

Chapter II: The Anhui SchoolIntroduction: Hui-chou and Its Merchant Culture

A prevalent phenomenon in early Ch'ing painting is the flourishing of local schools. As in earlier centuries, when Hangchow, Soochow, and Nanking succeeded each other as centers of painting, these schools were mostly located in the great cities; in later chapters we will consider the Nanking school in the early Ch'ing and the beginnings of what would become a Yangchow school. The most attractive kinds of patronage, the liveliest markets for painting, and the urban pleasures to which most artists appear to have been prone, all were able to be found only in cities.

The Hsin-an p'ai or Anhui school is an exception: no single large city served as focus for the activity of artists of this school, which was spread over the region of present-day southeastern Anhui province, mostly the part south of the Yangtze River (see map, p.) and mostly concentrated in what were then Hui-chou and Ning-kuo prefectures.

Separating the two prefectures was the great Huangshan mountain range; the major cities in the region were She-hsien and Hsiu-ning. The difficulty in defining the school geographically is reflected in the diversity of names that have been applied to it, as we will see.

School designations such as this one, while their value has sometimes been questioned, are still useful if we understand them as tighter or looser groupings of artists based on such factors as local traditions, availability of collections, and the economic circumstances of patronage and the market. And we must, of course, allow for varying degrees of independence or conformity among the artists, and for their freedom to move from place to place, or to practice styles not particular to their region, blurring school boundaries. But after these diffusive forces have been acknowledged we are left with local schools as real, verifiable phenomena: confronted with a hundred early Ch'ing paintings with signatures concealed, any good Chinese connoisseur could assign most of them by style to the region where they were produced, if not to particular masters within the schools.

The beginnings of the Anhui school in the late Ming period, and its relationship to the spectacular rise of the Hui-chou merchants to economic dominance over the richest area of China, were treated briefly in the preceding volume (Distant Mts., pp. 133-60, especially pp. 136-37) and in more detail in a recent exhibition catalog.¹ The Hui-chou region was poor in agricultural land, but rich in natural resources such as timber, and ideally located on waterways that allowed cheap and easy transport to the prosperous Chiang-nan (Yangtze delta) cities. Moreover, the Anhui region had been

prominent in the manufacture of craft and trade goods--paper, lacquer, ink-cakes, etc.--as well as in the production of wood, tea, and other commodities since the Sung period; and to these, in the late Ming, was added high-quality woodblock printing. Porcelains from Ching-te-chen were conveyed by the Hui-chou merchants to consumers down-river; rice from Kiangsi and other growing areas was supplied to Soochow and Sungchiang, while textiles from those cities were brought to Hui-chou for dyeing and then transported to faraway markets for sale. Hui-chou families amassed great fortunes; their influence spread through a network of market towns and cities in the Chiang-nan region and beyond, and members of these families relocated in other places, rivalling or even displacing the local gentry. These commercial and family connections between regions and urban centers help to explain the spread of artistic tastes and styles as well. Artists from the Hui-chou region such as Ting Yün-p'eng (Distant Mts. pp. 217-21) and Chan Ching-feng had been associated with Tung ch'i-ch'ang's circle in Sungchiang in the late 16th century, and others were among his friends and followers later, including Ch'eng Chia-sui from Hsiu-ning and Li Liu-fang whose family came from She-hsien (Distant Mts., pp. 133-37). There seems to have been an especially close connection, both mercantile and artistic, between Tung's home city of Sungchiang and Hui-chou.²

As the merchant families became rich, they naturally aspired to higher social status and influence than wealth in itself carried with it. The Hui-chou merchant families' efforts at gentrification, a well-recognized phenomenon, took various forms.³ They could obtain high-sounding official titles by making large donations of money or man-power to the government for public works; although the positions obtained in this way were only nominal, they helped to exempt the holders from heavy taxation and extortion by local officials. They could educate their sons and grandsons toward passing the government examinations and winning real official ranks and posts, thus establishing the family in gentry-official status within a generation or two. And they could raise their standing and their reputations through support of learning and culture, and by becoming collectors of art and patrons of art. By the late 16th century, the Hui-chou merchants were eclipsing others in the money they spent on acquiring art objects and in the size of the collections they built.⁴

Wu Ch'i-chen, a dealer of the period whose account of the Hui-chou private collections that he saw has been preserved, leaves us in no doubt about the scope of the collecting there, or its status-raising benefits. He wrote in 1639:

"There were no places that exemplified better the prosperity of Hui-chou than She-hsien and Hsiu-ning prefectures. The possession of antiquities determined

whether one was [considered] cultivated or vulgar. Therefore, people contended in acquiring them at all costs. Hearing this, antique dealers from all over came [to Hui-chou], and the merchants traveling in other cities sought out antiques and brought them back, so that the amounts they acquired were huge."⁵

Collecting paintings by prestigious artists of the region could bring the same benefits: Chou Liang-kung was later to write that the possession of paintings by Hung-jen, the leading master of the Anhui school, similarly determined for Chiang-nan people whether one was regarded as cultivated or vulgar, just as had once been true of Ni Tsan's paintings.⁶ Both antiquities and paintings (in the "right" styles) could serve, then, as status symbols.

They were, of course, far more than that. If merchants emulated the refined tastes and cultural habits of an established gentry-literati class, this implies that there was such a class with such tastes and habits for them to emulate. The Hui-chou region was by no means populated only by merchant families, but had its own long-established gentry, its families that had produced men of learning and scholar-officials, its own tradition of literati culture. A local school of Confucian thought, stressing the philosophy of Chu Hsi, had grown up there by the Yüan dynasty and was recognized as a distinct school in the Ming.⁷ Like 16th century Soochow, this was a society based on a rich

interaction of established gentry and economic upstarts, as the merchants could be regarded while they were still engaged in "vulgar" displays of wealth and until they had mastered the gentry-literati refinements and achieved gentrification themselves. To collect objects of art, and to offer friendship and support to artists in return for "gifts" of their productions, were traditional and respected practices among the literati; to engage in these practices, and especially to collect works of the types and styles that had come to signify high-culture values, was to associate oneself with that prestigious class. The preference for these styles, then--and, more specifically to our purpose, for the dry and somewhat austere mode of landscape derived from Ni Tsan and Yüan masters--could be an expression of a genuine taste nurtured through gentry-family upbringing, or of an acquired taste cultivated as one aspect of a wider acquisition of culture; or it could be adopted as an attitude by those whose real tastes might be for quite different kinds of art. The sudden popularity of Yüan and later paintings in this manner among Hui-chou collectors in the late Ming would be hard to understand simply as a spontaneous upsurge of preference for such painting; the evidence suggests rather that the urge toward gentrification among the nouveau riche of the region was a significant element in it. The famous critic Wang Shih-chen (1526-90) wrote in 1585: "In regard to painting, one should treasure Sung paintings. But during the past thirty years, Yüan paintings have suddenly become very

much sought after--so much so that the price of works by Ni Tsan, and even of those of Shen Chou of the Ming dynasty, has quickly increased ten-fold . . . In general, this trend has been started by people from Soochow and followed by those from Hui-chou. This is indeed hard to explain."⁸

In fact, at the time Wang Shih-chen wrote, the center of the trend was shifting from Soochow to Sung-chiang, where both collectors and artists were already demonstrating their allegiance to the Yüan landscape styles, and theorists such as Tung Ch'i-ch'ang were beginning to argue it as an aesthetic doctrine. In his later years Tung, along with his activities as painter, calligrapher, and government official, seems to have acted as advisor and arbiter of taste for some of the rapidly-proliferating community of new collectors which this age of increased affluence had produced, visiting them to see their collections and being entertained by them, and on occasion writing inscriptions on pieces they owned. And prominent among those he visited and advised were the Hui-chou collectors. One of these was Ch'eng Chi-po (d. 1626), who owned two famous handscrolls that had previously been in Tung's collection, the "Clearing After Snowfall on Hills by a River" ascribed to Wang Wei (cf. Distant Mts., Pl. 36) and Chao Meng-fu's "Village By the Water" of 1302 (Hills, Pl. 13). Another was the rich She-hsien merchant Wu T'ing (active ca. 1575-1625), and still another was Wu Chen (active in the 1620s), also from She-hsien; both were on good terms

with Tung Ch'i-ch'ang and his friend Ch'en Chi-ju, who stayed at their houses on visits to the region.

The Early Anhui Masters: Cheng Yüan-hsün, Li Yung-ch'ang, Wang Chih-jui

Of greater interest to us, because he was a minor painter himself and also the cousin of Ch'eng Sui, an excellent artist we will consider later, was Cheng Yüan-hsün (1598-1645).⁹ Born in Hsiu-ning, some thirty miles southwest of She-hsien, into a prosperous salt-merchant family, Cheng undertook an official career, passing the district examination in 1624 and taking the chin-shih degree in 1643. In later years he lived mostly in Yangchow, where he had built a garden, the Ying-yüan or "Garden of Images." The name was given to the garden by Tung Ch'i-ch'ang, who visited Cheng there in 1632 and discussed theories of painting with him. The earliest version of Tung's highly influential theory of the Southern and Northern schools appeared in an anthology that Cheng edited and published in 1627, and Cheng may have been the first, at least in print, to name Tung himself as heir, for their time, to the "correct" Southern-school lineage (see Distant Mts., P. 14 and note 20).

A painting by Cheng Yüan-hsün from this same period, a "Landscape After Shen Chou" in the Soochow Museum (Pl. 3), reveals clearly the influence of Tung (who has inscribed it), along with elements of a still-emerging Anhui style. It was

painted in 1631, according to an inscription written ten years later by the artist. Tung praises the painting by evoking its stylistic forebears, Huang Kung-wang and Shen Chou; Cheng in his inscriptions protests modestly that his picture does not merit such praise. In truth, it does not--its derivation from the Sung-chiang masters' essays in the Huang Kung-wang manner (cf. Distant Mts., Pl. 33, 34, 38, 52) is too close to permit much originality. Still, it is a solidly-constructed work with some features that associate it with the Anhui school, notably the zig-zag path connecting foreground and middleground, but also the tentative geometricization of some of the forms.

It is from around this time, in fact, the 1630s and 40s, that we can begin to speak of an Anhui school of painting. Another interesting although secondary master who played a part in this early phase was Li Yung-ch'ang. He was born in Hsiu-ning, and seems to have been a well-educated man of some means. The early Ch'ing writer Chiang Shao-shu, in his Wu-sheng-shih shih, or "History of Soundless Poems," tells of visiting Li in 1636 and being shown antique bronzes and jades, paintings and calligraphy from the artist's collection--"all of excellent quality." Li Yung-ch'ang's dated paintings indicate a period of activity ca. 1625--1640. In 1639 he was one of five Anhui artists who collaborated on a landscape handscroll, each painting one section, for a friend's birthday. One of the others was Liu Shang-yen, who

had studied painting and calligraphy with Tung Ch'i-ch'ang and had even served as tai-pi (ghost-painter or ghost-writer, cf. Distant Mts. p. 82) for Tung; another was a young artist who signs Chiang T'ao, and who later, under his Buddhist priest's name Hung-jen, was to become the greatest master of the school.¹⁰ Li Yung-ch'ang's section offers highly simplified, untextured forms in the thick, blunt drawing that was by then characteristic of the school.

A hanging scroll by Li Yung-ch'ang dated 1640 in the Palace Museum, Beijing is in the same manner (Pl. 4), and alongside Cheng Yüan-hsün's similar Huang Kung-wang-style composition of 1631 (Pl. 3) reveals the stylistic direction the school was taking. Shading and texture have been virtually eliminated, along with fine detail, which the thick-line drawing used throughout would not in any case allow. A succession of overlapping earth forms provides simple diagonal moves into depth; pale, flat washes help to separate one form from the next. Houses and trees reproduce long-established schemata, without adornment or significant change. Even though it occupies (like the very different landscapes of the Orthodox masters) a late position in the "Southern school" lineage, as a successor to Huang Kung-wang, Shen Chou, and Tung Ch'i-ch'ang, the painting seems less the product of accretion than of reduction: it is a skeletal or bare-bones version of its models.

Painters of this period, as we have already seen, were not constrained by dictates of moderation from pushing interesting ideas beyond what would in other periods have been acceptable limits; and the reductive mode was to be carried to still further extremes. The taste for the sparse and plain was exerting itself elsewhere as well, for instance in the works of Tsou Chih-lin (Distant Mts., Pl. 68: Shadows, no. 36). For the Anhui school proper, the extreme point can perhaps best be represented by the works of Wang Chih-jui.

Wang Chih-jui was another native of Hsiu-ning and a disciple of Li Yung-ch'ang. The fullest early account of him is by Chang Keng in his Kuo-ch'ao hua-cheng lu (preface 1739). Chang's terse characterization of Wang Chih-jui's style applies as well to much of the rest of early Anhui school painting: "He was good at [painting] landscapes, using a hanging forearm and tip-centered [brushstrokes], a parched brush and roasted ink." The term "hanging forearm" refers to the practice of painting or writing without resting the arm or wrist on the table; "tip-centered" strokes are done by enclosing the brush-tip within the stroke to avoid the hooks and points of other modes of brushwork. A "parched brush" is one lightly loaded with semi-dry ink, and "roasted ink" is ink that has been allowed to dry partially on the ink-stone, and is then applied dry and black, for an effect that can resemble charcoal drawing. Chang Keng continues by relating that when Wang Chih-jui was excited by drinking he

would "wield the brush like the coming of a violent storm of wind and rain, and sometimes finish several dozen pictures in a single day. When his excitement ran out he would lie down, often not getting up for days."

If this begins to sound like a conventional account of the "untrammelled" artist at work, that impression is deepened when Chang goes on to tell us that Wang Chih-jui would not condescend to paint for unsuitable people, however much money they offered, but would depart with a haughty air. He ends by quoting, as "notable artist's statements," two of Wang's sayings: "Whoever can work in either the sparse or the dense manner, the odd or the orthodox, is really a good painter!" and : "Thickness (richness) doesn't come from profusion [of forms], nor does thinness come from paucity." The capable artist, in other words, can create an effect of richness with only a few forms, just as the incapable one can use many and still produce a thin-looking picture.¹¹

Like most articulate artists, Wang Chih-jui here defines quality in art to match the nature of his own achievements: richness-within-simplicity is indeed his forte. That quality can be seen ideally exemplified in two album leaves in the Anhui Provincial Museum (Pl. 1,2), which represent Wang Chih-jui's style at its best. The scenery is very plain: in one, a pair of naively-drawn trees with a t'ing-tzu or rest-shelter on a further bank (a playful variant of the Ni Tsan

formula); in the other, a flat-topped hillock with a few trees, and a low ridge beyond. The drawing is done in the broad, even, centered-tip line that Chang Keng describes, and "roasted ink" has been rubbed on with a dry brush in place of texture-strokes or ink wash. The technique permits nuances of touch and tone that Wang exploits fully; the success of the paintings in avoiding flatness and sameness within their minimalist means supports Wang's statement that "thickness doesn't come from profusion." But the chief attraction of the pictures lies in their absorbing readings as abstract form: visual confusions of vertical and horizontal planes: plays with scale; a line that ambiguously serves as lower contour of one set of forms and upper contour of another.

None of this is what we would expect, on the other hand, from Chang Keng's account of how Wang Chih-jui painted; the style does not speak of impetuosity or drunkenness at all, but rather of restraint and a slow, deliberate execution. This contradiction belongs within a larger paradox: the designation i or i-p'in, used in early centuries for "untrammeled" artists who splashed ink onto the painting surface or worked with pieces of rope or their hair instead of brushes, had later come to be applied to kinds of painting almost diametrically opposite from those of the ink-splashers, and especially to the style of Ni Tsan. Susan Nelson writes of this phenomenon: "If the T'ang i was a release of the inner impulses from outer restraints (aptly

translated "untrammelled"), the *i* of later times took the form of the disengagement of the inner sensibilities from outer compulsions (perhaps better rendered "relaxed"). Wang Mo's liberated impulses, therefore, burst forth, while Ni Tsan's seemed rather to straighten, to achieve balance."¹²

We have tried to identify some of the ideas, values, and attitudes that made up, for this time and place, the expressive associations of the spare, linear manner of painting, and others could be added without exhausting its rich range of signification. As a general phenomenon in mid-17th century painting, it appealed to the sensibilities of that age for its implications of disengagement, purity, high-mindedness--the qualities ascribed to Ni Tsan and more broadly to the Yüan masters.¹³ For late Ming and early Ch'ing Hui-chou, it had more specific associations, some of which we have attempted to define; but again, the network of relevant circumstance, if we were to pursue the matter, would include still other factors. A taste for the plain and simple had been inculcated in Hui-chou merchant families by the clan rules, which stressed the superiority of a relatively ascetic way of life: don't squander, they cautioned, but invest. This principle was often violated in the late Ming, as we have seen, but it keeps its force as an ideal. The development and popularity of pictorial woodblock printing, which had been practiced for centuries on a

generally cruder, functional level as book illustrations which now rose to the status of art, must have spread the taste for linearity. And one can even see the terrain of the region, especially the Huangshan, lent itself to pictures in a linear, angular manner. The urge toward simplification and abstraction culminated in the works of Wang Chih-jui, and a few others by lesser masters of the school working at the very end of the Ming period. Unlike the early Ch'ing artists of Anhui, however, who brought no distinction, even greatness, to the school. The severe technical restrictions of the Anhui manner defined their color problem: to achieve, within this severely constricted technical repertory, the qualities of solid construction, formal and spatial clarity that were traditional goals in landscape painting. Stated another way, their task was to emerge from a reductive phase into a constructive one without sacrificing their purist expressive aims.

Hsiao Yün-ts'ung

An Anhui master who stands somewhat outside the main development, both geographically and stylistically, is Hsiao Yün-ts'ung (1596-1673).¹⁵ He was a native of Wu-hsiang, a hundred miles north of the She-hsien/Hsiu-ning region. When Li Yung-ch'ang and Wang Chih-jui were active. Hsiao came into a minor gentry family with strong upward aspirations. Both he and his younger brother took the local ci

examinations in Nanking; the brother graduated to the chü-jen rank which permitted the holder to attempt the higher examinations, but Hsiao, although he tried twice, in 1639 and 1642, never scored high enough to proceed further. The course of his life parallels in some respects that of Ch'en Hung-shou (Distant Mts., pp. 244 ff.) who, although three years younger, is always treated as a late Ming personage because he lived only a few years into the Ch'ing. Like Ch'en, Hsiao seems to have had strong political sentiments without ever becoming deeply involved in political affairs. He and his brother both joined the Fu-she or Restoration Party when it was organized in 1638. And like Ch'en, Hsiao turned from dashed hopes for an official career to become a semi-professional painter.

Hsiao's father had dreamt, on the night of his birth, that Kuo Chung-shu, a famous tenth century landscapist and specialist in chieh-hua or finely detailed depictions of architectural subjects, had come to him and announced that because the family was fated to prosper in the next generation, he, Kuo Chung-shu, was about to be reborn into it. Hsiao Yün-ts'ung would later use a seal reading "A Reborn Kuo Chung-shu." But these auspicious auguries were deceptive: the family did not prosper, nor was Hsiao ever to rise as a painter to the fame or greatness of Kuo Chung-shu. Moreover, whatever security had been afforded by his family situation ended with the Manchu invasion. When the Ch'ing

troops, after taking Nanking in the fourth month of 1645, pushed on to Wu-hu, only about fifty miles to the southwest, Hsiao fled with his family to Kao-shun, which was a center of anti-Manchu resistance. (It was in Anhui province, in fact, that this resistance was strongest.) Whether, or how, Hsiao participated in the resistance is not known. Returning to Wu-hu in 1647, he found his house in a state of ruin. Bitter poems from this period express his indignation and grief.

We can assume that the need to earn money for simple survival, along with whatever expressive urges he may have felt, persuaded him to take part in two important printing projects of this period, the Li-sao t'u published in 1645 or shortly after, and the T'ai-p'ing shan-shui t'u of 1648. Both are outstanding products of the brief, brilliant flourishing of pictorial woodblock printing in the seventeenth century, in which major artists took part, together with equally accomplished block-cutters and printers, in raising the medium to an artistic level unequalled before or after. The highest-quality block-carving and printing were concentrated in Anhui province, as we noted earlier; the best of Ch'en Hung-shou's works in this medium, for example, employed Anhui cutters and printers.¹⁶

For the Li-sao t'u, Hsiao Yün-ts'ung contributed sixty-four illustrations (each 24.2 x 14.4 cm. in size) to poems

attributed to Ch'ü Yüan, the great fourth century B.C. poet of the Ch'u state. For the Li-sao (Encountering Sorrow) poem itself he did a single picture; the remainder illustrate the Nine Songs (for which Ch'en Hung'shou had also done designs for a series of woodblock pictures--see Distant Mts., pp. 246-47) and the T'ien-wen or Heavenly Questions. The blocks were cut by two Anhui carvers, and probably published some time shortly after 1645, the date of Hsiao's preface.

It is evident from Hsiao Yün-t'sung's few extant figure paintings, and from the figures that appear in his landscapes, that he was not technically comfortable in this subject category; his figures, and even more the animals that accompany them in many of the Li-sao leaves, are drawn with an awkwardness that can only partly be explained as intentional. But like Ch'en Hung-shou (in his early period) and other figure painters of the time, Hsiao exploits for positive effect the mannerisms that typically afflicted figure drawing of this late age, turning them into engaging grotesqueries. It has also been suggested that the uncomfortable distortions in the depiction of the figures should be read as expressions of anguish over the fall of the native dynasty.¹⁷

In view of political readings that had been imposed on the poems since the Han dynasty, the choice of these texts to republish at this time in an illustrated edition was

certainly also politically inspired--Hsiao virtually says as much in his preface. The poems, he argues, had served in their time to express sadness and worry, and to move people's hearts; but later illustrations to them (he mentions having seen a set recently--Ch'en Hung-shou's?) fail to capture these emotional messages and distort the meaning of the poems. Pictures, he writes, can express all kinds of meanings: they let us know the unpredictability of ghosts and gods, and the distinction between order and disorder, or between "fragrant and odorous" (i.e., virtuous and wicked) men. They can be used to edify, advise, or warn people. Hsiao's postface to the Nine Songs series exposes his feelings even more openly: he is a man, he writes, unable to accomplish his aims--his upbringing was in poverty, his social standing low, and he is afflicted with illness without dying. He lives in this world as neither an official nor a monk--neither engaged with the problems of his time, that is, nor wholly withdrawn from them. He will use the "leftover fragrance" of the ancients for his pictures, to entertain himself; after that, he can die. He concludes by saying that if even Ch'ü Yüan, who wrote the Nine Songs as advice to people, had his advice rejected, what can he, Hsiao, hope for? He will lock up his pictures in an iron box and wait for spring to come.

These indications of Hsiao's intentions in doing the pictures, charged with rhetoric as they are (we will find his

inscriptions on paintings to be the same), permit us to read into the distortions and oddities of his depictions of antique subjects the bitterness he felt about conditions of his own time--in this they share a common expressive strategy with some of Ch'en Hung-shou's works (cf. Compelling Image, pp. 133-37).

The dancing shamaness illustrating the Li Hun or Ritual Cycle, the last of the Nine Songs (Fig. 1), twists oddly and raises her face to heaven as she waves her flower-wands. (The text reads in part: "Lovely maidens sing their song, slow and solemnly./ Orchids in spring and chrysanthemums in autumn:/ So it shall go on until the end of time."¹⁸ Hsiao's pictures for the T'ien-wen are even more bizarre, featuring an assemblage of monsters and anomalies. One, for example (Fig. 2), depicts the passage: "Mei Po was sliced and salted, but Chi Tzu feigned madness. Why is it that wise men whose virtue is the same yet act in different ways?" The translator comments: "I.e., some prefer martyrdom and some prefer to survive by cunning and clean up the mess."¹⁹ Hsiao Yün-ts'ung's portrayal of the deranged Chi Tzu and the pickled Mei Po offers, with an intensity that goes beyond the disinterested imagining of ancient events, the terrible options that face men of principle in hopeless situations.

The T'ai-p'ing shan-shui t'u was an even more ambitious project, carried out after Hsiao's return to Wu-hu in 1647.

His contribution consists of forty-three pictures of scenic places in T'ai-p'ing prefecture. The series was commissioned by a prefectural judge who had served there and was about to return to his home in Shantung; the judge himself edited the collection and wrote a preface for it. The pictures were done over a period of some months--they bear various dates in 1647 and 1648. Each of the scenes is accompanied by a suitable poem, chosen by Hsiao from some old poet and copied in his calligraphy; each of the pictures, moreover, is in the manner of some old master. Albums made up of leaves in a succession of old manners were popular in this period, as we have already seen, but overlaying this art-historical program onto a topographical one was probably unprecedented. Such a piling-up of allusions and quotations in both poems and pictures seems a heavy display of scholarship on Hsiao's part, but no doubt was intended also to compliment the patron's level of cultivation and to give a distinct cultural flavor to the portrayals of the places. Hsiao's stylistic allusions are often obscure, and probably mostly uninformed as well--he cannot have seen original works by more than a few of the artists he "imitates." But the pictures are admirable for qualities quite independent of the acquaintance with antique painting that they reveal.

The prints are large (20.1 x 27.7 cm.) and horizontal, each having originally occupied two facing leaves in the album, folded down the center. The first is a bird's-eye

view of the whole prefecture; the others portray its notable mountains and rivers, pavilions and bridges. One of the most powerful (Fig. 3) depicts Lung-shan or Dragon Mountain in the manner of Kuo Hsi, and within the limitations of Hsiao's knowledge and the medium, captures admirably the monumental instabilities of the Sung master's style. Two men relax in a pavilion and gaze at a thunderous waterfall, which arouses mist in the space below (partly hidden by leafy trees) and flows off to the right with cataract volume and force. The stringy-line patterning on the surfaces of the pendulous earth masses is untrue to Kuo Hsi's style but ideal for displaying the capacities of the woodblock medium, and the cutters and printers have met the challenge Hsiao gave them, creating with him a richly-textured, dynamic print.

The last in the series (Fig. 4), titled "Carrying Wine at the North Garden," probably portrays the villa of the prefectural judge who commissioned the work. A man who wears an official's cap, presumably the judge, sits with two friends on a flat-topped rock right of center, regarding the scene below: a servant appears in the doorway of the house carrying a tray with cups; a table with dishes on it is surrounded by three chairs; a crane stands outside, near a low table with dwarf trees in pots; a boat filled with wine-jars and dishes waits to take the three friends on an outing. Even in these turbulent times, artist and patron agree in choosing to portray only the ideal occupations and pleasures

of the gentleman-scholar, as if these could not be touched by reality. Hsiao Yün-ts'ung relates in his inscription that when he began to design this picture he was in a dispirited state, but that the great Ming painter T'ang Yin appeared to him in a dream and presented him with this composition. Some references to T'ang Yin's style, hardened again by mannerisms and the medium, can be seen in the heavy light-dark treatment of the rocks and hills, and perhaps in the whole composition, which is faintly reminiscent of Wu-school pictures of gardens and villas.

Although there is no evidence for Hsiao Yün-ts'ung having associated closely with any of the Hui-chou artists, he was certainly affected by their simplified, dry-line manner, and occasionally tried his hand at it in its pure form. His hanging-scroll painting of 1648 titled "Walking with a Staff Among Sparse Trees" (Tientsin Museum, see Shadows, fig. 114, also Compelling Image, 5.14) is an odd, not entirely successful attempt to create within the linear mode a spacious landscape with a towering cliff. Perhaps its insubstantiality and instability should be seen as deliberate, an expression of alienation and unease. There is ample evidence that Hsiao was depressed and ill around this time. In an inscription written in the spring of 1649 he complains that although in his youth painting had been a pleasure for him, pursued with dedication in leisure time from his studies, he now finds it difficult to take up the

brush, what with the upset of moving from place to place, and failing health--"My sight is blurred and my teeth are falling out; at the age of [not much over] fifty, I am as dull as an old man of eighty or ninety." When people ask him for paintings, he writes, he usually has his nephew paint them for him; this painting is an exception, done by himself.²⁰ However, Hsiao was to continue to paint prolifically for over two decades more, and would do his best work in his late years.

His landscapes from the early period, although sometimes accomplished and attractive, tend to be fussy and crowded with detail; seldom a strong compositionalist, he would too often make big pictures by, in effect, putting together a lot of little ones. His style in this period is usually quite conservative, based on Sung models, or his own imperfect knowledge of them--perhaps he was trying to live out his role as a "reborn Kuo Chung-shu." Like other artists who seem uncomfortable with the large hanging-scroll form, Hsiao can be seen at his best in albums and handscrolls.

An album painted in 1653, now in the Anhui Provincial Museum, contains leaves after Li Ch'eng, Ching Hao, Kuan T'ung, and other early masters. Hsiao's inscriptions name these "sources," and also contain oblique expressions of Ming loyalist sentiment. One of them (Pl. 7) relates the apocryphal story about how the early Yüan painter Chao Meng-

fu--who, like the "collaborators" in Hsiao's time, served as an official under an alien dynasty--visited his relative Chao Meng-chien; Meng-chien, a loyalist, was morally repelled, and "reclining loftily, shut the gate and refused to see him."²¹ The painting depicts the imagined incident in a straightforward narrative manner, using the compartmented composition that for centuries had signified dwelling-in-seclusion: behind a series of visual barricades (water, rocks, bamboo, trees, a wall) Chao Meng-chien is seen "loftily reclining" in his study; at the lower left Chao Meng-fu stalks away stiffly, observed by a vigilant dog guarding the gate. Hsiao Yün-ts'ung's inscription relates the story briefly, and concludes: "I have used Chao Meng-chien's painting style for the picture; Chao Meng-fu's, excellent as it is, I have rejected." Politics, not styles, are at issue here (especially since Hsiao could not possibly have done the landscape and figures in the style of Chao Meng-chien, who never painted those subjects); we might recall what another loyalist of the time, Fu Shan, wrote about Chao Meng-fu's calligraphy: "I despise the man, and accordingly hate his calligraphy" (Distant Mts., p. 169).

Another leaf (Pl. 8) portrays "Palaces on Immortals' Mountains," a Taoist sanctuary identified by the standard cranes and pines, curling clouds, unnaturally neat rock formations, and arriving worthies, seen with their servant ascending on a balustraded path toward the pavilions. Hsiao

claims in his inscription that the composition is based on one by Kuo Chung-shu, but that the T'ang master Li Chao-tao had also painted a similar picture. True to these illustrious origins, Hsiao colors his picture with bright red and green pigments.²² Pictures of Taoist paradises could carry either auspicious meanings, such as wishes for long life on the occasion of someone's birthday, or the desire to escape from a real world grown oppressive; the latter must be Hsiao's intent here.

Hsiao Yün-ts'ung's most successful essay in the geometricized mode of the Hui-chou artists is a landscape dated 1657, now in the Freer Gallery of Art (Pl. 6). The poem Hsiao has inscribed on it suggests that it was painted as a farewell present for some friend (trans. by Marshall Wu):

With a staff you walk until late in the evening.
 Who says that peace can be found beyond this world?
 Gazing at clouds, I worry about the road you travel;
 Saddened by our parting, I notice your hair turned gray.
 I think of you, like the lonely crane,
 Flying so high you cannot be drawn back.
 Like floating duckweed, you leave no trace behind you--
 How can I know the day you will return?

In the lower left of the painting one of Hsiao's typically stubby figures, perhaps the artist himself, regards a crane which may represent his friend. Spatially, the painting belongs to the secluded-dwelling type, with a house set in an enclosure of rocks, trees, and riverbank, and the

idea of separation and isolation expressed in the relationship between this and the further hill. The linear mode, which was used by other artists for astringent or even severe effect, is softened in Hsiao's hands and turned to the evocation of quiet melancholy, an effect further enhanced by a few touches of reddish color on the figure and in the autumn trees. Hsiao does not attempt, here or elsewhere, the tense, orderly constructions of Hung-jen; like Ch'eng Cheng-kuei, he tends to invent his forms lightly and arrange them into relatively loose assemblages. This painting offers more than is usual, among his works, of repetitions of shapes, plays on space and mass, and other manipulations of abstract form, but still contains too much that seems merely arbitrary or improvised to command our attention in the way that the best works by the major individualists of the time can do.

In inscriptions on paintings from the 1650s Hsiao continues to complain about physical decline. One written in this same year, 1657, on the well-known handscroll in the Tokyo National Museum,²³ states that he did the painting some ten years earlier, and now, examining it again, has to admit "that I cannot paint like this any more. In those days my arms were strong and I could paint fine lines and objects in fine detail. Who says that painters must first become old and then they will be able to paint better?"²⁴ Even while writing such expressions of gloom, however, Hsiao continued to paint prolifically, producing in his late years a number

of long handscrolls, quite a few of which survive. The inscription on one finished in 1663, now in the Vannotti collection, Lugano, indicates an upturn in his spirits: "For fifty years I have been wandering to the north and south, yet the landscapes in my paintings are all ordinary ones. I pondered on this problem but could not get an answer. Now, in the year 1663, after I polished up this composition . . . it turned out to be an excellent painting. There is great joy in my mind . . . there is a lot of happiness in the reclusive life."²⁵ The remaining decade of Hsiao's life, his later sixties and seventies, were in fact to be his finest period as a painter.

In an inscription on a handscroll painted in 1666 (Colorplate) Hsiao writes that in the autumn of that year he was lying quietly in his studio and suddenly remembered how the great Sung master Li T'ang, at the age of nearly eighty, could still paint long handscrolls and large screens, which were admired and in one case inscribed by the Emperor Kao-tsung. Hsiao remarks that although there was no possibility of his presenting his painting to the emperor, he was nonetheless inspired by Li T'ang's example to work very hard to finish this scroll, which he regards as one of the best of his whole life--"The mountains are remote and the valleys deep." He concludes by resolving to put it away to wait for the coming of someone who really understands him. He was granted his wish posthumously, more than a century

later: in 1774, the scroll was presented to the Ch'ien-lung Emperor, who wrote an admiring inscription on it, pointing out that Hsiao's intention had been fulfilled at last.²⁶

The painting is indeed an outstanding example of the artist's late work, combining dry-brush outlining, inkwash shading, washes of pale blue and red, and touches of brighter color into an attractive and distinctive style. Nothing here seems labored or derivative; the conventional materials--a crane stalking across a plank bridge toward a meditative scholar in his house; groups of pines, autumn trees, and a hillside constructed in the Huang Kung-wang manner-- are treated as the artist's personal properties. Long landscape handscrolls of this kind were normally not expected to deliver aesthetic shocks or even surprises as one rolled them; like musical compositions in familiar idioms and fixed forms, they calmed the mind and reaffirmed established versions of the natural and cultural order, however irrelevant to present reality these might be.

It was probably around this time that Hsiao painted the set of albums totalling sixty leaves of scenes of Huangshan, now in the Palace Museum, Peking, that has customarily but wrongly been accepted as the work of Hung-jen (Colorplts. 3,4).²⁷ Each leaf bears a single, small Hung-jen seal, of a type that cannot be matched on any genuine Hung-jen work; there is no inscription or even signature of the purported

artist (an absence that should alone arouse suspicion about the attribution). Accompanying the album, however, is a colophon by Hsiao Yün-ts'ung written in 1665, nearly two years after Hung-jen's death, in which he praises the paintings as the work of his late younger contemporary, says that he himself has never been to Huangshan, and ends with the statement that seeing these albums made him so discouraged by the younger artist's accomplishments that he felt like laying down his brush. The fame of Hung-jen had indeed eclipsed Hsiao's by then, and his works were no doubt more valuable and saleable. It is possible that Hsiao's colophon was written for a genuine Hung-jen album of Huangshan scenes, and later switched to this series of his own paintings, presumably at the same time that the false seals were added to it, to pass it as Hung-jen's work. But it is also possible that Hsiao was from the beginning a party to the deception, if not the instigator of it, and did the albums in response to a demand for Hung-jen's works that genuine examples were insufficient to fill.

In either case, the paintings are typical in every respect of Hsiao's late style, in the overlapping, simplified forms, the distinctive combination of pale blue and red-brown washes with strokes of shaded wash, the depiction and placing of trees, the blocky red-robed figures--all foreign to Hung-jen's style. Pleasant as they are as paintings, they fail utterly to convey the grandeur of Huangshan scenery--these

are indeed the works of someone who has never seen the real place, and is presumably making free copies of designs by Hung-jen and others.²⁸ Hsiao Yün-ts'ung had once before, in 1656, borrowed another artist's designs for a series of quasi-topographical pictures of real places. Some time around 1662, moreover, he had painted four great mountains--Lu-shan, O-mei, T'ai-shan, Heng-shan--on the walls of the T'ai-po Hall near She-hsien, under coercion from a local official; and again, these were places where he had never been.²⁹ Hsiao's economic situation did not permit him to limit his themes to those that belonged to his own experience and had personal meaning for him; he had to paint much of the time in response to outside demands, explicit or understood.

One of his strongest and most accomplished works is the long handscroll in the Los Angeles County Museum (Pl. 9), which Hsiao painted for his son-in-law in the spring of 1669. Here he works boldly with imposing masses, which are given an unusual sense of volume through well-mastered techniques of linear drawing and graded washes. The style is consistent throughout the scroll, and is totally assured, with no signs of indecision. Hsiao builds his composition out of large, clearly-defined elements and the spaces they enclose, taking the viewer into distance with ease or drawing him to the foreground to observe some detail--travelers on bridges, recluses in houses, interesting trees. The familiar washes of pale blue and red-brown over strokes of ink-wash, and the

spots of brighter color on the tree foliage and figures, again enhance the readability and visual pleasures of the painting.

Taken together, Hsiao Yün-ts'ung's paintings and inscriptions reveal a serious, hard-working artist, not brilliantly gifted but developing steadily over several decades of activity. His output is uneven, and failed to win him either a high reputation or financial security during his lifetime--one can easily imagine a critic of the Orthodox persuasion scorning his works as provincial and stylistically insecure. But Hsiao's successes are sufficient to assure him a secure place in the history of early Ch'ing painting.

Hung-jen's Early Years and Sun I

By the time of Hsiao Yün-ts'ung's death in the 1670s, the Anhui painters were recognized both inside and outside their province as making up a distinct regional school. The school was variously named, and different masters were identified as founders, central figures, and members of it. Kung Hsien, in an inscription on one of his own paintings datable to the late 1660s, calls it the T'ien-tu school, giving it the name of the Heavenly Citadel, grandest of the peaks of Huangshan. He credits Ch'eng Chia-sui with founding the school, and Li Yung-ch'ang with expanding its "breath and force." Among the others he names are Wang Chih-jui, Sun I,

Hung-jen, Cha Shih-piao and Ch'eng Sui, the last four of whom will be considered further on in this chapter.³⁰ By the late seventeenth century Wang Chih-jui, Sun I, Hung-jen, and Cha Shih-piao had come to be known as the "Four Masters of Hsin-an," a grouping much repeated afterwards.

But such relatively even-handed listings gave way in time to a version of the school centered firmly on a single master, the monk Chien-chiang or Hung-jen (1610-1664), a version in which other artists took subordinate places as predecessors or followers. Ch'eng Sui, writing a colophon for the sixty-leaf album of scenes of Huangshan, begins with the statement that in the orthodox lineage" of painting in his region, Hung-jen "walks alone," and others follow. Chang Keng in the mid-eighteenth century repeats this assertion, and it has gone unquestioned since then.³¹ An international symposium on "Master Chien-chiang and Huangshan School of Painting" held at the Anhui provincial capital, Hefei, in 1984 commemorated the 320th anniversary of the artist's death and reaffirmed the now-universal view of him as the leading artist of the school and as one of the great Individualist masters of the early Ch'ing period.

Hung-jen was born in She-hsien in 1610; his original name, now all but forgotten, was Chiang T'ao.³² His family was prominent in the region, but the death of his father while he was still a boy left him and his mother

impoverished, and he had to work to support them, while pursuing his studies. He took the chu-sheng degree, but upon the death of his mother gave up all thought of marrying or attempting an official career. Such devotion, of course, won him a reputation for filial piety. There are some indications that he was involved with the literary-political clubs of the time, and was a member of one of them.³³ He had also begun to paint.

Two statements by contemporaries offer clues to the identity of Hung-jen's painting teacher, and both have been cited and discussed, although inconclusively, in modern treatments of the artist. One, an inscription on a painting done by Hung-jen in 1657, names Hsiao Yün-ts'ung as his teacher. But this is an isolated statement and seems dubious--at the time Hung-jen was studying painting, in the last years of the Ming, Hsiao was not yet much affected by the new stylistic developments in the Hui-chou region, and a young painter in She-hsien would have had no reason to choose this still-obscure artist of Wu-hu to study with. Hsiao and Hung-jen probably knew each other and affected each other's work, but without ever being in a properly master-pupil relationship.³⁴ More interesting is a statement by Chou Liang-kung that he had heard that "every stream, every stone" in Hung-jen's paintings was derived from an artist named Sun Wu-hsiu.³⁵ Chou identifies him with an otherwise unrecorded, seemingly irrelevant Nanking master, to the bewilderment of

later writers; but the truth is probably that Chou has mixed up two artists who used similar names, and that the one he heard about as the source of Hung-jen's style was not Sun Wu-hsiu but Sun Wu-i, or Sun I--who, by contrast, is entirely plausible as Hung-jen's teacher, or at least as an older artist of his region who was an important influence on him.

Sun I (ca. 1605-ca. 1660) remains little-studied, and few of his works survive. A native of Hsiu-ning, he later moved to Wu-hu and was associated there with Hsiao Yün-ts'ing. Like Hsiao, he was capable of painting landscapes in a range of traditional manners, inserting allusions to Sung-Yüan masters into a careful, conservative style that was the legacy of the Soochow artists of the Ming. An album of landscapes in old styles dated 1639, now in the Palace Museum, Peking, exemplifies this conservative side of his painting and reveals why he was sometimes called a "reborn Wen Cheng-ming." But he seems also to have been one of those who established the spare, geometricized landscape manner as the "local style" for his home region of Hui-chou. In the same year, 1639, he was one of the five artists who took part in the collaborative landscape handscroll, done for the fortieth birthday of a friend or patron, to which Li Yung-ch'ang contributed one section (cf. p. and footnote). Here, in keeping with the three preceding sections (Sun's is the fourth), he worked in the dry-linear manner. And,

significantly, the section that follows his and ends the scroll is by Chiang T'ao, who would become Hung-jen.

Other evidence connects Sun I with Hung-jen's early development,³⁶ but instead of pursuing it we will observe Sun I at his best, in a landscape dated 1654 (Pl. 5). The subject, according to his inscription, is the Chu-sha Feng or Cinnabar Peak at Huangshan. The unassertive dry-line drawing serves to delineate a frail but orderly construction of banks and cliffs by a river. Trees with autumnal-colored foliage relieve the bareness of the earth and rock formations, and surround a modest temple complex at the left. In the lower right corner a traveler with staff enters the picture along an elevated zigzag path, an odd motif favored by the older Anhui masters--it is frequently to be found in Hung-jen's early works, and in Hsiao Yün-ts'ung's (e.g., Compelling Image, Pl. 5.1, 5.8, 5.12, 5.14). Like the flat-topped banks and plateaus seen further back in Sun I's landscape, it served as one of the building-blocks of the linear style, permitting the artist to establish, within the confines of that style, both the three-dimensionality of his masses and a series of short horizontal recessions to counter the verticality of the dominant forms. Rising out of this elaborate construction is the Cinnabar Peak, the ostensible subject, which by its placement seems to echo the "principal mountains" that dominate Sung monumental landscapes. But it is a thin echo; the virtues of Sun I's painting are in

sensitivity, not in the kind of compositional power that Hung-jen would attain or in the bold abstraction that was to distinguish the school.

The passage of landscape painting by Chiang T'ao or Hung-jen that follows Sun I's in the 1639 collaborative scroll--to return to that--is a cautious essay in the Ni Tsan manner, and suggests what, besides painting technique in the simple sense, the thirty-year-old artist may have learned from the older master: a respect for finesse of execution, even at the expense of striking effect, and a willingness to learn usefully from the past. Sun I is said in one account to have followed Huang Kung-wang; Hung-jen committed himself from the beginning to Ni Tsan, whose works were his principal models in these early years. Genuine examples were to be seen in local collections, and Hung-jen himself was later to own a landscape by Ni Tsan.

When the Ch'ing troops invaded the Hui-chou region in November of 1645 Chiang T'ao escaped south to Fukien with one of his teachers, and may have become involved there in loyalist political activities. At a temple in the Wu-i Mountains he met the Ch'an Buddhist master Ku-hang Tao-chou (1585-1655) and was ordained a monk of that sect in 1646, taking the name Hung-jen but keeping as his hao (style) Chien-chiang, the name of the river that flows past She-hsien. Many loyalists entered the Buddhist monastic order

during the Ming-Ch'ing transition for reasons more political than strictly religious--by doing so, they bettered their chances of escaping retribution for any involvement in anti-Manchu movements, and it was also an effective way of disengaging from public life. What Hung-jen's motives may have been cannot be determined, but Buddhist terms and ideas can be found in his poems, and his commitment was probably real.

He returned to his home in She-hsien in 1652 and lived his remaining years in Buddhist temples in that region and at Huang-shan. He was never reclusive, having many friends, poets and artists and others; he traveled to Nanking, Yangchow, Hangchow, and in 1663 to Lu-shan, another mountain beloved of Chinese landscapists. On returning to She-hsien from that trip he stayed, as he often had before, at a monastery located below the P'i-yün Peak southwest of the city, and died there at the beginning of the following year, 1664. His tomb on the P'i-yün Peak can still be visited.

The Paintings of Hung-jen's Later Years

All of the works that support the present-day assessment of Hung-jen as one of the great Individualist masters of the early Ch'ing were painted in the last decade of his life, and most of them in the last five years. A few extant works dated between 1651 and 1655 reveal stages in his mastery of

the compositional and representational techniques of his mature style; I have outlined this early development elsewhere (Compelling Image, pp. 148-160) and will sketch it here only briefly before going on to the late paintings. No dated work survives between 1639 and 1651, when Hung-jen again contributed one section to a collaborative handscroll (Compelling Image, 5.1). He may have painted it while staying in Nanking on his way back to She-hsien from Fukien. This time he adopted the thick, blunt drawing and conventional materials of his Hui-chou predecessors; at this stage he is almost indistinguishable from minor members of the school. From the next few years virtually nothing survives,³⁷ and from 1655 only a single fan painting (Pl. 10)--which, however, modest as it is, announces the mature Hung-jen, original and self-confident, with all awkwardness and hesitency left behind.

"I happened to see a small album-leaf by Wang Meng-tuan," he writes in his inscription, "and used it in following his idea [in this picture] for the Retired Scholar Lung-chao." The early Ming painter Wang Meng-tuan or Wang Fu himself sometimes "followed the idea" (or the style) of Yüan masters such as Ni Tsan (cf. Parting, Pl. 22), and Ni Tsan seems to be the ultimate, unstated source here, with Wang Fu only an intermediary. And where most Ming-Ch'ing imitators of Ni Tsan had reduced his familiar imagery to flat, formulaic renderings, Hung-jen understands fully, and can

turn to his own purposes, the structural potential of Ni Tsan's bent-stroke brush drawing as Ni himself had utilized it in the best of his late works (e.g., the 1372 "Jung-hsi Studio," Hills, Pl. 50). In Hung-jen's hands this soft, unobtrusive drawing in pale ink, to which a few dark accents are added, suffices to construct blocky but natural-looking forms; thinner in substance even than Ni Tsan's, they nevertheless occupy firmly their places in the solidly-organized composition through the effectiveness of this volumetric drawing. Seen in relation to Hung-jen's better-known and bolder works, this one will seem cautious; he had mastered the simplified, geometricized manner years before, so that the 1655 fan should be understood not as a stage in a consistent move into abstraction, but rather as an essay in reconciling such abstraction--which in its earlier forms clearly did not satisfy him--with the demands of creating a stable, believable picture. Even his use of the fan shape reveals competence and confidence: the space and ground plane of the scene must be curved subtly, enough to allow a comfortable side-to-side reading in which the shape functions like a slightly arched handscroll section, but not so much as to parallel the more extreme arch of the fan shape, which would upset the reading of it as a unified, album-leaf-like plane.

The painting's rarefied air of serenity and its thinness of sensory stimuli pertain, of course, to the style and

artistic temperament of Ni Tsan, and to all the mystique that had formed around the Yüan master and his paintings. But they pertain also to Hung-jen's own taste and temperament: this seems to be a real case of close affinity, a meeting of minds across three centuries. Hung-jen's own perception of the affinity is expressed in two of his quatrains:

Ni Tsan in middle years reached a rare
situation: Dispersing his property, he then
perfected his painting. I too am homeless,
and set on painful study--
Sad, sad that one cannot escape the burden of
life.

The look of sparse trees, cold mountains, tranquil
distance,
Does not, as we well know, suit the present age.
Ni Tsan's brush-and-ink [painting] is my family
treasure--
Year after year I burn incense to honor him as my
teacher.³⁸

And in an inscription on one of his landscapes he wrote: "I take Ni Tsan as my teacher with the aim of capturing his wintry-cold feeling." Sui-han or wintry-cold was a long established metaphor for harsh circumstance, especially political, and here alludes to another affinity between Ni Tsan and Hung-jen: both were living under alien rule and expressing their disaffection in poetry and painting.

However, although Hung-jen frequently adopted Ni Tsan's favorite subject matter for his paintings--simple river scenes with spindly rest-shelters, thin bamboo and trees with rocks--these are not on the whole his most interesting

pictures. A source of grander pictorial interest was close at hand: the peaks and pines of Huangshan.

Huangshan is a range of mountain peaks located about thirty miles northwest of She-hsien. It is not great height that makes the peaks impressive--the highest rises only about 1,820 meters above sea level--but the strangeness of the rock formations, produced by vertical fissuring of the granite masses and countless millenia of erosion. In addition, expressively contorted pine trees grow from crevices in the rock, and seas of cloud often surround the peaks, allowing climbers to gaze down into them with an extraterrestrial sense of remoteness from ordinary life. Huangshan was known to travelers and poets from early times, but became more easily accessible after 1606, when a Buddhist monk established a temple there where pilgrims might lodge; other temples were built and roads opened, and by the early Ch'ing, Huangshan was a popular pilgrimage place. The peaks were given names--thirty-six great ones and thirty-six lesser--as were springs, ravines, waterfalls, even pine trees, providing a rich toponymic vocabulary for poets. Artists went there, and still do, to contemplate and depict what seemed artful creations of nature, places where the earth's dynamic processes, the flow and storing of ch'i, were revealed with awesome directness and drama.

Hung-jen climbed Huangshan first in 1656, and nearly every year after that, devoting many of his paintings and poems to portraying its sublime scenery. The demands of dealing adequately with the Huangshan scenery, in fact, were doubtless a major factor in the changes that his style underwent in this period: Huangshan could not be effectively depicted in the Ni Tsan manner. The linear drawing of the early Hui-chou artists was better suited to the clean geometry of its boulders and jutting crags, but offered no better vehicle for conveying the impression of overpowering massiveness and towering height that the climber of Huangshan experiences.³⁹ For this, and for grander effects in his landscape pictures more generally, Hung-jen had to find stylistic means--whether by creating them anew or by learning them from earlier painting--for rendering height and scale and ponderous mass.

An excellent if somewhat untypical work, well beyond the achievements of his earlier ones, is a landscape now in the Freer Gallery of Art, which Hung-jen probably painted around 1656 or 1657 (Pl. 12). He signs it as "painted at the Yün-ku Ssu" or Cloud-valley Temple, one of the temples at Huangshan which was, and still is, the eastern point of entry for climbers. From it one ascends a steep valley along a stream, beneath leafy trees, with impressive peaks looming above but with the great visual experiences still ahead--they begin with what is appropriately named the Shih-hsin Feng or Start-

to-believe Peak. It is presumably this preliminary phase of the Huangshan ascent, the gentler scenery near the Cloud-valley Temple, that Hung-jen portrays here, and he does it in a suitably delicate brush-manner, as if bent on demonstrating that the style of Ni Tsan was adaptable to Huangshan scenery. Like Ni Tsan, he rarely included a figure in his pictures, but one is seen here, perhaps the artist, seated in a thatched shelter in the lower right. The composition develops in an almost classical manner: the stream divides the foreground; two groves of trees are diagonally opposed on its banks, their foliage serving as a lacy middle-ground screen; a central peak dominates the upper part, separated by clefts from lower declivities at both sides, in a symmetrical scheme that recalls Northern Sung monumental landscapes. But instead of treating the central peak as a unitary form, as a Sung artist would do, Hung-jen divides it into two masses, higher and lower, leaning away from each other in response to the bifurcated plan of the composition. Moreover, the scale of trees to peak does not allow monumentality, and the viewer is not so much awed as visually engrossed, by the vibrant brushstroke-patterns of the leafage and the spatial complexity of the foreground, but even more by the ceaseless transformations that Hung-jen works on the rock surfaces of the peak, in which one reads the configurations one moment as restless abstract design, akin perhaps to some works by Mark Tobey, and the next moment as highly naturalistic picturing of the fractured and eroded rock surfaces, true to one's

memories of Huangshan (or photographs of it). The subtlety of Hung-jen's brushwork, an aspect of his painting unmatched by other artists of the school, is nowhere better displayed.

A very different, far more imposing presentation of Huangshan scenery is Hung-jen's "Pines and Rocks of the Huang-hai," painted in 1660 (Pl. 13). Nearly two meters tall, it dominates any space where it is hung with its bold, heavily-delineated forms and striking composition. This time Hung-jen takes us high up on Huangshan ("Huang-hai" means the "sea of clouds" at Huangshan, probably the area now called the Pei-hai or "North Sea") where the cliff and pinnacles stand against open sky, and gives us no ground to stand on--seeing only the tips of the rocky spires persuades us that solid earth is far below, and we can only climb precariously on one crag while gazing across at another. The seemingly simple composition sets rocky mass against space, articulating the one with crevices, the other with pine trunks and branches, the intervals between the spires, and the effectively-placed inscription. Forms and spaces tend to angularity, but any static effect that might result is offset by the running, shifting impulsion of the line that defines them. Oddly, the cliff that seems at first continuous resolves itself, when one studies it longer, into two separate masses, a round-topped lower one leaning leftward and a squared upper one leaning rightward. The pairing is similar to that in the Freer Gallery picture (Pl. 12) as well

as the great "Coming of Autumn" (Pl. 16) and others of Hung-jen's landscapes, and would seem to belong to some private store of compulsively-repeated forms.

One of Hung-jen's best-known and finest works, a long handscroll in the Sumitomo collection, Kyoto (Pl. 11), represents scenery of the Feng River, a tributary of the Hsin-an River which has its source east of Huangshan. It was painted, according to Hung-jen's inscription, in the eleventh month of 1661 for a certain Lien-shih. This date and dedication are preceded by a quatrain:

My plan for living in the mountains has gone for
years unfulfilled:
With flask and rain-hat [as belongings] I drift
about like duckweed on water.
It is only at the Feng River that I can gaze with
real fondness--
Breathing on my icy [brush tip, to warm it] I
portray its shadow [image], the ink scattering
sparsely.

In his rootless life, that is, he can form a lasting attachment only with the landscape. But the attachment, however profound, is not manifested in a faithful portrayal of the scenery: while the whole composition of the scroll may follow some general configuration of the Feng River terrain, beginning with a view over the river to distant hills, developing to a climactic passage with rocky cliffs filling most of the scroll, and ending with an expanse of carefully ill-assorted hillocks and banks that carry the eye

again into far distance, this is essentially a landscape of the mind. Hung-jen's friend T'ang Yen-sheng recognizes this character of the picture when he writes, in a long colophon (part of which was quoted above, p.): "The clustered mountains stretch continuously for thousands of miles before their arteries are disrupted and their strands unravelled, presenting strange shapes at dusk and dawn. The trees and rocks, bridges and roads, all issue from patterns in the artist's mind and are quite unlike those of the real world, as if he longed to be beyond some faraway heaven-and-earth."

In the section reproduced here, a series of huge, oddly-related forms "present their strange shapes at dusk and dawn." The reference to time of day is not irrelevant to the painting: pale washes of ink and reddish color convey the fall of thin sunlight and shadow, most strikingly on the three component masses of the central bluff, and indicate a sun low on the horizon at the right. Here, even more than in the earlier Hung-jen paintings considered above, the picture is constructed out of volumetrically-rendered masses--flat-topped, rounded, shaped--and believable spaces. I once wrote of this same passage as "like a construction of thin wires and glass, fragile and without solid substance," but now would see that characterization as applying better to others of his paintings, and especially to the early works. By 1661 Hung-jen, like the other great Individualist masters in their best periods, was deeply concerned with making his pictures

linear style and the corporeal and spatial rendering that satisfying landscape representation requires, and experimented constantly with ways of resolving it. One way, which he used for a leaf in an album painted in Nanking in 1657 (see Compelling Image, Pl. 5.16 and 5.18 for other leaves), was to surround the central area of the picture, meant to be read as a pond, with rock forms that were themselves flat but served to demarcate a space; the tension between the two-and-three-dimensional readings becomes the formal theme of the painting. The same compositional scheme was elaborated and re-used in one of his finest works (Pl. 14). The poem that Hung-jen has inscribed in the upper right describes a house left deserted and desolate, presumably in the aftermath of the Manchu conquest:

There are few things to be seen now around [the house],
But two trees remain to guard the door.
Also a cold pond--who will care for it?
When autumn comes, it will be consigned to reed flowers.

Hung-jen identifies the author of the quatrain, a She-hsien poet, and continues: "The residence of my club friend Hsiang-shih has fences around a pond which is so deep and clear that one can scoop up the water with one's hands. An old raft is there, and short reeds heavy with dew, bowing in the wind. The scene is like the meaning [of this poem], so I inscribed the poem on it, just for amusement." The second poem in upper left was composed after the artist's death by

probably painted in the late 1650s (Pl. 15). The Wu-i Mountains (the name has entered English as "bohea," a kind of black tea grown there) are a range in Fukien province, one section of which, along the Nine Bends River, presents towering rock formations as strange and awesome as those of Huangshan. It was there that Hung-jen had been ordained a Buddhist monk, and memories of the grandeur of the Wu-i peaks, emotionally associated with this crucial transition in his life, remained in his mind, merging with later impressions of Huangshan scenery--he once painted Wu-i after returning from climbing Huangshan, writing on the picture that he "couldn't bring himself to be rude to the Heavenly Citadel Peak," presumably by making a painting that failed to do justice to it.⁴⁰

His quatrain on the present painting reads:

How could Creation have composed the Nine Bends
River?
The spindly peaks and bulging cliffs are glassy in
appearance.
The Taoist's brush lies unused on the boat window
sill;
He can only stare with wide eyes, too bemused to
poetize.

Seeing the peaks and cliffs, he suggests, stupefies the poet who has come there by boat, leaving him unable to compose his poem. Once more, as with the Huangshan and Feng River pictures, we are confronted with a mind-landscape: it

his friend T'ang Yen-sheng, who writes of looking at the painting and seeing his late teacher's countenance.

Hsiang-shih was a Wu-hu resident named Ch'en Ying-shih, one of Hung-jen's friends and patrons; the house seen in the picture is his. The master is absent, but in its bare interior one glimpses the k'ang on which he sits and a stool for a visitor. Two trees flanking the house--Hung-jen is fond of such off-symmetrical pairings--represent the two "guardians" mentioned in the poem. Steps leading from the space before the house down to the pond suggest a boat-dock, and a simple watergate at the lower right--forming, with the steps, another visual pairing--indicates, perhaps, how Ch'en Ying-shih ventures from his seclusion when he wishes to participate in the world outside. The softened-square shapes of Hung-jen's basic repertory are here arranged in overlapping sequences for the curving recessions of the banks at both sides, leading back to the more cohesive and flat-surfaced earth bank on which the house is set. The composition is so simple that in less accomplished hands it would be stark, but Hung-jen uses it, as always, as a framework for subtle offsets, variations of shapes, delicate touches such as the reeds and the few sprigs of bamboo at right.

A mysterious, undated work long known only in reproduction is Hung-jen's "Landscape of the Wu-i Mountains,"

is unlikely that Hung-jen means to transmit anything specific or descriptive about any particular Wu-i peak; what he transmits is an impression of looming rocky mass that defies comprehension. The small boat partly hidden by reeds at the bottom must hold the bemused poet, and transforms the scale of the rest. Ch'en Hung-shou had similarly played with disparate indicators of scale within a single composition (e.g. , Distant Mts., pl. 108), but without integrating them into so confidently imposing a structure as Hung-jen's. The revival of the Northern Sung monumental landscape mode in the late Ming had brought back to popularity a kind of composition organized around a single massive form and the relationship between its dynamic shape and the static, confining boundaries of the picture which it crowds; Fan K'uan provided the ultimate model, to which the works of Wu Pin and others were mannerist but powerful responses (cf. Compelling Image, 3.28 and Distant Mts., Pl. 90). Hung-jen's painting adopts this formula only to work a brilliantly original transformation on it. To construct a monumental composition in the Northern Sung mode using Ni Tsan's fragile brushline and forms already sets up a tension between substance and insubstantiality, and that tension is powerfully augmented here by the spatially irreconcilable treatments of the right and left sides of the principal mass. From the foreground a stepped recession carries the eye back to the middle distance, which is marked by a group of trees. Beyond this point, overlapping shapes lead to the summit.

But on the left, another precipitous drop, unreadable as anything but a pure vertical parallel to the picture plane, ties top and bottom together. This visual ambiguity prevents us from ever quite working out the spatial and formal logic of the picture, which nonetheless continues to project a kind of logic and retains its mystery however many times we study it.

The undated "The Coming of Autumn" (Pl. 16) is generally recognized as Hung-jen's masterpiece. It must belong to his last years, and we can only regret that his relatively early death prevented the completion of more paintings of this quality. Its impact as a work of profound lucidity and rightness registers immediately on virtually everyone who sees it: this is a composition of a kind that calls to mind, and makes provisionally persuasive, the Chinese contention that great artists in their finest moments transcend human skill and imagination to "borrow the creative powers of nature."

We can analyze more rationally some of the means by which this effect is produced, without pretending to account wholly for it. The monumental scale and limited distance are set by a well-calculated series of near-repetitions: successive spits of river bank projecting from one side and the other to mark the course of the river; tree groups diminishing into distance, while in a kind of counterpoint

the steep-sided bluffs grow larger, to culminate in the dominant flat-topped peak--reminiscent of both Fan K'uan and of the T'ien-tu Feng at Huangshan--which, following Sung practice, rises out of mist. Other repetitions bind nearer and further passages into a tight unity: the crest of the pine trees at left, for instance, with downward-slanting branches at both sides, is closely answered in the formation of the upper surface of the bluff directly above, and the upper portion of the thinly-foliated tree to the right is similarly echoed in the upper part of the smaller bluff behind it. The volumetric construction of the bluffs, with overlapping formations along their sides but continuous, receding upper surfaces tipped forward so that the viewer can read their thickness and thus comprehend their bulk, Hung-jen had learned from Northern Sung landscape painting, probably in Nanking, where examples were to be seen--this formation appears first, among his works, in one leaf of his album of 1657 painted in Nanking.⁴¹

Turning from this formalist approach to the painting, we can see it as a representation of spare mountain scenery in clear, cold air, and--noting the small house on the river shore, seen through the foreground pines--as an evocation of the experience of living in such a place. Hung-jen's quatrain enlarges on that experience:

With season's change comes lonely desolation,
 But in my wooden shack I live at peace.
 A mountain wind sometimes blows off the stream,
 Bringing chill harmonies of clashing branches.

Like others of the finest works of the Individualist masters, the painting achieves its effect finally by impressing indelibly on our consciousness its special vision of the world, one that is complete and coherent, both aesthetically compelling and metaphysically moving.

No attempt to deal with an artist of Hung-jen's stature that considers only seven of his works can be adequate to his achievement, but it can, we may hope, suggest the nature of that achievement and some of the process through which it was reached. It can also suggest why Hung-jen was the principal model, for a time, for other painters of the Anhui school.

Chu Ch'ang and Cha Shih-piao

The statement by the painter Ch'eng Sui quoted above (p. and note 31) naming Hung-jen as the central figure in the "orthodox lineage" of Anhui painting continues: "In recent years, people have been promoting his painting abilities. Now it appears that in every corner of the earth, everyone is painting in the Chiang family style and that within the empire each member has established himself firmly as a patriarch. Chien-chiang is still alive--it is as if he had never departed.⁴² The reference to the "family style" is to the several of Hung-jen's relatives who painted--the best-

known was his nephew Chiang Chu--and who could fairly be seen, like the imitative progeny of famous painters in China today, as capitalizing on the fame of their more illustrious elder. But other artists unrelated to Hung-jen also imitated him, giving the school its period of greatest stylistic coherence: from the mid-1650s through the 1660s, much of the output of Anhui painters is based closely on Hung-jen's new, mature style. After that the influence wanes, and Anhui school painting exhibits greater diversity as its artists go separate ways, in both geographical and stylistic senses.

A lesser master who exemplifies the imitative phase while making some small original contributions was Chu Ch'ang. Little is known about him; he was a native of T'ung-ch'eng, was active as a landscapist in the 1650s and 1660s, and had died by 1679.⁴³ Some of his few known paintings offer only thinner, flatter versions of Hung-jen's linear landscapes. More distinctive are the densely-composed leaves of a twelve-leaf album painted in 1659, on each of which the artist has inscribed a five-word phrase, like a line of poetry, which states the pictorial theme--for the two reproduced here, they are: "A green stream winds through the secluded valley" (Pl. 17), and "A gorge, with movement at the edge of fog" (Pl. 18). Both leaves give the effect of formal and spatial complexity without being clearly readable, as Hung-jen would have made them. Towering earth masses divide and enclose the spaces, zig-zag recessions are interrupted

and resumed. Chu Ch'ang aims at richness in place of Hung-jen's terseness, fitting a profusion of trees and houses within his angular structures. These are nonetheless strong and satisfying pictures, not merely routine performances in the school manner.

A more versatile and prolific Anhui master who might also, in the 1650s, have been classified as a close follower of Hung-jen but who went on to an independent artistic career, living more than thirty years after Hung-jen's death, was Cha Shih-piao (1615-1698).⁴⁴ Born into a wealthy Hsiu-ning family that boasted a collection of Sung and Yüan paintings and other antiquities, he studied in the local school and qualified as a hsiu-ts'ai or Cultivated Talent, a ranking that would have allowed him to take the examinations for an official career. But he never took them, and lived as a litterateur and painter through the remainder of his long life-- toward the end of it he would write of himself as having been an "inkstone-plowing guest," i.e., one who had made his living by his brush, for over seventy years. When his family estate was destroyed in the Manchu invasion he fled into the mountains, and later traveled around such places as Nanking and Chen-chiang, doing painting and calligraphy and writing poems. His earliest extant paintings are from the 1650s, and reveal him attempting a variety of styles while seeming comfortable and accomplished in only one: the spare manner, derived from Ni Tsan, which he shares

in this period with Hung-jen and others.⁴⁵ He knew both Wang Chih-jui and Hung-jen in these early years; Hung-jen dedicated paintings to Cha, who inscribed several of the older master's works. Both artists were numbered in the "Four Masters of Hsin-an," and Shih-t'ao was to pair them by writing, in an inscription of 1694, of the "pure elusiveness" of their painting.⁴⁶ The best works of Cha Shih-piao's early period draw creatively on the styles of both Ni Tsan and Hung-jen, essaying the "pure" Ni Tsan manner in paintings that nearly equal Hung-jen's in fidelity and refinement, or attempting Hung-jen-like ambiguities of flat and volumetric forms.

From the 1660s on, Cha Shih-piao spent much of his time in Yangchow, and eventually settled there. This city, located some fifty miles northeast of Nanking, had been largely destroyed and much of its population killed in the terrible ten-days massacre of 1645,⁴⁷ but within a decade it had recovered enough to become a thriving mercantile center--much of the commercial activity of the Hui-chou region seems, in fact, to transfer to Yangchow, and many of the Hui-chou merchants move there, in the decades after the fall of Ming. Succeeding Nanking as a mecca for seekers after culture as well as luxury-lovers and voluptuaries, the city attracted the merchants and others with pleasures beyond those that Anhui could offer, and the patronage of these men in turn

attracted artists and writers. The rise of Yangchow as a center of culture in the K'ang-hsi era is still little studied,⁴⁸ but appears to have foreshadowed the better-understood situation in the eighteenth century, when the gardens of the Yangchow economic elite--notably, by then, the great salt merchants--were gathering places for poets, painters, and their patrons. Ch'eng Sui also lived in Yangchow in his late years, and in subsequent chapters we will encounter other noted painters who were active there in the K'ang-hsi era. Most of Cha Shih-piao's extant paintings are from his later, Yangchow years.

From the 1660s on, Cha Shih-piao spent much of his time in Yangchow, and eventually settled there. This city located some fifty miles northeast of Nanking, had been largely destroyed and much of its population killed in the terrible ten-days massacre of 1645,⁴⁹ but within a decade it had recovered enough to become a thriving mercantile center--much of the commercial activity of the Hui-chou region seems, in fact, to transfer to Yangchow, and many of the Hui-chou merchants move there, in the decades after the fall of Ming. Succeeding Nanking as a mecca for seekers after culture as well as luxury-lovers and voluptuaries, the city attracted the merchants and others with pleasures beyond those that Anhui could offer, and the patronage of these men in turn attracted artists and writers. The rise of Yangchow as a center of culture in the K'ang-hsi era is still little studied,⁵⁰ but appears to have foreshadowed the better-understood situation in the eighteenth century, when the gardens of the Yangchow economic elite--notably, by then, the great salt merchants--were gathering places for poets, painters, and their patrons. Ch'eng Sui also lived in Yangchow in his late years, and in subsequent chapters we will encounter other noted painters who were active there in the K'ang-hsi era. Most of Cha Shih-piao's extant paintings are from his later, Yangchow years.

In Yangchow in the early 1670s he came to know Wang Hui, Wang's friend and fellow-painter Yün Shou-p'ing, and the

critic, connoisseur, and minor artist Tan Chung-kuang (1623-1692), who had served as an imperial censor in the capital. It was around this time that Tan was writing his essay on landscape painting, the Hua ch'üan or "Fish-trap of Painting"--the title refers to the Taoist philosopher Chuang-tsu's advice that "when you have caught the fish, you can forget the fish-trap."⁵¹ The essay was in part the outcome of discussions with Wang Hui and Yün Shou-p'ing, both landscapists of far greater ability than Tan himself; Wang and Yün lived for a time with Tan, and wrote annotations to his essay that are still printed along with the main text. Cha Shih-piao probably read it, and may well have been affected by its original and well-stated arguments. Tan emphasizes the creative powers of the artist, but also stresses that the painted landscape must be securely based not only in real scenery but in the particular scenery of the artist's home region--this was true, he says, of all the great landscapists of the past. "It does not matter whether the figures are clumsy, if only their spirit is properly expressed, nor whether the scenery is strange, if only it conveys some impressions of an actual place." He advises that the painter should not repeat himself: "If ten pictures [by the same man] are all alike, the hills and valleys in his bosom are easily exhausted; but if each one is [in some respect] better than the last, the mist and clouds under his hand are inexhaustible." And he praises the broad, loose manner of painting that he practiced himself, and that had

been popular from the late Ming among scholar-amateur artists (cf. Distant Mts., Pl. 71-79 for examples). "Looked at from close by," he writes, "the outlines and texture strokes seem careless and sketchy, as if they were not representing anything; but seen from a distance the forms have an appearance of movement, and are able to hold [one's attention]."

Whether Cha Shih-piao was indeed influenced by the essay, or whether the essay and Cha's later painting should be seen as independent reflections of artistic tastes and tendencies of the time, much of the prolific output of his later years seems designed to satisfy Tan Chung-kuang's criteria: the paintings are highly varied in composition, often depict strange and dynamic scenery, and tend to a looseness and seeming carelessness of execution that frequently (contrary to Tan's ideal reconciliation of looseness with quality) weakens them without offering the compensating benefits of any engagingly "untrammelled" effect. A nineteenth century writer characterizes Cha's works of this kind as "unbridled and unrestrained, lacking in discipline and composure."⁵² Again, we might find here the beginnings of a phenomenon that would continue into the eighteenth century, when artists active in Yangchow seem typically to slip into an over-production of lightly-conceived and quickly-executed works--presumably in response to a lively market for such pictures, which, by demanding less of the artist's time and

creative thought, must have been priced within reach of a wider public. Julia Andrews, in discussing Cha's development as a painter in his later years, points out that works of this kind within his oeuvre usually bear no dedications, and were probably done for sale to buyers unknown to the artist.⁵³ Although biographical accounts offer the conventional assurances that Cha cared nothing for money or practical affairs--he would stay up all night drinking, we are told, so that those who wanted his paintings could only get them in the early morning hours; he never painted until his family complained that there was no food--⁵⁴ the same anecdotes can be taken as evidence that he depended on painting for his livelihood. His scholarly attainments and his mastery of styles that carried scholar-gentry, high-culture implications only enhanced the attractiveness of his works for the Yangchow audience. A popular ditty paired him, as a supplier of landscape paintings for hanging in the home, with a maker of mother-of-pearl inlaid plates: "For dishes in every place it's Chang Ch'iu-shui; for scrolls in every home it's Cha Erh-chan."⁵⁵ Under these conditions, it is remarkable that Cha Shih-piao continued to paint some high-quality pictures, along with the quick and sloppy ones, into his last years.

One of his finest surviving works is a landscape in the Ni Tsan manner that he painted for Tan Chung-kuang, probably around 1670, now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (Pl. 19). The title, "True Reclusion on the Yü Hill," along with the

signature and dedication to Tan, are written in an attenuated script imitative of Ni Tsan's; Cha signs as having "made this picture" (chih-t'u), a phrase usually indicative of serious intent and careful workmanship. The Yü Hill in Kiangsu was where Tan Chung-kuang's retreat was situated, and the picture is probably to be understood as an ideal and imagined depiction of the place, with Tan seen seated in a simple thatched hut in upper right. In its fastidious brushwork and adherence to the Ni Tsan manner, the painting continues the Anhui-school mode of Cha's earlier period; such paintings are fewer in his later years. What is perhaps most impressive about it is the success with which he has utilized the dry brushwork and sparsely-defined textures of the Ni Tsan manner in a landscape so substantial in its forms and readable in its spatial relationships. The composition develops, like others of Cha's in this period, by diagonal thrusts into depth, from one marker (tree groups, hilltops) to the next. The hut that stands for--without representing--Tan's retreat is located on a slightly zigzagging bluff (a familiar motif in Anhui school painting) and seems suspended between two low growths of trees. A path leading upward from the foreground suggests a difficult access to Tan's secluded house; a crane standing on the path, looking up, conveys an auspicious wish from the artist.

A painting dated 1671 (Pl.20), which cannot be far removed in time from the "Yü Hill" painting for Tan Chung-

kuang, represents nevertheless a very different stylistic direction. Beginning with a foreground not unlike that of the "Yü Hill" picture, the landscape develops upward in a far more forceful way, with looming earthy masses pressing on each other and space constricted by the tipping together of vertical and horizontal planes. The drawing is in long, soft outlines and some dry-brush shading over which are added light washes of ink and reddish color. Trees, rocks, and slopes are treated more sketchily, and the whole work appears to have been conceived and carried out with a less serious intent: little remains of Anhui restraint and austerity. This is a relatively early, still-excellent example of the type of painting that Cha Shih-piao was inclined to overproduce in later years; casual improvisation and dependence on conventional arrangement of familiar motifs would more and more replace the truly imaginative creation of painted worlds such as this one. Even here, some shift toward materials of general appeal can be marked, from the figure walking with a staff in lower left to the quatrain inscribed by the artist in upper right:

A small bridge spanning the stream, mountains in
distance,
I always walk alone on rustic paths where clouds gather.
I remember still the place where I sought the crane in
years past--
The pines were sighing in the wind, the water was
murmuring.

Cha Shih-piao was another who often painted albums of landscapes in a variety of styles; as we saw in the last

chapter, the form was popular among early Ch'ing artists. Easily the finest among the many examples from Cha's hand is the ten-leaf album now in the Tokyo National Museum, painted in 1674 (Pl. 21-24). Most of Cha's inscriptions on the individual leaves specify the masters he is "imitating," and most are Yüan-period artists: Hūang Kung-wang and Kao K'o-kung, but also two less famous painters, Chao Yüan and Hsü Pen. A few leaves claim precedence in the Sung period. Cha's opportunities to see collections in Yangchow had given him an increased familiarity with these old styles. But the album is not a display of learned allusions to old masters, such as the Orthodox artists produced; Cha's references are subtle, and absorbed into pictures that seem fresh and unburdened by them.

About half the leaves are in the dry-brush manner of the Anhui school. One of these (Pl.21) resembles the landscape for Tan Chung-kuang (Pl.19) in its rendering of scenery on a monumental scale. Thinking back to our definition of the collective problem of the Anhui masters, to create solidly constructed and spatially readable landscapes within their self-imposed stylistic constraints, we realize that Cha Shih-piao has achieved the first part of this aim admirable in such pictures as these, but has done so by relaxing the restraints enough to alter fundamentally the nature of the achievement: richness in the brushwork and variety in the forms bring the style closer now to Yüan painting than to the

Anhui styles of the 1650s. When we observe the styles of other early Ch'ing masters, such as Kung Hsien in Nanking, undergoing comparable changes in this same period, we are tempted to see this phenomenon--describable as the fleshing-out again of the forms that had been reduced to bare-bones starkness in the first decades of Ch'ing--as a great painterly metaphor for the re-attainment of some degree of political and social stability after the traumatic transitional years, or as the expression of a sense of resignation, a draining of bitterness. Even while admitting the danger of overreading the paintings implicit in such an interpretation, we can note that paintings of the 1670s and after generally carry less feeling of austerity and tension, and interpret this change as we please. In the Anhui school context, the change can be seen also as a weakening of Hung-jen's influence and a diversification of the school's range of styles.

In this leaf, a simple t'ing-tzu or rest-shelter is placed astride an ascending path, commanding a view over steep hills and a valley through which a stream flows. The quatrain at the top speaks of "the day ending without anyone passing through, as the leisurely clouds drift to and fro." In an unusual leaf that is inscribed as imitating the late Yüan master Hsü Pen (Pl.22), Cha Shih-piao abandons the dry-brush linear manner altogether to depict in wet brushstrokes a scene of mossy trees and bushes growing by a stream.

Mottled ink washes in the background suggest ambiguously either a murky sky--a rainy scene may be intended--or further trees obscured by fog. Atmospheric ambiguities had generally been foreign to the Anhui manner, as were the effects of shifting light and the romantic, slightly mysterious feeling of the whole (leaf). One can imagine Shih-t'ao, who knew Cha Shih-piao in Yangchow and who painted similar pictures in his late period, being affected by Cha's works of this kind.

Other leaves in the album follow the Southern Sung mode of limiting the materials of the picture to a few telling elements that make up a concise, evocative image, typically some variant of the man-in-nature theme. One of these (Pl. 23), according to Cha's inscription on it, "sketches the spirit of a T'ang master," presumably a T'ang poet, since the painting is clearly Southern Sung in inspiration. A wanderer has reached the end of a path at the river bank, and sits beside a stunted willow to gaze across at low, bare trees on the misty further shore. The theme of lateness is indicated subtly also in the pair of swallows skimming the water, and intouches of reddish sunset color mixed with the ink washes. In another leaf (Pl. 24), a moonlit scene, two men who may represent Cha and the man for whom the album was painted are seen in a boat, with their servant, being towed along a river or canal. They are passing a fenced enclosure with thatched houses among trees; a full moon appears above, accounting for the silvery pale tone of the picture. Cha writes, "I departed

from Han-kou [an ancient canal, now part of the Grand Canal] during the night, and record here what I saw from the boat." He and adds the date but no dedication.

If we were to follow Cha Shih-piao's painting through the last two decades of his life we would find a still greater variety of subjects and compositions, but not much of true stylistic development, and fewer works of a quality equal to those reproduced here, or others that could be cited from the 1660s and 1670s. The decline in overall qualitative level in Cha's work can be associated with over-production, as was suggested above, but may also reflect the artist's response to the easy acceptance of quick, sketchy pictures by his Yangchow audience: when neither critical attitudes nor popular taste favor painstaking workmanship, there is little encouragement for the artist to practice it consistently. But even when we leave aside the lesser works, the amount of high-level painting produced by Cha Shih-piao throughout his career easily suffices to justify his position as one of the major masters of the school.

Ch'eng Sui and Cheng Min

Ch'eng Sui (1605-1691), although one of the older artists of the Anhui school--he was five years older than Hung-jen, ten older than Cha Shih-piao--is placed here among the later masters because he was active as a painter mainly

in the late years of his long life.⁵⁶ Ch'eng Ta-yüeh, the famous manufacturer of ink who in 1606 published the Ch'eng-shih mo-yüan or "Ch'eng Family Garden of Ink" reproducing designs impressed on his ink-cakes, was Ch'eng Sui's paternal uncle. The young man was given a good Confucian education--one of his best-known paintings shows him receiving it from a great-uncle who was his tutor--⁵⁷ and acquired also a good grounding in connoisseurship through study of the family collection. The understanding of old script styles that he reached through deciphering inscriptions on bronzes and engraved stones served him later when he became one of the leading seal-carvers of his period. Later in the Ch'ing, the group known as chin-shih chia or "epigraphy masters," artists whose practice of calligraphy and painting was similarly guided by the refinement of taste and sense of design they acquired through study of old bronze and stone inscriptions, were to see him as a highly respected predecessor, and he is still regarded as that today.

Ch'eng Sui attended the district school for a while, but left around 1624 for Peking, where he became a disciple of Huang Tao-chou (cf. Distant Mts., pp. 160-61), who was then engaged, as a leader of the Tung-lin party, in the struggle against the eunuch Wei Chung-hsien. When the struggle ended in defeat in 1625, and many of the Tung-lin leaders were executed, Ch'eng accompanied Huang to his home province of Fukein and stayed with him there for several years. From the

mid-1630s he lived in Nanking and Yangchow, dividing his time between these nearby cities for the remainder of his life. In Nanking he met his paternal relative Ch'eng Cheng-k'uei, whom he was later to credit as his teacher--through him, Ch'eng Sui felt, he received at second-hand the teachings of Tung Ch'i-ch'ang. Ch'eng Sui also came to know Chou Liang-kung in Nanking, and later was a close friend of Kung Hsien there. In Yangchow, he probably lived for some time with his cousin Cheng Yüan-hsün, who was introduced briefly earlier in this chapter as a minor painter and as the owner of a Yangchow garden that was visited by Tung Ch'i-ch'ang. In Yangchow also he met artists such as Cha Shih-piao, probably Fang I-chih, a lesser master named Chang Hsün, and, in his late years, Shih-t'ao; he also knew the famous poet Wang Shih-chen (1634-1711). Many of his friends had been members of the Fu-she or Restoration Party, and continued to express i-min or loyalist sentiments in their poems and other writings, as did Ch'eng Sui himself. He was one of those invited to take the Po-hsüeh Hung-tzu examination in 1679 (cf. p.), but declined. He probably depended in some way on his scholarly accomplishments, and especially his seal-carving, in making his living, but unlike Cha Shih-piao he seems to have painted only occasionally--in his spare time from seal-carving, he claimed--and mostly gave his paintings to friends. Again unlike Cha Shih-piao, he keeps the level of quality uniformly high in them and does not repeat himself. Chou Liang-kung wrote that where in poetry,

calligraphy, and seal-carving Ch'eng is "ahead of the rest," he "keeps his painting hidden from others," and that it was only he, Chou, who could "recognize its marvelousness."

Ch'eng Sui's paintings are not numerous today, and are much sought after--a circumstance that has, as always, encouraged forgers to supplement their number.

Ch'eng's deep involvement with the objects of antiquarian scholarship--stone engravings and rubbings made from them, seals, ink cakes and inkstones--instilled in him not only the sensibility of the connoisseur but also a special respect for his materials that was manifested, when he came to do calligraphy or painting, in his fastidious attention to the choice and use of those materials: the ink and how it was applied to the paper, the texture and absorbency of the paper. One admires the paintings for these qualities as much as for their interest as images. Ch'eng is never a painter who, in the Chinese phrase, "waves the brush and splashes the ink," but rather one who "spares his ink as if it were gold." Like others of the Anhui masters, he could have served as a living advertisement for the superiority of the Anhui-manufactured ink, inkstones, paper, and brushes; and he would stand out even in their company. "Parched brush" and "roasted ink" are terms and techniques that we have encountered already, in the works of Wang Chih-jui and in Chang Keng's description of Wang's style (p.).

Ch'eng Sui must have seen and admired paintings by Wang Chih-

jui and other early masters of the school during his early years in She-hsien and although his own painting style seems to have developed later--datable paintings begin around 1650-58 he remains true to his Anhui origins in continuing to adhere to the dry-brush mode. His mature works preserve little, however, of the angularity characteristic of early Anhui style, or of its linearity--Ch'eng prefers to rub on the semi-dry ink in short, blunt dabs to render slightly blurry forms instead of drawing it across the surface in longer strokes to trace contours.

An eight-leaf album in the She-hsien Museum, undated but probably from Ch'eng's late years, is made up of landscapes-with-figures that are mostly unremarkable as compositions, but are made visually engaging by the broad, wavering, charcoal-like drawing and the richness of ink values, from wispy strokes that seem pale smudges on the paper to patches of deepest black. One leaf (Pl. 25) presents itself as an illustration to a couplet from some old poem which Ch'eng has inscribed on it: "This is what is called 'Going alone on a path in autumn mountains,/ Turning to look back--the world of men is distant.'" Where the couplet is about being in a remote place, however, far from human habitation, the traveler in the picture seems to be returning home to the thatched houses seen at the right. Perhaps the artist would have us see him as looking back on the feeling of the poem, as an "emotion recollected in tranquillity." He pauses on

his approach to the house, about to pass between stands of leafy trees, to turn and gaze back at the low, earthy hills--savoring, perhaps, a lingering echo of the unattached visual experience of wandering in the mountains before he returns to the comfortable but confining involvements of home and family. The style of the picture supports such a reading by massing the areas of darkest tone and strongest tactile sensation at the right and leaving the left side spacious, less substantial.

For all its evocation of distance in theme and text, and some separation of near and far by varying ink tones, the picture has little real depth; the homogeneity of brushstrokes works against that. Ch'eng Sui turns this aspect of his style into a positive attribute in some of his most successful works by choosing a compositional type for them that virtually eliminates deep space, pulling the materials of the picture into what is essentially a single middle-ground plane. The model for such compositions was the landscape in which a single massive mountain, or mountainside, crowds the picture space, exercising a tense relationship with the frame. Good examples can be found in the works of Wu Pin (e.g. Distant Mts., Pl. 90).⁵⁹ The origins of the compositional type were in Northern Sung monumental landscape, and it was usually rendered in a Sung-derived mode, with densely-applied texture-strokes and fine detail. To render it in the crumbly brushwork of the Anhui

school, building a monumental structure with such frail supports, was a bold idea, and the kind of challenge that the best of the Anhui masters liked to set themselves.

An undated landscape painted for his close friend Chang Hsün is Ch'eng Sui's finest work of this kind, and perhaps his finest surviving landscape painting (Pl. 29). The inscription on it reads (translation by Scarlett Jang):

Artists of the Chiang-tung [East of the Yangtze] region all follow the "level distance" mode of composition. This way of painting has slipped gradually into decline. Only my master Chih-kung [Chang Hsün] devotes himself to overcoming this decline by restoring the "high distance" mode. I have discussed this with him more than once. I have imitated him here, but this is not to say that I dare to compete with him.

The observation is acute: the p'ing-yüan or "level distance" river landscape as performed by innumerable artists of the Ming-Ch'ing period must indeed have become a bore, except in rare cases of creative reworkings. The kao-yüan or "high distance" landscape, in which one "looks up to the mountain's peak from its foot" (as Kuo Hsi had explained it in his eleventh century essay), still offered more room for fresh explorations--and, as we will see in the next chapter, was favored by some Nanking artists of the period, such as Kung Hsien. Chang Hsün was a minor landscapist from Shensi province who took his chin-shih degree, served as a Drafter in the Central Drafting Office, but for some reason did not

continue his official career and spent his later years in Yangchow as a professional painter--Chou Liang-kung tells us that he returned from some unspecified exile "beyond the border" to find his house destroyed and had to sell paintings to make a living; he posted a sign advertising his prices for a fan or a hanging scroll, thus providing a precedent for the better-known case of Cheng Hsieh, who was to do the same in mid-eighteenth century Yangchow. A landscape by Chang Hsün dated 1682 is a good example of his "high distance" composition that Ch'eng Sui admired.⁶⁰

In Ch'eng Sui's painting as in Chang's "high distance" implies that one moves back into distance as one visually climbs the mountainside, and Ch'eng indeed creates limited pulls into depth along by zigzagging paths and overlapping slopes, so that the picture is not so flat as, for instance, Wu-school compositions that follow the same plan (e.g. Wen Cheng-ming's landscape of 1535, Parting, Pl. 115.) At the same time, it is a dense field of brushstrokes on a vertical plane that initially confronts the viewer, and that only gradually resolves into a spatially readable passage of scenery. Neither diminution nor any marked dimming of ink-tone separates foreground from distance, and the sizes of the earthy units that make up the complex scene remain more or less uniform throughout. The pale tone and soft, seemingly tentative touches of ink dematerialize the landscape while the firm composition and volumetric drawing work to

constitute it, so that one's absorption of the painting takes place on different perceptual levels. A series of visual echoes add to its complexity, and its pleasures: foreground water and distant sky, rooftops and rocks, a nearby array of leafy trees and a row of thin pines near the top.

Among the late works of Ch'eng Sui are a few that offer still more radical reworkings of this compositional type, notably an album that he painted in 1687. Only one leaf (Pl. 28) is presently locatable; the others are known only from an old publication.⁶¹ The program of the album is extraordinary, even in this period of extreme departures from accepted practice: with one exception, leaf that open back at one side for a restricted view over a river, the pictures repeat a single composition, a single mountain form that fills almost the entire space. This plan is varied from leaf to leaf only by the addition of a few trees or simple houses at the bottom, by altering and rearranging the smaller components that make up the mountain masses, and most of all by substituting one system of obsessively repeated brushstrokes for another. The abstracting character of the whole project may remind the present-day viewer of such a recent artist as Mark Rothko, tirelessly repeating his huge soft-edged rectangles of color that similarly crowd the frame--substituting brushwork for color, the comparison is not so far-fetched as it may at first seem.

Ch'eng Sui compounds the audacity of his achievement by adding poetic (and largely irrelevant) titles to the leaves, drawn from the works of earlier artists: "Waves of Pines on a Myriad Peaks," or "Autumn Hills Thrusting Up Green." The leaf we reproduce is titled "A Thousand Cliffs Contend for Splendor," a title that had been used by Wen Cheng-ming (Parting, Pl. 116) and other artists. In fact, what we are given is a single peak, or bluff, that contends with nothing, all its energies contained within itself, both in the diagonal counter-thrusting of the units that compose it (in which even the houses in lower left participate) and in the vibrating strokes and flecks of ink, which shift in angle and direction like leaves drawn this way and that on an eddying stream.

A less-known Anhui master who has only recently begun to receive some attention is Cheng Min. His dates have not been clearly established, but a recent study indicates that he was probably born in 1633 and died in 1683.⁶² A native of She-hsien, he studied the classics and philosophy in the Neo-Confucian tradition, but there is no record of his having attempted the examinations or a career as an official. His preserved writings include expressions of bitterness against the Manchus--his father, he writes, never smiled after the fall of Ming, and he himself, although impoverished in later years, pawned his clothes and sold paintings to live while rejecting the proffered friendship and support of Manchu

officials. Like Ch'eng Sui, he made some money also by carving seals.

Cheng Min's diary, which has recently been discovered, contains entries that give us some sense of how a poor artist in this period eked out a living:⁶³

[1672] Tenth month. "Fifth day: I did three fan paintings for Fu-wen . . ."

"Seventeenth day: cloudy. Yen-ch'ing and K'uan-chung 'moisted by brush' [gave me a present for painting] and I added bamboo and rock for them [to some previously-done painting?]"

Eleventh month. "Eighth day: I went into town and wrote a fan for Yen-ch'ing . . . Keng-yü summoned me, and I added to [retouched?] a painting by T'ang Yin for him . . ."

[1673] Sixth month. "Third day . . . Mu-ch'ien ordered a painting for Hsü Erh-ming, and I used the money for food."

[1674] Second month. "Sixth day: cloudy. After supper I visited Tzu-yen, and entrusted him with three paintings to sell for me."

Sixth month. "Sixth day: I visited Hsüeh-hai, where the owner of the I-kuan [an inn?] . . . summoned me to do a painting for him."

[1676] First month. "Sixth day: rainy. Ssu-jo visited me to order a painting, bringing a present [lit. "moisture," see above]."

Ninth month. "Eighteenth day: for my 'elder brother' Yin-nan I did a painting on satin. Also did five fans for . . . [names]"

Twelfth month. "Fourth day: This line [of poetry] came to me: 'To get through the year, I need the money from selling paintings!'"

Twenty-ninth day: Snow has been falling for the whole month. Fortunately, I have managed to get through my New Year's obligations with the small income from my paintings. I sit recalling that there are a great many really poor people now, and wish that I had a spacious, myriad-roomed house [to entertain them]--an empty thought."

Other entries record his carving of seals for patrons in return for grain or presents, and borrowing money from one of them to buy food.

As a painter Cheng Min was most proud of what must have been a brief association with Hung-jen; he received some direct teaching from him, and shortly before the older master's death, borrowed his copy of a Huang Kung-wang painting and spent five days and nights copying it. He composed a poem for Hung-jen's tomb, and paid other kinds of homages to him throughout his writings. Since his dated works all fall between 1662 and 1682, we have no evidence for the early development of his style. A published album from 1662,⁶⁴ although painted while Hung-jen was still living, shows few signs of his influence; on the contrary, Cheng had by this time already formed a style that was distinctly his own. It combines outline drawing, mostly dry-brush, with areas of ink wash laid on either flat or in uneven patches and puddles, sometimes with the addition of dark dotting, a combination that would characterize Cheng's most original works throughout his career. He tends to avoid the simplified, geometric forms of the more austere Anhui manner in favor of a freer invention of natural shapes, frequently with wavering or undulating contours.

An album of Eight Scenes of Huangshan that Cheng Min painted in 1681 is an ideal introduction to the refinements

of design and brush-and-ink quality of which this little-known master was capable; along with others of his works that have recently come to light, it is sure to raise his reputation (Pl. 26, 27). In an accompanying inscription he tells how a certain Ch'u-ch'en brought him two blank albums, asking him to paint one as a present for a friend and the other for Ch'u-ch'en's own enjoyment; the Huangshan album is Cheng's response to the latter request. Cheng, who says that he himself has never traveled far, recalls climbing Huangshan twice, in 1670 and 1673, visiting all the famous sights--a kind of pilgrimage that was necessary, he suggests facetiously, to validate his status as a She-hsien native. He remarks that the pictures will convey some of the excitement of being there to Ch'u-ch'en, who had not yet visited the place--at some future time, he says, when Ch'u-ch'en has cast off his worldly attachments as he, Cheng Min, has already done, he too can climb Huangshan, using this album as a guide.

Most of the leaves are in Cheng's dry-brush manner, and several, such as the "Heavenly Gate Pines" (Pl. 26), could almost have been painted by Hung-jen--Cheng is quite capable of imitating his revered predecessor closely when he chose to. The continuing production of such pictures by Hui-chou artists into the K'ang-hsi period reflected not only their attachment to the subject and style but also a response to patrons' desires for what had no doubt come to be considered

a distinctive local product, like fine Anhui printed books or inkstones. The "Heavenly Gate Pines" picture seems natural and uncontrived, its unassuming brushwork giving both substance and tactile surface to the rocks. Cheng's quatrain on it reads:

Passing through perils, one arrives at Heaven's
Gate,
Where two old pines stand upright and stern.
In our dynasty they serve to soothe one's
thoughts--
Planting my staff, I bow to them in respect.

In his inscription on the leaf representing "The Heavenly Citadel Peak," most awesome of the peaks of Huangshan (Pl. 27), Cheng Min notes that when one gazes at it from a hundred li away, as one sets off from the Ch'ien River to approach the mountains, its majestic cliffs make one doubt that it can ever be climbed. He portrays the peak in that aspect, seen from a distance, towering above drifting fog. Here, too, the drawing seems informal and sensitively descriptive, not geometricizing. But here the dry outlines bound pale washes of ink, a departure from the practice of Hung-jen and other earlier Anhui masters. The mountain peak and slopes are thus differentiated from the areas of sky and fog by the subtlest contrast of cool wash against the ivory paper tone.

Scenes of Huangshan are the subjects also of several of Cheng Min's paintings in hanging-scroll form, among them an

impressive depiction of "The Sounding Strings Spring," a waterfall called that both because the water fell in stringlike streams and for the similarity of its sound to plucked and vibrating zither strings. In Cheng Min's picture (Pl. 30) the waterfall issues at the top of a tall cliff and drops in stages to the base, which is hidden by trees and rocks in middle ground. In the dark and dense foreground, clusters of black dots render vegetation on the lumpy earth forms of the kind that Cheng favors; this part of the picture sets off the thinner, more orderly drawing of the upper part, where the clusters of dots are lighter and spaced neatly on the surface. The application of wet, suffusing patches of ink behind these clusters and along the edge of the cliff gives the painting a distinctively smoky-grey atmospheric tone that is also a distinctive trait in others of Cheng's most original works. The title of the painting is written in the upper right, along with a quatrain in which Cheng plays on this title by suggesting that the sound of the waterfall transmits the pure music of antiquity:

↓

Like turbid and clear water, the minds of ancient
people--Their sorrows and joys they wrote out
untroubledly. Mountains and streams compose an
album of transmitted
 sounds [of antiquity,]
Their rare voices preserving the music of the
Greater Odes.

Tai Pen-hsiao (1621-93) was not from the Hui-chou region but from Ho-hsien, located near the eastern border of Anhui province only about thirty miles southwest of Nanking (see map).⁶⁵ His father Tai Chung (1602-1646) was active in politics, working with the famous scholar and poet Mao Hsiang (1611-93) in the Fu She in Nanking in the 1630s. The family moved to Nanking for about five years from 1632, and later lived in several other places, in a situation of poverty. Tai Chung's political involvement kept him away from home much of the time, and the teenage Pen-hsiao had to help his mother hold the family together. In the last years of the Ming, Tai Chung held a post in the Nanking court of the Prince of Fu and Ma Shih-ying, and somehow incurred the resentment of Ma; he left Nanking and was in Wu-hsing in Kiangsu with his family when he heard the news of the fall of Nanking to the Manchus. He raised troops and fought the invading army futilely until he was wounded by an arrow. Tai Pen-hsiao managed to get him back to Ho-chou by boat, but Chung died shortly after. Thirty years later, with help from Mao Hsiang, Pen-hsiao built a shrine to his father and to a Sung loyalist monk whom his father had revered.

This succession of tragedies divided Tai Pen-hsiao's life. He expressed his perception of this discontinuity in the titles he gave to the two parts of his collected literary works, Ch'ien-sheng chi or "Previous-life Collection" for the early part and Yü-sheng chi or "Residual-life Collection" for

the latter. Like Cheng Min and others who were left economically stranded by their decisions to forego all the profitable kinds of political and social activity after the fall of Ming, Tai came to depend on painting for most of his livelihood. Around 1660 he began traveling to see and paint the famous mountains of China--Hua-shan, T'ai-shan, Lu-shan--in part, no doubt, to expand his repertory of landscape themes. In 1662 he attended a party in She-hsien given for Hung-jen, who was about to set off to climb Lu-shan. In 1666 Tai was in Peking; in 1668 he reportedly heard someone describing the scenery of Hua-shan and was so excited that he set forth the next day to view it for himself--among those who saw him off was the poet Wang Shih-chen, whom he had met in Nanking. On the way Tai stopped at T'ai-yüan to visit the painter-calligrapher Fu Shan (Distant Mts., pp. 163-65), who wrote facing inscriptions for an album of landscapes that Tai painted there. In his later years he spent much of his time in Nanking, where he knew Kung Hsien, and perhaps through Kung met the playwright and art-patron K'ung Shang-jen (1648-1715); after Kung's death in 1689 Tai painted for K'ung a landscape of K'ung's native place, Shih-men Shan or Stonegate Mountain, which Kung Hsien had promised to paint but had never completed. Also in Nanking, Tai came to know Shih-t'ao, who lived in a temple south of the city during the years 1680-87. Tai's association with Mao Hsiang continued also, and a number of his paintings are dedicated to Mao and to one of his sons.⁶⁶

At the time Tai Pen-hsiao knew Shih-t'ao in Nanking in the 1680s, Shih-t'ao was formulating some of the ideas about painting that he would later express in a series of theoretical inscriptions and in the great essay Hua-yü lu that he wrote around 1700. Some of the same ideas can be found in writings by Tai Pen-hsiao, especially an inscription on a landscape handscroll painted in 1691. The two artists must have discussed such fundamental questions as the nature of artistic creativity and right and wrong kinds of derivation from old masters, and reached some common ground of agreement. It would be pointless to try to determine priority in these ideas for either artist; it was certainly Shih-t'ao who worked through them more thoroughly and expressed them more forcibly. Tai Pen-hsiao's inscription is nevertheless worthy of some attention in its own right:⁶⁷

The Six Laws [of painting] were based on [the practice of] ancient masters, and [the practice of] ancient masters was based on Creation. If one has Creation in one's hand, there is nothing that brush-and-ink cannot possess. Even if one brings together various [older] styles to form a new style, one will recognize in each [style of each earlier master] its particular attainments through study and talent. In drawing, and in capturing meanings beyond the words and forms, modern artists surpass the old ones in some respects. When the movings [phenomena] of heaven-and-earth and the spiritual understanding in men's minds imbue each other, limitless transformations are effected--this is how the superior man contemplates the tao. When I start to apply the brush in painting, I never have any pre-existing, completed vision [of what I will paint]--I let [my hand] go free, to start or stop on its own. As Ch'ü Yüan writes in the

Yüan-yu (Far-off Journey): "Unify the essences and control the spirit . . . before even Inaction."⁶⁸ Doesn't [painting done this way] reach the point of being the equivalent of Creation [in nature]? (Literally: Aren't this and Creation the outside and inside [of the same thing]?)"

Tai Pen-hsiao and Shih-t'ao, along with other Individualist masters of their time, were breaking sharply with both the artistic practice and the theoretical positions of Tung Ch'i-ch'ang and his Orthodox-school followers, as these were outlined in the previous chapter; most of all, they were rejecting the contention that the paintings and writings of the old masters could be taken as a repository of correct "methods" (fa) by which later artists should be guided. Tai Pen-hsiao's inscription makes a counter-assertion that was also basic to Shih-t'ao's theory: that although on one level the artist can draw on earlier styles for his ¹own creative purposes, on another and deeper level he must return the act of painting to its primordial state, before methods were established, a time when the artist confronted the world directly and participated in the ongoing process of creation/transformation. Only two months before Tai wrote his inscription, Shih-t'ao had written on the last leaf of an album (painted in the seventh month of 1691) that "there is only a single method [of painting], and when one has attained that method, one no longer pursues false methods. Seizing on it, one can call it one's own method.

painting have a subtlety that allows true enjoyment of a kind with which other pleasures can't compare." Here the drawing is necessarily firmer and less broken than in his smaller works, since it is made to sustain a composition of monumental scale with towering bluffs and tall pines. A man stands beneath the trees in middle ground, accompanied by a crane, looking up at a house built at the entrance to a cave. The picture is more spacious and atmospheric than most of Tai's, with its foreground pools of water and receding bank clarifying the recession to middle ground, a region of fog giving depth there, and the further bluffs opening to allow a vista of hills on the far horizon. The way of experiencing nature that the picture evokes, with its quiescent figure placed in the midst of such activated surroundings, is dynamic and exhilarating while at the same time contributing to an inner calm rather than disturbing it (as the view of nature in some romantic landscapes by European artists seems designed to do). Many of Shih-t'ao's best paintings are similar in effect.

By the late seventeenth century the theme of nature as refuge and solace had been used in unconvincing ways in so many conventional pictures that it was difficult to invest it once more with authenticity, as Tai and Shih-t'ao and a few other early Ch'ing masters manage nevertheless to do. For them, driven as they were to pursue such solace by the terrible events of their earlier years, it had become again a

But in fact I do not know what the old masters' methods were, or what my own method is."⁶⁹ Tai Pen-hsiao's equivalent to Shih-t'ao's better-known phrase "the method that is no method" appears in a seal he carved and impressed at the beginning of his 1691 handscroll, reading fa wu-ting or "Method is not fixed."

Tai Pen-hsiao's expression of this view of painting might lead us to expect as great a stylistic variety and freedom from convention in his works as in Shih-t'ao's, but Tai did not, in fact, carry through the implications of his ideas in his paintings so radically as did Shih-t'ao. His style does not seem to undergo any marked changes in the thirty-three years over which we can trace it, nor do its mild idiosyncracies indicate a really rule-breaking temperament. His earliest surviving works, a landscape of 1660 "in the manner of Shen Chou" and another of 1664,⁷⁰ present already his distinctive brushwork and forms: the ink brushed on dry for soft, discontinuous contours and slight shading; discrete landscape masses that twist as they thrust upward to fill most of the space.

Essentially the same materials are employed on a larger scale in an undated landscape that is one of his finest works (Pl. 31). In his inscription, Tai quotes the words of Tsung Ping (375-443), "Landscape captivates the tao with its forms," and adds: "From this we know that the principles of

personal and deeply-felt theme. It had a special immediacy for Tai Pen-hsiao, and along with the excitement of climbing mountains and seeking out unusual scenery, it runs through most of his paintings. Like Shih-t'ao, he usually includes figures in his landscapes and draws expressive value from their placement and postures. Also like Shih-t'ao, he painted many albums, using their leaves to explore the endless variations and nuances of the man-in-nature relationship. Two closely-related albums, both undated but done around the same time and late in his life, stand out among them: one is in the Shanghai Museum,⁷¹ the other in a U.S. private collection (Pl.34,35). Both include leaves in which the ink is rubbed on with such a light, unassertive touch as to remove almost all feeling of "brushwork" in the normal Chinese sense of traces of movements of the brush.

In the center of one of these (Pl.34) a man is dimly seen seated meditating in a cave; stalactites hang above him, and a torrent of water gushes from another opening below to the left. We find this compound motif in the paintings of other early Ch'ing masters, notable Tai's contemporary K'un-ts'an, who will be considered in the next chapter;⁷² it must have been, for people of the time, a potent image with clear meaning. Tai Pen-hsiao reinforces this meaning in his inscription, beginning his quatrain by naming virtuous ministers and recluses of antiquity whose decisions to serve or not serve in the government "were not dual"--contrasting

them, that is, with the "dual subjects" (erh-ch'en) of his own time, who served both the Ming and the Manchus. "Their natural fulfillment was in the mountains [instead of at court]," he continues; "Each gentleman has his own purpose." His prose note adds: "The caves and ravines between heaven and earth: their ch'i (vapors) penetrate everywhere. I smile to myself; my old brush finds no obstacle in boring through [this matter] to reveal it to people." This somewhat cryptic text appears to be, along with the picture, another expression of i-min sentiment, advocating the ideal of withdrawal that was the proper course of conduct for virtuous men under unsanctioned rule. The style of the painting conveys the same message in a quieter way, the gossamer brushstrokes suggesting hesitance or diffidence, the transparency of the earth forms dematerializing them, their rounded softness conveying a benign view of nature, and all these serving as visual metaphors for the same theme of disengagement from present reality that underlies the subject.

In another leaf (Pl.35) a man leans on a boulder and contemplates three trees growing together, a cypress, pine, and blossoming plum. The cypress and pine are thinly foliated, and a few blossoms are barely visible on the twigs of the plum. Behind the man are several stalks of bamboo. These four plants and the stone itself, along with the whole landscape, were by now so charged with messages that one

understands the figure not merely as someone enjoying nature, but as someone surrounded by symbolic meanings; unchanging integrity through the cold winter, fortitude, hope for refflorescence in better times. We read these into the mind of the contemplating man, and the quatrain inscribed on the picture fills out his thoughts about the trees:

How to attain their temper of snow and frost?
 They lean on each other, all in a single
 place. Their bitter song wafts on the
 fragrant wind--broken rock, alone, bows
 loftily to them.

The appended prose note returns to the world of art, and style: "[The painting of] Ni the Impractical [Ni Tsan] is excessively simple and desolate, so I have changed his style--one needn't limit oneself to a single master." The seal Tai has impressed on it reads: "Mountains Beyond the World."

Most of Tai's paintings represent such "mountains beyond the world," unlocated scenes that were vehicles for personal, moral, and political thoughts and feelings besides being aesthetically enjoyable. Tai Pen-hsiao also, however, painted many landscapes of particular places, especially the famous and sacred mountains he had visited. An album of twelve scenes of Hua-shan, probably modeled consciously on the famous album by the fourteenth century artist Wang Li (Parting, Pl.1-2) and containing, like Wang's, lengthly prose descriptions of the places visited, was painted in the ninth

month of 1668, on his return from the climb.⁷³ Other albums and hanging scrolls record trips to Huang-shan (these are most numerous) and other mountains. A hanging scroll dated 1687 (Pl.32) depicts the famous stone bridge at Mt. T'ien-t'ai in eastern Chekiang province. The perilous crossing of the bridge, which spans the gorge over a waterfall, had implications both Taoist and Buddhist, as a physical enactment of spiritual passage into either paradise or enlightenment.⁷⁴ The bridge was narrow-spined and slippery, and the crossing was made still more difficult by a hump or rock at one end. Tai Pen-hsiao fantasizes both the bridge, which becomes spindly and high-arched, and the hump of rock, which he moves to the center and turns into an upright garden-stone. His real subject, however, according to the inscription, is less the stone bridge than the strange pine trees that grew around it. A late Ming traveler to the place described them as "dwarf pines that . . . have old knotty trunks and lovely green sprays and are the kind of choice pines which we see in pots in Soochow."⁷⁵ Tai laments in the inscription that the pines, he had recently learned, had mostly disappeared since his visit. He depicts them as he remembers them, growing from crevices in the rock at both sides of the waterfall, stunted and twisted.

Here, as in his other depictions of famous mountains, Tai adapts his style to suit better his quasi-descriptive intent and the imposing effect for which he was striving.

out of Hsüan-ch'eng to a nearby estate, where they escaped the destruction of the Manchu troops; in 1649 they moved again. Mei Ch'ing's poems written in the years immediately after the conquest contain expressions of indignation against Manchu rule, but by 1654 he was enough reconciled to it to take and pass the provincial examination for the chü-jen degree, and to travel to the capital four times between then and 1666 to attempt the chin-shih examination that would have led to an official post. But he failed all four times, and in 1667 gave up hope of success by that route. For the rest of his life he lived in Hsüang-ch'eng, excepting some trips-- in 1670 he climbed T'ai-shan in Shantung, and in 1671 and again in 1690 Huang-shan, which would become the principal subject of his paintings. He must have made his living as a scholar, poet, and painter. In 1673 he took part in the compilation of the local history, and in 1675, on the invitation of an influential friend, depicted the friend's garden in a handscroll painting that still survives.⁷⁷

Mei Ch'ing seems to have studied painting chiefly by imitating old works that were available to him; he knew Hsiao Yün-ts'ung when he was about twenty, but there is no indication either in textual sources or in his paintings that Mei learned anything significant from Hsiao. A series of poems that he composed about people he had known includes the artists Ch'eng Sui, Cha Shih-piao, and Tai Pen-hsiao,⁷⁸ but his painting has no noticeable affinity with any of these

either. The single greatest influence on his mature style appears to have been from an artist nearly twenty years his junior: Shih-t'ao.

Shih-t'ao (1641-1708), the greatest of the Individualist masters, who will be the subject of our last chapter, lived in monasteries near Hsüan-ch'eng area from the late 1660s until 1680, and Mei Ch'ing was his close friend during those years. They were the years just after Mei had abandoned his ambitions for an official career; Shih-t'ao was leading a more settled and secular life after a period of traveling with an older monk and studying with Ch'an Buddhist masters. For both, the newly-opened prospect of a life devoted mainly to poetry, calligraphy, and painting must have been exhilarating. Both were forming distinct and attractive styles after early periods that had not yet indicated a clear stylistic direction for either. The interaction between the two, and between them and other painters of the region, must have been crucial in enabling them to emerge as mature artists, and in establishing a kind of regional sub-school that would later include two others of the Mei family.

The formulation commonly advanced about the relationship between Mei Ch'ing and Shih-t'ao is that Mei influenced his younger friend in the early period, and later was influenced by him. The latter part of this formulation is abundantly borne out by the available evidence; for the former part

there is less. A landscape fan painted by Mei Ch'ing in 1649 is rather orthodox and undistinguished; a twelve-leaf album painted in 1657 offers more anticipations of Mei's mature style in compositions and motifs, but little that can have affected Shih-t'ao's development.⁷⁹ No dated works by Mei Ch'ing from the 1660s are known. The argument for Mei Ch'ing's influencing Shih-t'ao could perhaps best be made on the basis of a sixteen-leaf album of scenes of Huang-shan that Mei painted in 1672, in which some leaves do appear to anticipate compositions seen in Shih-t'ao's famous "Eight Scenes of Huang-shan" album, probably painted in the 1680s (Pl. ,).⁸⁰ But by 1672 both artists had climbed Huang-shan and were no doubt making pictures of it, pictures in which the modes of portraying its notable scenery that are familiar from their later works were taking form, and it is impossible to establish priority in these for either painter, except in a few cases that we will consider below.

A large part, perhaps most, of Mei Ch'ing's oeuvre consists in fact of hanging scrolls and albums repeating a more or less set repertory of designs representing the famous peaks and sights of Huang-shan. These were presumably worked out together with Shih-t'ao in the 1670s; many of them are announced already in the 1672 album, where they are rendered in relatively restrained and descriptive brush-drawing. Later they appear transformed, but still recognizable, in the faster and odder drawing of his drawing of his late style.

Mei Ch'ing was a late developer as a painter--most of his surviving dated works are from the years 1690-95, his most prolific period and also his most idiosyncratic. For his hanging scrolls he favored a tall, narrow shape, within which he arranged freely his strange materials: cliffs that overhang impossibly, plateaus slanting so sharply that buildings and people on them threaten to slide off, bizarre rock formations and contorted pine trees. His aim was no doubt to create strong, striking effects suited to his awesome subjects, effects of perilous ascents through other-worldly scenery, in pictures that somehow reproduced the impressions experienced by Huang-shan climbers. But too often the awkwardness and heavy-handedness of the pictures, and their air of casual improvisation, leave us unconvinced of Mei Ch'ing's serious intent.⁸¹

One of the most successful among Mei Ch'ing's landscapes of this type (Pl.33) represents the Wen¹shu Tai or Manjusri Terrace, which was the first major stopping-place for climbers making the "frontal" ascent of Huang-shan (as opposed to the "back" ascent from the Cloud-valley Temple depicted by Hung-jen, cf.Pl.12). Mei Ch'ing writes in his inscription: "The Manjusri Terrace at Huang-shan is the central rock (peak) in the Great Sea [of clouds]; the Heavenly Citadel and Lotus [Peaks] are on its left and right. From here you contemplate the Sea spread out before you. Arriving at this place, you see it entire for the first time." A Buddhist

monastery and hostel there (located where the Jade Screen Hall is today) put up climbers overnight, before they continued on to the further recesses of the mountains. We see the hostel schematically represented in Mei Ch'ing's painting. Two men sit on the ledge before it, one of them pointing at a cluster of needle-sharp spires that may be intended as the Lotus Peak. The Terrace is raised far above the viewer's vantage point, and removed far from it, by repeated rows of pine trees, arranged in diagonal tiers because they grow on slopes but also because Mei Ch'ing favored strong diagonal alignments in his hanging scrolls. Heavy fingers of fog separate the tiers of pines, and the succession of dark and light, detailed and obscure, conveys some feeling of the long climb, as well as of the expansiveness of the view that opens before the men seated on the Terrace. Mei Ch'ing adds in his inscription that he has "used Wang Meng's brush-conception" in doing the picture, and the scumbled brushwork on the peak, as well as the use of rows of trees as compositional units, do recall the Yüan master.

For the most part, Mei Ch'ing seems more comfortable with the smaller form of the album, in which the sensitivity and poetic softness of his brushwork can be better manifested, and the sometimes whimsical oddities of his compositions and distortions of natural forms can be appreciated briefly as one turns the leaves, instead of being

exposed at length and large-size on the wall. The pleasures of his albums are cumulative, and any individual leaf, taken from the context of the rest, may not appear well-balanced or self-sufficient; it is thus difficult to convey the qualities of Mei Ch'ing's painting in writings such as this where only a leaf or two can be reproduced. With that problem in mind, we offer a representative leaf from an album of 1692, another portrayal of the Manjusri Terrace (Pl.36). Pale color washes, mostly greenish and bluish, supplement the light dry-brush drawing. The horizontal form allows Mei to present a miniature panorama of Huang-shan peaks, with the Manjusri Terrace enlarged and centrally placed, topped by the same three buildings as in the hanging-scroll portrayal. This time three men sit in front talking. The artist's purpose is certainly not topographical or descriptive: the Heavenly Citadel Peak at the right, which is normally shown in its proper shape as flat-topped and cohesive (cf. Cheng Min's picture, Pl.27), is here turned into another clump of twisting spires, like a Buddha's-hand fruit, to match the Lotus Peak at left--which, with a company of lesser peaks, leans outward as though blown by the wind. The movement is joined by another, smaller group of rocky forms in the foreground. Fanciful transformations of this kind, and the cultivated amateurism implicit in the light, fluttery brushwork (often more fluttery than here), characterize most of Mei Ch'ing's albums of this late period.

An exception, and probably the artist's finest surviving work, is an album of nineteen scenes of Huang-shan (five horizontal and double-leaf, fourteen vertical and single-leaf) painted by Mei Ch'ing in 1693 and now in the Shanghai Museum (Pl.37,38,Colorplts.6,7).⁸² (So much admired are the leaves of this album that copies, sometimes expanded to hanging-scroll shape and size, have been made in recent times and pass as genuine works of the artist.)⁸³ The factors that set this album apart from his others are recognized by Mei Ch'ing himself in two inscriptions on its leaves: he has painted it in the "fine-brush" (i.e. careful, detailed manner) and it was done under the influence of Shih-t'ao. One inscription (on a leaf not reproduced here) reads:

When the monk Shih-t'ao came back from Huang-shan he showed me several albums he had painted there. Among them, the picture of the Five Old Men Peaks (Wu-lao Feng) was most strange. I have been to Huang-shan, but have never seen the Five Old Men myself. Nevertheless, in my mind's eye I cannot forget them [as Shih-t'ao depicted them], and now I take up the brush to capture their likeness . . .

The inscription on the next leaf, representing the Drinking Stone Dwelling (Pl.38), reads:

The Drinking Stone Dwelling (Ho-shih Chü) is also after one of Shih-t'ao's designs, and again, I haven't been there myself. It is a villa at Huang-shan. I haven't worked in the fine-brush manner for a long time; but I also can't bear to think of myself as too old to do it. When Shih-t'ao sees this some day, can he help saying that I have imitated him?

The last line is meant facetiously, but in fact the leaves of the album are imitative of Shih-t'ao, and they are the better for it. Mei Ch'ing has not only used Shih-t'ao's designs for places he had not himself seen, but has adopted Shih-t'ao's style as a whole--or rather, one of Shih-t'ao's styles; as we will see, this versatile master refused to be bound to any one. Here there is no question of priority, since dated works testify that Shih-t'ao was painting in this style by 1677 (see Pl. ,) or even, for some features of it, in 1667, before he had met Mei Ch'ing.⁸⁴ The style combines broad dry-brush drawing, often in undulating contour lines, and rubbed-on ink used as a kind of dry wash, with spidery linear patterns of extraordinary delicacy in the depiction of trees, architecture, and figures. It allows (as Mei Ch'ing's fluttery-brush manner does not) softly atmospheric scenes in which believable forms occupy convincing space, and, as with visual experience of the real world, repays longer contemplation by disclosing subtle details that were missed at first.

The second leaf, representing the three central Huangshan peaks with which we are by now familiar, the Manjusri Terrace with the Lotus Peak at left and the Heavenly Citadel at right (Pl.37), reveals at once how profoundly the mode of depiction in this album differs from Mei Ch'ing's other versions of the same scene (Pl.33,36). Calligraphic

brushwork is suppressed in favor of an approach that captures sensitively the real shapes and aspects of the peaks, and locates them in misty space. This is not to argue that realism is generally better than calligraphic abstraction, but only that Mei Ch'ing applying himself here more seriously than usual both to the craft of painting and to the portrayal of the scene, achieves a grandeur of vision that is nearly equal in its way to Shih-t'ao's famous handscroll of 1699 (Pl.). The "fine-brush" manner permits him to reduce the sizes of buildings, figures, and pine trees to a more natural scale, and to convey the geological structure of the mountain range with an understanding based on first-hand observation, for which the style, Shih-t'ao's or his own, is only a vehicle.

In the "Drinking Stone Dwelling" leaf (Pl. 38) Mei Ch'ing moves from the grand view to consider a small corner of Huang-shan where someone has built his villa. It is shown as a modest house constructed out of the local stone, comfortably (and geomantically) situated in a hollow and surrounded by bamboo and trees. Like many of Shih-t'ao's pictures, this one makes the house into a still center in the midst of movement: the trees and bamboo seem to reach outward, projecting the energy of their lively patterns into the void at the right; the earth forms add their more ponderous pushes, the foreground bank thrusting fistlike, the steep slope above carrying the eye rightward until it is lost

in fog. In locating the conception of his picture at the nice intersection of naturalism and metaphysical exposition, Mei Ch'ing harmonizes his version of mind and nature with those of the great Individualist masters of his time.

The same is even more true of the brilliantly-conceived leaf representing the Nine Dragon Pool (Colorplt.7). It presents a turbulent vision in which rushing water, rocks, and trees participate without regard for the normal distinctions of solid and fluid, living and inert. Fine grass growing on the boulders gives them a hairy appearance that makes them look all the more like animal forms, dragon or other; the foliage of the trees echoes visually the foam of the cataract. Here Mei Ch'ing has dislocated the scene from any intelligible space, tipping it up alarmingly and offering no explanation for how the massive rocks are supported. Again, the brushwork modulates from cobweb-thin tracteries to heavy outlining, and the addition of color contributes to a fresh, cool feeling. Two men on a boulder in lower left contemplate the tumult, in a pairing that recalls the figures in Shih-t'ao's "Waterfall on Mt. Lu" (Pl.), probably painted around the same time: one man holding a staff looks at his friend, who gazes downward into the pool.

Among the smaller, vertical pictures in the album, the leaf representing the Lien-tan T'ai or Refining Cinnabar Terrace (Colorplt.6) stands out for its somber power. The

name Huang-shan, "Yellow Mountains," was sometimes said to derive from the mythical Huang-ti or Yellow Emperor's having practiced alchemy there, refining cinnabar in a crucible in his search for the elixir of immortality. Mei Ch'ing's poem reads:

The Yellow Emperor roosted at this place-
 The terrace is abandoned, its old ruins desolate.
 In what year will immortals' herbs be picked,
 And the fire in the great crucible glow again?

Once more, reality and imagination merge: a natural and observable phenomenon at Huang-shan, the isolation of the mountaintops above the Sea of Clouds, is made a metaphor for the remoteness of antiquity, the esoteric character of the alchemists' quest, and most of all the Taoist pursuit of emancipation from the confines of earthly existence. This last meaning underlies the poem and the picture; but if the poem is a somewhat conventional wish for escape from the troubles of the world, the painting is not conventional at all. Instead of depicting pine trees in the usual way, Mei reduces them to rows of needles suspended in deep, smoky ink washes that are not distinguished from the murky areas seen through rifts in the fog. Some of the pines grow from the pillar-like rock that rises out of the fog, but others above, along with the terrace itself and the empty house, seem to float unsupported. In its evocative depth, the leaf stands as one of the memorable images of early Ch'ing painting.

The superiority of the album to most of Mei Ch'ing's other paintings, and its reliance on the style of Shih-t'ao, do not reduce the interest or importance of the rest of his work; but they demonstrate how a secondary talent can sometimes be inspired to transcend his ordinary level of achievement through contact with a greater talent, or genius.

The individuality of Mei Ch'ing's production is made more problematic also by the existence of a relative, probably a cousin, named Mei Ch'ung who painted in a very similar style and who is even said to have ghost-painted for Mei Ch'ing on occasion.⁸⁵ Whether or not that is true, the two collaborated sometimes on albums, each doing some leaves, and Ch'ung's style is usually difficult to distinguish from Ch'ing's. On the one hand, then, Mei Ch'ung would seem to have been a derivative master who made no noticeable contribution to the school; on the other hand, however, he can work on a qualitative level equal to all but the very best of Mei Ch'ing's. Apart from an undated hanging scroll in the Anhui Provincial Museum, the finest of his paintings presently known are the four leaves he contributed to an album, also undated, done jointly with Mei Ch'ing and now in the Hashimoto collection, Kyoto.⁸⁶

The last leaf (Colorplt. 8) is an enchanting depiction of densely vegetated hilltops in rain, painted mostly with a fine brush moved in tight, overlapping rotary strokes. More vigorously calligraphic versions of the same brush technique can be seen in paintings by Mei Ch'ing, where it is usually designated "manner of Wang Meng," and by Shih-t'ao, notably a leaf in an album of 1691 (Compelling Image, Pl. 6.23). In Mei Ch'ung's hands it is neither a reference to the past nor a means of calligraphic expression, but purely a representational device, and a very effective one, for rendering the appearance of grassy hillsides seen slightly blurred through light rain. A boy carrying a ch'in is barely visible walking on a path through pine trees in the foreground; he will pass between two stupa-like stone markers and through a gate at the right, than will make his way up a flight of steps on the further slope to a house built among pines in the upper left, where his master, a recluse, sits waiting in an open second-storey room. A viewing pavilion located still further up evokes the possibility of looking back over the same scene from this far vantage point. The atmospheric dimming of the further hill, and the subtle shaping of it, help to draw one into the picture, and as one moves through it, following the guide-posts the artist has provided, one is made to imagine with a vividness unusual in Chinese painting the sensory impressions, tactile and visual, that walking in the rain in such a place would bring.

The circumstances of the life of Mei Ch'ing's nephew Mei Keng (1640-1722) are better known than those of Mei Ch'ung; he was a recognized poet, who moved in literary circles and associated with noted men, and held an official post himself in his late years.⁸⁷ He took his chu-jen degree in 1681, and traveled several times to Peking in the hope of an appointment to office. But he did not receive one until 1710, when at the age of seventy he was made governor of T'ai-shun in Chekiang. He held the post for five years before he retired. During his long years in Hsüan-ch'eng he composed poetry, climbed Huang-shan in 1686, took part with Mei Ch'ing and others in the compilation of the local history, and painted, although probably never in any quantity--his surviving and recorded works are few. Dated examples are from the 1680s to 1703. A handscroll by him dated 1686 records a boating party in which he participated with a number of poet friends; he himself inscribes ten quatrains that he composed on the occasion.⁸⁸

Mei Keng's best paintings are distinguished more by refinement than by strength; even more than Mei Ch'ing he is the poet-painter, with a technique limited but efficient for capturing in pictorial form those highly cultivated sensations of nature that make up the content of so much Chinese poetry. An album dated 1688 (Pl. 39, 40) shows him at his best, and also at his closest to Shih-t'ao, who seems to have affected Mei Keng's style as powerfully as he did Mei

Ch'ing's. The ten leaves of the album include scenes of Huang-shan and others not specifically located; some of the themes are conventional--an old gentleman gazing at a plum tree coming into blossom, another returning to his study from a scroll--but all are painted with freshness and sensitivity. The first leaf (Pl. 39), an unusual composition (although related pictures by Mei Ch'ing and Shih-t'ao are known) presents an experience familiar to climbers of Huang-shan: a man, followed by his servant, comes to the end of a narrow, pine-grown gorge and looks out into the mists of a deeper ravine. Much of the striking effect of the picture comes from its reversal of the usual direction of view: we are where the scenery should be, and contemplate the viewer. The fade-out around the single area of focus concentrates our attention on the man, and our imagination on the sensations he is feeling; the confinement of line-drawing to the figures, and the device of turning the blank face of the servant toward the man instead of outward, intensify this effect. As an achievement in terse evocativeness the picture is hard to match, except in the paintings of Shih-t'ao.

The fourth leaf (Pl. 40) is no less pleasing in the finesse of its dry-brush drawing and the poetic refinement of the conception. A traveler on a donkey crosses a stone bridge, accompanied by a servant carrying his luggage on a pole over his shoulder (as porters at Huang-shan still do). The traveler turns his head to look up at the waterfall; the

servant stands at the edge of the bridge admiring a blossoming plum tree growing on the bank. Again, unseen lines of sight and hearing structure our reading of the picture in a way that had rarely been achieved so well since the Southern Sung period. (One might recall, for instance, an anonymous thirteenth century painting in which a traveler emerging from a ravine turns to look upward and back to where two gibbons climb on a plum tree over a waterfall, or another in the same series in which a gentleman leans on a tree and watches two cranes wheeling in the evening sky.)⁸⁹ The reappearance of such finely-nuanced portrayals of people experiencing highly particularized sensory stimuli in nature is a phenomenon in early Ch'ing painting to which we will return, especially in our consideration of Shih-t'ao, in whose works it is supremely manifested.

Yao Sung

By the middle of the K'ang-hsi era, the late seventeenth century, painting in the Anhui region had lost most of its coherence as a school or movement, both through the geographic dispersal of its artists and through a greater diversity in the styles and subjects they chose. Nevertheless, the continuing demand for paintings in some version of the school manner, as a kind of local product, ensured that later Anhui artists would go on painting them on

some level, as they have continued to do down to quite recent times.

One of these epigones, and perhaps the youngest to have a direct link with the flourishing phase of the school, was Yao Sung. He was born in 1648 in She-hsien, and later lived in Wu-hu. Nothing is known about his life, or how he studied painting; he seems to have formed his style by imitating closely the works of Hung-jen. His known dated works extend from 1690 to 1719; recorded works expand this period of activity to 1687-1721. His death date is unknown.

The 1717 painting, a large landscape in the Nanking Museum, offers a good end-point for our consideration of the Anhui school (Pl. 41). The initial message of the painting, if we take into account its date, is that the artist is trying consciously to hold onto the school style in its pure form, as it had been used by its best practitioners, especially Hung-jen, in its greatest period, the first decades of the Ch'ing. Motifs and traits of style taken from Hung-jen's paintings are everywhere, and the formal complexity and monumentality of the central bluff is a strong link to Hung-jen's compositions. The arrangement of the houses, trees, and bamboo in the foreground, the flat-topped banks, even the drawing of contours of cliffs with waverings and sudden thickenings of the brushline, all have their sources in Hung-jen; the same is true of the plum tree, the

railings, the boat drawn up at the bank. But longer contemplation of the picture makes one conscious that there are too many of these motifs--the number and variety of things in it are excessive, and Yao Sung fails to establish any interesting formal interactions between them. He is more concerned than earlier Anhui masters had been with making his picture entertaining, and loses accordingly the qualities of tightness and austerity that distinguished their works. The failings of his painting allow us to perceive more clearly what was one of the principal strengths of those earlier masters: that they were not afraid of plainness, were willing even to risk dullness, in their reductionist effort to strip painting of all decorative and anecdotal attractiveness, and in pursuit of their purist purposes.

Later artists of Anhui origin who sometimes echo in their works the styles of their early Ch'ing predecessors include Fang Shih-shu, active in the second quarter of the eighteenth century, and Lo P'ing, active in the last quarter; Hsü-ku (1821-1896), in whose works the disciplined dry-brush drawing is turned to very different but equally effective ends; and Huang Pin-hung (1865-1955), who not only imitated artists such as Hung-jen and Ch'eng Sui in his own landscape paintings but also wrote and published scholarly studies of them.⁹⁰ And visitors to Anhui province today will find its artists still painting the peaks and pine trees of Huang-shan.

FOOTNOTES : CHAPTER II

¹ James Cahill, ed., Shadows of Mt. Huang: Chinese Painting and Printing of the Anhui School, Berkeley, 1981. Studies of Anhui school painting have also been greatly enriched by the many papers, mostly by Chinese scholars and mostly unpublished, prepared for the International Symposium on Anhui School Painting held in Hefei in May, 1984. An exhibition of nearly 200 works by artists of the school was shown at the Anhui Provincial Museum on that occasion; another, smaller exhibition selected entirely from the holdings of the Palace Museum, Beijing was shown at that museum in the winter of 1984-85.

² See my Introduction to Shadows, pp. 10-11, for a discussion of this problem.

³ See Yeh Hsien-en, Ming Ch'ing Hui-chou nung-ts'un She-hui yü tien-p'u chih (the Hui-chou Farming Village Society of Ming and Ch'ing and the Bond-slave (?) System), Hefei?, 1983, pp. 122-30: "The Gentrification of the Hui-chou Merchants." See also Kuo Chi-sheng, "Hui-chou Merchants as Art Patrons in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries," and Sewall Oertling II, "Patronage in Anhui During the Wan-li Period," both in . . . (etc.)

⁴ See the chapter on "Anhui Merchant Culture and Patronage" by Sandi Chin and Cheng-chi Hsü in Shadows, pp. 19-24, for a discussion of the Hui-chou merchants' patronage of scholarship, the drama, and art. On their collections, see also Kuo Chi-sheng, op. cit.

⁵ Wu Ch'i-chen, Shu-hua chi, pp. 160-61. Translation slightly altered from Kuo Chi-sheng, op. cit., (ms. p. 9).

⁶ Chou Liang-kung, Tu-hua lu, HSTS ed. Ch. 2, p. 24.

⁷ Private communication from Joseph McDermott; see also Yeh Hsien-en, op. cit., pp. 199-211, on "Hsin-an li-hsüeh" or the Hsin-an School of Neo-Confucianism.

⁸ As quoted by Kuo Chi-sheng, op. cit. (ms. p. 7).

- 9 I have taken some of the information given below on Cheng Yüan-hsün from an unpublished essay by Howard Rogers on Ch'eng Sui, titled "Ch'eng the Abstruse."
- 10 The scroll is in the Shanghai Museum, and was shown in the Anhui Provincial Museum exhibition of May, 1984. The information about Liu Shang-yen is from an 18th century colophon on the scroll; see Wang Shih-ch'ing and Wang Ts'ung, Chien-chiang tz'u-liao chi, rev. ed. p. 60. The paintings are unpublished.
- 11 Chang Keng, Kuo-ch'ao hua-cheng lu, HSTS ed., ch. 2, p. 33.
- 12 Susan E. Nelson, "I-p'in in Later Painting Criticism," p. 416.
- 13 For further discussions of this phenomenon, see Fu Shen, Ming Ching Chih-chi . . . ; also the essay "Theoretical Foundations of the Anhui School" by Julia Andrews and Haruki Yoshida, Shadows, pp. 34-42.
- 14 See the essay "The Great Age of Anhui Printing" by Hiromitsu Kobayashi and Samantha Sabin in Shadows, pp. 25-33; and the essay "Topography and the Anhui School" by Jane DeBevoise and Scarlett Jang in ibid., pp. 43-53. Both factors are discussed also in my Compelling Image, pp. 146-57, in relation to the development of Hung-jen's style.
- 15 Information on Hsiao Yün-ts'ung's life can be found in Wang Shih-ch'eng, Hsiao Yün-ts'ung (in Chung-kuo hua-chia ts'ung-shu series), Shanghai, 1979; and in Hu I, "Hsiao Yün-ts'ung nien-p'u," in Mei-shu yen-chiu, no. 1, 1960, pp. 48-55. I have also made use of an unpublished study by Marshall Wu, "A Study of Hsiao Yün-ts'ung," written for a seminar on Anhui school painting at the University of Michigan in 1979, and want to thank him here for permitting me to quote from it in what follows.
- 16 See the Kobayashi and Sabin essay "The Great Age of Anhui Printing" in Shadows, pp. 25-33.
- 17 Hironobu Kohara, "Sho Unso 'Temmon-zu' no dokko-sei" (The Originality of Hsiao Yün-ts'ung's T'ien-wen Pictures), in Shoron, no. 22, Autumn, 1983, pp. 149-66.
- 18 See David Hawkes, trans., Ch'u Tz'u: The Songs of the South, London, 1959, p. 44.
- 19 Hawkes, op. cit., p. 54.

- 20 Marshall Wu, "A Study of Hsiao Yün-ts'ung," ms. p. 21. The painting is in the collection of Cheng Te-k'un, Hong Kong; see Ch'eng Hsi, "Mu-fei Ts'ang-hua_K'ao-p'ing," Hong Kong, 1965, p. 19.
- 21 The story must be apocryphal, since Chao Meng-chien died when Chao Meng-fu was seven years old. Hsiao Yün-ts'ung further confuses the matter by misidentifying Meng-chien as Meng-fu's younger brother. See Chu-tsing Li's biography of Chao Meng-chien in Herbert Franke, ed., Sung Biographies: Painters, Wiesbaden, 1976, p. 4. In another version of the story, Chao Meng-chien receives Meng-fu, but after he leaves has servants scrub the seat of the chair he sat on.
- 22 For color reproductions of these two leaves see I-yüan to-ying no. 20, April, 1983, p. 23.
- 23 A section reproduced in Tokyo National Museum, Min Shin no kaiga, 1964, Pl. 93.
- 24 Trans. by Marshall Wu, op. cit., pp. 11-12.
- 25 Translation adapted from Marshall Wu, op. cit., p. 49. Another version of this painting with the same inscription is in the Palace Museum, Beijing, unpublished; the Vannotti version appears more likely to be the original.
- 26 The scroll is recorded in the Ch'ien-lung catalog Shih-ch'ü pao-chi (hsü-pien, Taipei 1970 edition, vol. 2, p. 2102). Hsiao's inscription is translated in Marshall Wu, op. cit., p. 23.
- 27 My paper delivered at the May, 1984 symposium at Hefei argued that these albums cannot be the work of Hung-jen, and appear clearly from their style to be by Hsiao Yün-ts'ung. The paper, together with two others by Chinese scholars presenting opposing views, is to appear (in Chinese) in a forthcoming issue of the Shanghai art magazine Duoyun.
- 28 Two leaves by Hung-jen from a Huangshan album survive; they will be reproduced in my article (see preceding note). The problem of the interrelationships of a number of surviving Huangshan albums by different artists is treated briefly there, but is very complex and will require further research when the relevant materials become more accessible.
- 29 For the 1656 scroll, based on depictions of places in the Hsüan-ch'eng district in southern Anhui by a monk whom Hsiao Yün-t'sang had visited, see Chu-tsing Li, A Thousand Peaks and Myriad Ravines: Chinese Paintings in the Charles A.

Drenowatz Collection, Ascona, 1974 (Artibus Asiae Supplementum XXX), no. 4.

30 Kung Hsien's handscroll is in the Fogg Art Museum, former Hofer collection. My dating of it to the later 1660s is based on its style; none of Kung Hsien's inscriptions on the scroll is dated.

31 Like Hsiao Yün-ts'ung's inscription of 1665, Ch'eng Sui's might have been written originally to accompany a genuine Hung-jen album, and later switched to the extant album by Hsiao Yün-ts'ung; see above, p. . For the text of the inscription, see Wang shih-ch'ing, op. cit., pp. 97-98. For Chang Keng's statement, see Shadows, p. 34.

32 Biographical information on Hung-jen is now amply available, notably in Cheng Hsi-chen, Hung-jen, K'un-ts'an, Shanghai, 1963 (in Chung-kuo hua-chia ts'ung-shu series), and Kuo Chi-sheng, The Paintings of Hung-jen, doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, 1980, pp. 9-71. Very useful also are Hiroshi Sofukawa, "Kojin to sono kaiga" (Hung-jen and His Paintings) and Fu and Fu, Studies in Connoisseurship, pp. 140-51. See also my biography of him in DMB, pp. 675-78.

33 Kuo Chi-sheng, The Paintings of Hung-jen, pp. 13-14.

34 In my DMB biography I was inclined to accept the identification of Hsiao Yün-ts'ung as Hung-jen's teacher; now I am not. See Kuo Chi-sheng, The Painting of Hung-jen, p. 116, for notes on the inscription that makes this claim.

35 See Cheng Hsi-chen, p.

36 The evidence connecting Sun I with Hung-jen and suggesting that he may have been Hung-jen's teacher, or at least have influenced him significantly in his early period, includes a Sun I inscription on what appears to be an early work of Hung-jen, a picture of bamboo, tree, and rock in the style of Ni Tsan, in the Anhui Provincial Museum, see I-yüan to-ying, no. 20, p. 15; an undated fan-painting landscape by Sun I in the same collection that closely resembles Hung-jen's early works, see ibid., p. 10; and a simple landscape by Sun I dated 1643 in the Palace Museum, Peking that also resembles Hung-jen's early style. A detailed investigation of this relationship must be left for later.

37 A handscroll in the Sumitomo collection, Kyoto, dated 1652, although probably genuine, is neither a distinguished work nor especially revealing of any stylistic direction.

- 38 Wang Shih-ch'ing, op. cit., pp. 35 and 39. My renderings are based partly on those of Julia Andrews and Haruki Yoshida in Shadows, p. 39. The Ni Tsan painting that Hung-jen owned, referred to as his "family treasure," is identified by Sofukawa (op. cit., p. 57) with a work now in the Palace Museum, Peking.
- 39 Most readers will by now be familiar with Huangshan scenery, from the many photographs that have been published or from the slide-shows of those who have gone there. Some of the photographs are reproduced with the introductory essays in Shadows, and in ch. V of Compelling Image.
- 40 Wang Shih-ch'ing, op. cit., p. 113.
- 41 Hung-jen's adoption of this device is discussed, and the 1657 leaf reproduced, in Compelling Image, pp. 158-161.
- 42 Translation from Kuo Chi-sheng, "Hung-jen and His Followers," p. 153.
- 43 For information on him, see Anhui hua-chia hui-pien, p. 222. He contributed one section to the 1651 collective handscroll; other dated handscrolls are 1662 (C.C. Wang collection, New York, see Shadows, no. 30) and 1666 (Su-chou Museum). For his death by 1679, mentioned in a letter by Cha Shih-piao, see Kuo Chi-sheng, "Hung-jen and His Followers," p. 154. The 1659 album described below has been published as a reproduction album, but the only copy I know is in the Art History Library of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, and lacks any indication of publisher or date.
- 44 For biographical information, see the brief entry by Weiping Liu in DMB, pp. 34-35; Fu and Fu, Studies in Connoisseurship, pp. 152-55; An-hui hua-chia hui-pien, p. 206; and Mu Hsiao-t'ien, Cha Shih-piao, Shanghai, 1980 (in Chung-kuo hua-chia ts'ung-shu series).
- 45 An unpublished album of landscapes in old styles in the Palace Museum, Peking, inscribed in 1659, contains several leaves painted in 1652; one of these is an excellent imitation of Ni Tsan. Two fans close to Hung-jen in style, dated 1655 and 1659, are reproduced in Shadows, p. 103.
- 46 The association of Hung-jen and Cha Shih-piao is summarized in Kuo Chi-sheng, "Hung-jen and His Followers," pp. 157-58; the 1694 inscription by Shih-t'ao is translated in Fu and Fu, Studies in Connoisseurship, pp. 52-3.
- 47 Wakeman, op. cit., pp. 556-69.

48 A preliminary investigation of this phenomenon was presented in a paper by Julia Andrews, "Landscape Painting and Patronage in Early Qing Yangzhou," at the College Art Association annual meeting in New York, February, 1986. Andrews's suggestions about the effect of the move to Yangchow on Cha Shih-piao's paintings seem to me convincing.

49 Wakeman, op. cit., pp. 556-69.

50 A preliminary investigation of this phenomenon was presented in a paper by Julia Andrews, "Landscape Painting and Patronage in Early Qing Yangzhou," at the College Art Association annual meeting in New York, February, 1986. Andrews's suggestions about the effect of the move to Yangchow on Cha Shih-piao's paintings seem to me convincing.

51 Tan Chung-kuang's postface to the essay is dated 1680; Yü Shao-sung (CKHLLP, pp. 801-814), who reprints the entire text, believes it was written around 1670. Excerpts are translated in Siren, Chinese Painting, vol. V, pp. 124-25. I have used Siren's renderings for two of the passages quoted below.

52 Ch'in Tsy^u-yung, quoted in Fu and Fu, Studies in Connoisseurship, p. 154. ✓

53 Andrews, op. cit., ms. p. 17.

54 Mu Shiao-t'ien, p. 9; Andrews, ms. p. 18.

55 Andrews, ms. pp. 17-18. The saying is recorded in the 18th century Yang-chou hua-fang lu. Cha Erh-chan is another of the artist's names.

56 Biographical information on Ch'eng Sui can be found in the introductory material, much of it by the compiler Huang Pin-hung, to Ch'eng's literary collection Kou-tao-jen chi, which is included in MSTS Part V, no. 8; and in An-hua-chia hui-pien, p. 288; English-language studies include Scarlett Jang's in Shadows, pp. 111-12; an unpublished study by Howard Rogers prepared for (but not delivered at) the symposium at Hefei in 1984; and Julia Andrews's paper (cf. note). The accompanying text to Ch'eng Sui shan'shui ts'e, Peking, 1983, gives different dates for his birth and death, 1607-1692, without citing any source.

57 See Shadows, no. 48, p. 113; the painting is in the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco.

58 A landscape in the Shanghai Museum, shown in the Hefei exhibition of 1984, bears an inscription by Cha Chi-tso dated 1650. A small landscape in the Yamato Bunkakan, Nara, is dated 1657.

59 A landscape with a false inscription of the Yüan-period minor master Ts'ui Yen-fu in the Palace Museum, Taipei (YV 296, reproduced in Ku-kung shu-hua chi, vol. 21) bears a seal of Ch'eng Sui and is probably by him; if so, it must be an early attempt at this kind of landscape composition, and still preserves many features of the style of Wu Pin and other Nanking-region masters of the late Ming. Since Ch'eng Sui was in Nanking and Peking in the 1620s and was associated with Huang Tao-chou, he could even have met Wu Pin.

60 Reproduced in Naito Konan, ed., Shincho shogafu, Osaka, 1916, Pl. 32. Chou Liang-kung's account of Chang Hsün is in his Tu-hua lu, ch. III; translated by Hongnam Kim, op. cit., p. 125.

61 The leaf reproduced here is in the Chekiang Provincial Museum in Hangchow, and was exhibited in the Hefei exhibition of 1984; it is reproduced from Hsin-an hua-p'ai, Nanking, 1948, Pl. 19. Four other leaves from what appears to be the same album were published, together with an eight-leaf landscape album by the late Ming artist Chang Hsüeh-tseng, as Chang Erh-wei Ch'eng Mu-ch'ien shan-shui ho-ts'e, Shanghai, Shen-chou Kuo-kuang-she, 1909.

62 Huang Yung-ch'üan, "Cheng Min 'Pai-ching-chai jih-chi'ch'u-t'an," in Mei-shu yen-chiu, 1984 no. 3, pp. 39-40 and 49-50. The article is based on Huang's discovery of a manuscript copy of Cheng Min's diary covering the years 1672-76. For biographical information and a discussion of Cheng Min's dates, see also An-hui hua-chia hui-pien, p. 315. In connection with his death date, it should be noted that the dating of the album of landscapes in the Princeton Art Museum to 1688 (Shadows, pp. 123 and 143) is a mistake; that is the date of a colophon attached to the album, which is itself undated.

63 Huang Yung-ch'üan, op. cit., pp. 40 and 49, has assembled entries from the diary recording sales and commissions of paintings and seals, from which I have excerpted the following.

64 Cheng Mu-ch'ien shan'shui ts'e, Shanghai, Shen-chou Kuo-kuang-she, 1928. It is composed of eight landscapes and an additional leaf of writing by the artist, which contains the date.

65 A comprehensive and excellent study of Tai Pen-hsiao, from which much of the information that follows was taken, is Minoru Nishigami, "Dai Banko ni tsuite" (Concerning Tai Pen-hsiao), in Suzuki Kei sensei kanreki kinen Chugoku kaiga-shi ronshu (Essays on Chinese Painting, Festschrift for Professor Kei Suzuki's Sixty-first Birthday), Tokyo, 1978, pp. 291-340. Also valuable, although labeled as "draft--not for citation," is Xue Yongnian, "Tai Pen-hsiao san-t'i" (Three Topics in Tai Pen-hsiao), unpublished paper written for the 1984 Hefei symposium and distributed there. Xue's "three topics" are: Tai's relationship with Mao Hsiang; his painting theory; and his landscape style.

66 For evidence of Tai Pen-hsiao's association with these artists and others, see Nishigami, op. cit., pp. 295-305. For his relationship with K'ung Shang-jen, see also Richard E. Strassberg, The World of K'ung Shang-jen: A Man of Letters in Early Ch'ing China, New York, 1983, pp. 175-76. For Tai Pen-hsiao's travels around famous mountains, Nishigami, op. cit., pp. 305-08.

67 The inscription is written at the end of a long handscroll titled (by the artist himself, in a briefer inscription at the beginning) the "Picture of Meanings Beyond Images." The handscroll was published as Tai Ying-a shan-shui chuan, Shanghai, Shen-chou Kuo-kuang She, 1931. The inscription has been discussed by Nishigami, op. cit., pp. 308 ff., and Xue Yongnian, op. cit., pp. 19ff.

68 The reference is to one of the Ch'u Tz'u or Odes of Ch'u, ascribed to (but later than) the poet Ch'ü Yüan. See David Hawkes, Ch'u Tz'u: Songs of the South, p. 83; I have used his rendering here.

69 Shih-t'ao's inscription is on the last leaf of the 1691 album now owned by the Japanese painter Higashiyama Kaii; see Compelling Image, pp. 185 and 206-7. The leaf is reproduced there as Pl. 6.24.

70 The 1660 landscape is in the Palace Museum, Peking, and is unpublished; it was exhibited in the exhibition of Anhui school painting shown there in the winter of 1984-85. The 1664 painting is in Shadows, no. 50, p. 120.

71 Published as Tai Pen-hsiao shan-shui ts'e, Shanghai Museum, n.d. (ca. 1958?). The album, containing ten leaves, was formerly owned by the noted Shanghai collector P'ang Yüan-chi. For two other leaves of the album in the Weng collection, see Shadows, no. 55, p. 122.

72 A number of depictions of this motif in K'un-ts'an's paintings are reproduced, and its implications discussed, in my paper "K'un-ts'an and His Inscriptions" [in press].

73 The album is published as Tai Pen-hsiao shan-shui chen-chi, Shanghai, Kuo-hua Shu-chü, 1920; its present whereabouts is unknown.

74 See Wen Fong, The Lohans and a Bridge to Heaven, Washington, C.C., Freer Gallery of Art, 1958, pp. 13-24.

75 See Li Chi, The Travel Diaries of Hsü Hsia-k'o, Hong Kong, 1974, pp. 33. Hsü visited T'ien-t'ai Shan in 1613.

76 The fullest source of information on Mei Ch'ing's life is Yang Ch'en-pin, "Mei Ch'ing sheng-p'ing chi ch'i hui-hua i-shu" (Mei ch'ing's Life and Painting), in Ku-kung po-wu-yüan yüan-k'an, 1985 no. 4, pp. 49-57. This is the first part of a longer study by the same author that was distributed at the Hefei symposium of 1984; the remainder is unpublished.

77 The handscroll, representing the Tan-yüan or Tranquil Garden of Hsü Ch'ien-hsüeh, is in the Tientsin Historical Museum, and was shown in the 1984 exhibition at the Anhui Provincial Museum, Hefei. It is one of Mei Ch'ing's most original and important works, and its publication is awaited.

78 Chiang Hua, "Mei Ch'ing shou-chuan yü 'Huang-shan hua-p'ai'" (A Handscroll by Mei Ch'ing and the Huangshan School of Painting), a paper prepared for the 1984 Hefei symposium and unpublished, presents and discusses the text of a handscroll of calligraphy that Mei wrote in 1691 consisting of thirty-three poems on people he knew. The handscroll is in the Nanking Museum.

(2) 79 The 1649 fan, a winter landscape "in the manner of Li Ch'ing," is reproduced in Semmen taikan, Kyoto, 1915, vol. 3. The twelve-leaf album is in a private collection, Princeton, and is unpublished.

80 The sixteen-leaf album of 1672 was published as Mei Ch'ü-shan Huang-shan ch'üan-ching-p'in, Shanghai, Commercial Press, 1939.

81 Nine paintings by Mei Ch'ing of this type were shown in the 1984-85 Anhui school exhibition at the Palace Museum, Peking; five of them appeared to belong to one series, on silk, and four, including the one reproduced here, to another series on

paper. Others that appear to belong to these series are in other collections. It is possible that these were originally panels in screens. A ten-panel screen by Mei Ch'ing, dated 1693, of the type that presents a continuous composition with only one inscription, is in the Kuang-chou Art Museum; see I-yüan to-ying no. 16, pp. 12-13.

82 The entire album was published as Mei Ch'ü-shan Huang-shan shih-chiu ching ts'e, Shanghai, Commercial Press, 1934.

83 The "Western Sea Gate" leaf (not reproduced here) and the "Nine Dragons Pond" leaf (Colorplt. 7) seem to have been copied by the same hand, perhaps as part of a larger series of forgeries based on this album; the former copy, dated 1695, is in the Tientsin Museum (T'ien-ching i-shu po-wu-kuan ts'ang-hua chi, II, Pl. 87) and the latter in the Cleveland Museum (Eight Dynasties, no. 229). Even if we allow the possibility of Mei Ch'ing re-using the compositions, as he often did, the correspondences are too exact and mechanical; the inscriptions are copied precisely, character for character (no artist could write a poem twice without introducing more variation than this); the seals on the two copies correspond exactly with each other, but not (I believe) with those on any reliable Mei Ch'ing paintings; and finally, the brushwork in both is quite without force or character, the ink simply rubbed on almost as if applied with an air-brush. Nothing in Mei Ch'ing's acceptable works suggests that he was able or willing to suppress his hand in this way. Because these are admired and attractive pictures, but muddy our understanding of Mei Ch'ing, it seems worthwhile to clarify their real nature here. Other copies from leaves in the album include another based on the "Western Sea Gate" leaf, formerly owned by a New York dealer, and one after the Manjusri Terrace leaf (Pl.) in the Senoku Museum, Kyoto (Kei Suzuki, ed., Comprehensive Catalog of Chinese Paintings, III, JM 13-080). The hand of the late artist-forger Chang Ta-ch'ien may be suspected in some of these.

84 The 1667 paintings by Shih-t'ao that display already some elements of the style that would come to maturity during his period in Anhui in the 1670s are: a "View of Huangshan" (see Fu and Fu, Studies in Connoisseurship, p. 56, fig. 21); and the "Sixteen Arhats" handscroll (ibid., p. 170, fig. 4, now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York). A Huang-shan landscape by Shih-t'ao dated 1672 (Shadows, p. 133, fig. 18) is also close to the style that Mei Ch'ing would use later, and would appear to argue priority for Shih-t'ao. See also, however, a "Red Cliff" painting by Mei Ch'ing datable to 1673 (Sotheby's New York, auction catalog, June 3, 1985, no. 40) which testifies that Mei was using related style by that year. The problem of the relationship between the two

artists is discussed by Chu-tsing Li, A Thousand Peaks, pp. 196-98; Li cites the 1693 album and the same two inscriptions quoted here.

⁸⁵ See An-hui hua-chia hui-pien, p. 238. It offers little information on Mei Ch'ing, and some probable misinformation: that he was Ch'ing's cousin's grandson and active during the Ming-Ch'ing transition. Other sources are equally uninformative. It has been conjectured that Mei Ch'ung was Mei Ch'ing's brother, but Yang Ch'en-pin (op. cit., p. 51) gives the names of Ch'ing's four brothers, and Ch'ung is not among them.

⁸⁶ The hanging scroll in the Anhui Provincial Museum is reproduced in I-yüan to-ying, no. 20, p. 30. For the Hashimoto album, which contains four leaves each by Mei Ch'ing and Mei Ch'ung, see Shadows, no. 61.

87 A year-by-year biography (nien-p'u) for Mei Keng was prepared by Hu I, one of the participants in the Hefei symposium of 1984, and distributed there; it is unpublished. I have relied on it for the information that follows.

88 The handscroll is in the Nelson Gallery, Kansas City; see Eight Dynasties, no. 230.

89 See Siren, Chinese Painting, III, Pl. 241 and 242. Both paintings are in the Konchiin, Kyoto.

90 For a brief account of this aftermath of the school and reproductions of a few works by these artists, see Shadows, pp. 135-38.





此余年未卒臨洗石田筆也
時年三十有四腕力尚稚然
筆墨白亮望已極矣之為類
數語而不足存題不忍遽當
以傳矣付子為墨藏之
子校子已物於世也
萬曆 四

[illegible]

Shanxun (1598-
Landscape After
m. Dated 1631
Museum.

沈君
功主大濟
員生
無



己巳秋補
稿山良德
光

