A social history of painting inscriptions in Ming China (1368-1644)

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Chapter 4 The Compilations and Publications of Literary Painting Inscriptions

Textual form fundamentally affects the appreciation and circulation of texts. To a large degree, the form defines the reader's expectation, reading habit, and conceptualization of a text. As mentioned earlier, painting inscriptions exist not only as texts physically written on paintings, but also as texts separated from paintings. This chapter focuses exclusively the latter group; to be more precise, on literary inscriptions in the form of books. A high proportion of these books were put into print soon after their completion. This phenomenon raises a series of questions: Why were these inscriptions collected and printed? What did a printed copy of a body of inscriptions mean to Ming compilers, publishers, and readers? What motivated the printing? What place did these books of inscriptions have on the Ming book market, which was flooded with various publications, ranging from Confucian classics, examination model essays and classical literature, to books of jokes, dramas, fictions, short stories, almanacs, encyclopedias, route books, dictionaries and formularies. These questions remain unexplored and even undetected in extant studies of painting inscriptions.

The fact that many subject books are lost and some only survive through later reproductions prevents an exhaustive examination of these books from all possible perspectives, such as the content, physicality, publisher, distribution and consumption. This chapter adopts an alternative strategy. It primarily lays the emphasis on the book compilers, the compilation process and potential motivations. The focus of this chapter remains in the Ming era, but in order to understand the deep historical change that occurred in this period, it is important to situate the Ming books in a larger, coordinated system. I will begin with a handful of pre-Ming efforts at compiling painting inscriptions. Then, I

will move to the Ming era to examine the physical characteristics (if applicable) and contents of six available Ming books of inscriptions, as well as considering their compilers as social agents, and the combination of incentives for their production. A brief summary of all these pre-Qing attempts is that they were made either by private individuals or by commercial entities. The last section of this chapter will introduce a Qing anthology rendered in entirely different circumstances. Commissioned by the imperial regime in the early eighteenth century, this anthology marks the first time the regime entered into this realm.

First Anthology of Painting Inscriptions

The first known compilation of painting inscriptions is *Anthology of Audible Paintings* (*Shenghua ji* 聲畫集, hereafter "*Audible Paintings*"), compiled by Sun Shaoyuan 孫紹遠 (*zi* Jizhong 稽仲, fl. 1165-1193). The book title is a literary allusion to poetry being "audible painting" and painting being "silent poetry." A metaphor of the nature of poetry and painting, this has been a popular allusion since the twelfth century, the time that *Audible Paintings* emerged.[1]

Sun Shaoyuan was a native of Suzhou, the city that had already become the "eye area" of art activities in his day.[2] He was well-educated and good at literary composition, evidenced by several literary compositions written early in the 1170s.[3]

1 For instance, the expression can be found in Zhou Linzhi's 周麟之 (*jinshi* 1145) anthology *Hailing ji* 海陵集 (*juan* 2, SKQS edition, 6a), Fan Jun's 范浚 (1102-1150) anthology *Xiangxi ji* 香溪集 (*juan* 10, SBCKXB, 7a).

2 Xie Wei dates Sun's year of birth as 1150 without giving a reason. See Xie Wei, *Zhongguo huaxue zhuzuo kaolu*, 195. A record in *Lingui Gazetteer* (*Lingui xianzhi* 臨桂縣誌) introduces Su Shaoyuan as "Gusu Sun Shaoyuan 姑蘇孫紹遠." See Cai Chengshao 蔡呈韶 ed., Hu Qian 胡虔 comp., *Ligui xianzhi*, *juan* 9, 1801 printed, 1881 revised edition, 7b. In the preface of Zhu Xi for Sun's literary anthology Sun was addressed as "Sutai 蘇台 Sun Jizhong." *Sutai*, or *Gusutai* 姑蘇臺, is an alternative name for Suzhou.

3 He visited Xincheng 新城, the capital of Lin'an 臨安 (modern Hangzhou) and left an essay "Xincheng xian chuangzao xiqiao ji" 新城縣創造溪橋記 dated 1175 for the local magistrate. See Xu Shiying 徐士瀛 ed., Zhang Zirong 張子榮 et al. comp., *Minguo Xindeng xianzhi* 民國新登縣志, *juan* 6, Fangzhi, 298-300.

During 1186 and 1187, he was serving at the transport bureau of Guangxi in the city now known as Guilin 桂林, a remote city far from the political centre. He appears to have lived a leisurely life there and spent much time travelling, gathering with friends and creating literary writings.[4] Thanks to the abundance of spare time, Sun Shaoyuan started to compile an anthology of poems "that were composed for paintings" with some materials on hand and some borrowed from his colleagues.[5] The compilation was soon finished in 1187, yet the compiler faithfully admits in the preface that his limited resources and hasty preparation resulted in the anthology being incomplete.[6] Later in 1187, Sun Shaoyuan was transferred to Hubei as a Transport Assistant (*yunpan* 運判) subordinate to the Transport Commissioner (*zhuanyunshi* 轉運使).[7] From this point, records around him become vague. What is certain is that he never held a post in the central government. In other words, his compilatory activity was a private hobby, rather than any official commission. Thus, he would have selected the poems according to his own taste.

Sun Shaoyuan's personal oeuvre is completely lost. We only know that he had a ten-fascicle anthology entitled *Humble Draft of Mr. Grain-Bridge* (*Guqiao yugao* 穀橋愚稿), in addition to some other books on specialized topics such as medicine and military strategy. The preface to *Humble Draft of Mr. Grain-Bridge* is written

Slightly before or after, Sun wrote an essay eulogizing Mont Niu 牛 in the Yan Prefecture 嚴州. See Lü Changqi 呂昌期 ed., Yu Bingran 俞炳然 comp., *Wangli xuxiu yanzhou fuzhi* 萬曆續修嚴州府志, *juan* 2, 1614 printed edition, Riben cang zhongguo hanjian difangzhi congkan 日本藏中國罕見地方志叢刊, Vol. 5 (Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1991), 40-41; Li Xian 李賢 et al., *Ming yitong zhi* 明一統志, *juan* 41, SKQS edition, 5b.

4 His visits to scenic spots at Guangxi see *Lingui xianzhi* 臨桂縣誌 *juan* 4, facsimile reprint of 1801 edition (Taipei: Chengwen chuban youxian gongsi, 1967), 51; ibid., *juan* 9, 133.

5 Sun Shaoyuan, Preface to *Shenghua ji*, SKQS edition, *Ji bu*, Vol. 301-302, 1a-2a.

6 Ibid., 1-2.

7 See a report to the throne in 1187. Zhou Bida, *Wenzhong ji* 文忠集, *juan* 150, SKQS edition, 13b-15a; ibid., *juan* 172, 6a. In August 1188, before departing for Hubei, Sun formally bade farewell to the new emperor Xiaozong 孝宗 (1127-1194) who solicited advice from him regarding the economic situation in his old post at Guangxi. See Liu Zheng 留正 (112901206) et al. ed, *Huang Song zhongxing liangchao shengzheng* 皇宋中興兩朝聖政, *juan* 64, *Wanwei biecang* 宛委別藏 edition, comp. Ruan Yuan et al., 13a.

by Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) in 1193 and is preserved in Zhu's own anthology.[8] The preface was made upon Sun's request. Although it is difficult to outline the relation between Sun Shaoyuan and Zhu Xi, both held office in Fujian in the early 1190s, and they shared an interest in painting.[9]

Contents and the Context

Audible Paintings selects 818 poems under 609 titles (one title may incorporate multiple poems) intended for paintings by 109 poets. It remained the largest compilation of painting inscriptions until the early eighteenth century. Tang poems account for less than 9%, while the remaining 91% is taken by poems of the Northern Song period. Su Shi was undoubtedly the centre of these Northern Song poets. He and the other poets who were connected to him claim around 80%. The three poets with the most poems in *Audible Paintings* are: Su Shi (146), Huang Tingjian (89) and Su Zhe 蘇轍 (1039-1112) (64).[10]

An heir of the tradition established by Su Shi and his peers, Sun Shaoyuan, engaged in the same practice with friends. His biggest contribution was the compilation of his predecessor's legacy. Even though there is no evidence of any personal ties between his senior family members and Su Shi, or between

8 For *Humble Draft of Mr. Grain-Bridge* see Tuotuo 脫脫 , *Song shi* 宋史 , *juan* 280, SKQS edition, 16a. For the military book which is mentioned in Zhu Xi's preface to *Humble Draft of Mr. Grain-Bridge* see footnote 9. For the medical book see Chen Zhensun, *Zhizhai shulu jieti* 直齋書錄解題 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), 394.

9 Zhu Xi, "Sun Jizhong wenji xu" 孫稽仲文集序 , in *Hui'an xiansheng wenji* 晦庵先生文集 , *juan* 76, Qiuwozhai 求我齋 edition printed in 1874, Vol. 17, 28a-28b.

10 The assignment was announced in 1189, and Sun was recorded in Fujian gazetteer. See Huang Zhongzhao 黃仲昭 comp., *Bamin tongzhi* 八閩通志 , *juan* 30, facsimile reprint of 1490 printed edition (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1990), 624. Zhu Xi arrived at Zhangzhou in early 1190 and stayed there for a year. See Shu Jingnan, *Zhuzi dazhuan* 朱子大傳 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2003), 844-69. Zhu Xi left a number of poems for paintings. The well-known scholar-official Lou Yue 樓鑰 (1137-1213) had two poems inscribed on paintings by Sun Shaoyuan. Lou Yue, "Ti Sun Guqiao fanjian tu" 題孫谷橋墦間圖 , in *Gonggui ji* 攻媿集 , *juan* 11, SBCK edition, 5b. For discussion of the poems see Li Qi, *Liangsong tihua shi lun* 兩宋題畫詩論 (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1994), 325n6.

himself and any of Su Shi's descendants and students, the poems he selected suggest that he felt a sense of intimacy with Su Shi. It should be noted that the poets in *Audible Paintings* are addressed by their *zi*, or "style name." For example, Lü Juren 呂居仁 was called as Lü Benzhong 呂本中 , and Li Boshi 李伯時 as Li Gonglin 李公麟 . The use of a poet's style name denotes politeness and respect, but it was relatively unusual as a form of appellation in literary compilations. In this case, the reason was perhaps, as Sun Shaoyuan states in the preface to *Audible Paintings*, that these poets were venerable *xianxian* 先賢 – "solons of the past."[11]

From a broader historical view, *Audible Paintings* emerged sixty years after the Jurchen Jin's conquest of the Northern Song capital Bianliang 汴梁 (modern Kaifeng). This occurred in a context where the Southern Song was well-established in Hangzhou and everyone, from the ruler to the commoners, was aware of the reality that any military attempt to recover the lost territory and population carried too great a risk. Consequently, the Northern Song regime and its "solons of the past" were not only in the past, but were also somewhere else. The generation of Sun Shaoyuan that was growing up six decades after the collapse of Northern Song to some extent found itself without memory or experience to link to history. It appears that the compilation of painting inscriptions offered a channel for Sun Shaoyuan to reconnect with past cultural icons and a lost period of glory.

From a social perspective, *Audible Paintings* emerged in the context of a booming literati community and their culture in the twelfth century. This anthology does not contain any imperial poems, possibly due to the fact that Sun Shaoyuan, a local official, hardly had any access to the imperial painting collection with inscriptions executed by the ruling house. It is doubtful whether he was even aware of the existence of such paintings. What he did have access to was the inscriptions on or for paintings by scholars and officials. In the editorial preface to his book, Sun Shaoyuan states that he hopes the anthology will ultimately

11 Li Qi, *Liangsong tihua shi lun*, 329.

benefit *shidafu* 士大夫, or literati, who learnt painting from poetry and who learnt poetry from painting.[12] As mentioned in chapter 1, inscribing texts on paintings had undergone a vigorous growth since the late eleventh century, and reached an unparalleled level in terms of quantity and richness. Although the throne also participated in generating painting inscriptions, it was the literati that monopolized defining and evaluating this form of art. Sun Shaoyuan took a step forward. When he compiled poetic inscriptions in an anthology, his practice indicates that these inscriptions were evaluated no less highly than the literati's most serious poetic writings.[13]

In the anthological preface, Sun Shaoyuan expresses his tremendous admiration for and interest in painting. However, in contrast to this enthusiasm, he virtually excluded paintings as a "source pool", and only extracted poems from various anthologies that he "had on hand" and "borrowed from colleagues."[14] In other words, ironically, *Audible Paintings* completely expels paintings as a source. It remains unclear to what extent this compilatory pattern had influenced his Ming followers, as the latter mostly produced small, individual anthologies, many of which were unsystematically compiled by the poets themselves. But it heralds a pattern of envisioning what could be or should be the source of a *literary* anthology of painting inscriptions. It also marks a notion, which was probably shared by the literati community at that time, that literary inscriptions had enough value to be appreciated separately.

Distribution and Dissemination

It is not possible to provide an accurate portrayal of the trajectories of *Audible Paintings* after its completion based on the

12 Sun Shaoyuan, Preface to *Shenghua ji*, 2b.

13 Ibid., 2b.

14 For the tension between the literati group and the Song throne see Alfreda Murck, *Poetry and Painting in Song China: The Subtle Art of Dissent* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2000).

currently available materials. That said, we do know that this anthology appeared in *Catalogue of the Studio of Initial Success* (*Suichutang shumu* 遂初堂書目 , 1190), one of the most important bibliographical works in the twelfth century published by You Mao 尤袤 (1127-1194). But the bibliophile did not record anything other than the anthology title. *Audible Paintings* failed to be noticed by *Annotated Studio of the Straightforward Studio* (*Zhizhai shulu jieti* 直齋書錄解題), another crucial bibliography written slightly later in the 1230s by Chen Zhensun 陳 振 孫 (fl.1211-1249). This bibliography instead recorded a pharmaceutical book compiled by Sun Shaoyuan.[15] It seems that ever since its birth, *Audible Paintings* had a relatively limited distribution. Its distribution might possibly have started from Guangxi where Sun held his post. Guangxi was on the outer edge of Han-Chinese culture, far away from the economic and cultural centre of the Southern Song empire.

There is no trace of *Audible Paintings* throughout the thirteenth century, however it later reappeared in Ming documentation. The first record is in *Catalogue of Books Stored at Wenyuan Pavilion* (*Wengyaunge shumu* 文淵閣書目), commissioned by the Emperor Yingzong 英宗 (Zhu Qizhen 朱祁鎮 , whose reign is named Zhengtong 正統 , lasted from 1436 to 49) in 1441, which provides a thorough inventory of the Ming imperial library Wenyuan Pavilion.[16] A considerable proportion of the books in this library were confiscated from the Yuan imperial collection after the then capital, Dadu 大都 (modern Beijing), was conquered in 1368. Since the Yuan legacy rested heavily on the confiscations from Song and Jin courts, *Audible Paintings* was very likely among

15 Sun Shaoyuan, Preface to *Shenghua ji*, 2b.

16 The Song dynasty was the pinnacle of private publications of medical books, especially of formulary codex. For the Northern Song state's use of medical books for governance, see Tj Hinrichs, "Governance through Medical Texts and the Role of Print," in *Knowledge and Text Production in an Age of Print: China, 900–1400*, ed. Lucille Chia and Hilde De Weerdt (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 217-38. For the publications of these books, see Xu Yuanting, "Nan Song shiqi de chuban shichang yu liutong kongjian – cong keju yongshu ji yiyao fangshu de chuban tanqi" 南宋時期的出版市場與流通空間 —— 從科舉用書及醫藥方術的出版談起 , *Gugong xueshu jikan*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (2011): 122-29.

those books once housed in the Song or Jing imperial book collection.

Later records from Ming private libraries support that theory that *Audible Paintings* was distributed outside the court as well. *Catalogue of Treasuring Literature Hall* (*Baowen tang shumu* 寶文堂書目), completed around 1551 by Chao Li 晁瑮 (1507-1560), is the first known library report containing this book.[17] But this poorly documented catalogue records nothing other than the book's title.[18] The bibliophile Chao Li held official posts in the Hanlin Academy for many years after 1541. It is probable that he found the book in the imperial collection. There is another, much later library record in Ningbo 寧波 , finished between 1803 to 1804 and belonging to the most important private library Tianyi Pavilion 天一閣 , namely "Number One Library under Haven." The library was established by Fan Qin 范欽 (1506-1585) in the late sixteenth century and survived the dynastic war in the mid-seventeenth century. The catalogue, based on Fan Qin's book collection, clearly notes that the version of *Audible Paintings* that entered the Tianyi Pavilion was a manuscript.

Indeed, the initial form of *Audible Paintings* was very likely a manuscript, but unfortunately neither the original copy, nor the manuscript that Tianyi Pavilion once housed survives today.[19] The anthology seems to have developed several editions, most likely, as a result of transcribing. At least one edition had two fascicles, and for an unknown reason this edition omitted Sun Shaoyuan's preface. Consequently, *Catalogue of Wenyuan Pavilion* mistakenly recorded the name of the first poet, Liu Shenlao 刘莘老 , as the anthology compiler.[20] In the late 1600s, Wang Shizhen

17 Yang Shiqi et al. comp., *Wenyuan ge shumu* 文淵閣書目 , *juan* 2, SKQS edition, 54a.

18 For the catalogue and tis compiler, see Nakasatomi Satoshi, "Shinheisan dō 'Rokujū ke hōsetsu' omegutte – 'Takarabundō shomoku' choroku banashi hon shōsetsu no sai kentō" 検討清平山堂「六十家小説」をめぐって --「宝文堂書目」著録話本小説の再検討 , *Tōhō gaku* 東方学 , Vol. 85, No. 1 (1993): 100-15.

19 Chao Li, *Baowen tang shumu* 寶文堂書目 , Ming manuscript edition (date unknown), 60b.

20 For the lack of traceable information on Chinese books, see Joseph P. McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book*, 43.

王 士 禎 (1634-1711) found a copy of this edition and wrote a colophon for it.[21] Interestingly, he correctly noted Sun Shaoyuan as the compiler. Perhaps Wang had seen another edition which had preserved Sun's preface. Nonetheless, despite a paucity of Ming accounts talking about or commenting on this anthology, the three above-mentioned library documentations indicate that this anthology reached a certain scale of distribution in the Ming reading community. After all, as Glen Dudbridge has noted, a book's survival is only made possible "when later generations have reason to copy and hand them on."[22] The survival of *Audible Paintings* is itself a demonstration of the popularity of painting inscriptions among educated readers. It might have influenced some Ming inscribers searching for a classical model, and those Ming compilers who intended to join the tradition of compiling literary inscriptions.

Audible Paintings was first published in 1796, as part of a book series *Twelve Books in Chinaberry Pavilion Collection* (*Lianting cangshu shi'er zhong* 楝亭藏書十二種) by Cao Yin 曹寅 (1658-1712).[23] The publication was an eight-fascicle version, correctly noting Sun Shaoyuan as the original compiler.[24] Since *Twelve Books in Chinaberry Pavilion Collection* aimed at reproducing rare ancient books, the master copy that Cao Yin used was probably a Song or Yuan edition, independent from the editions in the Ming imperial collection and Tianyi Pavilion. The well-known SKQS project provided this book with a second chance to be printed. The publication was based on a copy presented by Shandong's Provincial Governor, yet little is known about the condition of this master copy.[25] Nonetheless, its printing must have fuelled

21 Li Qi, *Liangsong tihua shi lun*, 324.

22 Wang Shizhen, *Canwei ji* 蠶尾集 , *juan* 10, SKQSCMCS, *Ji bu*, Vol. 227, 316.

23 Glen Dudbridge, *Lost Books of Medieval China* (London: The British Library, 2000), 18.

24 For Cao Yin, his printing activities, and *Twelve Books in Chinaberry Pavilion Anthology*, see Cao Hongjun, "Cao Yin yu Yangzhou shiju, Yangzhou shuju keshu huodong kaobian" 曹寅與揚州詩局、揚州書局刻書活動考辨 , *Nanjing shifan daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 南京師範大學學報 (社會科學版), No. 6 (2005): 151-57.

25 For the book in Cao Yin's catalogue, *see Lianting shumu* 楝亭书目 , *juan* 3,

circulation of *Audible Paintings*. In the 13th year of Bunka (1816), Tokugawa shogunate published the book in Japan via Shōhei-zaka Gakumonjo 昌平坂学問所 and as an official version, which testifies to the book's wide distribution.

Other Pre-Ming Anthologies of Painting Inscriptions

Shortly after *Audible Paintings* in 1187, *Annotated and Categorized Dongpo Poems by Top-ranked Civilian Wang* (*Wang zhuangyuan jizhu fenlei dongposhi* 王狀元集注分類東坡詩) was printed. This anthology culled 114 poems about paintings and calligraphies in a chapter named "Calligraphy and Painting" (*shuhua* 書畫).[26] Almost at the same time, Chen Si 陳思, a minor bibliophile based in Hangzhou selected 20 poems (in 17 titles) by Liu Shugan 劉叔贛 (fl. 12th /13th cent.) from *Audible Paintings* into "Anthology of Painting Inscriptions" (*Tihua ji* 題畫集). This small compilation formed the eighty-fourth fascicle of a voluminous published corpus entitled *Works of Personages of the Two Eras* (*Liangsong mingxian xiaoji* 兩宋名賢小集) that has 380 fascicles in total.[27] These two anthologies provide a clearer picture of painting inscriptions as texts of literary value worth collecting, and texts of commercial value worth publishing. Yet, as the aforementioned chapter and book titles show, there was still no fixed term for these kinds of texts. Therefore, the notion of "painting inscription" remained in flux in the early thirteenth century.

It is no coincidence that these three early compilations of painting inscriptions are all poetic anthologies. Residing at the top of the literary hierarchy, poetry played a significance role in public life. Moreover, as previously mentioned, early in the

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Liaohai congshu 遼海叢書 edition, printed between 1933-1936, Vol. 71, 5b.

26 Zhu Shangshu, *Songren zongji xulu* 宋人總集敘錄 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), 153-54.

27 Whether Wang Shipeng was the compiler is still debatable. See He Zetang, " 'Wang zhuangyuan ji baijia zhu fenlei Dongpo xiansheng shi' kaolun" 《王狀元集百家註分類東坡先生詩》考論, *Zhongguo dianji yu wenhua* 中國典籍與文化, No. 4 (2009): 78-79.

Tang dynasty, poetry established its status to be associated with painting. It is not surprising that *Audible Paintings* proclaims that it only gleans "poems of ancient sages" that were "made for paintings" (*weihua erzuo* 為畫而作), and shows no interest in writings from other literary genres.[28]

Printed Anthologies of Painting Inscriptions in the Ming Era

The compilations of anthologies of literary painting inscriptions became active again in the last decades of the Ming dynasty, and six have survived to this day. Regardless of their physical status, these anthologies are totally forgotten by studies in any possible sphere. It is true that they are small scale, showing no hint of printing technique and layout design. It also seems to be the case that their contents, in accordance with the general evaluation of Ming literature, are not attractive to modern scholars. Unlike the catalogues of connoisseurship inscriptions, which have attracted the attention of art historians, these literary anthologies are trivialized in the scholarship of literary history as well as in art history and book history.

This section, perhaps for the first time in scholarship, investigates the available Ming books of inscriptions. Most of these books were published, indicating that they were intended for a public audience. Therefore, this section assumes that these books are social and cultural products on the premise of their implied readership. It explores the formats (if applicable), contents and the compilers, in order to reconstruct the motivations behind and possible social impact of their publication. It will be shown that behind these books was an unprecedented diversity of literary inscriptions, and that a broad social strata of people was involved in compiling and circulating them.

28 See Gu Shuguang and Fu Yijing, "Zhongguo gudai diyibu tihuashi bieji – 'Tihua ji' zuozhe ji chengshu kaolue" 中國古代第一部題畫詩別集 ——《題畫集》作者及成書考略 , *Zhongguo wenhua yanjiu* 中國文化研究 , Vol. Summer (2009): 95-103.

The subjects of this section synchronize with the second boom in the printing industry in China after the first one occurred in the Southern Song era. During the one hundred years from 1540 to 1640, the number of printed books in China doubled.[29] This tremendous boost occurred to both commercial and private publishing, and it was largely a result of significant decrease in printing costs.[30] This unprecedented environment for publishing one's own writings, forms the backdrop of this chapter.[31] It should be noted that in the imperial society of China, having one's writing published had positive social and cultural meanings. Whereas once, the practice had denoted a superior elite class, now it became affordable to a wider population. Some elite, however, conceived of printing as a threat to their status. Tang Shunzhi 唐順之 (1507-1560) was one of them. He lamented in a rather disapproving tone that people with all sorts of backgrounds had become involved in book-printing:

> The humble merchants, like butchers and liquor sellers, as long as they have a bowl of rice to eat, have epitaphs written after their death. Dignitaries and those have passed the civil service examinations, even though they only attain a minor reputation, have an anthology of essays and poems into print after death.[32]

The notion of where this printing fashion was headed was disquieting. Tang Shunzhi mocked those *nouveau riche* who rushed to print their private writings, who, in his eyes, were awkwardly intimating the life style of his class and attempted to make social distinctions via the symbolic power of the printed word.[33] But Tang seems to be tolerant to professional publishers,

29 Sun Shaoyuan, Preface to *Shenghua ji*, 2b.

30 Ōki Yasushi, *Minmatsu kōnan no shuppan bunka no kenkyu*, 23-24.

31 For the ascendancy of printed books in late imperial China, see Joseph P. McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book*, 43-78.

32 Tobie Meyer-Fong, "The Printed World: Books, Publishing Culture, and Society in Late Imperial China," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 66, No. 3 (August 2007): 787.

33 Tang Shunzhi, "Da Wang Zunyan shu" 答王遵岩書, in *Tang jingchuan*

many of whom were frustrated examination aspirants, who had openly or implicitly turned to the printing world with a view to earning a living.

The majority of the compilers and publishers that feature in this section are scholars manqué. "Heightened competition for social status," Dorothy Ko notes, "increased the demand for books, both as ammunition and as token of victory. It was this new market for practical instruction that fueled the commercial publishing industry and created a distinct feature of the emerging reading public."[34] However, ascertaining the readership of a Chinese book is long vexing students of Chinese book history in the imperial period. Unlike the field of European book history, which has yielded a series of important results from encompassing a broader range of materials other than books, scholars of Chinese books find a tremendous paucity of all kinds of materials – such as lists of inventories, advertisements, contracts – that can firmly identify a book's target market, trajectories of distribution, and consumption. It is almost impossible to execute a research in the way like Robert Darnton, who, in *The Business of Enlightenment: A Publishing History of the 'Encyclopédie', 1775-1800* (1979), convincingly traces the publishing story of Diderot's *Encyclopédie* by using materials such as correspondence and contracts between publishers and bibliophiles, duty arrangements and wages of printers and typesetters, sale prices, consumers' written reactions.

In short, readership is a less feasible angle from which to approach the Ming publications in this section. We should also be cautious about the extent to which the audience of a book can be deduced from the rhetorical strategies manifested in, for example, book prefaces and commentaries, or from the publisher's decisions about the quality of ink, paper and page layout.[35] My

xiansheng wenji 唐荊川先生文集 , *juan* 7, CSJCXB, 291.

34 Tobie Meyer-Fong, "The Printed World," 788.

35 Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 34. For the commercialization of late Ming printing business, see Kai-Wing Chow, "Writing for Success: Printing Examinations, and Intellectual Change in Late Ming

strategy is rather to focus on the physical features and contents of these books, as well as the human agents engaged in producing and circulating them, for which sources are much more available and analysable. Based on an investigation of the book producers and the books themselves, I attempt to reconstruct the contours of the invisible consumers and readers.

Private Printing: The Case of Li Rihua

Li Rihua once again attracts our attention. His hometown was Xiushui 秀水 County in Jiaxing Prefecture, located in the heart of the Jiangnan area. It was a one-day boat-ride to the surrounding big cities like Suzhou and Hangzhou via the densest inland waterways in the empire.[36] The Li clan was not locally prominent.[37] His maternal uncle, Zhou Lüjing 周履靖 (1549-1640), took on the job of his primary teacher. Zhou perhaps also helped Li Rihua to build a personal circle. An intimate friend of Xiang Yuanbian, he was presumably the person who first introduced Li to the influential Xiang clan.[38] Li also respected Feng Mengzhen and Chen Jiru, two renowned and active scholars, as his *yeshi* 業師 (learning teacher), who may also have provided him with an introduction to art and connoisseurship.

Initially, Li Rihua dedicated himself to an official career, rather than exploring the artistic world. He succeeded in becoming a *jinshi* in 1592 at the age of 28, and was immediately appointed to an official post in Jiangxi province. But in the next ten years he received no significant promotion. In 1604, mourning his mother's death, the disappointed Li Rihua withdrew from

China," *Late Imperial China*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (1996): 120-57.

36 Tobie Meyer-Fong, "The Printed World," 802.

37 For Li Rihua's boat-trips to the major cities of the Jiangnan region, see Wan Muchun, *Weishuixuan li de xianjuzhe*, 24-30.

38 Two records of his peers from relatively reliable sources: Tan Zhenmo 譚貞默 (1590-1665), "Ming zhongyi dafu taipusi shaoqing lijiuyi xiansheng xingzhuang" 明中議大夫太僕寺少卿李九疑先生行狀 , in Tan Xinjia 譚新嘉 (1874-1939) comp., *Biyi sanji* 碧漪三集 , CSJCSB, Vol. 60, 528-38; Luo Kai 羅炫 ed. Huang Chenghao 黃承昊 comp., *Chongzhen Jiaxing xianzhi* 崇禎嘉興縣志 , 1637 printed edition. Riben cang zhongguo hanjian difangzhi congkan, Vol. 14, 574-75.

officialdom. Hereafter, he lived in Jiaxing for most of the next thirty years, giving priority to family affairs and duties. It was during these years that he created a vast treatise on art in various forms: diaries, poems, prosaic essays, and bibliographical records.

Today, Li Rihua is mainly known for his achievements in connoisseurship. But in fact, he never accumulated a private collection as large as those of his wealthy town fellows, like the Xiang clan and the Wang clan (Wang Jimei 汪繼美 and his son Wang Keyu). We have already seen in chapter 3 that the Jiangnan area was credited with providing various channels for artworks. One could browse and buy artworks from stalls and shops in the marketplace, from itinerant curio dealers, and borrow them from peers. These diverse and very flexible channels emphatically enabled circulations of artworks without transactions.[39] Such excellent circumstances provided Li Rihua with access to a large number of artworks and he was able to develop a rich knowledge of art without investing much capital.[40] His *Diary of Water-tasting Studio* (*Weishuixuan riji* 味水軒日記), which covers the years 1609 to 1616, is the most intensively studied of his writings.[41]

The first anthology of authored inscriptions

Our subjects – *Mr. Lazy-Bamboo's Painting By-Products* (*Zhulan huaying* 竹嬾畫賸 , hereafter *Mr. Lazy-Bamboo*) and *The Continuation of 'Painting By-Products'* (*Xu huaying* 續

39 Ye Mei, "Li Rihua yu jiaxing Xiangshi jiancang jiazu zhi guanxi yanjiu" 李日華與嘉興項氏鑒藏家族之關系研究 , *Nanjing yishu xueyuan xuebao* 南京藝術學院學報 , No. 2 (2011): 27. For Zhou Lüjing, see Wan Muchun, *Weishuixuan li de xianjuzhe*, 140-42.

40 For Li Rihua and his contemporaries' access to artworks, see Craig Clunas, "The Market in 17th Century China: The Evidence of the Li Rihua Diary," in *Meishu shi yu guannian shi* 美術史與觀念史 , ed. Fan Jingzhong and Cao Yiqiang, Vol. 1 (Nanjing: Nanjing shifan daxue chubanshe, 2003), 201-23. For Li Rihua and his art collecting activities, see Wan Muchun, *Weishuixuan li de xianjuzhe*, 97-98; see also Wan Muchun, "You 'Weishuixuan riji' kan Wanli monian Jiaxing diqu de gudongshang" 由《味水軒日記》看萬曆末年嘉興地區的古董商 , *Xin meishu* 新美術 , Vol. 28, No. 6 (2007): 18.

41 This pattern seems applicable to many literati collectors. For gift-exchange and borrowing as connoisseurship channels of Wen Zhengming, see Craig Clunas, *Elegant Debts*, 160-61.

畫賸, hereafter *The Continuation*) – are also products of Li Rihua's retirement. But these two anthologies are almost forgotten by academia. They are both small pamphlets of a single fascicle. They exclusively contain Li's self-inscriptions on his own painting works. Thus, *Mr. Lazy-Bamboo* is the first *independent* anthology of self-inscriptions,[42] and marks a shift from culling inscriptions by other people to compiling one's own. The earliest inscription in *Mr. Lazy-Bamboo* is dated 1607 and the latest 1614. It was first printed in the Tianqi 天啓 Reign (1621-1627). The time span of the second anthology *The Continuation* is from 1625 to 1627, and it was printed in the early Chongzhen 崇禎 Reign (1628-1644). The modern scholar Fan Jingzhong in a published essay states that he has discovered a two-fascicle manuscript entitled *Mr. Lazy-Bamboo's Painting By-Products* containing another 180 painting inscriptions. He assumes that the book is a long lost work produced somewhere between *Mr. Lazy-Bamboo* and *The Continuation*, and the inscriptions in it were written between 1614 and 1625.[43] Unfortunately, I have no access to this book, therefore, my discussion will focus on the two available anthologies.

Li Rihua initiated a way of naming his inscription treatises metaphorically. "*Zhulan*," or "Lazy Bamboo," was his *hao*, or sobriquet. *Ying* means one or several female cousins or maids who accompanied a bride into the bridegroom's family; it was a variant of concubinage and refers to a female of the most inferior status in Chinese polygamy. *Hua-ying*, "*ying* of a painting," then, literally means "subordinate to a painting" and rhetorically denotes

42 The recent scholarship on this dairy and the major research on Li Rihua include Wan Muchun's *Weishuixuan li de xianjuzhe* and Craig Clunas, "The Art Market in 17th Century China," 201-24.

43 Some scholars presume *Mr. Lazy-Bamboo* as the earliest individual anthology of poetic painting inscription. See Li Qi, *Liangsong tihua shi lun*, 322; Huang Yi-Kuan, *Wan Ming zhi sheng Qing nüxing tihua shi yanjiu*, 13. This viewpoint is challenged by those who advocate "Anthology of Painting Inscriptions" four centuries earlier. See Gu Shuguang and Fu Yijing, "Zhongguo gudai diyibu tihuashi bieji," 95-103.

an inscription that, like a *ying*, is collateral to, secondary to, and assists visuality. The contents of the two compilations are poem-dominated, mixed with a very small proportion of prose. The vast majority of the poems are in a modern-style (*jinti* 近体) with a strict metrical regulation and seven or five characters. Both books show little concern for systematically classifying their contents: inscriptions were neither arranged by style, nor by subject matter, but roughly in chronological order. The preface to *Mr. Lazy-Bamboo* elaborates its initiation:

> I am fond of the two activities (painting and poem-composing). But as a neophyte, my creations may not be touching to the beholders and readers. Reading books weakens my painting skill. [...] How is it possible to take care of inscriptions (*ying*)? Whenever my disciples Xu Jiezhi 徐節之 and Chen Weibo 陳衛伯, and my son Heng 亨 see me adding texts on paintings, they always transcribe the texts and collect them together. In their idle days, they take them out, check them, then seek to print them. It will waste thousand pieces of paper! Whether these poems can win people's favour and can be passed on fundamentally depend on my paintings. A poem is like a *ying*; it is too trivial to be preserved (fig. 4-1).[44]

Painting's maid? A further consideration of painting inscriptions

Li Rihua's preface raises some crucial questions. First, *Mr. Lazy-Bamboo* contains 233 poems and short unrhymed proses, and *The Continuation* 209. This means that Li Rihua produced at least 440 paintings during the first two decades of the seventeenth century. However, three or four decades later, these paintings were rarely seen. In *Lives of Painters* (*Duhua lu* 讀畫錄), a crucial biographical book written between 1647-1670 and first printed in 1673 about Chinese artists in the first half of the seventeen

44 Fan Jingzhong, "Zhiwei cao" 紙尾草, in *Cangshu jia* 藏書家, Vol. 11 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 2006), 10-12.

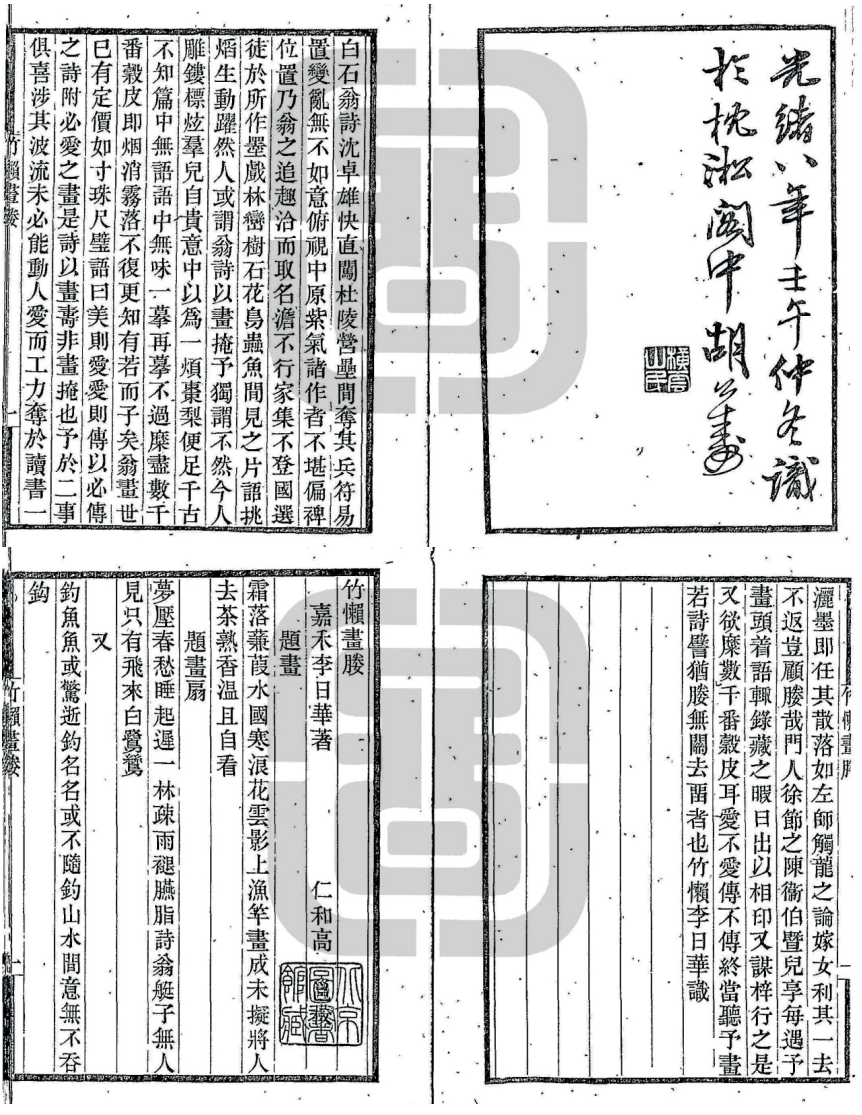


Fig. 4-1 The author-preface pages and the first main body page of *Painting By-products of Mr. Lazy Bamboo*, composed and prefaced by Li Rihua, 1882 printed edition, National Library of China, Beijing.

century,[45] the great biographer Zhou Lianggong 周亮工 (1612-1672) laments: "I had never seen his (Li Rihua's) paintings. Only by reading *Collected Works of Tranquil and Devoted Studio*

45 Li Rihua, preface to *Zhulan huaying*, 1882 printed edition, 1b-2a (see fig. 4-1). This preface is missing from the existing Ming imprints.

(*Tianzhitang ji* 恬致堂集), *Random Jottings of the Purple Peach Studio* (*Zitaoxuan zazhui* 紫桃軒雜綴), and *Mr. Lazy-Bamboo* did I learn that he was good in painting. I had vainly searched for his original painting but had no discovery." [46] Zhou Lianggong eventually saw an album by Li Rihua at the home of Sun Chengze 孫承澤 (1592-1676) in Beijing and later he had access to a few others. Zhou Lianggong was a very active art critic and connoisseur based in Nanjing during the dynastic transition. He had a multitude of acquaintances in the art circles in the Jiangnan area. His observation about the scarceness of Li Rihua paintings probably reflects the situation nationwide. A possible reason for the tension between the diligent creation of paintings indicated by Li Rihua's inscriptions and the high percentage of these paintings being lost is that Li Rihua was a painter particularly interested in the fan format. In *Mr. Lazy-Bamboo*, approximately 35% of the entries are for fans. As noted in chapter 2, the fan format is much less durable due to its small size and frequent usage.[47] Since the format is particularly common in gift-giving, we can also infer that a large proportion of Li Rihua's inscriptions were perhaps made for social obligations. These inscribed fans would have soon worn out. The high loss of Li Rihua's paintings shows that artworks in the seventeenth century were extremely vulnerable and highly ephemeral. Minor painters like Li Rihua might have had their paintings circulated, but they were rarely transmitted.

Second, Li Rihua appears to be preoccupied with the visual part of the painting and therefore totally neglects the verbal part. He thus compares the relation between painting and inscription to the relation between a bride and a *ying* maid. He purports that this is why he is reluctant to undertake unworthy efforts to collect and copy his inscriptions, and that his book was only produced because his disciples and his son were eager to do the

46 For research on Zhou Lianggong, see Hongnam Kim, "Chou Liang-kung and his 'Tu-hua-lu' (*Lives of Painters*): Patron-critic and Painters in Seventeenth Century China" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1985); Hongnam Kim, *The Life of a Patron: Zhou Lianggong (1612-1672) and the Painters of Seventeenth-Century China* (New York: China Institute in America Gallery, 1996).

47 Zhou Lianggong, *Duhua lu* 讀畫錄 , *juan* 1, XXSKQS, 568.

work. It is very difficult to verify his statement. His undervaluing of inscriptions could be sincere, as he certainly credits paintings as decisive carriers with which to transcend inscriptions. He extols Shen Zhou who, he believes, "attached the poems which he hoped to hand down to the paintings which can definitely be treasured. His poems gain permanency on the strength of his paintings, rather than that his poems are overshadowed by his paintings."[48] Ironically, things have transpired rather contrary to Li Rihua's wishes: the vast majority of his paintings are lost, but his inscriptions survive. But we cannot rule out the possibility that Li Rihua, a well-educated scholar, was aware of the power of texts in terms of passing on a writer's fame and thoughts. Therefore, while complaining that the publication of his inscriptions was a total waste of paper, he still entrusted the publishing project to his family juniors. Perhaps his underselling of inscriptions was more a question of modesty.

Another compilatory method?

If Li Rihua's account is true, *Mr. Lazy-Bamboo* is the first known anthology gathering and transcribing poems directly from paintings. How did Li Rihua (or his son and students) glean the inscriptions for the book? Did they make a copy of the inscription before presenting the painting to its recipient? The question can be posed in a more general way: how did the inscriptions become part of all sorts of textual anthologies, including the catalogues discussed in the previous chapter, individual anthologies, and anthologies specifically for inscriptions?

Li Rihua's diary records the way he collected inscriptions from other people's paintings. On one day in 1610, he notes that he had just returned from an event at Xiang Yuanbian's residence where he had been appreciating a few excellent paintings, two of which bore a number of inscriptions. He regretfully reports, "the twilight was closing in. I could not memorize them." Yet,

48 However, in at least ten extant artworks by Li Rihua, such a preference for the fan format is not found.

he carefully records the inscriptions written on the remaining paintings that he has memorized.[49] Memorization was a very basic but significant way of transmitting all sorts of texts. It may well have been one of the most common methods by which catalogue compilers collected inscriptions from paintings that they did not own. Certainly, making transcriptions of paintings was also common.

Two anthologies by the early Qing painter Wang Yuanq 王 原 祁 (1642-1715) suggest a third way. Both anthologies are of paintings inscriptions. One is a handwritten manuscript, and the other is a printed book.[50] The manuscript features many traces of revisions, corrections, and deletions. It is thus believed, as some scholars have pointed out, to be a collection of rough drafts of the inscriptions that Wang Yuanqi would later transcribe onto paintings. The preparation of these drafts was, understandably, probably a way of avoiding unwanted writing errors and corrections on painting surfaces. The interesting aspect is that Wang Yuanqi carefully accumulated his drafts and later published them in a book of painting inscriptions. This hypothesis is evidenced by the fact that the contents of the manuscript is consistent with those of the printed anthology, while some inscriptions on Wang Yuanqi's extant paintings have discrepancies with those in the two anthologies. These discrepancies probably resulted from last-minute changes when Wang transcribed inscriptions from his rough drafts onto painting surfaces.

Wang Yuanqi's drafts are a rare extant example, while it is logical to speculate that the employment of draft paper was not unusual among painting inscribers. This method would certainly assist any inscriber who planned to publish his inscriptions later. As long as he keeps the draft paper, he does not have to look at the paintings again, which may well have scattered anyway. It is unclear whether Li Rihua dealt with his inscriptions in this

49 Li Rihua, preface to *Zhulan huaying*, 1882 printed edition, 1b-2a. See fig. 4-1.
50 Li Rihua, *Weishuixuan riji*, *juan* 2, 344.

way. The possibility that Li kept his drafts in chronological order cannot be ruled out, though, as even though not all his inscriptions carry date information, Li's inscriptions do appear to have been arranged chronologically in the two anthologies. If this is the case, this compilatory method raises a series of questions. To what extent can we describe Li's anthologies as anthologies that draw texts from paintings? To what extent does this differ from *Audible Paintings*, which as sourced from other books? In light of the common procedure of compiling a book, culling inscriptions from a painting is, to some degree, an ideal situation that perhaps none of the books of inscriptions can or even need to achieve.

Compilatory incentive

The earliest existing imprint of *Mr. Lazy-Bamboo* is the original version that Li Rihua published. But Li's preface is missing from this version. Each folio has eight lines with 19 characters, and the same arrangement can be found in *The Continuation*. The fonts used in these two books are slightly different, which indicates that they were made by different carvers. Both books have a simple and sober layout. Neither of them has punctuation or annotations. They also have only one colour of ink and there are no illustrations, which often appeared in delicate publications (fig. 4-2). This layout and design suggests that the targeted readers of Li Rihua's books were not those looking for visual pleasure from literary texts that were presented in books with dazzling layouts and refined illustrations, like those shown in figures 2-19 and 4-10.

Inscriptions to Ink Gentleman (*Mojun tiyu* 墨君題語 , hereafter *Ink Gentleman*), another anthology of inscriptions generated within Li Rihua's circle, is indicative of the possibility that Li Rihua's publications of inscriptions had social aims. The two-fascicle *Ink Gentleman* contains inscriptions that were claimed to have been collected from the ink-bamboo paintings of Li Rihua's

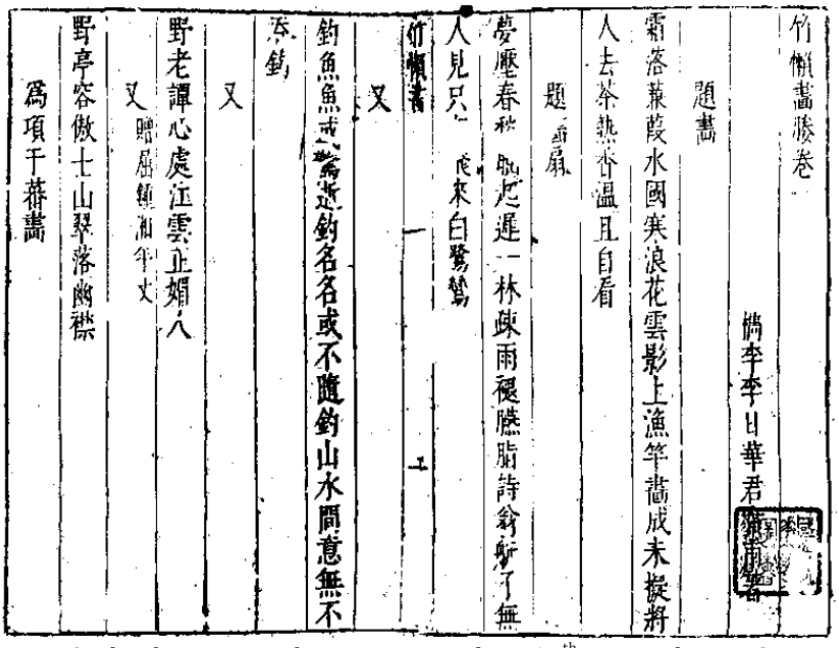


Fig. 4-2 The first page of *Mr. Lazy-Bamboo*, 17th cent. edition. Source: SKQSCMCS, *Zi bu*, Vol. 72, 25.

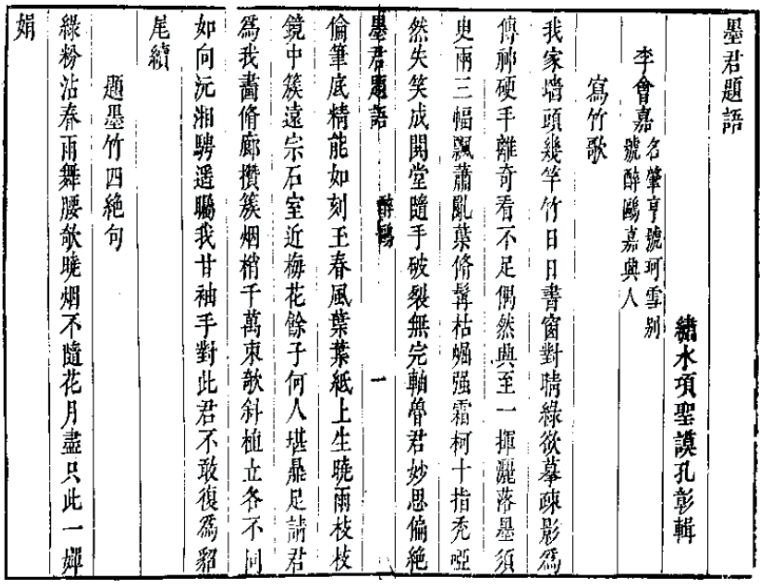
pupil Lu Dezhi 魯得之 (b. 1585). The first fascicle was compiled by Jiang Yuanzuo 江元祚 (d. ca. 1641) exclusively for inscriptions written by Li Rihua. The second fascicle was compiled by Xiang Shengmo 項圣謨 (1597-1658), embodying inscriptions by Rihua's son Li Zhaoheng 李肇亨 (b. 1591), also known as monk Kexue after the collapse of the Ming dynasty. Jiang Yuanzuo, a native of Hangzhou, was associated with father and son Li. He had prefaced another of Li Rihua's writings, *Third Anthology of Six Ink-Stone Studio* (*Liuyanzhai sanbi* 六硯齋三筆). Xiang Shengmo was the grandson of Xiang Yuanbian, with whose clan Rihua had intensive associations. Xiang Shengmo even married a daughter to the eldest grandson of Li Rihua to consolidate their ties. Upon this marriage, the friendship of the two families was transformed into a much more stable relationship. One inscription in *Ink Gentleman* by Li Rihua lauds Xiang Shengmo and Lu Dezhi unreservedly:

> Nowadays the Way (*dao* 道) of painting is scattered. The best landscape painting is by Xiang Kongzhang (Xiang Shengmo), while the best ink-bamboo painting is by Lu Kongsun (Lu Dezhi). Xiang is a son-in-law of my family, just as Su Dongpo had [a son-in-law named] Wang [Xiang 王庠]. Lu is my pupil, reminiscent of Manshi 漫仕 (Mi Fu) who had [a pupil named] Cai Tianqi 蔡天啟 (Cai Zhao 蔡肇). It is shameful that I am not as good as Su Shi and Mi Fu in painting and calligraphy, so as to exalt Xiang and Lu's fame. How worthless is my friendship (*xiangzhi* 相知) to them![51]

This inscription emphatically illuminates the social circle in which *Inscriptions to Ink Gentleman* was embraced and embedded. The acknowledgement of the author and compiler on the first page of each fascicle automatically declares to the reader that the book was based on the inscriptions by Li Rihua and Li Zhaoheng on the paintings of Du Dezhi, and was compiled and printed by Jiang Yuanzuo and Xiang Shengmo. The multi-sided participation and the interpersonal relationships distinguish this book distinct from the simple pattern manifested in *Audible Paintings*.

The participants in printing *Ink Gentleman* remained close to the Li family. Commercial benefits may not have been the primary concern in publishing this anthology and the previous two. In commercial printing, as long as woodblocks had not worn out, they would be recycled for another printing project. This occurred mainly because the purchase of woodblocks were the greatest expenditure in the whole printing process, and recycling them could considerably lower the cost. The woodblocks for *Ink Gentleman,* on the contrary, were not immediately re-carved. They were stored intact in Jiaxing, Li Rihua's hometown. In 1768, a Jiaxing educated man named Cao Bingjun 曹秉钧 mended the damage to these woodblocks so that they could be used for another print of Li Rihua's books (fig. 4-3).

51 Ling Lizhong, "Fayue jiangnan diyijia – Loudong huapai yanjiu sanze" 閔閱江南第一家 —— 婁東畫派研究三則 , *Nanzong zhengmai: Huatan dilixue*, ed. Shanghai Museum (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2012), 122-31.


墨君題語

緒水項聖謨孔彰輯

李會嘉名肇亨號珂雪別號醉陽嘉興人

寫竹歌

我家墻頭幾竿竹日日書窗對晴綠欲摹疎影爲傳神硬手難奇看不足偶然興至一揮灑落墨須臾兩三幅飄蕭亂葉脩莖枯媚强霜柯十指禿啞然失笑成閎堂隨手破裂無完軸魯君妙思偏絶

墨君題語　辭陽　一

倫筆底精能如刻玉春風葉葉紙上生曉雨枝枝鏡中簇遠宗石室近梅花餘子何人堪鼎足請君爲我畫脩廊攢簇烟梢千萬束欹斜植立各不同

尾續

題墨竹四絶句

如向沅湘騁遥矚我甘袖手對此君不敢復爲貂

綠粉沾春雨舞腰欹曉烟不隨花月盡只此一婵娟

Fig. 4-3 The first page of *Ink Gentleman*, printed by Cao Bingjun using the repaired original woodblocks in 1768. Source: SKQSCMCS, *Zi bu*, Vol. 72, 71.

Li Rihua's books were the result of a fashion for educated men to distribute their imprinted individual anthologies to smooth their way through social occasions and into beneficial social relationships.[52] Li Rihua would have produced these books by buying in professional services somewhere in Jiaxing.[53] His social status and multiple social roles as a local elite, official, and renowned painter and connoisseur must have played a part in preparing these works for printing. This social element is absent in the Ming cases described below. He would have presented the books to associates on certain occasions as gifts. This speculation does not exclude the possibility that the books might have further disseminated as a result of borrowing and transcribing. Moreover, the social aspects did not completely rule out commerciality. There are cases of Ming private printings being sold or being deposited in a bookstore.[54] But the first batch of Li's book readers

52 Li Rihua, *Mojun tiyu*, in *Zhulan huaying*, 124.

53 Joseph P. McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book*, 90.

54 Chinese wood-block printing was of high mobility. See Cynthia J. Brokaw, "On the History of the Book in China," in *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. Cynthia J. Brokaw and Chow Kai-wing (Berkeley: University

were most probably from his personal circle. This unique series of printed books of painting inscriptions was produced and serialized for social engagement. Certainly, one can wonder to what extent modern researchers can endow past objects (including textual anthologies) with the characteristics and meanings of their creators,[55] but Li Rihua and his circle indisputably moulded these books as the fruits of late Ming elite culture.

Private Printing: Cases of Two Obscure Painters

This subsection is concerned with two minor figures and their books of inscriptions which have long been lost. Even though these anthologies are no longer available for physical analysis, I will use materials related to the anthology compilers in the hope of collecting all possible pieces to form a picture of these books.

Zhao Cheng

Our first subject is a painter named Zhao Cheng 趙澄 (ca. 1577-after 1657, *zi* Xuejiang 雪江 and Zhanzhi 湛之). Zhao Cheng was not a degree-holder, and lived an itinerant. His traceable life history began in his hometown Yingzhou 穎州 (modern Fuyang 富陽) in Fengyang 鳳陽 Prefecture, and then shifts to northeast Shandong (Donglai 東萊 , modern Laizhou 萊州 , and Jiaoxi 膠西 , modern Jiaoxian 膠縣), then to Kaifeng 開封 , and finally back to Fengyang in later years.[56] Different from the majority of Ming painters known to the art history inhabiting the Yangtze Delta, Zhao Cheng seems to have been based in the northern part of the Ming empire, along the middle and lower reaches of the Huang and Huai rivers. This was a region distant from the big cultural centres in the south, yet relatively closer to the two empire

of California Press, 2005), 9.

55 Kai-wing Chow, *Publishing, Culture, and Power in Early Modern China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 80.

56 Leora Auslander et al., "AHR Conversation Historians and the Study of Material Culture," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 114, Issue 5 (Dec 2009): 1365.

capitals, i.e. Beijing and Nanjing.

Zhou Lianggong's *Lives of Painters* includes a biography of Zhao Cheng. Since Zhou had a direct association with Zhao Cheng, his biographical record is by far the most reliable source of the painter's life. The point that most deserves our attention in this biography is its emphasis on the painter's ability to imitate. As told, Zhao Cheng once imitated twenty ancient paintings for Zhou, and later these copies were said to have spread overseas to the King of Ryukyu. It is also reported that, having befriended the high court official and well-known calligrapher Wang Duo in Beijing, Zhao Cheng took the opportunity to copy a number of paintings from the imperial collections in a smaller size. These imitations were executed in such an exquisite way that in the biography Zhou Lianggong cites a poem he inscribed on one of them, marvelling: "all the brushworks are of resemblance with no exception."[57] Zhou further cites a complimentary poem by Wang Shizhen 王士禎 – a member of his coterie – which was written on another imitation of Zhao Cheng.[58] I have no intention of questioning the credibility of these accounts, but I do ask for attention for the fact that this record and the inscribed poems suggest that Zhao Cheng was very probably a painter who made his name and his living from imitations of old paintings. This speculation is supported by more than just Zhou Lianggong's biography. An inscription by Qian Qianyi entitled "Inscriptions for the intimation of Zhao Zigu's *Zhandao tu* by a native of Kaifeng Zhao Cheng" 題汴人趙澄臨趙子固棧道圖 is another helpful source.[59] This long, seven-metric poem issued from the leader of the literary circle extols the painter's exuberant painting skill and laments the painter's obscurity. Its title plainly states

57 Zhou Lianggong, *Duhua lu*, *juan* 3, 46-48. Zhao Cheng is also recorded in Liu Huwen 劉虎文 and Zhou Tianjue 周天爵 eds., Li Fuqing 李復慶 et al. comp., *Gazetteer of Fuyang Prefecture* (*Daoguang fuyang xianzhi* 道光阜陽縣誌), 1829 printed edition, *juan* 13, 14.

58 Zhou Lianggong, *Duhua lu*, *juan* 3, 47.

59 Ibid., 47. Wang Shizhen also selected five poems inscribed on the paintings of Zhao Cheng (including the one quoted by Zhou Lianggong) into his own literary anthology *Daijingtang ji* 帶經堂集, Lueshu tang 略書堂 1718 printed edition, *juan* 4, 9b, *juan* 12, 3b; *juan* 13, 12b; *juan* 19, 2a, 3a.

that the painting was painted in the style of the Southern Song painter Zhao Mengjian 趙孟堅 (1199-1264).

None of the extant paintings by Zhao Cheng bear poetic inscriptions. Mostly they have very short signatures stating "fang…Xuejiang daoren Zhao Cheng 仿…雪江道人趙澄" (Imitation of…by Mr. Snow River Daoist Zhao Cheng).[60] *Snowy Hill and Bamboo Cottage Imitating Fan Kuan* (*Fang fankuan xueyan zhuwu tu* 倣范寬雪巘竹屋圖 , 1647), for example, claims to have followed the style of Fan Kuan. There is an obvious preference for Song painters. *Daoism Mountains and Dreamy Shadow* (*Xianshan mengying tu* 仙山夢影圖 , 1651, fig. 4-4) is an example portraying a fairyland scene with fussy line drawing, where a Daoist palace is isolated by water and grotesquely whirling stone-hills. Its style, resembles less Dong Qichang and his followers, and more late Ming painters who learnt from Song tradition such as Wu Bin 吳彬 (1573-1620) and Chen Hongshou 陳洪綬 (1599-1652). Very probably, he was a professional painter catering to the late Ming art market which had a high demand for Song paintings.

According to Zhou Lianggong, Zhao Cheng created a number of poetic inscriptions and, in his eyes, their literariness was praiseworthy. Zhou's teacher, Sun Chengze, also a "friend" of Zhao Cheng, selected forty poems for publication in a single, printed volume.[61] Zhou records Sun Chengze's remarks regarding the printing of this book for Zhao Cheng:[62]

> [Zhao Cheng] paints in such a way that sometimes he produces a certain number of works per day, while sometimes he cannot finish a single painting in several days. He either inscribes a poem before he paints, or he paints before he inscribes his

60 Qian Qianyi, *Muzhai youxue ji* 牧齋有學集 , *juan* 6, SBCKCB, facsimile reprint of 1664 printed edition, 16b-17a.

61 So far, *Bamboo and Stone* (*Zhushi tu* 竹石圖), a hanging scroll (165.5 × 63 cm) in Shandong Provence Museum, has not been published in a resolution that provides a legible inscription. The inscription thus requires further investigation.

62 For Sun Chengze, see Hongnan Kim, "Chou Liang-kung and His Tu-hua-lu Painters," in Li Chu-tsing ed. *Artists and Patrons: Some Social and Economic Aspects of Chinese Painting* (Lawrence: University of Kansas; Kansas City: Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art; and Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1989), 191.

Fig. 4-4 Zhao Cheng, *Daoism Mountains and Dreamy Shadow*, 1651, ink and colour on silk, 48.5 × 30.6 cm, Tianjin Art Museum, Tianjin. Source: *Tumu*, Vol. 9, 182.

verse. I have plucked forty poems [inscribed on his paintings] and printed them.

Zhou Lianggong must have had this book on hand as he then proceeds to cite three poems from it. All of these poems are about an idealized landscape featuring idyllic villages, thus they were quite routine in terms of the subject matter and literary style. It is difficult to speculate about the number of printed copies and the

scale of the circulation of this tiny book. But the people actively involved in producing this book are noteworthy. One is Zhou Lianggong, a noted patron of many painters of his day.[63] He often opened his residence in Nanjing for painters, providing them with accommodation and food.[64] It would come as no surprise to learn that he had been a patron of Zhao Cheng, at least for a while. Sun Chengze, a significant art collector and a friend of Zhou Lianggong and Wang Duo, was also involved.[65] A native of Beijing, Sun spent most of his life there. Between 1635 and 1637, he briefly assumed posts in Chenliu 陳留 and Xiangfu 祥符 , two counties under the jurisdiction of Kaifeng Prefecture. Notably, Zhao Cheng also stayed in Kaifeng and Beijing for several years. It is tempting to consider that Sun Chengze might once have been a patron or a client of Zhao Cheng. The project to make a book of Zhao's poetic inscriptions may have been a reciprocal gift to the painter, or an implicit way of repaying the painter's service.

Wang Duo and Qian Qianyi were also probably Zhao Cheng's customers, or friend-patrons. This speculation allows us to explain why Zhao Cheng painted forty paintings – an impressive number – that carry "Wang Duo's inscriptions in regular scripts all over the surface." [66] Zhou Liangong admired this batch of inscribed paintings very much and regretted that they were obtained by a collector in Fengyang. Wang Duo did not include any of these inscriptions in his own corpus, but he included a preface dedicated to a painting album by Zhao Cheng.[67] Accordingly, he first met Zhao Cheng in 1647. In the eyes of Wang, the once-aspirant educated man Zhao Cheng was a seventy-year-old senior then. Deeply frustrated by the era

63 Zhou Lianggong, *Duhua lu*, *juan* 3, 48.

64 Hongnan Kim, "Chou Liang-kung and His Tu-hua-lu Painters," 192-94.

65 James Cahill, *The Painter's Practice*, 67.

66 For Sun Chengze's connection with Wang Duo, see Xue Longchun, "Shufa yingchou yu Wang Duo de renmai wangluo – yi shoushuren zhong de Henan difangguan yu Qing chu xingui weili" 書法應酬與王鐸的人脈網絡 —— 以受書人中的河南地方官與清初新貴為例 , *Qinghua xuebao* 清華學報 , Vol. 40, No. 3 (2010): 528-29.

67 Zhou Lianggong, *Duhua lu*, 1673 edition, *juan* 3, 47.

and his righteous personality, Zhao could not ingratiate people in authority. He chose to articulate his ambition to learn from ancient painting masters and wield a painting brush. But my argument is that Zhao Cheng is much less likely a hermit painter than a professional painter who made a living selling replicas of old masters. If this is the case, the book of inscriptions that Sun Chengze printed would represent the sponsorship of a minor painter by an influential collector in the art circle. The circulation of this book of inscriptions could hopefully raise the painter's reputation and marketability. Furthermore, the geographical localities of Zhao Cheng's book suggest an enthusiasm for creating, compiling and publishing painting inscriptions in the north of China, an area that had been in the shadow of the brilliant achievements of the Jiangnan area, but which is by no means meaningless to seventeenth-century art history in China.

Fan Yu

The second book of painting inscriptions to be discussed shares some common ground with Zhao Cheng's anthology. This lost book embodies inscriptions by a late Ming literatus named Fan Yu 范迂.[68] Fan Yu's elder brother, Fan Yingbin 范應賓, became *jinshi* in 1592. If we use this year as a calculation index, he was presumably born between the 1560s and 1570s, at almost the same time as Zhao Cheng. The Fan brothers were natives of Jiaxing Prefecture, the same place as Li Rihua and Xiang Yuanbian.[69] Compared to his *jinshi* brother, Fan Yu was only a Government Student (*zhusheng* 諸生) living in his hometown, but

68 Wang Duo, *Nishanyuan xua nji* 擬山園選集, 1653 printed edition, *juan* 30, 17-18.

69 Fan Yu changed his name. See Shen Jiyou 沈季友 (1654-1699), *Zuili shixi* 檇李詩繫, SKQS edition, *juan* 18, 16a. For the sake of accuracy and consistency, he will be referred to as Fan Yu in the discussion of this dissertation. *Encyclopaedic Compilation of Writings on Calligraphy and Painting of the Pei Wen Zhai Studio* (*Peiwen zhai shuhua pu* 佩文齋書畫譜) records his sobriquet Manweng 曼翁, which must be an error as it is inconsistent with all previous records. Sun Yueban 孫嶽頒 comp., *Yuding peiwen zhai shuhua pu*, SKQS edition, *juan* 58, 5b.

he was known for his literary talents.[70] It is said that he did not learn painting until he was forty years old, and then he became an enthusiastic inscriber of his own paintings.[71] His inscriptions were perhaps a device for covering up the deficiency in his painting skills, but also a way of interacting with friends who were also fond of literature and painting.[72] These inscriptions were later compiled into an anthology *Poems Inscribed on Paintings* (*Tihua shi* 題畫詩). Even less is known about this lost anthology than is known about Zhao Cheng's anthology. We know nothing about its physical appearance, scale, printer, and compilation process. It is also questionable whether the book title originated from Fan Yu or from later book recorders. A fragment of a line from the book's preface, written by Zhang Jiaru 張嘉孺 (fl. 17th cent.), a minor educated man from Jiangyin 江陰 , is preserved in *Encyclopedic Compilation of Writings on Calligraphy and Painting of the Pei Wen Zhai Studio* (*Peiweizhai shuhua pu* 佩文齋書畫譜 , 1708).[73] This means that Fan Yu's book was still obtainable in 1708. About a hundred years later, the SKQS editors also mentioned Fan Yu's book in a critical bibliographical review of all the previous anthologizations of poetic painting inscriptions.[74] But it is ambiguous whether, by that time, the book still existed or was just known to a certain bibliophiles.

Compared to Zhao Cheng, Fan Yu seems to have had a

70 For Fan Yu's native place, see Luo Kai ed., Huang Chenghao comp., *Jiaxing xianzhi*, *juan* 20, 25b. This gazetteer (*juan* 14, page 83a) also embodies the biography of his wife lady Yao 姚 . Xue Gang 薛岡 (1561-ca. 1641), a native of Zhejiang, refers to Fan Yu as "a person from the same province of mine." See Xue Gang, *Tiajuetang wenji* 天爵堂文集 , *juan* 17, edition printed between 1627-1644, 31b.

71 Yao Lü 姚旅 (d.1623), *Lu shu* 露書 , *juan* 3, edition printed during 1622-1627, 67a.

72 Tan Yuanchun, *Tan Yuanchun ji* 譚元春集 , *juan* 30, punct. and annot. Chen Xingzhen (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1998), 823.

73 Zhong Xing, *Yinxiuxuan ji* 隱秀軒集 , *juan* huangji wuyanlü san 黃集五言律三 , 5b; *juan* xuangji qiyanguyi 玄集七言古一 , 15a-15b; Ge Yilong 葛一龍 (1567-1640), *Ge Zhenfu shiji* 葛震甫詩集 , *juan* xinlüzhai 新綠齋 , edition printed between 1627-1644, 12a-12b.

74 Sun Yueban comp., *Yuding peiwen zhai shuhua pu*, *juan* 58, 5. Zhang Jiaru, *zi* Yuanli 元禮 , is a native of Jiangyin 江陰 . For the biography of Zhang Jiaru, see Feng Shiren 馮士仁 ed., Xu Zuntang 徐遵湯 and Zhou Gaoqi 周高起 comp., *Chongzhen Jiangyin xianzhi* 崇禎江陰縣志 , *juan* 3, 1640 printed edition, 117a.

much more economically secure existence. He had a wide circle of friends, among whom Tan Yuanchun 譚元春 (1586-1637) and Zhong Xing 鍾惺 (1574-1624) were the two most reputable of their day. These two famous literary men left writings about their associations with Fan Yu. They indulged themselves at banquets, or in music and opera performances, or interacted through exchanges of poems and paintings. A long poem that Tan Yuanchun wrote for Fan Yu describes Fan as a hospitable hermit, who "hearing about my [Tan's] coming at dawn for lake and mountain, he eagerly presented five poems and three paintings." This poem accentuates the identity of the artist Fan Yu: he was not an artisan-painter; hence he would say no to those who begged for paintings.[75] It is true that Fan Yu was never known as a skilful painter. The local gazetteer of Jiaxing records him as a *shanren* 山人 (a mountain man), an ambiguous name for men of letters who failed examinations and were notorious for networking.[76] Fan Yu also seems to have been active in the local community. His associations with some contemporary cultural icons left many traces in the poems of the latter.[77]

One of the very few extant literary creations by Fan Yu is a poem in *Painting Model Book of Ten-Bamboo Studio* (*Shizhu zhai shuhua pu* 十竹齋書畫譜). Matched with an image of a blossoming wintersweet (also known as Japanese allspice), the poem appears on the verso folio in a free-hand calligraphic style. (fig. 4-5) Was this poem included in Fan Yu's book? We may never know. *Painting Model Book of Ten-Bamboo Studio* was printed during 1627-1633. The publisher of this book, Hu Zhengyan 胡正言 (1584-1674), was from Huizhou, but based his printing business in Nanjing. At that time, Fan Yu might have already moved to Nanjing.[78] The

75 Siku quanshu editorial board, "Zongmu 總目" to Chen Bangyan comp., *Yuding lidai tihuashi lei*, *juan* 1, 12.

76 Tan Yuanchun, *Xinke tanyouxia heji*, *juan* 18, 2b-3a.

77 Huang Chenghao, *Jiaxing xianzhi*, *juan* 20, 25b.

78 Gao Chu 高出 (fl. 17*th* cent.), *Jingshan'an ji* 鏡山庵集 , *juan* 19, 1626 printed edition, 28b-29a; Tan Yuanchun, *Tan Yuanchun ji*, 196; Zhong Xing, *Yinxiuxuan ji*, *juan huangji wuyanlü san*, 4a; Zhuo Fazhi 卓發之 (1587-1638), *Luli ji* 漉籬集 , *juan* 4, edition printed between 1627-1644, 10a; Lu Bao 陸寶 (fl. 17th cent.), *Shuangjing ji* 霜鏡集 , *juan* 7, edition printed between 1627-1644, 5a. Xue Gang

Fig. 4-5 Fan Yu's poem illustrating a picture, in section "Plum Model" (*Meipu* 梅譜), *Painting Model Book of Ten-Bamboo Studio*, *juan* 13, 1817 Mustard Garden print, folios 21-22.

two may well have established contact with each other there. Since Hu Zhengyan opted to approach people for contributions to his books, the two could have connected in this way.[79]

It is notable that Fan Yu was also actively involved in book printing. A few Ming books acknowledge his contribution as reviewer and reviser, such as *Five Assorted Offerings* (*Wu Zazu* 五雜俎) written by Xie Zhaozhe 謝肇淛 (1567-1624), a Nanjing official who briefly served in Nanjing in 1605 and 1606. Fan Yu also printed an anthology for his deceased wife who enjoyed fame as a talented female poet.[80] To this end, Fan

describes his personality as "passionate and hospitable," see *Tianjuetang wenji*, *juan* 17, 31b.

79 For his settlement in Nanjing, see Shen Jiyou 沈季友 (1654-1699), *Zuili shixi* 檇李詩繫 , *juan* 18, SKQS edition, 16a. Bu Shen did not specify the time of this moving.

80 For Hu Zhengyan, see Suzanne Wright, "Visual Communication and Social Identity in Woodblock-Printed Letter papers of the Late Ming Dynasty" (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1999); Ma Meng-ching, "Yiwei yu banhua yu huihua zhijian – 'Shizhu zhai shuhua pu' de duochong xingge" 依違於版畫與繪畫之間－《十竹齋書畫譜》的多重性格 , *Gugong xueshu jikan*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Autumn

Yu played a similar role to that of Chen Jiru, a much more famous mountain man of their day, who engaged in publishing enterprises as a writer and editor.[81] But he might have been more deeply engaged in book publishing than Chen Jiru ever was. We may speculate, then, that Fan Yu, as someone much more familiar with book printing much more than Zhao Cheng, might have printed his own book of painting inscriptions. However, the lack of information makes it very difficult to substantiate this speculation or determine whether the book was self-funded or sponsored by cooperative publishers.

The two anthologies in this subsection were pamphlet-size and printed in small numbers. Their distribution would have been primarily within a relatively narrow circle. From the perspective of book history, these characteristics mean that they were liable to disappear or be lost. Indeed, the SKQS editorial board had already observed this disadvantage. They compared these Ming books to "faint flames" (*juehuo* 爝火) about to be extinguished. By contrast, they praised a voluminous anthology (120 fascicles) commissioned by the Qing emperor, and compared it to the "brilliant sun" (*yaoling* 曜靈), which is mighty and sustaining.[82] Their deprecation of the Ming publications underpins the fragility of private compilations of inscriptions in the pre-modern era. But it is also a discursive manifestation of the power of centralized bibliographic projects, which the Qing government was keen to sponsor. Glen Dudbridge has shed light on book transmission in medieval China, suggesting that books survive only if someone is committed enough to make copies of them.[83] This argument is also true of books in Ming China, and of the books of inscriptions that we have discussed above. Their loss indicates a lack of the power to motivate their reproduction.

2000): 109-49.

81 Huang Yuji 黃虞稷 (1629-1691), *Qianqing tang shumu* 千頃堂書目, SKQS edition, *juan* 28, 25b.

82 For Chen Jiru and publishing, see Jamie Greebaum, *Chen Jiru (1558-1639)*, 67-81.

83 Siku quanshu editorial board, "Zongmu 總目" to *Yuding lidai tihuashi lei*, comp. Chen Bangyan, *juan* 1, 12.

It may not be a mere coincidence that, except for the full-volume-length anthologies generated from the circle of Li Rihua, other Ming anthologies are either part of larger publishing projects or merely addenda to books. This strategy of incorporating a small anthology into a book series or a large-scale book would have contributed to the preservation of these anthologies. There might have been more anthologies of painting inscriptions in the Ming period, whose existence we do not even know.

Commercial Printing: Mao Jin and *Ni Yunlin*

This subsection examines Mao Jin's book, *Ni Yunlin*, which was mentioned in the introduction. The printer Mao Jin was best known to his coevals and to posterity for his extraordinary business of collecting and publishing books. His social identity significantly differentiates his publication from the previous five. I will show in the following that the book was almost certainly printed with a commercial aim and to appeal to anonymous readers in an expanding book market.

Mao Jin and his printing empire

Mao Jin was born in a farmer's family in Suzhou's Changshu 常熟 County.[84] He was already showing a talent for learning classical texts in childhood. But like the vast majority of examination candidates, he never passed the provincial examination.[85] Having decided not to spend his whole life struggling with the examination, Mao devoted himself to his book publishing enterprise, and achieved tremendous success.[86] At one point, he had over one hundred workers in his workshop.

84 Glen Dudbridge, *Lost Books of Medieval China*, 11.

85 Feng Guifen 馮貴芬 comp., *Tongzhi Suzhou fuzhi* 同治蘇州府志, *juan* 99, Zhongguo defangzhi jicheng Jiangsu fuxian zhi ji 中國地方誌集成江蘇府縣志, Vol. 9 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1991), 580-81.

86 Chen Hu 陳瑚, "Wei Mao qianzai yinju qiyan xiaozhuan" 為毛潛在隱居乞言小傳, in *Que'an xiansheng wenchao* 確庵先生文鈔, 1870 printed edition *juan* 5, quoted in Su Xiaojun, "Mao Jin yu Jiguge keshu kaolue" 毛晉與汲古閣刻書考略, *Zhongguo dianji yu wenhua* 中國典籍與文化, No. 3 (2006): 49.

Throughout his life, he published 650 kinds of books that were extremely popular, so much so that they even spread overseas to the Ryukyu kingdom.[87] Mao Jin's printing enterprise was fundamentally commercial. Even though his friends Qian Qianyi and Lu Shiyi 陆世儀 (1611-1672) defended him for having printed some books that were unprofitable but historically valuable,[88] he could not have sustained such a large enterprise for decades without an element of commerciality and profit-earning.[89] Mao Jin's printing was different from other publishers who engaged in the activity as a hobby or for fame or fun. His enterprise was primarily profit-making and thus market-oriented.

To a large degree, Mao Jin's social identity differentiates him and his book from the other compilers in this chapter. The book cannot be isolated from the commerce and printing world of the late Ming. This does not mean that Mao Jin was totally disinterested in painting inscriptions. Conversely, he was familiar with this type of writing and printed an anthology that featured all sorts of inscriptions by Zhu Xi. This anthology, entitled *Inscriptions and Colophons of Mr. Hui'an* (*Hui'an tiba* 晦庵題跋), has a considerable part dedicated to painting inscriptions. It was perhaps this familiarity with painting inscriptions that led Mao Jin to shed light on another historical figure: Ni Zan.

Ni Yunlin and Ni Zan mania

Ni Yunlin (fig. 4-6) was printed around 1638, and named

87 Mao Jin's life is synthesized from several important biographies: Qian Qianyi, "Mao zijin liushi shou xu" 毛子晉六十壽序, in *Muzhai youxue ji*, *juan* 23, 20-21; Qian Qianyi, "Yinhu Mao jun muzhiming" 隱湖毛君墓誌銘, *Muzhai youxue ji*, *juan* 32, 15a-17a; Chen Hu, "Wei Mao qianzai yinju qiyan xiaozhuan", quoted from Su Xiaojun, "Mao Jin yu Jiguge keshu kaolue," 49-51; Zheng Demao 鄭德懋 (fl. 19th cent.), "Jiguge zhuren xiaozhuan" 汲古閣主人小傳, *Jiguge jiaoke shumu* 汲古閣校刻書目, CSJCXB edition, Vol. 5, 425.

88 For Mao Jin's workshop, see Kai-wing Chow, *Publishing, Culture, and Power*, 72-73.

89 See Qian Qianyi, "Yinhu maojun muzhiming," 15a-17a; Lu Shiyi 陸世儀 (1611-1672), *Futing xiansheng wenji* 桴亭先生文集, *juan* 6, 1714 printed edition, 36-37.

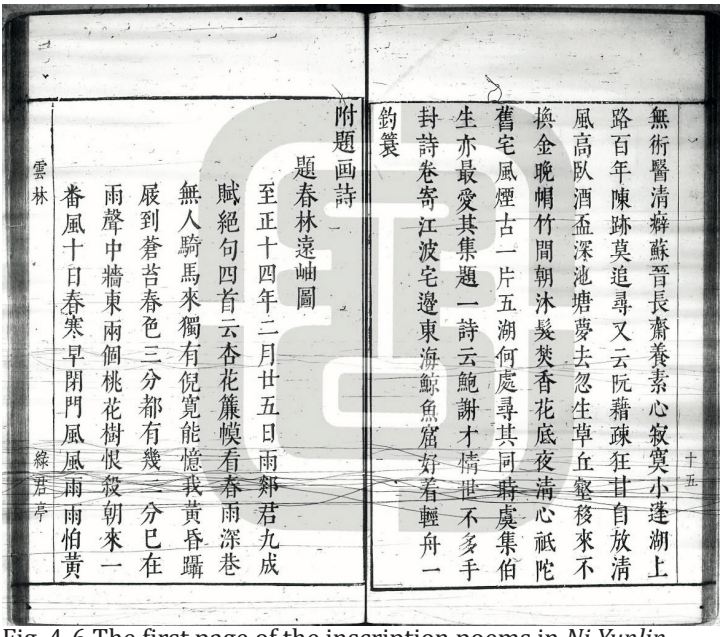


Fig. 4-6 The first page of the inscription poems in *Ni Yunlin* , compiled by Mao Jin and published by Ji Guge around 1638, National Library of China, Beijing.

after the Yuan painter Ni Zan's *hao*.[90] This single-volume book culls 29 anecdotes and 137 poems (99 titles) by him. Its scale – 51 folios – is inconspicuous in comparison with the other voluminous compendia (Confucian classics, sample examination essays, and so forth) that Mao Jin had already printed or would print in the future. Hence, the book is totally overlooked in studies on Mao Jin, on Ni Zan, or on the entire book history. It is also not the only book about Ni Zan that Mao Jin published. Earlier in 1638 he embarked on a big publishing project entitled *Ten Selected Works of Yuan Poets* (*Yuanren shizhong shi* 元人十种詩), which included an anthology entitled *Anthology of Ni Yunlin* (*Ni Yunlin xiansheng shiji* 倪雲林先生詩集). To understand *Ni Yunlin*, it is important to know the publications of Ni Zan's works throughout the Ming period:

(1) An unnamed anthology of Ni Zan, Sun Daya 孙大雅 prefaced

90 Ōki Yasushi, *Meimatsu kōnan no shuppan bunka*, 151.

in1360s or 1370s, lost.

(2) *Ni Yunlin xiansheng shiji* 倪雲林先生詩集, compiled and printed by Jian Xi 蹇曦, 6 fascicles and appendix 1 fascicle, 1460.

(3) *Ni yinjun ji* 倪隱君集, compiled and printed by Yu Xian 俞憲, 1 fascicle, in *Shengming baijia shi* 盛明百家詩, 1565.

(4) *Ni Yunlin xiansheng shiji*, printed by Ni Cheng 倪珵, 6 fascicles and appendix 1 fascicle, 1591.

(5) *Qingbi ge yigao* 清閟閣遺稿, printed by Ni Cheng, 15 fascicles and appendix 1 fascicle, 1600.

(6) *Ni Yunlin xiansheng shiji*, compiled and printed by Pan Shiren 潘是仁, 6 fascicles, in *Songyuan shi liushiyi zhong* 宋元詩六十一種, 1622.

(7) *Ni Yunlin xiansheng shiji*, compiled and printed by Mao Jin, 6 fascicles and appendix 1 fascicle, in *Yuanre shizhong shi* 元人十種詩, 1638.

One may naturally wonder about the reasons behind the repeated publication and republication of Ni Zan. Ni Zan died in 1373, while most of these books (3, 4, 5, 6, 7) did not emerge until nearly 200 years later. Family ties provide us with one incentive: one publisher Ni Cheng (4, 5) was Ni Zan's eighth generation descendant.[91] Printing and reprinting for family commemoration was not uncommon in the Ming period. We have seen in previous chapters that Sun Kuang's two descendants put their ancestor's manuscript into print. A regional complex may also have played a part: Yu Xian (3) was a town fellow of Ni Zan. But this does not necessarily explain the others.

The later editions of the seventeenth century – 6 and 7 – were part of a larger literary corpus. This fact suggests that they were not private publications circulated within a small circle, but rather market-oriented publications designed to appeal to

91 Mao Jin's postscript to *Ni Yunlin xiansheng shiji* mentions that he had printed *Ni Yunlin* earlier. The publishing date of *Ni Yunlin* therefore should be no later than 1638 when the former was printed. See Ni Zan comp., *Ni Yunlin xiansheng shiji* 倪雲林先生詩集, *juan* fulu 附錄, in *Yuanren shizhong shi* 元人十種詩, facsimile reprint of 1638 printed edition (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1990), 603.

new recruits to the field of literature. *Ni Yunlin* is an independent book not belonging to any book series. But it also has strongly commercial elements. The first third of the book is 29 anecdotes. These anecdotes portray a hermit who is aloof, not interested in money, and is a true artist. A particular emphasis of these stories is the Ni Zan's morbid fear of dirt. To protect this noble image, Mao Jin confesses in a postscript to the book that he intentionally deleted some stories, such as Ni Zan's was once imprisoned aside a toilet bucket. He considers these stories "unbearably rustic."[92] In a sense, the compiler was collecting, judging, and filtering rough materials for the reader. He chose those that he felt they might be interested in and delete those he felt they might dislike. In this process, he, in turn, participated in moulding an image of Ni Zan as a legendary figure, free from vulgarity yet bizarrely mysophobic. The remaining part of *Ni Yunlin* is more than one hundred "poems inscribed on paintings" (*tihua shi*). They add another dimension to the image of Ni Zan: a superb master in art and literature. In this sense, this part is by no means a sloppy extension of the first part.

Behind the book was a long lasting "Ni Zan mania" since the mid-Ming, which to a large extent fashioned and refashioned Ni's public image. In the mid-fourteenth century, Ni Zan enjoyed a reputation as an austere hermit with literary talents, as we can see from various epitaphs, records by friends, and the artist's writings about himself.[93] However, his achievements in painting began to be acknowledged from the mid-fifteenth century. This change started with Shen Zhou and his associated Suzhou masters. Shen Zhou extols Ni's *Water-Bamboo Studio* (*Shuizhu ju tuzhou* 水竹居圖軸 , fig. 2-3) by saying: "In all my life I love the brushwork of Ni Zan most. I have seen some forty works of him and none of them

92 Jian Xi also stated in the postscript of *Ni Yunlin xiansheng shiji* that his great-grand father had association with Ni Zan, which, though as well as indicating the source of his prints, implies the psychological facet of his printing. See ibid., 11.

93 Mao Jin comp., *Ni Yunlin* 倪雲林 , Jigu ge 汲古閣 edition printed in 17th cent., 52b.

failed to make me enchanted."[94] Yet, this discovery was equalled by Ni Zan's achievements in other fields, and further evolved into a veneration of him as a versatile person with an admirable temperament. Since the 1490s, Shen Zhou had launched a long-lasting cultural project to compose poems in response to Ni Zan's "Spring in Jiangnan" (*Jiangnan chun* 江南春), matching the same rhythm, and creating paintings that saluted his work. This project continued until the next generation of Suzhou artists, who rendered books and paintings, such as Wen Zhengming's *Spring in Jiangnan Area* (*Jiangnanchun tu* 江南春圖, 1530), and contributed to a sense of localism.[95] Prior to the sixteenth century, the cultural elite large agreed that Ni Zan, although a good painter, could not be ranked among the top Yuan masters. Indeed, Ni Zan's name is absent from "Four Yuan masters", a list of names nominated by some of the most influential mid-Ming critics such as Wang Shizhen 王世貞 and Tu Long 屠隆 (1543-1605). The most frequent names were: Zhao Mengfu, Huang Gongwang, Wang Meng and Wu Zhen.

However, Wang Shizhen notes that the value of Ni Zan's paintings "has shot up tenfold."[96] Hu Yinglin 胡應麟 (1551-1602), a contemporary of Wang and Tu, evaluated Ni Zan's poetry at the same level of the four Yuan poetry masters, and paralleled his paintings to the four Yuan painting masters. Even though Hu Yinglin still excluded Ni Zan from the "Four Masters," his criticism of people who showed a keen interest in Ni's painting but ignored his writing reflected a shift in public interests.[97] In a sense, Hu and Wang were at a midpoint where the visual

94 Lü Shaoqing, "Lun Ni Zan de dangshi shiming dayu huaming" 論倪瓚的當時詩名大於畫名 , *Nanjing yishu xueyuan xuebao* 南京藝術學院學報 , Vol. 3 (2005): 75.

95 See Zhang Zhao et al., *Shiqu baoji*, *juan* 6, 32a.

96 The poems by Shen Zhou and his circle were published in a mono-volume book *Jiangnan chun ci* 江南春詞 , SKQSCMCS, *Ji bu*, Vol. 292, 378-93. For the link between this event and their local awareness, see Craig Clunas, *Elegant Debts*, 95-96.

97 Wang Shizhen, *Gu bu gu lu* 觚不觚錄 , Zhi hai 指海 edition, comp., Qian Xizuo 錢熙祚 (fl. 1800-1844), the 9th compilation, 22b. The statement is translated by Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, 61.

production of Ni Zan started to outweigh his textual production in the common conceptualization as well as in consumptive practices. It was Dong Qichang, the leader of the late Ming art circle, who triggered the real turning point. In his own name-list, he replaced Zhao Mengfu with Ni Zan, and lavished tremendous praise on Ni's unique "somber and naive" painting style.[98] Since then, the brilliance of the painter Ni Zan has overshadowed the poet Ni Zan.

Mao Jin was aware of the trend. He observed the phenomenon that saw his contemporaries treasure even tiny remnants of Ni Zan's paintings but totally neglect his literary works. He lashed out at them for "valuing the eyes but despising the heart," and appealed against placing excessive emphasis on one art but ignoring the other.[99] The most crucial factor in terms of approaching Ni Zan, Mao maintained, was focusing on his moral conduct. His morality could only be revealed via biographical anecdotes and, of course, his personal writings.

This assertion perhaps revealed Mao Jin's real attitude, but it is more meaningful to understand it in the context of the increasing value of Ni Zan in the late Ming art discourse. This increase indicated a large number of anonymous readers and potential benefits. In the preface to *Ni Yunlin*, Mao Jin promotes the book's value by claiming: "Browsing this book, [the reader] could feel as if the cloud, mountains, bamboo and trees [in Ni Zan's paintings] are just on the right side of the seat. The book can be an antique on the tables of impoverished scholars."[100] This statement was more like a sales promotion designed to tempt those who could not afford a real Ni Zan painting. Once in possession of this book, it suggested, simply reading the painting inscriptions would give readers the illusion of looking at the artist's paintings with their own eyes. The word *pinshi* 貧士 , lit.,

98 Hu Yinglin, "Yu gushushi lun songyuan erdai shi shiliutong" 與顧叔時論宋元二代詩十六通 , *Shaoshi shanfang ji* 少室山房集 , SKQS edition, *juan* 118, 11b.

99 Dong Qichang, *Hua zhi* 畫旨 , in *Rongtai bieji* 容臺別集 , *juan* 4, 1630 printed edition, 8a-8b, 19a.

100 Mao Jin comp., *Ni Yunlin*, 52b.

"impoverished scholar," hence could refer to the followers of Ni Zan; yet the book could also lure enthusiasts of poetry and painting inscriptions, or even those who were only interested in the amusing anecdotes of an ancient artist. Mao Jin was not the first to exploit the commercial value of painting inscriptions. But compared to Chen Si in the twelfth century, his publication was evidently more motivated and more conscious, which, in turn, evidenced a growing readership for inscriptions in the Ming book market.

Sale price and targeted readership

Scholarship on late Ming book prices agrees that the price for late Ming publications available on the market, although varied in size, printing quality and material, fluctuated around one tael of silver.[101] Kai-Wing Chow's study on printing in Ming society uses two examples bearing a close resemblance to *Ni Yunlin* in terms of scale and formality. The examples provide us with a superb base for calculating the sale price of this small book and further deepen our speculation about its target readers. One example is a pamphlet of 24 folios (頁 *ye*), 580 copies of which were printed in Hangzhou in 1608 at a cost of 6.72 taels. For printing of this pamphlet, the fixed charges for block materials and carving were 0.36 (0.0006 each) taels and 1.64 (0.0028 each) taels, respectively. The cotton paper for 20 copies cost 0.24 (0.012 each) taels, and bamboo paper 4.48 (0.008 each) taels. Thus, the total cost per book was between 0.011 (bamboo) and 0.015 (cotton) taels.[102] Chow estimates that for larger scale publications, the prime costs would have be even lower because of the scale effect and the fact that more copies dilute the fixed charges for block materials.[103]

101 Mao Jin comp., *Ni Yunlin*, 50b-51a. The "right side of seat" (*zuoyou* 座右) is the usual place for putting precious antiques for delicate appreciation.

102 Ōki Yasushi, *Minmatsu kōnan no shuppan bunka*, 121-28.

103 The estimation of the sale price, see Kai-Wing Chow, *Publishing, Culture, and Power*, 44-7; Zhou Chunsheng and Kong Xianglai, "Mingdai yinshua shuji chengben, jiage, ji qi shangpin jiazhi de yanjiu" 明代印刷書籍成本、價格及其商品價值的研究 , *Zhejiang daxue xuebao (Renwen shehui kexue ban)* 浙江大學學報 (人文社會科學版), Vol. 40, No. 1 (2010): 9.

Ni Yunlin has 51 folios, approximately double the Hangzhou pamphlet in Chow's discussion. If the number of copies of *Ni Yunlin* produced from one impression was around 500, then the cost per print would be between 0.022 and 0.03 taels. The printing quality would have had little affect on this calculation, as the book does not contain any pictorial illustration, which is naturally more time consuming in terms of block-carving. The layout is also rather sparse with eight lines of eighteen characters on each folio (288 characters per *ye*). This is much less than Li Rihua's layout of nine lines with nineteen characters (342 characters per *ye*). Unlike Li's private printing enterprise, Mao Jin's bookselling network could digest a larger number of final copies at a significantly lower cost. In spite of the above factors, the above estimate already makes selling each printed copy of *Ni Yunlin* for 0.06 taels 100 percent profitable. This selling price was quite affordable to most Ming book consumers, as it was the equivalent to 1.5 kilos of pork or 0.75 kilos of peaches.[104]

Joseph P. McDermott reminds us that a sixteenth-century

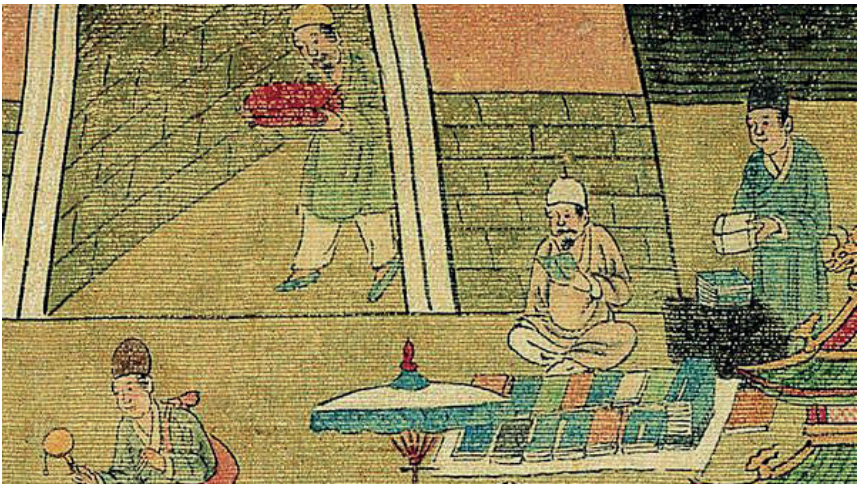


Fig. 4-7 A crude book stall on a shopping street of Beijing city, *The Flourishing Empire Capital* (*Huangdu jicheng tu* 皇都積勝圖) by an anonymous painter, ca. 16th to 17th century, ink and colour on silk, 32x3182.6 cm, The National Museum, Beijing.

104 Chow's another example, a print in 1628-1630 in Nanjing of nine lines by nineteen characters per page, was estimated to cost the same. See "A Study of Prices, Cost, and Commercial Value of Imprints in Ming Qing China," 12-13.

Fig. 4-8 A grand bookshop named Jixian *tang* 集賢堂 (The Hall of Virtuous Men) neighbouring a fabric shop and a blacksmith shop in the vivid commercial district of Suzhou city, detail of *Going Upriver on the Qingming Festival*, attributed to Qiu Ying, Liaoning Provincial Museum, Shenyang.

destinations more quickly and efficiently than elsewhere. Ultimately, these books became available at fixed bookshops, mobile bookstalls and book fairs, and via itinerary peddlers (fig. 4-7, 4-8).

The huge price difference between a painting by Ni Zan and a printed copy of *Ni Yunlin* might have been a big selling point of the book. The book content suggests that it was designed for leisure reading. The small scale and remarkably low price of the book indicates a readership perhaps less of bureaucrats and rich merchants who enjoyed much more economic liberty to purchase a real Ni Zan, and more a readership from the low-end market, or what Anne E. McLaren calls a group of readers with new awareness that reading was not exclusive to the learned.[106] Compared with buying a folding fan with a

105 For the price level in late Ming China, see Kai-Wing Chow, *Publishing, Culture, and Power*, 47-48.

106 For how to purchase a book in late imperial China, see Joseph P.

calligraphic inscription by a big name artist for one to five taels, it was a perfect bargain to pay 0.06 tael of silver (very probably even less) for several dozen anecdotes and inscribed poems by the most celebrated Yuan master.[107] In the 1590s, the daily wage for a binding worker working for Hanlin Academy in Beijing was 0.07 tael.[108] For the three-day Provincial Examination in 1591, each scriber (for transcribing an examination paper) could earn 0.9 tael, and printing workers (for printing the successful names) 1.2 tael.[109] In the 1630s when *Ni Yunlin* was printed, the import of silver from Japan and Southeast Asian had caused serious economic inflation in China. The wages of low-class workers at that time would have been even higher than the level recorded in 1591. A book like *Ni Yunlin*, the price of which was around 0.06 tael, was quite affordable for common people.

Ni Yunlin, then, provides compelling evidence that by the late Ming painting inscriptions were no longer confined to the royal court and degree-holders. Some inscription literature was destined for educated commoners of lower social status, namely, the "impoverished scholars." These scholars were beyond the rudimentary level of literacy.[110] They would have been at least "fully literate," a term Wilt L. Idema uses for people who were able to read Confucian classics and to write a composition according to a set pattern.[111] To gauge the scale of the literate

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McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book*, 94-103.

107 For the "high-end" and "low-end" market for Ming books see Robert H. Hegel, "Niche Marketing for Late Imperial Fiction," in *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. Cynthia Brokaw, Kai-Wing Chow (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 235-66.

108 Kai-Wing Chow, *Publishing, Culture, and Power*, 47-48.

109 Shen Bang, *Wanshu zaji*, 144.

110 Ibid., 159.

111 For the content of rudimentary education in the Qing period, which would not be drastically differ from the situation in the Ming period, see Evelyn Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy in Ch'ing China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1979), 24-53. Benjamin Elman estimates that the primer literacy needs knowledge of two thousand characters, while fully empowering classical literacy needs some thousands plus. See *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 261-66. For Idema's classification of literacy in late imperial Chinese society, see *Chinese Vernacular Fiction*, XLIV-LXIV.

community in late imperial China is, in fact, very problematic. Evelyn Rawski estimates the literacy rate in Qing society as approximately 30%.[112] But this figure has been widely criticized for being too optimistic and being based on an extremely low standard of literacy.[113] Nevertheless, seen from the number of examinees across the empire, the absolute quantity of fully and highly literate (the medium and high levels in Idema's classification) in the early seventeenth century was clearly growing.

In the late Ming, as painting inscriptions embraced a burgeoning reading community and thereby a blossoming printing industry, this genre of text was no longer only a symbol of the elegant taste of the imperial family and the official group, or a product of the taste they disciplined and monopolized. Certainly, the social and cultural elite still held the power in terms of defining what was elegant and what was not, but those who wanted and could afford to pay 0.06 taels for a booklet like *Ni Yunlin* were undermining this hegemony. Notably, the books that we have discussed in this section lack annotations. This indicates an implied audience already possessed a certain level of education and literary skills.

Rethinking Anthologies of Painting Inscriptions and Their Heritage

As mentioned, Li Rihua may well have culled his inscriptions from draft notes. With regard to *Ni Yunlin*, all its poems appear in the larger and probably earlier compilation *Anthology of Yunlin*, in exactly the same order. *Anthology of Yunlin* is very likely the primary source of the inscriptions in *Ni Yunlin*. The situations of both Zhao Cheng and Fan Yu deserve further exploration, but at this stage it is logical to conclude that a painting inscription in fact has two parallel systems of being presented, preserved and circulated: one is written on a painting and the other is preserved

112 Wilt L. Idema, *Chinese Vernacular Fiction*, LI.

113 Evelyn Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy in Ch'ing China*, 10-20.

in a textual book. The two systems are not mutually exclusive. An inscription on a painting also has the chance of being transcribed into a book. But the book system has its own operating mode. A booming printing industry increasingly appealed to those who intended to distribute painting inscriptions on a larger scale and more securely.

It is noteworthy that none of these Ming books contain any illustration. The readers of "painting inscriptions" were actually completely isolated from the paintings' visuality. But it appears that none of the compilers and readers had a problem with excluding images, or were never concerned about introducing images into the books, which was technically feasible in the Ming period. A certain number of Ming publications employed illustrations, for example, to enhance poems, such as *Painting*

Fig. 4-9 A page in *Painting Model Book of Tang Poems* showing the juxtaposition of a poem and an illustrative image, Huang Fengchi 黃鳳池 (fl. 17th cent.) comp. and prt. Edo, Kyōto: Tōhon'ya Tahē : Tōhon'ya Seibē, Kanbun 12-nen (1672).

Model Book of Poetic Redundancies (*Shiyu huapu* 詩餘畫譜, 1612) and *Painting Model Book Illustrating Tang Poems* (*Tangshi huapu* 唐詩畫譜, ca. 1620, fig. 4-9). If readers were familiar with the simultaneous appreciation of poems and illustrations in one book, why do the above Ming anthologies, unintentionally, or, as is more likely, intentionally not adopt this layout? The question deserves further exploration, but is beyond the scope of this study.

Another salient feature of the above Ming anthologies is their poetic bias. All are exclusive anthologies except *Mr. Lazy-Bamboo* and *The Continuation*, which are also preoccupied by poems. By contrast, the anthologies of connoisseurship inscriptions show no tendency to any kind of literary style. I would call this phenomenon "poetic bias," and it permeated this field in the periods before and after the Ming era.

In ancient times, poetry resided at the top of the Chinese literary hierarchy along with prose (*wen* 文), and had an unchallengeable popularity in practice. But this poetic bias had social roots beneath the superficial literary level. With the exception of Li Rihua, the other Ming compilers discussed in this section are all failed candidates of the civil service examinations. However, they were not a homogeneous group and had gradations that parallel the gradations in the "literate" community, which was undergoing a great literacy expansion. The gradations ranged from Li Rihua, a retired official-gentry, to his son whose life and reputation were affiliated to his renowned father, to Zhao Cheng, a professional painter, to Fan Yu, a perhaps unskillful painter, a social person, and a literary man, to Mao Jin, a businessman thoroughly devoted to the commercial world. These would-be scholars would have been extremely anxious to sustain their livelihoods and not to be labelled as humble commoners. Poetry, an elegant literary genre and a functional tool in daily communication, provided them with a strategy. If publishing one's poems indicated his cultivation in poetry, then publishing poems on paintings manifested the

author's admirable exploits in two fields.

Even reading such publications imbued an individual with elegant overtones. These works were especially ideal for those who had no capital to partake in investment-demanding fields such as antiquarianism. Hence, Mao Jin proclaims that *Ni Yunlin* is an offer to the poor men of letters to take a virtual tour of Ni Zan's paintings. This idea of a virtual viewing was common. Zhou Lianggong who extracts some ten inscribed poems by Li Rihua into his biography of the latter, asserts: "For those who admired Mister [Li Rihua] but had no access to his brushwork, as long as they read the poems [I excerpted here], they would immediately see Li's paintings filling their walls!"[114] Possessing and reading poetic inscriptions thus became a natural nexus for readers to connect with the art masters they admired, in the process of which they transcended space and time, and perhaps more significantly, their original social status.

The terms these books use to refer to the texts they contain direct our attention to the conceptualization of inscriptions. The Song anthologies respectively employ *shenghua* 聲畫 (audible painting), *shuhua* 書畫 (calligraphy and painting), and *tihua* 題畫 (inscribing painting). Among the Ming anthologies, Li Rihua metaphorically uses *huaying* 畫賸 (by-products of paintings) and another vague formulation *tiyu* 題語 (inscribed words). Mao Jin captions the inscription part in *Ni Yunlin* with *tihua shi* 題畫詩 (poem inscribed on painting). The titles of the anthologies of Zhao Cheng and Fan Yun were lost, but they were given titles such as *Tihua shi* by high-Qing book editors. The usage of *tihua shi* became more frequent. By the eighteenth century, the first officially commissioned anthology also adopted the same term. The terminological fixation strongly indicates that, by the eighteenth century *tihua shi* was no longer a fortuitous coinage but a well-conceived term. The influence of the term persisted even over modern publications, and encompassed all sorts of inscriptions regardless of sources and physical positions. At the

114 W. L. Idema, "Review of *Education and Popular Literacy in Ch'ing China*," *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, Vol. 66, Livr. 4/5 (1980): 314-24.

same time, the fixation unavoidably leads to a contradiction that lots of poems with the label *tihua shi* are not inscribed on paintings at all. The contradiction compels almost every scholarly study in this field to clarify the term so as not to use it without due care.

A Qing Heritage

The Ming practices of producing and compiling literary inscriptions were bequeathed to the Qing people. Indeed, anthologies mushroomed in the Qing period, but with the exception of one, they are beyond the scope of this dissertation. The one that deserves our attention is the first and also the last officially commissioned compilation, and the second compilation of collected literary inscriptions by multiple writers after *Audible Paintings* in the twelfth century. This voluminous anthology is entitled *Imperial Anthology of Categorized Poems Inscribed on Paintings of All Dynasties* (*Yuding lidai tihua shilei* 御定歷代題畫詩類 , here after *Categorized Poems*).

The compiler Chen Bangya 陳邦彥 (1678-1752) originated from a prominent and affluent clan in Haining 海寧 in Zhejiang, which was also famous for calligraphic tradition.[115] It is reported that Chen Bangyan's imitations of Dong Qichang could pass as genuine.[116] (fig. 4-10) His distinguished skill possibly facilitated him building a close relation with Emperor Kangxi 康 熙 (r. 1661-1722), who was fascinated with Dong's art throughout his life.[117] Chen Bangyan himself was also an enthusiastic painting connoisseurship. His diary, the manuscript of which is now

115 Zhou Lianggong, *Duhua lu*, *juan* 1, 11.

116 Lai Huimin, "Mingqing Haining Zha Chen liangjiazu renkou de yanjiu" 明清海寧查陳兩家族人口的研究 , *Dalu zazhi* 大陸雜誌 , Vol. 78, No. 3 (1989): 1. Chen Xian who was also from this clan engraved ancient calligraphy pieces into a book entitled *Pavilion of Jade Smoke* (*Yuyan tang tie* 玉煙閣帖 , 1612), with a preface written by Dong Qichang. See Huang Zhun, *Zhongguo shufa shi Yuan Ming juan* 中國書法史元明卷 (Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe, 1999), 463.

117 Jin Ao 金鼇 et al. comp., *Qianlong Haining xianzhi* 乾隆海宁縣志 , *juan* 9, facsimile reprint of 1765 printed edition, Fangzhi, 1327.

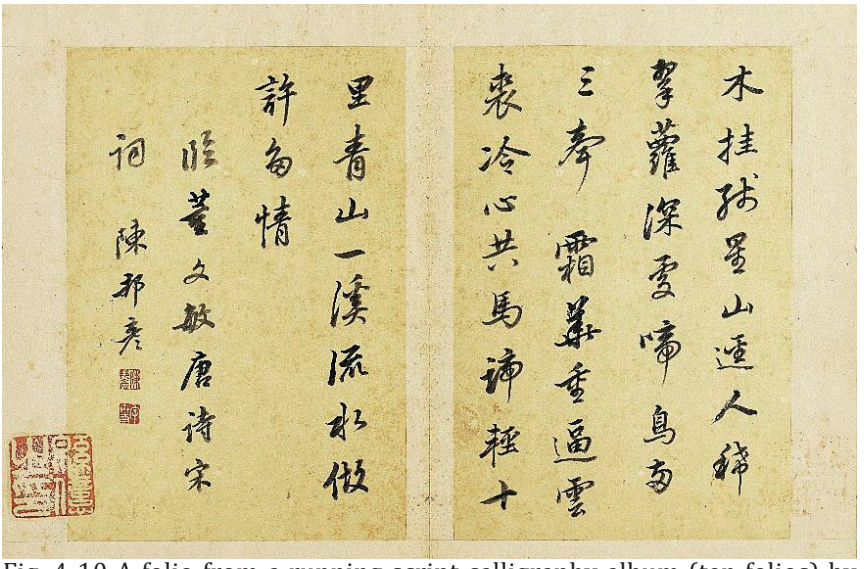

Fig. 4-10 A folio from a running script calligraphy album (ten folios) by Chen Bangyan, who imitated Dong Qichang's calligraphic style, overall 25.8 x 34.6 cm, The Palace Museum, Taipei.

housed in the Shanghai Library, constantly reports activities related to painting and calligraphy.

The life trajectory of Chen Bangyan was emphatically different from the above Ming compilers. In 1703, he achieved the *jinshi* degree, at the age of 25 (rather a young age considering the average age was 30).[118] In the next twenty years, he stayed close to the Emperor Kangxi, proofreading inscriptions on the steles commissioned by the emperor and drafting documents for him.[119] Compiling books was also a major duty. Around 1706, Chen Bangyan received the order to compile an anthology of painting inscriptions. It was the first time that he independently took charge of a compilation project. The work was finished in about

118 For instance, many officials selected to serve in the emperor's studio were followers of Dong Qichang. See John Hay, "The Kangxi Emperor's Brush-Traces: Calligraphy, Writing, and the Art of Imperial Authority," in *Body and Face in Chinese Visual Culture*, ed. Wu Hung and Katherine Tsiang Mino (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), 315.

119 See Guo Peigui, "Mingdai juren shuliang ji jinshi pingjun zhongshi nianling kaoshu" 明代舉人數量及進士平均中式年齡考述, paper presented at the conference "Quanqiuhua xia mingshi yanjiu zhi xinshiye guoji xueshu yantaohui 全球化下明史研究之新視野國際學術研討會," Taipei, October 27-31, 2011.

a year, and the manuscript was submitted to Emperor Kangxi. The emperor created a preface to it as a symbol of his approval. On the twentieth-sixth day of the second month of 1707, Chen received the order to send the book for printing.[120]

Like many other ancient Chinese compilations, *Categorized Poems* gives no book source, except a vague statement that, "Painting inscriptions in variant styles of all past dynasties amount to some tens of thousands. They are scattered in numerous anthologies and hard to glean."[121] Considering the speed that the compilation was produced, it is probable that the poems came directly from books rather than from paintings. Textual comparisons between this anthology and other contemporary anthologies support this speculation.[122] Chen Bangyan's compilation of poem inscriptions is not exhaustive but selective, perhaps with a view to controlling the final scale of the book. But this selectiveness frustrates our attempts to locate the anthology in Chinese book taxonomy. Its tag oscillates between *zongji* 总集, "a complete anthology," and *leishu* 類書, "a book of categorized knowledge." The same frustration occurs with *Audible Paintings*.[123] These different tags reflect the fluidity of the knowledge about literary inscriptions in the form of books.

Categorized Poems gleans 8,962 poems from the Tang, Song (Jin), Yuan and Ming periods, yet excludes Qing poems. The main categories of poems are: "Landscape" (20 fascicles), "Classic Allusion" (12 fascicles), "Idleness" (8 fascicles), "Orchid and Bamboo" (8 fascicles), and "Flower" (8 fascicles). In comparison, the three biggest categories of poems in *Audible Paintings* are "Landscape" (68 titles, 81 poems), "Beast" (69 titles, 72 poems), and "Classical Allusion" (55 titles, 65 poems). The fluctuations in these categories relate to the actual rise and decline of painting subject matters and the perceptual change regarding what kind of

120 Jin Ao et al. comp., *Haining xianzhi* [*j*]*uan* 9, 1327.

121 See Chen Bangyan's diary *Paolu gong riji* 匏廬公日記, *juan* 1, manuscript edition, Shanghai Library, 14.

122 Chen Bangyan comp., *Yuding lidai tihua shilei*, *juan* 1, 1.

123 Li Qi, *Liangsong tihuashi lun*, 359-60.

poetic inscriptions were worthwhile collecting and compiling.

The scale of *Categorized Poems* is far beyond any Ming anthology of inscriptions, and a systematic categorization became necessary. Chen Bangyan categorizes these poems into thirty types. Confronted with the fact that none of the Ming anthologies attempted to categorize poetic inscriptions, Chen's only reference, if he ever looked for one, was *Audible Paintings*, which has 26 categories. Among the 30 categories of *Categorized Poems*, 11 are identical to those in *Audible Paintings*. Yet, the Qing anthology has made noticeable rearrangements. The first change is the omission of the "Barbarian" (*manyi* 蛮夷) category. This theme, once important to Northern Song people who suffered continuous border pressures from Jurchen, Tanguts and Mongols, was understandably irritating to the Qing Jurchen ruler and inappropriate for an anthology under royal commission. The second change is that *Categorized Poems* adds 8 new categories: "Scenic spots," "Historic relics," "Idleness," "Hunting," "Fisherman and woodman," "Farming and sericulture," "Grazing," and "Millet, wheat, vegetable and fruit." The latter five are all related to agricultural activities. This stress on agriculture is in sharp contrast to Song and Ming anthologies, which show little interest to this theme. The Qing compilation's emphasis on agriculture must be placed in a larger context. Since Confucianism valued agriculture as the foundation of supremacy, the early Qing rulers were keen on symbolically projecting themselves into agriculture related activities and representations.[124] For example, they commissioned a large number of "Plowing and Weaving Pictures" (*Gengzhi tu* 耕織圖) in various forms, such as painting, stone carvings, woodblock prints and porcelain. These pictures visualized the regime's aim to promote farming (*quannong* 勸農), and this intent was indicative of the regime's strong sense of responsibility for its people's livelihood. In the same vein, to a large extent, poem inscriptions with an agricultural subject were

124 See You Mao 尤袤 (1127-1194), *Suichutang shumu* 遂初堂書目, *juan* 1, CSJCCB, 33; Yu Shaosong 余紹宋 (1883-1949), *Shuhua shulu jieti* 書畫書錄解題, first printed in 1932 (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan, 2003), 526.

put under the spotlight as a way of propagandizing the ruler's image as a loyal follower of Confucian teachings and Chinese moral order.[125]

These rearrangements direct our discussion towards the compilatory motivation for *Categorized Poems.* The motivation essentially differs from the practices in the seventeenth-and-eighteenth century Europe, when and where authors, translators, and booksellers dedicated their books to the price for patronage and protection.[126] It is also different from the privately compiled Song and Ming anthologies of inscriptions. As for the Song and Ming compilers, poetic inscriptions were either a personal hobby, or a widely shared interest from which they could socially or commercially benefit. By contrast, Chen Bangyan, an attendant directly serving the high court, could hardly act in accordance with his own literary ideas. It is true that the throne could not manipulate every detail of such a voluminous anthology, but every detail in *Categorized Poems* had to reflect the emperor's ideology, thoughts and taste.

Categorized Poems begins with a preface by the Emperor Kangxi, which claims:

> [Through the book] one can have a panoramic view of mountains and rivers in all their variations and forms as close as if before one's eyes without bothering to go outside. One can then learn from the relics of past dynasties, and farming and sericulture scenes. All these are displayed in marvelous details. Chicken, dogs, mulberry trees and flaxes seem to be available for a personal view. [...] Hence, painting is an art that comes

125 "Fisherman and woodcutter" is a frequently image in the elite's writings and paintings. Ostensibly an allusion to a free and leisure lifestyle, it can be used to suggest an opposition to the authority. See James Cahill, *Three Alternative Histories of Chinese* Painting (Lawrence: Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, 1988), 27-29.

126 See Francesca Bray, "Agricultural Illustrations: Blueprint or Icon?" in *Graphics and Text in the Production of Technical Knowledge in China*, ed. Francesca Bray et al. (Leiden: Brill), 529. The article sorts out the tradition of making *Gengzhi tu* and later printed copies since the Song dynasty till the Qing. James Cahill also demonstrates interest in the functionality of *Gengzhi tu* in *Painter's Practice*, 139; *Three Alternative Histories of Chinese Painting*, 18-23.

near to the Way (*dao* 道); poems inscribed on paintings is a category that connects to stability (*zhi* 治).[127]

Aside from the fact that poems depicting agricultural prosperity are once again underlined, the idea of the power of poem inscriptions is invoked. The emperor's preface portrays the idea that possessing *Categorized Poems* would give the reader a panoramic vision of all things on earth. This vision was a significant step towards the ideal Confucian governance tactic of "observing the people" (*guanmin* 觀民), which led to the Way (*dao*) and stability (*zhi*).[128] Emperor Kangxi, as the author of this preface, is naturally in a legitimate position to be empowered by reading inscriptions. This linkage between inscriptions and statecraft was absent in the Ming anthologies, which were produced for social interactions and the book market. It is probably this ideological concern that made *Categorized Poems* a retrospective compilation targeting poems from past dynasties, without paying attention to the contemporaneous achievements of early Qing inscribers.

Chen Bangyan once presented several books of painting inscriptions to Emperor Kangxi and his crown prince.[129] But it is difficult to gauge the extent to which the emperor's private interest in the literature of painting inscriptions contributed to the birth of *Categorized Poems*. Before and after 1707, the court launched a succession of large-scale publishing projects, mobilizing a great mass of scholars. Each contains a preface by Emperor Kangxi as an explicit manifestation of the regime's dedication to preserving the old culture and tradition. These compendia, including *Categorized Poems*, shaped the Manchu ruler's image as a powerful patron of ancient knowledge and

127 Roger Chartier, *Forms and Meanings,* 29-35.

128 Chen Bangyan comp., *Yuding lidai tihua shilei*, *juan* 1, 1-2.

129 For the Manchu ruler's realization of "observing the people," see Michael G. Chang, "The Emperor Qianlong's Tours of Southern China: Painting, Poetry, and the Politics of Spectacle," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol. 13, Issue. 8, No. 2 (February 2015). Accessed March 13, 2016, http://www.japanfocus.org/-Michael_G_-Chang/4288/article.html.

literature.[130] The publication of *Categorized Poems* demonstrates that inscriptions went beyond purely literary activities and reached the political, moral and ideological domains. This anthology consolidated the conceptualization of *tihua shi* as a specific category among all types of painting inscriptions. Moreover, it marked the intervention of the state into this specific domain, a phenomenon that is absent in the Ming period.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has shed light on the compilations and publications of painting inscriptions in the form of literary anthologies. It has first of all dealt with the situation in the pre-Ming era by analyzing three Song anthologies in respect of their contents and dissemination. None of these anthologies were written by the compilers themselves. The motivations behind them were diverse, varying from personal leisure to market profits. Evidence supports their circulation and dissemination perhaps had an impact on Ming practices.

The main subject of this chapter was six anthologies of literary inscriptions that emerged in the Ming era. These compilations exhibit a different pattern from Song practices insofar as all of them are inscriptions by a single person, mostly by the compiler himself. This difference leads us to conclude that Ming people began to notice the literary value of their own inscriptions. The fact that all these Ming anthologies were in a printed form indicates that the compilers took full advantage of the booming printing industry to efficiently multiply inscriptions for their readers. The aim for wide distribution contrasts with the connoisseurship catalogues that I have examined in chapter 3. Those texts adopted the form of manuscript. In this sense, the physicality of a textual inscription became by new distribution method and their commerce.

This chapter has also discussed how these Ming anthologies reveal a wide and complicated readership for painting inscriptions. The realities of this readership could be deduced from the

130 Chen Bangyan, *Paolu gong riji*, 79-80.

physicality and contents of these publications, as well as from the know prices at which these publications retailed.