blossom Spring," dated 1500, or the brushwork in Shi Zhong’s "Landscape" and in his handscroll "Clearing After Snowfall," both dated 1504, again suggesting that Wu Wei may have been indebted to these Nanjing artists for certain aspects of his style. (It should be noted, however, that Shi Zhong’s brushstrokes are somewhat looser and more dissolved than those employed by Wu Wei for his 1506 work.)

Lu Zhi, like Wu Wei, selects from a broad range of past and contemporary sources. However, particularly in works in the style of early masters such as "Fisherman Recluse on the Flower Stream" in the style of Wang Meng or "Daoist Retreat among Streams and Mountains" in the style of Ni Zan, he shows a greater concern for historical accuracy, which I believe reflects not only his own individual character, but also the more scholarly atmosphere of Suzhou.

Susan Nelson demonstrates a relationship between Lu Zhi’s landscapes with cave-paradise imagery related to Tao Yuanming’s Peach Blossom Spring (such as his "The Jade Field") and Tang, Song, Yuan, and contemporary Ming sources. Nelson defines two basic approaches to the theme which set precedents for the later treatment of the subject: The "conventional narrative presentation" of the Song artist Zhao Boju (d. c. 1162) and the "subjective and lyrical interpretation" of the Yuan artist Zhao Mengfu, "with the Peach Blossom Spring thought of as a state of mind or a way of life rather than as a specific place or story to be visualized." Zhao
Boju's treatment "with roots in the Tang tradition, preserved the Tang paradise aura of the scene along with Tang features of style and composition." Zhao Boju's painting of the subject is no longer extant, however, Qiu Ying's "The Peach Blossom Spring," with an inscription by Wen Zhengming dated 1530, is believed to be an exact copy of the Song artist's rendition of the theme. Nelson believes that the character of Zhao Mengfu's version of the theme in his hanging scroll (no longer extant) entitled "Fisherman Recluse on the Flower Stream" is recreated in a work with the same title by Zhao's grandson, Wang Meng.

A number of Suzhou artists painted versions of the Peach Blossom Spring including Shen Zhou, Qiu Ying, Wen Zhengming, Wen Jia, Wen Boren, Qian Gu, and so on. Lu Zhi too illustrated Tao Yuanming's Peach Blossom Spring theme several times throughout his artistic career. While these paintings have not survived, Nelson believes that his handscroll "The Jade Field," dated 1549, "may be considered a Peach Blossom Spring painting, with the anecdotal elements removed and the place reconceived in a timeless guise." Nelson cites this work, in addition to Lu Zhi's "Fisherman Recluse on the Flower Stream" of 1568 (an example of one of Lu's studies in the style of Wang Meng) as evidence of his familiarity with both the Song handscroll and the Yuan hanging scroll types and concludes: "Lu's paintings may be said to mingle the old Tang and Song-derived paradise conception of the Peach Blossom Spring with the allusive, internalized Yuan mode of presentation."

In "Cloudy Peaks and Forest Valleys" of 1552, a hanging scroll executed in ink and colours on paper, measuring 85.5 x 46 centimeters (fig. 14), as in "The Jade Field" of 1549, Lu Zhi creates a fantasy landscape, combining a variety of features from Tang, Song, Yuan, and Ming painting.
Here he depicts a solitary red-robed figure seated in front of the mouth of a cave. Features such as the stream issuing from the mouth of the cave and the flowering peach trees depicted in the foreground evoke the idea of the Peach Blossom Spring. Like much of Lu Zhi's work, the painting has a fragility, an almost brittle, prickly quality to it that reflects his irascible character, and contributes -- when combined with the use of the blue-and-green colour scheme in addition to archaic features such as the decorative, stylized clouds -- to the scroll's pervading air of purity and otherworldliness.

Much of Lu Zhi's painting reveals an indebtedness to Wen Zhengming. For example, the painting of the Demon Queller, "Zhong Gui," jointly produced by Lu Zhi and Qiu Ying in 1544, is remarkably similar to Wen Zhengming's "Zhong Kui in a Wintry Grove," dated 1535, suggesting that both artists were familiar with Wen's painting.

The format of "Cloudy Peaks and Forest Valleys," based on a composition ultimately derived from Wen Zhengming, was often used by Lu Zhi -- a long, narrow composition arranged along an axial center; foreground rocks forming a sort of repoussoir, opening up into a "space cell" bracketed by vegetative and landscape elements; and a zigzag progression up the scroll with flat inkwash mountains closing off the distance. Here the central axial plan is offset by a looming cut-off, crystalline mountain face on the right which reverses the direction of the paper thin central mountain peak and appears to be suspended from the top of the painting, echoing the form of the stalactites hanging suspended from the roof of the cave situated in the middleground. A sort of space cell constructed out of landscape and vegetative motifs frames and directs attention to the figure seated at the
mouth of the cave. The figure is enveloped by the enclosed space of the cave, creating a sense of safety and security, the notion of retreat or escape.

"The Jade Field" too is related to works by Wen Zhengming. As Yuhas observes, Lu's conception is essentially based upon the type of mountainscape in a hanging scroll format developed by Wen Zhengming: "Lu Zhi turns it on its side so that mountain forms are cut off at top and bottom rather than sides."52 That Wen Zhengming also experimented with this dramatic construction in the handscroll format, however, is shown by a work painted in heavy blue and green colours on silk and dated 1548.53 In both paintings the placement of trees and figures aids in establishing movement throughout the scroll. Lu Zhi's manner of depicting the trees is very similar to that of Wen Zhengming's, as is his depiction of stalactites suspended over tiny human figures. Lu's handscroll is also closely related to Wen Zhengming's hanging scroll, dated 1548, entitled "Playing the Qin in a Secluded Valley."54

Chu-tsing Li believes that Lu Zhi's "Portrait of Tao Yuanming" was "obviously modeled after Shen [Zhou]."55 Yuhas too maintains that "the soft coloring and textural richness of the pine needles, as well as the quiet intimacy of the scene, do indeed evoke Shen Zhou."56 While Lu Zhi's "Portrait of Tao Yuanming" does reveal an indebtedness to Shen Zhou, it can also be connected to certain works by Wen Zhengming. As Yuhas observes elsewhere, the composition focusing on a figure situated on a such a steeply sloping ground plane is rather unusual. It relates to the foreground of Wen Zhengming's "Brewing Tea on a Spring Evening," an undated hanging scroll in the Burke Collection.57 That Wen Zhengming employed this compositional device in the 1520s is shown by "Brewing Tea Under Stately Trees," a
hanging scroll dated 1526 in the National Palace Museum of Taibei (fig. 15).58

Turning to the matter of aesthetic sensibility, I would argue that, while the paintings of Wu Wei and Lu Zhi on the surface reveal a different aesthetic (resulting from factors such as their different personal temperaments and different urban environments) beneath the surface there can be seen a common sensibility. The works of both artists show the Ming artist's concern in general for surface as opposed to illusionistic effects. While Wu Wei's "Two Immortals" or "Winter Landscape with Travelers," for example, display a certain indebtedness to the Southern Song Academic tradition, typically the flattened forms are tilted up and piled on top of one another, bringing them close to the picture plane and contributing to a sense of immediacy and visual excitement. Unlike Southern Song artists, Wu Wei as a Ming artist is here more concerned with surface pattern and with the expressive potential of painting than with illusionistic depth. Lu Zhi too, in works such as "The Jade Field" and "Cloudy Mountains and Forest Valleys," in the depiction of hanging rock curtains and cut-off landscape forms, engages in this sort of visual play and demonstrates a concern for surface effects.

Further, certain of the paintings by both Wu Wei and Lu Zhi may be said to demonstrate the artist's personal involvement with his subject. For example, Lu Zhi's "Planting Chrysanthemums" (fig. 16), an undated hanging scroll executed in ink and colours on paper was painted for a friend named Tao in exchange for rare chrysanthemum cuttings. A figure is shown standing on the porch (presumably Lu Zhi himself), while another figure, followed by a servant carrying chrysanthemums, approaches the gate.
Although Cahill has described works such as Wu Wei’s "The Pleasures of the Fishermen" as "escapist art," belonging to "the category of idealization, not that of personal involvement," it could be argued that Wu has gone beyond mere idealization and has captured something of the hustle and bustle, the pleasures and the tribulations of life on the river. This must have been a scene that Wu was intimately familiar with, having lived on the bank of the Qinhuai River in Nanjing.

In his paintings of courtesans too, I believe that Wu reveals a sense of personal involvement. As was noted earlier, Wu is said to have enjoyed the company of courtesans and this, together with his sensitive portrayal of the figures, suggests that he may have been personally acquainted with his subjects. Wu would certainly have been able to sympathize with his subjects, for (in his role at court as artist-as-entertainer) his position was not so very different from that of the courtesan.

Finally, paintings by "professional" artists are often distinguished from those of "amateur" artists in the lack of inscriptions and colophons. While the majority of Wu Wei’s extant paintings (in contrast to those of Lu Zhi) bear only brief inscriptions or signatures certain of his works do, as Holtz suggests, bear inscriptions which "point to what may have been a literati appreciation" for works by Wu Wei. "Lady Carrying a Pipa," for example, is signed "Xiaoxian" and the signature is followed by a seal reading "Xiaoxian Wu Wei." It bears an inscription by the poet Huang Jishui (1509-1574), who lived in Nanjing during his middle years and was a student of Zhu Yunming, a famous literatus and calligrapher. Another inscription by the poet Sun Yiyuan (1484-1520) is a poetic description of the subject of the painting bidding her guests goodbye. Sun Yiyuan, like Wu Wei, was an orphan and was known for his eccentric behaviour. He lived in Wuxing
during the Zhengde era (1506-1521) and together with four other poets formed a group known as the Five Yin or the Five Recluses of the Tiao River. In a third inscription a contemporary of Wu's, Wang Zhongfang, writes that Wu Wei invited him to inscribe the work with one of his poems; however, Wang felt himself to be unworthy of the task.61

Wu's "Portrait of the Courtesan Wu Lingchun" is inscribed by Ye Gongzhuo and Dong Ji. A biography of Wu Lingchun by the Nanjing artist Xu Lin is attached. As Holtz suggests, it is possible that Wu Wei became acquainted with Wu Lingchun while at court. According to Xu Lin's biography, she was a talented woman known as a singer and a musician. She was also the author of two books. Just as Wu Wei would give his paintings only to the "right sort of people," so too Wu Lingchun would present her writings only to people of the same tastes, values, and education. She is said to have died of grief as a result of the loss of her lover who was forced to leave the court for Guangxi.62

"Immortal of the North Sea" bears an inscription by the artist Shen Zhou, who apparently did not feel it beneath him to inscribe the work of a "professional" artist. In his poetic inscription Shen Zhou identifies the subject of the scroll as a North Sea zhen ren (a Daoist term referring to one who has obtained the "Way") and signs his inscription "Changzhou Shen Zhou in admiration." In an inscription on another recorded work Shen Zhou is also said to have praised Wu's brushwork.63

In addition, "The Pleasures of Fishermen" bears a four-character title which was inscribed by Song Gu (also known as Song Jue, 1576-1632). Song was a native of Fujian who resided in Nanjing. As James Caswell observes, Song "was a poet, calligrapher and painter of a literati stylistic bent, but
obviously, as his handsomely inscribed title attests, he could admire the work of so adept a 'professional' artist as Wu Wei."\(^{64}\)

In conclusion, all of the foregoing considerations lead me to believe that the distinction between the "professional" and the "scholar-amateur" artist (which arose within the framework of the tradition of Chinese historiography and crystallized during the Late Ming period in the theories of Dong Qichang) is overstated, and that these rigid and formalized categories tend to deny and obscure the individual achievements and the interactions between Chinese artists. As noted in the previous chapter, despite the different status assigned to these two artists, Wu Wei and Lu Zhi share surprisingly similar backgrounds, concerns, and views on their artwork. In this chapter I have sought to demonstrate that both of these artists selected freely from a much broader range of painting traditions than is assumed from the theories based on later Ming painting criticism outlined earlier. In other words, Wu Wei, as an artist traditionally assigned to the "professional" Zhe School camp, did not simply slavishly follow the models of Southern Song Academy artists or artists classified by Dong Qichang as belonging to the Northern School; nor did Lu Zhi, as an artist traditionally assigned to the "scholar-amateur" Wu School camp, base his work solely upon the models provided by Yuan artists or artists classified as Southern School. Both Wu Wei and Lu Zhi can be seen to reach out and experiment with subjects and styles associated with categories which by the late Ming times had come to be seen as mutually exclusive.

While rooted in the traditions of their respective urban environment (as well, of course, as reflecting their own individual temperaments) the paintings of Wu Wei and Lu Zhi, in terms of the range of selected models,
choice of theme, subject matter, composition, and even occasionally style, show a greater affinity than is generally recognized. It remains to comment on two works which clearly underline the freedom that these two artists had to explore and experiment with a wide variety of painting styles and traditions. In this contrast between these two works is summed up the main line of interpretation for my thesis as a whole -- namely that, contrary to what one would expect from the theories of Late Ming painting criticism, making sharp differentiations between professional and scholar-amateur artists hinders a proper understanding of Chinese painting style.

Wu Wei's "Fishing Boats on a River" in the Palace Museum in Beijing is a large hanging scroll executed in ink and colour on paper, measuring 270 x 174.4 centimeters (fig. 8). It appears to be in something of the same vein as his handscroll "The Pleasures of Fishermen," however, the handscroll has a more intimate quality to it, and this is heightened not only by its smaller size, but also in the tighter focus on the river framed by banks depicted in the upper and lower portions of the scroll.

As Holtz observes, the Beijing hanging scroll can be seen to represent a departure from Wu Wei's works based upon court styles. In contrast to his conservative court-related paintings in which flattened forms press upon the picture plane, Wu here makes a greater use of volumetric forms and diagonal recession. The scroll opens with a spit of land surmounted by trees in the lower right foreground. A river with boats and fishermen zigzags back and forth from the lower right to the upper left portion of the painting. Mountains are piled vertically on the right and arranged in a step-by-step diagonal movement to the upper left. The mountains are textured with loose, ropey brustrokes reminiscent of those favoured by the 10th-century artist Dong Yuan. Indeed, compositionally the work relates to a
painting attributed to Dong Yuan now in the National Palace Museum in Taibei entitled "Dragon Boat Festival" (fig. 17). Wu Wei's scroll differs from Dong Yuan's in such features as the size of the figures in relation to their setting. Dong's figures, for example, are small and inconspicuous, while Wu's are much larger and thus have a far greater presence, reducing the importance of the landscape. The brushwork too is different. Dong's brushwork is disciplined and is confined to clearly defining and describing the shapes and textures of the landscape which is the subject of the painting. In contrast, Wu's loose, bold brushwork draws attention to itself (in addition to the presence of the artist) the landscape here functions more as an expressive vehicle than as subject. Nevertheless, Wu Wei's hanging scroll is clearly, if somewhat loosely, based upon the landscape tradition of Dong Yuan, a painting style which, according to late Ming painting theory, was carried on by "scholar-amateur" artists.66

Lu Zhi's undated album entitled "The Joy of Village Life" consists of ten album leaves executed in ink on silk, each leaf measuring 29.2 x 51.7 centimeters (figs. 18a-d).67 The first leaf depicts fishermen at work in their boats. Willow trees and reeds line the shores of the mist covered riverbanks. Lu Zhi has inscribed the title of the painting, "Fishermen," in seal script in the upper left corner followed by his seal reading "Lu Shuping shi." The second leaf depicts a boy tending geese. The title of the work, "Tending Geese," is inscribed in seal script in the upper right corner. The third leaf entitled "Listening to the Rain" depicts a figure reclining snugly indoors sheltered from a raging storm, while outside another figure trudges through a landscape of gusty rain and windblown trees. The fourth leaf, entitled "Tramping Through Snow," depicts travelers in a snowy landscape. It is signed "Lu Zhi made this for Mr. Yunquan." The signature is
followed by two of the artist's seals. In the subject matter and in the use of splashed ink and liquid brushwork, Lu Zhi's album leaves could have been painted by Wu Wei.68

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1 Cahill, Parting at the Shore, p. 105.
2 See Cahill, Parting at the Shore, p. 105.
3 Ibid., p. 132; p. 209.
4 Ibid., pp. 50-51; p. 100.
5 Ibid., p. 101.
7 See, for example, Appendix II, no. 8. See also Cahill, Parting at the Shore, p. 240; see Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," p. 156, p. 169, note 37. As Yuhas observes, the phrasing of these comments, in addition to the precedence given to bird and flower painting, appears to have originated with Wang Shizhen. See Appendix II, no. 2.
8 Album of 16 leaves, ink and colours on paper. Fujii Yurinkan Museum, Kyoto. See Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," pls. 21a-21k.
9 Handscroll, ink and colours on paper. Tianjing Museum. See Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," pl. 24.
10 See Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," pp. 100-112
11 Ibid., pp. 91-100.
12 The accompanying inscriptions are forged but are believed to duplicate the originals. See Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting: The Collections of the Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, and the Cleveland Museum of Art (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1980), pp. 231-33.
13 Translated by Marc F. Wilson, Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting, p. 231.
14 See Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting, pp. 231-32.
For a colour reproduction see Alice R. M. Hyland, The Literati Vision: Sixteenth Century Wu School Painting and Calligraphy (Memphis, Tenn.: Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, 1984), colour plate IV.


See James Cahill, "Ch'ien Hsuan and His Figure Paintings," Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America 12 (1958): 11-29.

See Holtz, "Wu Wei and the Turning Point in Early Ming Painting," p. 49.


Barnhart, Along the Border of Heaven, p. 99.

See Holtz, "Wu Wei and the Turning Point in Early Ming Painting," p. 36, fig. 34.

See Cahill, p. 104. For a reproduction of Liang Kai's "Huineng Chopping Bamboo" see Lee, A History of Far Eastern Art, fig. 483.


See Cahill, Parting at the Shore, pp. 50-51; 100.

Ibid., p. 13.

Hands scroll, ink and colour on paper, 46 x 740 cm. Freer Gallery of Art. Reproduced in part in Cahill, Parting at the Shore, colour plate 3.


Cahill, Parting at the Shore, p. 51.

Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 142.7 x 46.1 cm. National Palace Museum, Taibei. See Cahill, Parting at the Shore, pl. 67.
32 Handscroll, ink on paper, 25 x 319 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. See Lee, Chinese Landscape Painting, no. 45.
33 Album leaf, ink on paper. Shanghai Museum. See Cahill, Parting at the Shore, pl. 70.
34 Handscroll, ink on paper, 28 x 108.2 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing. See Cahill, Parting at the Shore, pl. 72.
35 Hanging scroll, ink and light colours on paper, 157.5 x 74 cm. Cleveland Museum of Art. See Lee Chinese Landscape Painting, no. 44.
36 According to Sherman Lee the work of this title attributed to Xia Gui is probably that of an early Ming artist. See Sherman Lee, "Early Ming Painting at the Imperial Court," p. 254. It is possible, however, that this work may be a copy of an original by Xia Gui.
39 Hanging scroll, ink and light colours on paper, 119.2 x 26.8 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei. Reproduced in Cahill, Parting at the Shore, pl. 123.
40 Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 107.8 x 45.8 cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art. Reproduced in Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting, fig. 183.
42 Nelson, "On Through to the Beyond," p. 32.
43 Ibid., p. 34.
44 Handscroll, ink and colours on silk, 32.2 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago. See Nelson, "On Through to the Beyond," p. 30, fig. 2.
45 Hanging scroll, ink and light colours on paper, 129 x 58.3 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei. See Nelson, "On Through to the Beyond," p. 32, fig. 7.
46 Ibid., 38.
47 Hanging scroll, ink and light colours on paper, 129 x 58.3 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei. Reproduced in Cahill, Parting at the Shore, fig. 123.
49 Reproduced in colour in Edmund Capon and Mae Anna Pang, Chinese Paintings of the Ming and Qing Dynasties 14th-20th century (Victoria: International Cultural Corporation of Australia Ltd., 1981), cat. no. 18.
Stephen Little comments on this in detail. See Little, "The Demon Queller and the Art of Qiu Ying," p. 15.

For a discussion of Wen Zhengming's mountain landscape see, for example, Cahill, *Parting at the Shore*, p. 214; Edwards and others, *The Art of Wen Cheng-ming*, pp. 75-77.


"Landscape," 1548. Handscroll, ink and heavy colours on silk, National Palace Museum, Taipei. See Ninety years of Wu School Painting, p. 177

Hanging scroll, ink and light colours on paper, 31.1 x 40.1 cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art. See Edwards and others, *The Art of Wen Cheng-ming*, pl. XLV. For a discussion of this work see pp. 158-60. Wen produced two other paintings of a similar composition dated 1537 and 1538. Ibid. p. 160.


Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," p. 82. Yuhas views this painting as visual evidence to support her argument that Lu Zhi did not directly study painting with Wen Zhengming. That the work (in her words) "bears so little resemblance to the paintings of Wen Zhengming" is not surprising. As Yuhas observes, this painting was produced while Lu Zhi was residing at Chenhu. Moreover, Wen Zhengming devoted only part of his time to painting before 1523. In that year, as was noted in the previous chapter, he left Suzhou for Beijing. He did not begin to dominate the Suzhou artworld until his return to that city in 1527 (the date of Lu's first recorded contact with Wen and his artistic circle).


Qiu Ying too employed this device in a work in a private collection in China, although he reverses the direction of the slope of the embankment. See Siren, *Chinese Painting*, 6: pl. 238. The painting bears a poetic inscription by Wang Chong who died in 1533.

Ibid., p. 103.

Holtz, "Wu Wei and the Turning Point in Early Ming Painting," p. 50.

See Holtz, "Wu Wei and the Turning Point in Early Ming Painting," pp. 50-51; p. 80, note 48.

See Holtz, "Wu Wei and the Turning Point in Early Ming Painting," p. 46; p. 80, note 47.

See Holtz, "Wu Wei and the Turning Point in Early Ming Painting," p. 42; p. 79, note 43.
65 See Holtz, “Wu Wei and the Turning Point in Early Ming Painting,” p. 52.
66 See also Holtz, Wu Wei and the Turning Point in Early Ming Painting,” p. 52.
67 Four of these leaves are reproduced in Zhongguo huihua shi tu lu (Shanghai: Shanghai Publishers, 1984), pp. 586–87.
Fig. 1.
Fig. 2.
Fig. 3.
Fig. 4.
Fig. 8.
Fig. 12.

Fig. 13.
Fig. 15.

Fig. 16.
Fig. 18c.

Fig. 18d.
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APPENDIX I

The following translations provided the background for the biographical portions of this thesis, in addition to insights into painting style and critical theory. It will at once become obvious to the reader that the translations at present are in a very literal form. Given my present level of proficiency in the Classical Chinese language, it is beyond my ability to provide a translation which reads closely in meaning to the text and yet at the same time is as elegant and evocative as the Classical Chinese. Nevertheless, I have included these translations in the hopes that they might be of some use to other readers.


Wu Xiaoxian's [Wu Wei's] Biography:

Xiaoxian (xing Wu, ming Wei, zi Lu Fu) was a native of Huguang, Wuchang. His grandfather, Wu, was a subprefecture magistrate. Because of the morality of his actions he served successively in two regions and held office for 30 years. At first he governed the Nanyang district in Yuzhou, later he governed the Daming district in Kaizhou. His reputation was well-known and spread. People consider him famous even now. Xiaoxian's father, Gangweng, had an advanced standing on the district list of successful candidates. He was cultured, learned, and righteous in his conduct and marvellous at calligraphy and painting. Nowadays, the two capitals' old families often collect his surviving works and consider them to be prized and important. Weng's nature was gay and extravagant. He used alchemy to ruin his family's economy. When Xiaoxian was several years old he died.

Again, after several years, when Xiaoxian was seventeen years old, he came one day to roam in Nanjing. Because of his young man's proud character, when then he put in order his clothes and cap and at daybreak went out of the inn, people did not know where he was going. Accordingly, they followed him to see.

He then went to visit the present Grand Tutor Duke Zhu of Cheng. As soon as the Duke saw him he considered him to be extraordinary and
said: "Is this not an immortal'? Because his years were few, he was called Xiaoxian [Small Immortal]. Xiaoxian, also used it himself as his hao (like the Duke called him) and the people accordingly also called him Xiaoxian. It is said that he was received as a retained guest and was treated [on a level] approaching that of a son, younger brother or old friend. Xiaoxian was also good at painting and had his father's style. People said his use of ink surpassed that of earlier men's by far, and that his style and rhythm were expressive and excellent and attained directly back to the practices of ancient artists. Duke Zhu, therefore, went to see the present Duke Wang, Grand Tutor in the Ministry of Personnel (the Duke at the time held a position in the Ministry of War and reached the rank of Grand Guardian), Duke Houchen of Pingjiang, and the Grand Guardian Marquis of Xinning to talk [about Xiaoxian]. The Dukes all invited him as a respected guest. Xiaoxian's bearing was dignified and his manners were respectful. His speech was confident and bold and not servile. As time went by, the Dukes increasingly treated him well. From this, of the officials, none did not desire to receive and accept Xiaoxian as a friend. Those who begged for an audience day and night would not leave the gate, but Xiaoxian was certainly only happy with shanren and yefu [non-officials]. His honest character was secretly like theirs. One time on a trip to the capital [Beijing], he was about to arrive at the city wall when the people heard of it in the city. The present Grand Preceptor Duke Zhang of Ying, Grand Tutor Duke Zhu of Bao, and the imperial son-in-law Duke Zhou first alerted the inn, and grain was prepared for Xiaoxian.

When the Emperor Xianzong heard of him he was summoned to court. He specially appointed Xiaoxian with a cap and sash and was going to give him a banquet and official position. He wanted him always at his side as an advisor. Xiaoxian persistently begged to decline. Then he obtained his escape and returned again to Nanjing. From this he cautioned himself, saying: "I now am acquainted with holding office." Then he began to travel in reduced circumstances.

In the past, I came from the mountains and once met Xiaoxian. We were not yet acquainted. Accordingly, I considered him to be a dashing visitor of the rivers and lakes. It was because of this, and for no other reason, that kings, dukes and important men honored him. Later, I again came and again met with Xiaoxian. I had a little leisure time and we talked together, however, our conversation was not yet exhaustive. I again left. I knew him better than in the past. Moreover, he was able to write poetry and prose. Therefore, those who were able to write prose and poetry competed to be friends with him and be humble towards him. Later, Xiaoxian passed by my lodge frequently. Moreover, we often went out of the south gate with each other on outings and entered the Gaozuo monastery or sat together in the fields. It was at that time that we were
finally able to have a thorough conversation. He spoke exhaustively about what was in his breast, and I began to be able to search out what was in his mind. The contents of his mind were very great and without limitation! His inexhaustibility was complete! He had a place to which he went to and place to which he returned. Concerning ancient and current affairs, there was nothing he didn’t know. His judgement of whether people were good or not was always correct. His deportment was great, his affairs fitting, his speech ample yet honest, his character peaceful and distant, great and illustrious, like a hidden gentleman of antiquity. He was able to be in accordance with the world, on the one hand, and to disregard the world, on the other! As for his embracing of the 'Way' and his self-importance, was there something he was waiting to do?

As for the people of today, none can fathom his action. Xiaoxian was famous for his wild reputation. However, his speech was very guarded and without a reckless flow of words. Therefore, people to a great extent did not know what was contained in his heart. How only by means of painting and calligraphy he was famous. At times, he was not willing to paint carelessly. Therefore, not many paintings are seen. At other times he would produce a scroll at once and then give it to a person in need. The person would then hand it down and sell it off. The wealthy and powerful families would compete to buy it and then say that they obtained it from Xiaoxian. Xiaoxian really did not paint it for these people. So great was his self-respect. As for Xiaoxian’s paintings, many were inscribed for people he knew. By means of this, people separate the genuine from the forgeries. Informal history praises him. It is said that Xiaoxian’s talent and deportment was concealed from many and not seen on the outside. People did not know him and none could discuss him. Now one can only take that which can still be seen -- poems and paintings -- and then discuss him. As for Wang Mojie's [Wang Wei's] painting of the Wangchuan picture, people say that in his painting there is a poem. And as for Du Shao's [Du Fu's] poems about entering Shu [Sichuan], people say that in his poem there is a painting. Because of this, ancient and modern people specially treasure them and compete in transmitting them. Now Xiaoxian has achieved both!

This biography then is the composition of Fanchang’s Xu Binxing which had never been printed. I copied it and kept it in my box for more than 30 years. I recently saw that Chancellor Duke Guo Zhengyu and Wu Wei were both natives of Jiangxia. He also recorded Xiaoxian’s biography and considered Xiaoxian to be the son of a farming family. Accordingly, I produced this record in order to give evidence of him.
The former Mr. Xiaoxian Wu's tombstone epitaph:¹²

After Mr. Ciweng Wu had died a month passed and his son, Shan, took an account of his life and visited me. Because I was a friend of Wu Wei's [he asked me] to compose an inscription to describe the circumstances of his life. Wu Wei (xing Wu, hui Wei, zi Ciweng, hao Xiaoxian) was a native of Wuchang, Huguang. His great-grandfather, whose personal name was Yue, passed the jinshi exam and was given a position. He twice served as the magistrate of the great Ming dynasty's Nanyang prefecture. His grandfather, whose personal name was Gang, was a leader of the gentry. He had not yet taken up his position, when he died. In his youth Wu Wei was orphaned and left impoverished. In serving his mother, whose clan name was Geng, he was very filial. He was conversant with the major significance of the classics and history. His character was simple and direct beyond compare. In private, together with vulgar people he was seldom in accord. He was good at landscapes and figure painting and all could be entered into the marvellous class. Those who sought to patronize him were constantly at his door, but unless they were of the loftiest sort he did not oblige them. During the Chenghua era [1465-1487], while Wu Wei was still young, Grand Commandant the Duke of Cheng invited him into his retinue. As soon as he saw him he called him Xiaoxian [Small Immortal]. Consequently Wu used it as his hao. Commander Rong, who pacified Jiangnan, bestowed gifts upon him, [invited him] to cross the Yangzi River, and brought him as an honored guest. From that time his renown increased daily. The emperor Xianzong summoned him to the palace and awarded him the title of jin yi zhen fu.¹⁴ The emperor died and he was released [from his duties] and returned. Subsequently he was registered at Jiangning [Nanjing]. He had a great capacity for alcohol. Sometimes he would go for a period of several weeks without eating. When arguing with people he entered and left the classics and commentaries and many submitted to him. The emperor Xiaomiao recalled him to court and had an audience with him at the Bian Dian. The emperor was very pleased and awarded him with the title jin yi bai hu and bestowed upon him the hua zhuang yuan seal. His favours and bequests daily became greater. He begged to be granted permission to go to Wuchang to sacrifice to his ancestors. It was several months before he returned. He repeatedly stopped over. At Shitou there was a confidential decree ordering him to hasten and return to the capital [Beijing]. A residence on West street was bestowed upon him. After two years had passed he pleaded illness and begged to return [to Nanjing]. He lived on
the east bank of the Qinhuai River. In the fifth month of the third year of the Zhengde era [1506-1521] the present emperor sent a messenger to summon him to court. The messenger arrived. He had not yet started on his journey before he died.

He was married to a woman of the Li clan. They had two sons. The eldest son, Shan, was a prefecture school graduate and married into a certain clan. The next son was betrothed to someone of a certain clan. They also had two daughters. The elder married a provincial exam student named Wu Tangren, while the second one was betrothed to a secretary in the Imperial Bodyguard. " Wu Wei was born on on the 12th day of the 5th month of the 3rd year of the Tianshun era [1459] and died on the 13th day of the 6th month of the third year of the Zhengde era [1508]. He enjoyed 50 sui. On a certain month of a certain day he was buried on the plateau of a certain mountain. Alas, the gentlemen suffers from not having a friend, his old and good deeds unheard! I was a friend of Wu Wei and now that he is dead if I were not to make a biography of him, would that not be emotional?


Preface to "Seeing Wu Ciweng [Wu Wei] Off on His Return to Court."

In Jiangxia there is a certain unrestrained, unbridled gentleman called Wu Wei (zi Ciweng). In his youth he had an unusual determination. His elder ancestor  was a prefect and his father was honored as an official. He attained from the family's instructions the ability to read books and pursue knowledge and expected because of this, to become a scholar. Early in life he lost his parent and as a result, he did not get a position. Then he wandered aimlessly around the rivers and lakes and roamed the two capitals. Happily, together with eminent gentlemen and officials, he sought entertainment. Ordinarily at home he liked to intone and chant poetry. He was fond of the brush and paper. Each time he became intoxicated, he became inspired. He gave vent to his ideas with unrestrained brush and splashing ink. In an instant the painting was finished. He wielded his brush as if it were flying. He looked upon those watching him with disdain. For him it was as if there were nobody there. Even though he stood before nobility and men of high position, he acted naturally. At one time he used the methods of Ma and Xia for painting landscapes. His technical inventiveness was bold and surpassing like a dragon ascending or a phoenix soaring. His openings and closings in a flash could not be constrained. People struggled to treasure his painting. However, it was not his intention. He always said: "This
brush and ink is child's play. It is hardly worth taking seriously."
Whenever he encountered famous and wonderful landscapes, he would go.
He would roam and sightsee and ascend to gaze all day, forgetting to
return. People looked upon him as if he were an immortal among men.
Then they called him Xiaoxian. Consequently, he also used it himself as his
hao.

After a short time, because those who knew him recommended him,
he was summoned to an audience at the Bian Dian. At that time what he
did pleased the emperor. His endowment was increased. He petitioned to
return [to Nanjing]. He did not desire a salaried position. There was an
order and the emperor did not assent. He sought to return using the
pretext of the burial of his parent in his old home town. Because of his
requests it was permitted. When that was done he again came to Nanjing
and sought out his old friends. He remained for nearly one year. The
court continuously sent official dispatches and urged him to return. He
was going to use the time of the bright scenery of mature spring to take a
boat and go north. His friends and companions led each other carrying
much wine and carrying food and sent him off on the shores of Dragon
River. When the wine was finished and he was about to depart, he rapped
the side of the boat and sang:

Spring wind joyful and harmonious,
fragrant grasses luxuriant and brocade-like.
The willow branch can be broken,\textsuperscript{18}
bright in the mists of dawn.
The river flow is vast and broad,
fish and dragons occupy the depths.\textsuperscript{19}
In my skiff I want to cross\textsuperscript{20}
and the breakers are calm.
Alas, how can I go
to the peaks of Mount Penglai.
The Yingzhou Island and the River Ruoshui
are located after and in front of each other.
You can gaze, but you cannot go there.
I wish to be one of the immortals.
I reminisce of ancient men,
emotions of departure pull at me.
Separated from my own illustrious meeting,
what year will it come in?

After the song was finished, he wanted to part. There was a guest
who pursued him and harmonized with him:
Sending off travelers, sending off travelers
at the river's edge.
In the east wind we drum on the rowing sweep,\( ^{21} \)
and the painted-prowed bird flies.\( ^{22} \)
The green wine flask is not yet empty,
let us down another cup
Willow branches in our hand,
we pull out its soft filaments.
The master's departure
is entangled in my thoughts.
Watching him ascend to immortality,
perhaps this is the time.
So distant are Peng and Ying
according to the place he goes.
Contacting the boundary between wind and cloud
his radiance is profuse.
Alas, old friends
cannot be made to further tarry.
Hurry off.
You have abandoned a time of return.

At the time I also was there. I heard this song and sighed at it because of its having captured the ancient men's way of sending off, of having that which is moved by feelings of separation and departure, and of having that which harmonizes with the benevolence of friendship. Consequently I ordered it to be brushed and set in order, in order to use it as a record of sending Wu Ciweng off on his return to court.

4. He Dafu (1483-1521), He Dafu ji, juan 14, [Wanli ed. (1573-1620)], in Suzuki, Mindai kaigashi kenkyu, footnote 279.

A Song on Wu Wei's Picture of Rivers and Mountains:

Wu Wei is long dead
and cannot be seen.
In the world of man and in the history of painting,
people sigh and admire in vain.
Looking at this scroll of rivers and mountains
my thoughts whirl as if approaching the void.
It calls to mind the wetted brush
sweeping across the plain silk.
In drunkeness he put brush to paper
and the spirit and substance was exposed.
In 10,000 li of blue sky
move the ocean and mountains.
From the empty hall
in daylight drift clouds and mist.
Islands slope, shores slant,
the waves, like mountain peaks, engulf.
Large and small islands invert their images,
turning over the springs and pools.
By the side of the river
10,000 barges all at once set forth.
In midstream the soughing of the wind sounds
as the sails open in the wind.
The collapsing waves bubble and roll
and the course is difficult to maintain.
The fisherman and the boatman
each turn their head.
The departing goose distantly
knows the Seven Marshes.
From the falling flowers one mistakenly recognizes
the mouth to the Peach Blossom Spring.
Out of the vast expanse of misty peaks,
he has drawn two faces like old people.
Their face and hair and cap and gown
are coarse and ugly.
As for rocks and forests, sand and grass,
their appearance is dotted and washed.
Unrolling this scroll the land of
the Immortals is in my hand.

I remember the recent Hongzhi era [1488-1505]. Wei's art was without equal. In the court he served and encountered the emperor. As for his invitations, he several times passed through the gates of feudal lords. The capital’s rich and powerful vied with each other to meet and receive him. But he was not at all pleased and often abused them with laughter and ridicule. Because from the beginning he had ability, he flaunted his nature and temper. He was unfulfilled in his ambition and lived in humble circumstances until the end of his lifetime. Alas, Mr. Wu how could you arise and paint again? After your death your paintings have become scattered. The remaining mountains and remaining rivers on their pieces of paper are prized. Even if one had 100 jin with which to buy them, not one could be obtained. This scroll has been passed down among men in the world. I have seen your real face.

Wu Wei's "Reading the Yi Jing by the Pine Window" picture:

From a slanting cliff a stream flows,
the rocks are without number.
The white cliffs are indistinct,
giving rise to mists and fog.
I have heard about a man from Jiangxia.
His temperament was full and well-developed
such that it swept the brave and simple.
His surpassing brush like wind and thunder
pulled at the ground as it rose.
His ingenious craftsmanship pierced the heavens
and the heavens were angered.

...And also, I recall in a former year when they summoned the painting masters. Mr. Wu of Jiangxia also was with them. Wearing a short coat of coarse material and with a dirty face he had an audience with the emperor. Although his manners were rustic, his carriage and demeanour were unusual. The emperor made him a *daizhao* in the Renzhi Dian [Hall of Humanity and Wisdom]. Once when he was half drunk, he was summoned by the emperor to an audience. He knelt down, overturned the ink, and trusting his hand he smeared and daubed. In broad daylight the wind and clouds changed and it became chilly and sombre. The emperor smiled and the officials were envious. Marquis and nobles vied with each other to go and see him and begged to behold this painting of the pine dwelling. [Because of its high value] gold lost its value and even the city was worthless. Mr. Wu -- Mr. Wu was too unrestrained and proud. If people spoke one word in disagreement, he would abruptly hurl his inkstone at them.


Mr. He Zhuyi held this scroll on the occasion of Mr. Yun Xuejiang's birthday, and asked me to rhapsodize about it.

Xiaoxian while drunk painted an old man. The old man's spirit was vital and his pupils were square.24 He went to visit the Golden Lady of the Western Pool,25 who bestowed upon him a red peach of immortality. The
family of Mr. Yun lives east of the great river. The ocean of Ying is near and Penglai is reachable. On his birthday he had a banquet and invited guests. Just now has arrived the king of spring in the middle of the first month. I desire that his eyebrows and hair may become white like those of an old man. Eat all the peaches on the mountain and plant their stones. One year, one banquet, three thousand years. Watch the peaches blossom and bear fruit.


Wu Wei was a native of Jiangxia. His hao was Xiaoxian [Small Immortal]. He served at court in the Renzhi Dian [Hall of Humanity and Wisdom]. In his figure paintings he followed Wu Daozi. His brushwork was not very planned or thought out, but its uncanny ease and dashing elegance moved people. For all of his landscapes and tree and rock paintings he employed axe-cut cun which were also very startling and exciting. His style is suitable for painting on temple walls and screens, but as for horizontal scrolls and vertical scrolls, I’m afraid there is nothing to be said for him.

8. Li Rihua (1565-1635), Wei shui xian ri ji, in Suzuki, Mindai kaigashi kenkyu, footnote 264.

Wanli era, 38th year [1610], 4th month, 23rd day. The rain has ceased. The merchants have managed to return to Qingjing. They add up their accounts and visit...There were also Jiangxia’s Wu Xiaoxian’s four vertical scroll paintings. His depictions of tree roots and the arrangement of rocks is also very vigorous, having the manner of wind and frost. I regret that the harmony of form is muddied and does not enter the scholarly class. He himself has made an inscription which says: “As I passed Baixia [near Nanjing], Liu Zhangshi sought a painting to match with the great Shen’s painting. I forced myself to paint on it wu fu stones and beautiful jades together. Jiangxia’s Xiaoxian.” Xiaoxian (ming Wei) was a gongfeng in the Zhengde era [1506-1521] and achieved great fame, but his technique does not balance with that of the great Shen Shitian, Qinan. One can say his labored paintings are flavourless.
Wu Wei (zi Ciweng) was a native of Jiangxia. In his youth he was orphaned and left impoverished. He was a good friend of Zhaozi Jia. One day he went out with Zhao Jia and met a Daoist. Wu Wei looked at him and considered him extraordinary and [agreed to] meet with him at the top of a large rock at the east gate. After they had twice gone there to meet with him and were late, they were able to obtain [a meeting] with the Daoist on the third occasion. He pierced the rock and out flowed a spring. Giving it to them to drink, he said: "As for you two gentlemen, from here on your skills should be famous in the world." Subsequently they parted and didn't meet again. After that Wei studied painting. He specialized in the twelve classes. His landscapes and figure paintings were vigorous and bold and could be classified as divine. His reputation was widespread amongst the dukes and nobles. Zhao Jia modeled clay images of spirits and ghosts. They were very numinous and strange. He was famous throughout Chu. At the time when the Daoist pierced the spring, Wei first cupped his hands and drank a great deal. Zhao drank less.

Ming shu.

Wu Wei was a native of Jiangxia. In his youth he was a farmer. Unexpectedly he met an "immortal" who said: "You have an extraordinary physiognomy. You should enjoy great fame." The next day they met each other at the top of the large rock at the pig market. Then Wu Wei was ordered to sit to one side of the rock. The Daoist took out an iron awl from his sleeve and pierced the rock. From its side flowed a spring. He ordered Wei to cup his hands and drink from it. Then he said: "You will study painting and your fame will be known throughout the world." Subsequently he disappeared. Later Wei studied painting. He specialized in the twelve classes and his landscapes and figure paintings were classified as divine.
Wu Wei (zi Ciweng, hao Xiaoxian) was a native of Jiangxia. In his youth he was orphaned and left impoverished. He was an expert at painting and drawing, and without having a teacher he had ability. With regard to his landscapes and figure paintings, all can be classified as divine. His character was simple and direct and he was indomitable and proud. He was seldom in accord with vulgar people, and if those who sought [his paintings] were not the kind or people he approved of he would not oblige them. Even if he had been on intimate and good terms with them for a long time, if they spoke one word in disagreement he would abruptly hurl his inkstone at them and leave.

During the Chenghua era [1465-1487], a certain Duke of Cheng invited him into his retinue. As soon as he saw him he called him Xiaoxian [Small Immortal]. For this reason Wu Wei used it as his hao. The Earl of Pingjiang, with a great deal of ceremony, invited him to cross the Yangzi. His renown increased daily.

The emperor Xianzong summoned Wu Wei to the palace and awarded him the titles of jin yi zhen fu and made him a daizhao in the Renzhi Dian [Palace of Humanity and Wisdom].

Once when Wu was very drunk he was summoned by [the emperor]. His hair was dishevelled and his face was dirty. Shuffling on worn down [torn] black shoes, he staggered along. The court officials supported him in order to have the audience. The emperor laughed and ordered him to paint a picture of pines in the wind. Wei knelt down and overturned the ink. Trusting his hand, he daubed and smeared and wind and clouds arose with a rustling sound on the screen. The attendants were visibly moved. The emperor then sighed and said: "This truly is the brush of an Immortal."

Wei came and went in the apartments of the imperial concubines. He regarded the powerful and noble as if they were no better than servants. Furthermore, many of those who sought his paintings were unsuccessful. Thereupon, the powerful and the noble frequently belittled him. After a short time he was released and returned to Nanjing.

Wei was fond of drinking and had a great capacity for alcohol. Sometimes he would go for a period of ten days [a Chinese week] without eating. While in Nanjing, all the wealthy and powerful daily invited Wei to carouse. And moreover, he liked courtesans. If he was drinking and there were no courtesans, then he was not happy. The wealthy and powerful would vie with each other to gather courtesans as a bait for him.
The emperor Xiaomiao ascended the throne and Wu Wei was again summoned to the Bian Dian and ordered to produce paintings according to imperial command. He was awarded the title of jin yi wei bai hu, and was granted the hua zhuang yuan seal. His favours and bequests daily became greater.

Wei longed to return to Chu. Receiving permission, he sacrificed and renovated his ancestral tombs at Wuchang. After several months he returned and stopped at Caishi where there was an imperial decree ordering him to hasten and return to the capital. He was then granted a residence on West Street.

After two years Wei pleaded illness. He obtained a residence on the east bank of the Huai River [in Nanjing].

In the fifth month of the third year of the Zhengde era the emperor Wuzong came to the throne. The emperor dispatched a messenger to summon Wu Wei. The messenger arrived, but Wu Wei had not yet started on his journey when he died of alcohol poisoning. He was fifty sui at the time.


This account is essentially the same as the one in the Wusheng shishi, except for the last line which reads:

His son, Shan, followed the orders that he had left behind and buried him in Jinling [Nanjing].


Wu Wei (zi Shiying, Lutian, and Ciweng) was a native of Jiangxia. As a young man he went to visit the Duke of Cheng who called him Xiaoxian [Small Immortal]. Subsequently he used it as his hao. In the Hongzhi era [1488-1505] he served in the Renzhi Dian [Hall of Humanity and Wisdom], received the title of jin yi bai hu, and was endowed with the hua zhuang yuan seal.

In figure painting he followed Wu Daoxuan [Wu Daozi]. His use of the brush was unrestrained. For mountains and rocks he employed axe-cut strokes. Also, he was naturally spontaneous and relaxed.

Figure painting: There was the school of the Ming dynasty's Wu Ciweng which took the method of Daoxuan [Wu Daozi]. Pingshan [Zhang Lu] [was a follower of his] and was the source of a gradual sinking to evil ways. (Ming hua lu, juan 1).

Wu Wei's zi was Shiying, another zi was Lufu [Stupid Sage]. In figure painting he followed Wu Daoxuan. His brushwork was dashing and unrestrained. For mountains and rocks he employed axe-cut strokes. Also he was naturally spontaneous and relaxed.


Wu Wei (zi Xiaoxian) was a native of Jiangxia. In his childhood he wandered to Yu. Governor Qian Xin was fond of his intelligence and made him his son's study companion. Wei took and played with the brush and ink and drew the forms of landscapes and figure paintings. The governor, seeing them, marvelled at them and said: "Do you want to be a painter"? Then he gave him a brush and paper and generously supported him. As a young man he went to Jinling [present-day Nanjing] and subsequently he achieved fame.


Wu Wei (zi Shiying and Ciweng, hao Xiaoxian) was a native of Jiangxia. Because he was good at painting he was summoned [to court] and awarded the title of jin yi wei bai hu. His character was unrestrained and he did not cultivate his deportment. After a while, he was released from his duties and sent home. He specialized in brush and ink paintings. In his painting of landscapes his brushstrokes were powerful and strong. His baimiao paintings are particularly excellent. Those who behold them naturally revere him. His art is not of the worldly painting class.
Also, he was once drinking at the house of a friend. While drinking he painted a picture. Playfully he seized a lotus pod, immersed it in the ink and stamped the surface of the paper in several places. Nobody could fathom his thoughts. Suddenly he put his brush into action waving and splashing and made a picture of "Catching Crabs" which was most wonderful.

Those who paint the first appearance of dawn are rare. Wu produces drunken ink paintings which enter the mystic and the subtle. Over a thousand villages and myriad hamlets the moon still exists. With a beating of wings a pair doves fly from the tree.

1. Tai fu Chengguo Zhu.
2. Tai fu li bu Wang gong.
4. Tai bao.
7. Fuma du wei Zhou gong.
8. Symbols of the literati.
9. Shanzhong may be a place name.
10. In other words, Xu Binxing did not have a very good first impression of Wu Wei.
12. This is one of the earliest accounts of Wu Wei written by Zhang Qi. Suzuki explains that this was a draft copy and hence the frequent use of the character mou, which I have translated as "a certain."
13. Shoubei. One of the three special dignitaries who had military control over Nanjing.
14. A position within the Imperial Bodyguard.
15. Jinyi wei sheren daiguan.
This phrase, *ji nai cun shang she jun*, is problematical. I was unable to find the title *she jun*. It may, however, be related to a *she ren*, a title which in the Ming was given to minor officials.

I am unable to find the character before *ru*. This may be a corrupted text.

A reference to the custom of breaking a willow branch before the departure of a friend.

This implies a bad ruler.

The connotation of instability, of a disillusioned official.

This is an allusion to the *Songs of the South*.

This is an allusion to a Han dynasty *fu*.

*Wan cheng zhu*.

An attribute of an immortal.

The Golden Lady refers to Xi Wang Mu.

*Xiaosa*.

*Xingjuan*.

*Dantiao*.

A type of jade.

Shen Zhou (1427-1509), *zi Qinan, hao Shitian*.

*Wuyan*. This is distinct from "bland" (*pingdan*) which would be a favourable word for a literatus like Li.

Outline drawing, without color, shading or wash.
Mr. Lu Shuping's biography:

There lives in Wu a reclusive gentleman named Mr. Lu Shuping. His personality is of the kind of Huang and Qi, but he cannot totally conceal his talent. Art such as his is seldom seen in the world. Although the world admires and takes pleasure in it, there are none who are able to name his virtues. I am therefore writing a biography for him.

Lu's official name is Zhi and his sobriquet is Shuping. His ancestors moved from Bian to Meiliang Village on the Wu region's Baoshan [Dongting West Mountain]. Afterwards, they moved to the prefectural city [Suzhou] and subsequently they settled there. Lu Zhi migrated again to Zhixing Mountain. However, he could not forget Baoshan and he named his studio after it. Scholars subsequently called him Mr. Baoshan, so it is said. As for his ancestors, some were assistant administrators of Changshan. Generation after generation they received a Confucian education. His father, Ming, began his career as Suichang county's assistant instructor. He was promoted to preside at Leqing to teach, but he did not take the post. Therefore, Wen Daizhao Zhengzhong [Wen Zhengming] highly esteemed his moral integrity and wrote the epitaph for his grave.

Lu Zhi was born outstanding and bright. He assiduously studied the meaning of the classics. From the time that he was at the zhusheng level, among the students he frequently gained distinction and a stipend of rice was given to him at the official granary. His stipend was similar to the imperial stipend of Wang Liji of Taiyuan. This being the case, he was supported in order to take the examinations, but he did not pass. In his heart he liked to write in the style of ancient writings gu wen cil. He avoided the fads of the times and thought superior the prose style of the Zuo Zhuan. He mainly wanted to amuse himself and suit his nature and that is all. He cut off and dispensed with all social intercourse. However, in the end he was employed and because of this he became known.

As for his attitude towards painting, he is especially understanding. In the landscape painting that he passes down, he selects from the styles of the preceding [Yuan] dynasty's four greatest artists. These paintings are marvellous, heroic, and outstanding and at times he produces innovative ideas. The birds and flowers and bamboo and rocks that he portrays are often heavenly creations. Since Xi and Quan [Xu Xi and Huang Quan] no one else is even discussed.
Because he had been bothered by the position of a zhusheng for so long, he did not wish to get his stipend from the granery and several times he petitioned and asked to resign. But the prefects Lin Maoju [served 1553-1556], Wen Jingkui [served 1556-1559] and Wang Daoxing [served 1559-1562] all promoted his talents. On his behalf, latter and former, they petitioned and recommended him to the superintendent of education censor. The censor had often already heard of his good reputation and thought it difficult. The three prefects sent down a letter and consoled Lu Zhi with words. They told him not to be troubled at being a zhusheng and to try to receive his grain stipend as before. However, Lu Zhi was not happy and increasingly he wanted to be done with it and to resign.

It happened that his younger cousin, Xia, had studied the classics with him. Lu Xia was awarded the title of a gongsheng, but he withdrew and did not presume to accept the title first [before Lu Zhi]. The censor subsequently commissioned Lu Zhi as a gongsheng. He persistently declined and did not accept it. The censor consequently sent a letter to the prefectural city saying: "Those scholars designated as gongshengs are talented men recommended by the county magistrate. In reality the position is also a means to extol and to encourage exemplary behaviour, but it is not only to directly evaluate qualifications or to compare seniority. A zhusheng deals with broad knowledge. In his personal conduct, Xia practices filial piety, friendship, honesty and kindness. With regard to [these things] you come before your cousin. You held on to the principles of the classics and you both declined. You inhabit your own path to glory. I very much admire it." In his giving Lu Zhi the title of gongsheng, the magistrate thereby demonstrated the importance of the title and praised and rewarded him.

However, to retire from the official world was Lu Zhi's utmost intention. Henceforth he wore the clothing of a retired scholar. He was increasingly determined to reside at Zhixing and did not go out [to serve]. As a person he has a long jaw and handsome eyebrows and eyes. His movement is elegant. If one approaches him abruptly then he is distant and polite. If one approaches him slowly then he is warm. I seek his conversation on ancient books. In the flower garden under the moon his manner is elegant and casual. He is continually unmindful of weariness.

In the Jin Dynasty a monk named Dun left an old residence on Zhixing. Lu Zhi's hut is at its base. The site is surrounded by clouds and mountains and flowing streams intersect it. There is fertile land and broad fields which are suitable for crops and gardens. The gate of his home is low and cannot admit a carriage. Aside from his cramped quarters, the land is entirely planted with famous chrysanthemums which often reach several hundred thousand in number. There are also rare flowers and trees which originated in the 10,000 li distant Rinan and Cangwu. He goes to
great lengths to obtain varieties from far and wide. With his own hands he mounds and plants, irrigates and clips them. He is extremely gifted at obtaining their climatic and seasonal cycles.

At times when favoured guests come to visit, he immediately receives them in his flower garden, brings out homemade wine, cuts honeycomb, boils tender bamboo shoots and fresh fish for them and directs them to the full table. They sing elegant songs and tarry to the end of the day. The guests cannot bring themselves to part. Or else, if those who are not his sort of people insist on visiting, he uses a rock to withstand them. If they tap at the door he warns his servant not to acknowledge or to respond.

The prefect Cai Guoxi [served 1566-1573] held a ceremony to honor local elders and worthies. He completely sifted out and left the ordinary people. He first received Lu Zhi as an honored guest. Later, Li Shoujian [served 1569-1573] again further wanted to promote and receive Lu Zhi. Lu Zhi esteemed his intentions and once again he went. The country increasingly knows of Mr. Lu and those who are on familiar terms with him.

He gradually produces paintings and drawings. Curious people are polite and beseech and are anxious to buy his paintings. They come one after the other to his door but decidedly are never able to move him with monetary rewards. If people’s thoughts are that which he agrees with then they do not have to wait and often request [paintings].

When Lu Zhi’s father died, he left behind his concubine’s five young sons and daughters. They were raised in Lu Zhi’s house and they were all married at the appropriate time. They regard Lu Zhi as a father. When his widowed eldest sister returned to Wu impoverished and without descendants, Lu Zhi welcomed her and sent the family grain to her. When she died she was buried in Wu. He grieved that her spirit might go hungry and she is given sacrifices as a Lu family member to this day.

Lu Zhi’s neighbor, a certain Commander Yang, whose post was as a guard, was often on good terms with him. In the past, Yang guarded some surplus money raised by the army. It is not known when it disappeared, but it was registered. Whenever a censor came to investigate, then with a sack of his own money, he would thereby respond. The money then would be taken by the censor. In the end, the censor understood the circumstances and thought that Commander Yang was truly a great bandit in the stealing of the money. He was prepared to imprison him and await trial and thereby detained him. However, Yang was very poor. It was calculated that he would lack the means to get out of prison. Lu Zhi wanted to use all of his possessions to delay [Yang’s imprisonment] but before the affair came to a head, it happened that there was a man in the village who had resigned from office and returned home. This gentleman was rich and respected Lu Zhi greatly. Lu Zhi therefore borrowed money from this
person, promising a high rate of interest. When he obtained the money he hastened to the censor's place and reported the surplus money was all there. Finally Lu's borrowed money became an official possession. In the end Lu Zhi repaid the money on Yang's behalf. Commander Yang finally died destitute. Lu Zhi built a mound and heaped earth and set up Yang's grave. He wore a white robe and cap and refused the guests who came to offer condolences. The guests themselves were embarrassed that they were not as good as Lu Zhi.

He had an old friend, Gu Zhengshu, who was a talented, outstanding scholar. They formed an acquaintance when they were common people, but since Gu retired from his office and returned home, his life became more and more difficult day by day. He retired and moved deep into the mountains and declined offers of social intercourse. Lu Zhi with his small income from time to time sent him meat and wine. Moreover, after Gu's death his affairs were entrusted to Lu Zhi. Lu Zhi proceeded to cry and sought a piece of land beside his friend Mao Sheng in order to bury him. Zhengshu again and again appeared in strange dreams and entrusted Lu Zhi to thank the village people. The people then increasingly extolled Lu Zhi and considered him to be virtuous.

Lu Zhi having retired to Zhixing, all the contents in the two houses of his father at Wu's Chengli were sold. From his own savings he furnished an ancestral hall. On one side was a resting place for the spirit tablets, on the other side were stored the sacrificial vessels. He made a record of them and entrusted them to his younger brother Zhao. Moreover, he declined the house next to it and gave both of the residences to his younger brother saying that successive generations could offer worship and vessels of millet. Together with Zhao he shared a residence and in harmony they reached old age. They could not endure to be separated. As for the land and property bequeathed by his father, he did not use it to give to his son, but gave it to Zhao. He is now seventy-six years old. His spirit is bright and has not a bit declined.

One day he came with Wangzi Zhideng and asked saying: "Your life's luck has been as fortunate as mine. You have not reached my years. As for my biography, I am going to die but I won't close my eyes and I won't go to sleep until I persuade you [to write it]." I had the opportunity to pass by Zhixing and visited Lu Zhi at leisure until the end of the day. Moreover, as for his picture of "The Peach Blossom Spring," he gave it to me. Of course, that which he spoke about does not need to be asked.

Lu Zhi (zi Shuping) is a Wu region zhusheng. He is well-mannered, harmonious, and extremely resolute. He is going to be 80 sui. We are well-acquainted with one another. Shuping [Lu Zhi] is good at drawing from life. He has grasped the traditions of Xu and Huang, but his paintings are not as good as Daofu’s [Chen Shun’s] in their marvellous qualities and are not as true to life. As for his attitude towards landscapes, he is fond of imitating Song artists and from time to time he produces his own ideas. The manner and structure of his landscapes is lofty and sharp-cut. Empyrean thoughts flow layer upon layer, but he cannot avoid exposing his methods.


Postface to Lu Shuping’s “Travelling in Dongting” [poems and paintings in 16 leaves]:

In autumn in the September of 1572 I travelled to Dongting. The elder Lu Shuping at that time also followed all the young people and went. He was 77 years of age, yet his hat and shoes appeared as if flying amid the clouds and vapors. On the day of my return I began to draft a record and several poems in the ancient style in order to give to Mr. Lu to preserve the occasion.

Then, in the fifth month of the next year [1573], Mr. Lu came to visit. At that time he produced sixteen scrolls on old paper, each scroll comprising one scene. It was as if he had selected from the scenes of my poems the ones which did not greatly offend [his style] and described them. His autumn ambience is outstanding and distinct. His floating skies are like boundless expanses of water. So clearly are depicted the two Dongtings of Lake Tai that he has unfailingly conveyed the spirit. His sublime places, at their best, approach those of Li Yingqiu [Li Cheng] and Guo Hezhong [Guo Xi]. Since Ma and Xia [Ma Yuan and Xia Gui] nothing has been seen in this category. The quality of the Mr. Lu’s paintings are the loftiest. From far and near people come to gaze at his alleyway. Those who hurry him, even if they seek only one water scene or one rock scene, cannot obtain it. Now then, he has raised up all the beautiful scenes of Dongting in Lake Tai and given them to me and said politely that his paintings will gain immortality because of my poems. I certainly enjoy great favour from Mr. Lu. Might it also not be that I am biased towards
him? I once asked him, and Mr. Lu himself said that when he gets to be eighty-two with regard to his paintings he will achieve a great synthesis [da chenal], and it's true. At that time I sent up a petition to ask for Daoist vestments and a staff. The inquiry was not yet realized when he died. The two of us together make up one Mojie [Wang Wei]. Don't say that this youth from an illustrious household seeks too much beyond his grasp.8


Postface to Lu Shuping's copy of Wang Andao's [Wang Li's] "Hua Shan" picture:9

Having written a colophon for Marquis Wu's "Hua Shan" picture by Wang Andao [Wang Li], I wanted to ask for a copy of it in the hand of Qian Shubao [Qian Gu, (1508-c.1576)], but with no result. After a month had passed Mr. Lu Shuping came to visit. I took out the painting. I thought it hard, but because of his old age I attended him until evening and did not dare discuss the business of copying the painting. Mr. Lu held the album. Not putting it aside he said: "This venerable one continues [the achievements] of Song artists. He has not used the preceding [Yuan] dynasty's weak-wristed technique which is on par with that of a young student." "Therefore," he said happily: "On your behalf I will stay for several days to recreate its salience. I should examine the principles of the painting even more closely." Mr. Lu's painting rank [pin] is the same as that of Andao. Therefore he could especially accord and agree with his painting. When the painting was finished I thought I should compose words in order to go with it. They didn't have to follow the painting exactly. My friends Yu Zhongwei [Yu Yunwen], Zhou Gongxia [Zhou Tianqiu], and Mo Yunching [Mo Shilong] are especially excellent at xiaokai.10 I gathered together all of Andao's explanations and records and ancient and modern style poems and entrusted them to Zhongwei. A Tang person's miscellaneous notes, together with poems, I entrusted to Yunching. Li Yulin's one record and six poems and Qiao Zhuangjian's one record and one fu I entrusted to Gongxia. Duo Xiaoching's one record I entrusted to Cheng Mengru. Outside of this I wrote a folio. When this folio was completed, if Andao has a soul, it could not help but cry like the lady of Wei.11

The commoner Mr. Lu Baoshan Zhi, *zi* Shuping, was a native of Wu. His affairs are detailed in the biography I wrote for him. Lu Zhi was born upright and he mastered literary accomplishments and had deportment and restraint. He was known by the former Grand Tutor Duke Wang Wenko [Wang Ao]. Lu Zhi travelled to the gates of Zhu [Zhu Yunming] and Wen [Wen Zhengming]. As for his attitude towards the study of painting, he regarded it as fundamental to bring out what was unusual in his breast in order to vie with the ancient men. At one time people said that he was almost like Mr. Wen. Lu Zhi was energetic. He loved righteousness and ardently loved scholarship. He thirsted for virtue and gallantry. If wealthy families, offering great wealth, visited, then he would refuse and would not receive them. He settled on this side of Zhixing. There was the scenery of mountains and water. By hand he planted chrysanthemums, several hundred native varieties whose appearance and form was brilliant. When favoured guests arrived, he would immediately loosen his clothing, prepare a setting chicken, and serve a dipper of wine. For the complete day and evening he was not tired. He had several qing of fertile land which he unexpectedly dispensed with it and built a temple in order to sacrifice to his ancestors and to be near to them. Later, when he was old, he was ill and died at the age of eighty-one. I once sailed on Lake Tai and proceeded to Dongting West Mountain. Lu Zhi took along a scroll in order to accompany me. His family did not know. When he returned, he completely portrayed its scenery in order to give to me. He said: "Only your poems are equal to the paintings." On another occasion he used two zhang [20 feet] of Song paper and painted a picture of "Peach Blossom Spring." When I saw it he gave it to me. Now I still feel embarrassed by his praise. Lu Zhi was a *zhusheng* for a long time. Moreover, when he was ill, the censor considered him to be virtuous and appointed him to be a gong [gonsheng], as if he were like one who had been given an office. Lu Zhi therupon declined official positions.


Although Lu Zhi (*zi* Shuping, *hao* Baoshan) was only a Wu prefecture graduate (*zhusheng*), he was very much refined and cultured. He built a house at the base of Zhixing mountain with rosy clouds on all sides and
surrounded by flowing streams. By hand he planted famous flowers -- nearly several hundred different varieties of them. From time to time, when favoured guests came to visit he would meet them in the flower garden, cut up honey-comb, slice bamboo shoots, and allow them to enter. If those who came were not of his liking, then he would prop up the gate with a stone. When they knocked at the door, it was as if he did not hear.

As for his landscapes, when he put brush to paper, his light and refined texture strokes were all excellent. Many of his surviving paintings depict clear autumn scenery. He was particularly good at drawing from life and inherited the traditions of Xu and Huang. Once for Wang Zhanggong [Wang Shizhen] he copied Wang Andao's [Wang Li's] forty scenes of "Hua Shan." The style of his drawing did not entirely achieve three dimensionality [literally, standing rice grain brocade].\(^\text{13}\) Afterwards, Wang Shizhen had poems and inscriptions by Yulin all written in the hand of Yu Zhongwei [Yu Yunwen].


Lu Zhi (zi Shuping) was a native of the Wu prefecture. He was a local school graduate [zhusheng]. He was unrestrained by social etiquette and sought righteousness. When he received an endowment he took it and gave it to his younger brother. As for several qing of fertile land, he dispensed with it all and used [the money] to build an ancestral hall. People extolled his filial piety and friendship.

Wang Yuanmei [Wang Shizhen], when discussing his landscape paintings, said that he took pleasure in imitating Song painters and at times produced paintings by means of his own innovations. Their manner and structure was lofty. Empyrean thoughts flowed layer upon layer, but he could not avoid exposing his methods. In drawing from life he inherited the traditions of Xu and Huang but [his paintings] are not as good as Daofu's [Chen Shun's] in their marvellous qualities and are not as true to life.

He built a house at the base of Zhixing mountain. Clouds and mists surrounded it and flowing streams encircled it. By hand he planted famous flowers -- almost several hundred varieties of them. From time to time when good friends came to visit, he immediately met them in his flower garden, cut up honey-comb, sliced bamboo shoots and let them in. If those who came were not of his kind then he would use a rock to barricade the gate so as not hear their raps at the door. He especially did not like to get involved with social exchanges with the wealthy. As far as
all his paintings were concerned, whoever insistently sought one would
certainly not be successful, while those who did not insist perhaps could
then obtain one.

8. Xu Qin, Ming hua lu [early Qing], in Huashi conshu, 3 vols. (Tokyo:
Kokusho Kankokai, 1972) 2: juan 6, p. 81.

Lu Zhi (zi Shuping, hao Baoshan) was a native of the Wu district. A
local school graduate, he had a distinguished manner and was extremely
upright and righteous. He was good at drawing from life. In flower and
bird paintings he attained the ideas handed down by Xu and Huang, but
his paintings could not equal Daofu's [Chen Shun's] in their sublimeness,
and they were not true to life. The style of his landscapes imitated that of
Song painters, but at times he exposed his shortcuts. Late in life he turned
his back on social propriety and his eccentricities became increasingly
extreme. As for all those who sought his paintings, those who insisted
were bound not to succeed, while those who did not insist perhaps could
obtain one.

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1 Two of the four early Han dynasty recluses.
2 Zhixing Shan (Grindstone Mountain) is situated 25 li west of Suzhou. The
Jin dynasty priest Zhi Dun (314-366), a friend of the calligrapher Wang Xizhi,
is said to have built a temple there. Admiring the flat rocks of the mountain,
he took the hao Zhixing which then became the popular name for the
mountain. See Louis Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih (1496-1576)"
(Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1979), p. 69, note 60.
3 A commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals.
4 Two 10th-century artists who specialized in bird and flower painting. They
are seen as representing two different traditions. Xu Xi's paintings came to
be classified as xie yi (paintings which convey meaning), while Huang Quan's
paintings came to be classified as xie sheng (paintings which convey formal
likeness). See Richard Barnhart, Peach Blossom Spring: Gardens and Flowers
in Chinese Paintings (New York: The Metropolitan Musuem of Art), pp. 25-
27.
5 Yuhas writes that Rinan could refer to a town in Yunnan Province or to a
number of locations in present-day Vietnam. Cangwu is located in Guangxi.
See Yuhas, "The Landscape Art of Lu Chih," p. 44, note 73.
6 Xiang yin li.
An example of metonymy: A figure of speech that consists in the naming of a thing by substituting one of its attributes or an associated term for the name itself. The image described is suggestive of an Immortal.


Wang Li's album contains forty leaves and is dated 1383. Twenty-seven leaves are located in the Shanghai Museum, and thirteen are in the Beijing Palace Museum. See James Cahill, Parting at the Shore: Chinese Painting of the Early and Middle Ming Dynasty, 1368-1580 (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1978), pls. 1-2.

Regular script in small characters.

A famous woman calligrapher of the 4th century.

A qing is approximately 15 acres.

This phrase, li fen wei is problematical. If it is a painting term, it is not included in Benjamin March's book. The above reading of it comes from Ci Hai.

Xie sheng is described by Benjamin March: "To paint a subject exactly like the original; to paint from life rather than from memory. Chiefly used with reference to birds, animals, flowers and insects. Also used with adjectival force, as in xi sheng hua." See Benjamin March, Some Technical Terms of Chinese Painting (Baltimore: Waverly Press Inc., 1935), p. 22.
吴小仙传

吴名偉字鲁夫湖广武昌人也

吴知州用廉斡迁转州居官三十年

治南陽之豫州後治大名之開州著聲籍

籍發聞至今民思之父剛翁中郷舉人榜

高等有文學行義妙書畫今兩京舊人家

往往藏其墨跡為珍重翁性豪華用燒丹

破其家生小仙數歲翁死又數歲小仙年

十七八日來游南京以童子負氣性至則

整衣冠晨出館人不知其所之因尾其後
吳偉，字次翁，別號小仙，江夏人。少孤貧，善繪事，不師而能，山水人物，俱入神品。

性魯直，有氣岸，與俗寡託，求者非其人不應，雖素與之昵好，一言不合，輒投硯而去。成化間成國公某延至幕下，一見以小仙呼之，因以爲號。平江伯具禮聘之渡江，聞譽日起。憲宗召至闕下，授錦衣廝撚，待詔仁智殿。偉有時大醉被召，遂首垢面，曳破衣履，踉蹌行，中官扶掖以見，上大笑，命作松風圖，偉跪翻墨汁，信手塗抹，而風雲惨生，屏幛間，左右動色。上歎曰：「真仙人筆也。」偉出入掖庭，奴視權貴，求畫又多不與，於是權貴數短之，居無何，放歸南海。偉好劇飲，或經旬不食，其在南海，諸豪客競贈餞之。李廟登極，復召見便殿，命畫稱旨，授錦衣衛百戶，賜「畫狀元」印，寵賞日厚。偉思還楚，蒙恩祭掃武昌，數月，還次采石，有旨趣同京，賜西街居第。逾二年，偉稱疾，得居秦淮之東涯。正德三年五月，宗即位，遣使召之，使者至，未就道而中酒死，時年五十。
吴伟字士英，更字次翁，号小仙江夏人也。又号其画圣。山水人物之状，方伯见而奇之曰：‘若欲作画工耶。’即与笔札，厚给留之。衣冠至金陵，遂致盛名云。

吴伟字小仙，江夏人也。韶时，流落至处，钱方伯赏爱其聪慧，俾为伊子伴读。伟窃弄流也，山水笔力矫健，白描尤佳。观者自然起敬非世俗贤。
陸収頺臨王安道華山圖後，
奈既為武侯，隴上叔平未訪，圖難其老待之至暮，
而未果繼月，陸丈叔平求訪出圖難其老待之至暮，
口不忍言墓，盡事也。陸丈手其墨不置日，此老遂能
接宋人不作勝國弱朝，第少生耳碩然雅謂余為子
留數日存其大都當更細究冊書，青理也。陸丈書品與
安道同故特相契合畫成，當彼此以筆意甲乙，耳不
規規鸞黃之跡及吾友人俞仲蔚，周公瑕，莫雲卿
董特妙小楷，吾悉取安道書記及古近體詩，托仲蔚
唐人雜記，與詩托雲卿，李子鱗一記六詩，喬莊簡
記一賦托公瑕，都少卿一記，拓程孟瞤別書作一冊
此冊成安道有靈不食作書，今泣矣。
布衣陸包山先生治字叔平吳人也事行詩予所撰
傅中先生生而磊落負文采有素號為故太傅王文
恪公所識異遊祝文二先生門其子丹青之學務出
其智中奇以與古人角一時好稱之幾與文先生埒
先生倜儻嗜義愛慕學士賢豪若渴富家兒齊重資
踵門謝弗納也家支碩彊有山水之勝藝菊數百本
陳田數頃忽盡栗之構祠以祀其先祖而依焉後老
病卒年八十一余嘗居太湖陸西洞庭先生揮一槩
以隨其家不知也歸而悉概其勝以貽余曰非子詩
不足以當余盡又嘗用文二赤宋時繪書桃源圖見
貽余至今愧甚意焉先生文次諸生且病御史賢之
而俾以貢名若當辟者先生遂却矜稱也

11:5.
陸治字叔平號包山為吳諸生而饒風雅築室支硎山

下雲霞四封流泉迴繞手藝名花幾數百種歲時佳

客過從即迎至花所割蜜脾劉竹萌而進之苟非其

人強造者即一石支門剝啄如弗聞矣山水下筆輕

清皴法都秀每見所作多是秋晴景氣尤工寫生得

徐黃遺意曾為王長公臨王安道華山圖四十幅皴

法不盡到如立粉末者後有子鱗詩及記皆俞仲蔚

書