

Culture, ethnicity, and empire in the work of two eighteenth-century "Eccentric" artists¹

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The eighteenth century saw China become, once again, a vast empire stretching far into Inner Asia. Not since the Mongol Yuan dynasty had the Chinese empire reached anything approaching this extent, and once again the stewardship of a nomad people was required. While one can legitimately speak of this empire as Chinese, to the extent that it was so presented by China's Manchu rulers, one has to be careful about what is understood by "China." For China was, in a sense, a floating concept that few people at the time wanted to pin down too closely, lest the inherent gap of perception between Manchu rulers and Han Chinese subjects became too evident. One often has the sense, reading Chinese writings of the late seventeenth and eighteenth century, that much is being deliberately left unsaid. It was clearly in the interest of the Qing state that the Han Chinese population be able to recognize itself in the Chinese empire; less obviously, perhaps, it must have been psychologically and politically necessary for the dynasty's Han Chinese subjects to be able to avoid thinking of the Qing as an alien power—if only because every adult male bore the visible sign of Manchu conquest on his body in the form of the pigtail, and clothes under the Qing dynasty were made to conform to Manchu custom. It might be argued that it was only at the cost of what might be thought of as a suspension of disbelief with regard to Manchu rule that the Han Chinese population could protect the successful negotiation of dynastic transition during the fifty years after 1644 that had brought a restoration of order and prosperity. The alternative, in all its horror, was spelled out repeatedly by the Qing state in dismissals of officials, show trials, and the persecution of writers from around 1710 to the end of the century.²

The official state conception of empire was a multiethnic coalition under the umbrella of Manchu power, the "Manchus" themselves being in their origins, not an ethnic group, but a local coalition of just such a kind.³ The Han Chinese, who thought of Beijing as the capital of the empire, did play a large role in the political apparatus that was centered there. However, Beijing was not, in fact, the only imperial center. The Qing dynasty had a second capital at Liaoning, in its Manchurian homeland; and, more important, in the course of the eighteenth century, the Qing rulers actively developed an area around Chengde (also known as Rehe or Jehol), to the northeast of Beijing, as a de facto political center turned toward Inner Asia and Tibet. In that environment, where Tibetan-style temples came to adjoin vast hunting parks, the elaborate reconstructions of southern Chinese landscapes had an exotic look.⁴ Correspondingly, Han Chinese officials from the south were naturally less at ease there than Manchus, Mongols, and Chinese bannermen.⁵ In their thinking, Chengde correspondingly occupied a less prominent place than Beijing. The tendency to exoticize nomad life thus continued among Han Chinese officials, who thought themselves engaged in the sinicization of their Manchu rulers and who underestimated the extent to which the Chinese polity was in fact being refashioned by the Manchus.⁶

Such intersections of culture, ethnicity, and power lie at the heart of the eighteenth-century imperial situation.

and the State in the Late Ch'ien-lung Era (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1987).

3. See Pamela Kyle Crossley, *The Manchus* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), esp. chap. 2.

4. See, in particular, Michèle Pirazzolli-t'Serstevens and Hou Ching-lang, "Les chasses d'automne de l'Empereur Qianlong à Mulan," *T'oung-pao* 65, nos. 1–3:13–50; Anne Chayet, *Les temples de Jehol et leurs modèles tibétains* (Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1985).

5. Or "Chinese-martial bannermen" in Crossley's terminology (see note 3). These were men from the northern Chinese families that had been integrated into the Manchu military system of banner groupings, largely during the prequest period.

6. The argument in favor of the Manchu refashioning of Chinese practices has been forcefully made by Joanna Waley-Cohen, in "Commemorating War in Eighteenth-Century China," *Modern Asian Studies* 30, no. 4 (1996):869–899.

1. This essay is part of a larger book project that examines the engagement of so-called "Eccentric" painting with public issues of different kinds, including public service, urban security, corruption, justice, political patronage, foreign policy, and ethnic tensions.

2. On the intersection of political and ethnic issues under the Qing, see in particular Frederick Wakeman, Jr., *The Great Enterprise: The Manchu Reconstruction of Imperial Order in Seventeenth Century China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); Pierre-Henri Durand, *Lettres et pouvoirs: un procès littéraire dans la Chine impériale* (Paris: Éditions de l'école des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1992); R. Kent Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries: Scholars*

The Qing rulers were extremely active in protecting Manchu identity throughout the eighteenth century, as they increasingly feared its dilution; indeed, the more they presented themselves as literati on the Chinese model, the more strongly they compensated elsewhere on the Manchu side.⁷ For Han Chinese literati, meanwhile, the Qing institutionalization of a multiethnic society at the political level threatened an ethnopolitical cosmology in which Chineseness was Han-identified. Yet criticism, in the normal way of things, was impossible, given Manchu sensitivity to negative comments on the non-Han cultural presence in China, which reached an extreme of intolerance in the years around 1780.⁸ Finally, overlaid on this tissue of ethnocultural insecurities was the budding awareness that other, faraway (European) powers might one day be able to interfere in Chinese affairs. I shall explore these issues in the painting (and, in one case, calligraphy) of two notably independent-minded artists, Jin Nong (1687–1764) and his student Luo Ping (1733–1799), over a period of some sixty years from around 1740 through the end of the century.

Jin Nong occupies a place apart in China's early-modern painting,⁹ for he employed what might anachronistically be termed the approach of a conceptual artist. To a unique degree, he self-consciously aimed at the creation of utterly original images, whose originality lies in a mastery of citation, recontextualization, and the subversion of normal expectations of craft. For all that, his art was not entirely unprecedented. It had its roots, on the one hand, in the art of citation and recontextualization of a fellow Zhejiang artist of the previous century, Chen Hongshou (1598–1652),¹⁰ and on the other, in the raw pursuit of

originality by the finger painter Gao Qipei (1660–1734).¹¹ Combining these two very different heritages with his calligraphic mastery, Jin came up with an approach that was uniquely his own. In his own time, however, he was more admired than influential, with the notable exception of his student Luo Ping, who subtly integrated Jin's "conceptual" approach into his own practice. Luo, however, was an infinitely more accomplished ink painter, simply in terms of pictorial craft, thus his conceptualism is both less consistently in play and, when present, somewhat harder to see. Isolated in their own time, Jin and Luo appear today as two of the most relevant artists of recent centuries. For if one seeks precedents within the Chinese tradition for the conceptual art movement that represents the major, ongoing achievement of present-day Chinese artists, a movement that in the space of fifteen years has produced a very large body of strikingly original images (in the broadest sense),¹² then it is to this cluster of idiosyncratic early-modern artists—Chen Hongshou, Gao Qipei, Jin Nong, and Luo Ping—that one would have to look, followed later by the no-less-idiosyncratic nineteenth-century painters Ren Xiong (1823–1857), who was strongly influenced by Chen Hongshou, and Xugu (1823/4–1896), who was much influenced by Jin Nong.¹³ Few, however, would make the connection, so strong is the categorial bias against conceptual art inhabiting the same historical narrative as ink painting.¹⁴

7. See Dorothy Berinstein's article in this volume for an exploration of this issue in relation to painting.

8. See Guy (see note 2), esp. pp. 16–37, 157–208.

9. The term "early-modern" (a more elegant alternative to the customary "Early Modern" pioneered by Timothy Brook) refers here to the period roughly circa 1500–1850, as it appears when examined in the light of the long-term history of Chinese modernity.

10. On Chen Hongshou's painting, see James Cahill, *The Compelling Image: Nature and Style in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Painting* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), pp. 106–145; id., *The Distant Mountains: Chinese Painting of the Late Ming Dynasty, 1570–1644* (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1982), pp. 203–206, 244–266. Chen's approach was followed closer to Jin's time by Hua Yan (1682–1756), another Zhejiang artist and friend of Jin, in a group of important works not entirely characteristic of his oeuvre of which the most important is an album in the Lanqian shanguan collection in Taiwan.

11. On Gao, see Klaas Ruitenbeek, *Discarding the Brush: Gao Qipei (1660–1734) and the Art of Chinese Finger Painting* (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1992).

12. The best introduction to contemporary Chinese conceptual art is Wu Hung, *Transience: Chinese Experimental Art at the End of the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago, 1999), but see also Norman Bryson, "The Post-Ideological Avant-Garde," in *Inside Out: New Chinese Art*, ed. Gao Minglu (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1998); Britta Erickson, *Three Installations by Xu Bing* (Madison: Elvehjem Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1992); Jonathan Hay (interviewer), "Zhang Hongtu / Hongtu Zhang: An Interview," in *Boundaries in Chinese Culture*, ed. John Hay (London: Reaktion Books, 1994); Alice Yang, "Xu Bing: Rewriting Culture," in *Why Asia? Contemporary Asian and Asian American Art* (New York: New York University Press, 1998).

13. See Ju-hsi Chou, *Transcending Turmoil: Painting at the Close of China's Empire, 1796–1911* (Phoenix: Phoenix Art Museum, 1992), pp. 160–169 (for Ren Xiong), pp. 115–125 (for Xugu).

14. Yet several prominent conceptual artists, including Gu Wenda, Qiu Zhijie, Zhang Hongtu, and Xu Bing, have made extensive use of the traditional Chinese brush in their work.



Figure 1. Luo Ping, *Portrait of Jin Nong Reading a Sutra*. Hanging scroll, ink and light color on paper, 113.7 x 59.3 cm. Zhejiang Provincial Museum. From *Yiyuan duoying* (1982) 18:40.

Consigned to the category of the transnational, conceptual art can seem to have little in common with Chinese art of the past. While I shall not explore further this question of the historical origins of contemporary Chinese art, it is only fair, given that the contemporary experience of conceptual art is what makes the modernity of Jin Nong's achievement visible, that I acknowledge the debt by noting, in passing, that the supposed lack of contemporary connections to the Chinese artistic past is in fact an illusion.

Utopian writing

Jin Nong's complex and subtle commentaries on empire were addressed by Luo Ping in a portrait of Jin contemplating—one could hardly say reading—a Sanskrit or Tibetan sutra (fig. 1).¹⁵ Luo's portrait image, in the manner and spirit of Jin's own paintings, engages with a number of different ideas. It is not only a Buddhist image, but also, among other things, a visual commentary on Jin's practice of calligraphy and more specifically on a script-type that was his own original and strange invention.¹⁶ Closest to a standard or clerical script, but not easily classifiable as either, this unnamable (and, by Jin Nong, unnamed) script-type may, it has been suggested, have required cutting the tip of the brush to give a sharp edge similar to a pen (fig. 2). Before it made its emergence, around 1743 on present evidence, Jin had been experimenting for several years with various forms of square and angular script, taking much of his inspiration from sixth-century northern stele inscriptions he had studied during travels in the north.¹⁷ The sharp edges and points of the strokes in Northern Wei stele inscriptions made a virtue of the stonecarver's chisel, incorporating the graphic values of

carving into the calligraphic aesthetic.¹⁸ Chinese scholars have made another historical connection, referring to Jin's script-type as *qishu*, or "lacquer script," in reference to Han dynasty lacquer writing on bamboo slips. However, this new and extreme script-type that Jin invented around 1743, while conditioned by his prior antiquarian experimentation, goes so far beyond them that one must assume the introduction of another, radically different frame of reference. Luo Ping's portrait, together with Jin's transformation of a brush into something like a pen, suggests that the new factor in play may have been non-Chinese writing systems. In the Buddhist context, Sanskrit script was now rivaled by Tibetan in the writing of sutras due to the Qing dynastic sponsorship of Lamaist Buddhism. The sutra in Jin's hand appears to be an approximation of Tibetan rather than Sanskrit writing, but neither writing system is very close to his new script, except in its pen-written effect. One obvious difference from Jin's own calligraphy is that the lines of script in the sutra transcription are horizontal.

In fact, the portrait provides only a partial explanation and should not be allowed simply to divert attention from Jin the antiquarian to Jin the Buddhist, thereby giving his truly strange calligraphic invention a reassuringly familiar context within the long-standing Chinese tradition of Buddhist exoticism. The sharp changes of direction, the elongated bladelike strokes, and the punctuation of the grid by oblique vectors and hooklike arcs, all of which distinguish the new script from his previous experiments, together with the vertical orientation, escape a Buddhist frame of reference defined by Sanskrit or Tibetan, and may make Manchu writing a more relevant comparison. While Jin himself never had to learn Manchu, he knew fellow-Chinese friends who had.¹⁹ Also relevant is the fact that since the beginning of the Qing dynasty imperial inscriptions on titleboards and steles had routinely been written in

15. The portrait is discussed at some length by Richard Vinograd in *Boundaries of the Self: Chinese Portraits, 1600–1900* (New York and Cambridge, 1992), pp. 106–109. Vinograd comments that "[h]is expression is somewhat ambiguous, hovering between wonder and perplexity."

16. Jin was not unique in his inventiveness: Zheng Xie's (1693–1765) contemporary *liufenban* or "six-and-a-half" script was no less original an invention.

17. The term "square and angular script" is Marshall Wu's. See his discussion of Jin's calligraphy in "Chin Nung: An Artist with a Wintry Heart" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1989), pp. 118–189, where he seeks to explain the new script in purely antiquarian terms (though he does repeatedly compare it, for descriptive purposes, with Gothic script).

18. As Marshall Wu has pointed out (*ibid.*), Jin was one of the first scholars to pay serious attention to Northern Wei calligraphy, anticipating the nineteenth-century interest of archaeologically inspired scholars and calligraphers such as Zhao Zhiqian (1829–1884). Zhao's exploitation of its graphic qualities in turn opened the way to its use as the basis of one of the first distinctively modern standardized styles used in print media in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

19. For example, Yuan Mei, whose efforts to learn Manchu in 1740–1741 in the Hanlin Academy are discussed by Arthur Waley in *Yuan Mei: Eighteenth Century Chinese Poet* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970), pp. 28–29.

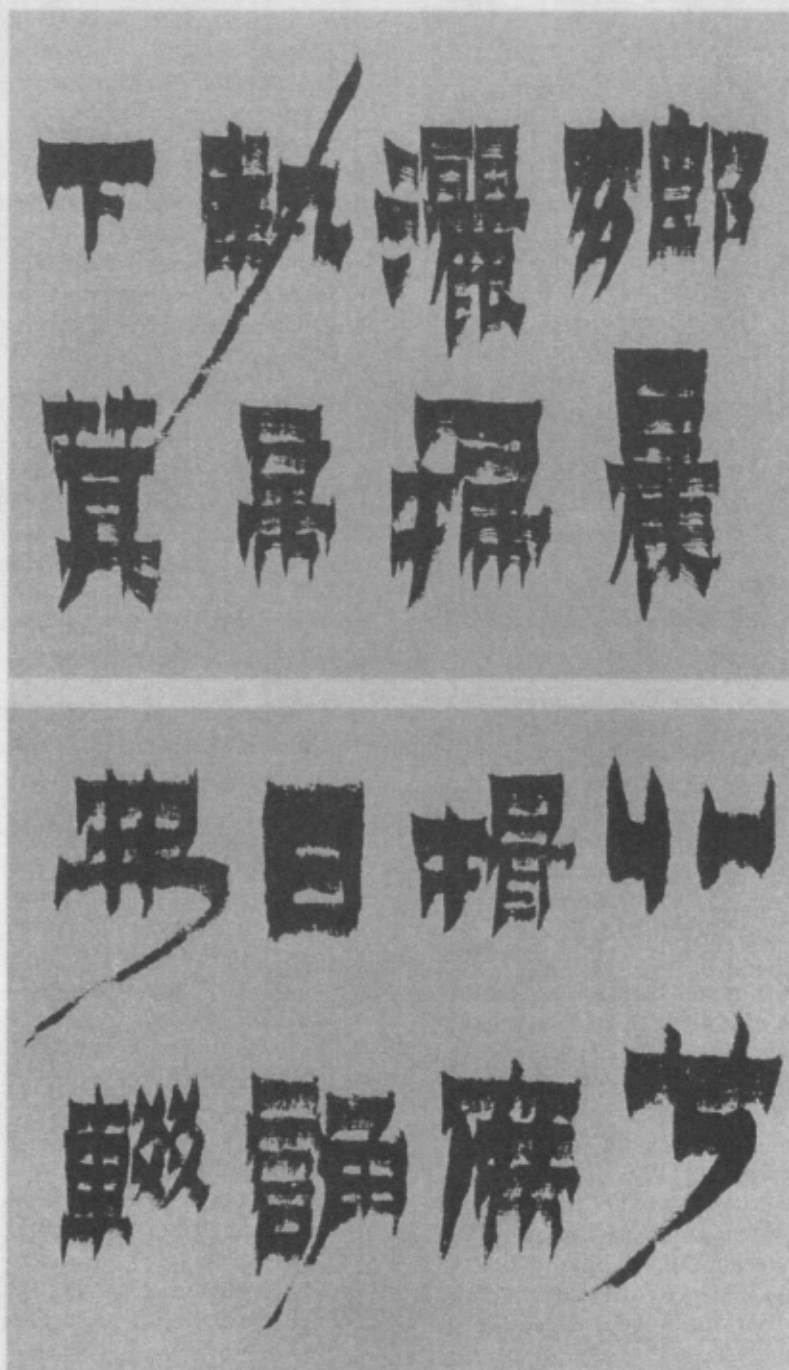


Figure 2. Jin Nong, *Album of Lacquer-script Calligraphy*, 1754. Ink on paper, dimensions unknown. Rongbao Zhai Collection, Beijing. From *Jin Nong shuhua ji* (Beijing: Rongbao Zhai, 1989).



Figure 3. Titleboard of the Palace of Retirement for Fasting, written in Manchu and Chinese, Forbidden City, Beijing. From *Zhongguo meishu quanji, Jianzhu yishu bian 1* (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1987), p. 125.

three languages: Chinese, Manchu, and Mongol (see fig. 3). But in the end, it is probably vain to associate Jin's script with any specific writing system. More reasonably, one might suggest that the power and resonance of Jin's new script lies in its willful difference from canonical norms, this difference in turn being conditioned by the cultural disturbance that the Qing state's consecration of non-Chinese writing systems of different kinds created.

On this argument, then, as early as 1743, Jin Nong had begun to engage with the Qing redefinition of Chinese empire through a script-type that was every bit as much an ethnocultural hybrid as the contemporary paintings using Chinese materials produced by Jesuit artists for the Qing court.²⁰ But whereas the Jesuit artists' hybridity is explicit and obvious, Jin's is disguised. To pin down the sense of his engagement is difficult, in large part because the *métissage* of the script-type is concealed by an apparent eccentricity. Paradoxically, it is the eccentricity that becomes the public persona of

the script-type, so to speak, while its engagement with empire recedes into a more private realm. As a private engagement with empire that he maintained until his death twenty years later, Jin's script may perhaps be best understood as a utopian attempt to bring the Manchu-introduced writing systems within the orbit of Chinese writing. As such, it may be considered one of numerous efforts to preserve the comforting illusion that the Manchus were being sinicized, and that the Han Chinese cultural center could hold under the strain, not of conquest, but of Manchu dynastic success.

The inner Asian horse and groom

In the eyes of the Qianlong Emperor (r. 1736–1795), one of the clearest signs of that success was the Qing victory over the Zunghars in 1759, which finally led to the incorporation into the empire of the vast area of Inner Asia that we now know under the name of Xinjiang, the New Territory.²¹ Qianlong's foreign policy success coincides with Jin's decision to move into the new iconographic area of horse-and-groom paintings. Undoubtedly, Jin Nong also had other reasons for painting horses at this time (circa 1760), for example, as a metaphor for his status as a frustrated scholar. Indeed, these paintings are remarkably multivalent. Here, however, I will restrict my discussion of them to their role in Jin's engagement with the Qing redefinition of empire.

The most esteemed horses came from outside China, from Inner Asia and Tibet. Obtained through tribute or conquest, they were military animals and symbols of Chinese imperial power on the larger Asian stage. Inevitably, the representation of horses became a means of addressing China's geopolitical relations with Inner Asian powers. Some of the most important monuments of the Chinese horse painting tradition engage with this issue, from the six horses represented in the tomb of the Tang emperor Taizong (r. 626–649), with whom Qianlong liked to compare himself, to Li Gonglin's (circa 1041–1106) *Five Horses* handscroll painted in the late eleventh century against the threat of the invasion of China by the Jurchens, and on to the horse paintings of Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322) and others under the Mongol dynasty of the Yuan.²² For the later horse painter,

21. See the article by Lucia Tripodes in this volume for some aspects of the history of this campaign.

22. On the tradition of horse painting, see Robert Harrist, *Power and Virtue: The Horse in Chinese Art* (New York: China Institute Gallery, 1997).

20. See the articles by Dorothy Berinstein and Lucia Tripodes in this volume.



Figure 4. Jin Nong, *Eight Chargers*, 1761. Album of six leaves, ink and color on silk, each leaf: 232.2 x 58.3 cm. Formerly Christie's. © Christie's Images Ltd. 1999.

this dimension of the tradition could only be avoided with great effort—an effort that Jin Nong can hardly be said to have made. In the first place, he always referred to this genre within his work as “foreigners and horses.” Second, he lavished great care on foreign grooms, be they of Iranian, Turkic, Tibetan, or Mongolian appearance, paying almost as much attention to the particularities of their dress as one can find in Jesuit painting or the exactly contemporary illustrations of ethnic types in the *Huang Qing zhigong tu* (Pictures of Tribute-Bearers to the Imperial Qing), published in 1761.²³ And third, in his accompanying inscriptions, Jin was not shy about encouraging an effort of imaginative geographic displacement. To accompany the Iranian-looking groom in Leaf 2 of the album *Eight Chargers*,²⁴

for example, he cited a poetic couplet: “The north wind howls and a wintry mist appears on all four sides” (fig. 4). And then he added the comment: “One imagines oneself in the region of Gugula.”²⁵ Though framed by antiquarian concerns, this text brings into play a discourse of the exotic that places Jin on politically sensitive ground. It was not simply that China’s Manchu rulers were intolerant of any ethnically inspired comments against themselves, or even against the Tibetans and Mongols with whom they had much in common. It was also a question of the Xinjiang campaign.

The eastern part of Inner Asia from which the horses represented by Jin Nong theoretically came was controlled by the Zunghars and other Mongolian tribes. The capitulation of many of them in the early 1750s (commemorated in such court paintings as *Imperial Banquet in the Park of Ten Thousand Trees*, which is the subject of a separate article in this issue) did not entail the incorporation of this area into the Qing empire. In 1755 the Zunghars reneged, leading to renewed warfare with the Qing. After a difficult three-year campaign,

23. An illustration from the *Huang Qing zhigong tu* is reproduced in the article by Lucia Tripodes in this volume. For a figure painting by Luo Ping in the same vein, identified by Luo as a copy, see Christie’s New York, *Fine Chinese Paintings and Calligraphy*, 6/1/94, lot 148.

24. Given Jin Nong’s known propensity to make use of “substitute brushes,” the authorship of his paintings always presents a difficult problem. The important point for the present discussion is that the album, whether painted by Jin himself or, perhaps more likely, by Luo Ping, certainly came out of Jin’s studio with his approval.

25. See also Jin Nong, *Dongxin hua ma tiji* (Meishu congshu ed.), p. 95.



Figure 5. Jin Nong, *Foreigners and Horses*. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 232.2 x 58.3 cm. C. C. Wang Family Collection, New York.

Qing generals finally incorporated this vast region into the empire as the New Territory (Xinjiang). This foreign policy success—in fact, a victory snatched from the jaws of defeat—was celebrated with enormous fanfare into 1760 and 1761 as one of the crowning achievements of Qianlong's reign.²⁶ It is unlikely, to say the least, that Jin Nong depicted horses in the wake of the conquest of Xinjiang without incorporating an awareness of the contemporary flurry of celebratory propaganda;²⁷ and it is all the less likely given the important place that horse paintings had held in Xinjiang-related commemorative

paintings produced at court throughout the Qianlong reign.²⁸ Although these paintings seem not to have circulated outside a palace context, their existence would certainly have been known to the many southern connoisseurs at court, some of whom were friendly with

26. See Ka Bo Tsang, "Portraits of Meritorious Officials: Eight Examples from the First Set Commissioned by the Qianlong Emperor," *Arts Asiatiques* 48 (1992):69–88.

27. See Li Weiming, "Jin Nong 'jianju boxue hongci,' bian," *Duoyun*, 1988, no. 3:35.

28. On horse painting at the Qianlong court, see Wang Dunhua, "Aiqimeng suo hua de ba junma (The Eight Horses Painted by Ignace Sichelbarth)," *Wenwu*, 1959, no. 2:47; Yang Boda, "Guanyu Mashu tuitai de zai kaoding (A Re-identification of the Subject of Horse Exercises)," *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan*, 1983, no. 7:64–7; Nie Chongzheng, "Qing dai gongting huajia zatan (Notes on Qing Court Painters)," *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan*, 1984, no. 1:41–8; Claudia Brown and Ju-hsi Chou, *The Elegant Brush: Chinese Painting under the Qianlong Emperor 1735–1795* (Phoenix: Phoenix Art Museum, 1985), pp. 26–29; *Hua ma mingpin tezhan tulu* (Special Exhibition of Horse Paintings) (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1989); Ka Bo Tsang (see note 26).

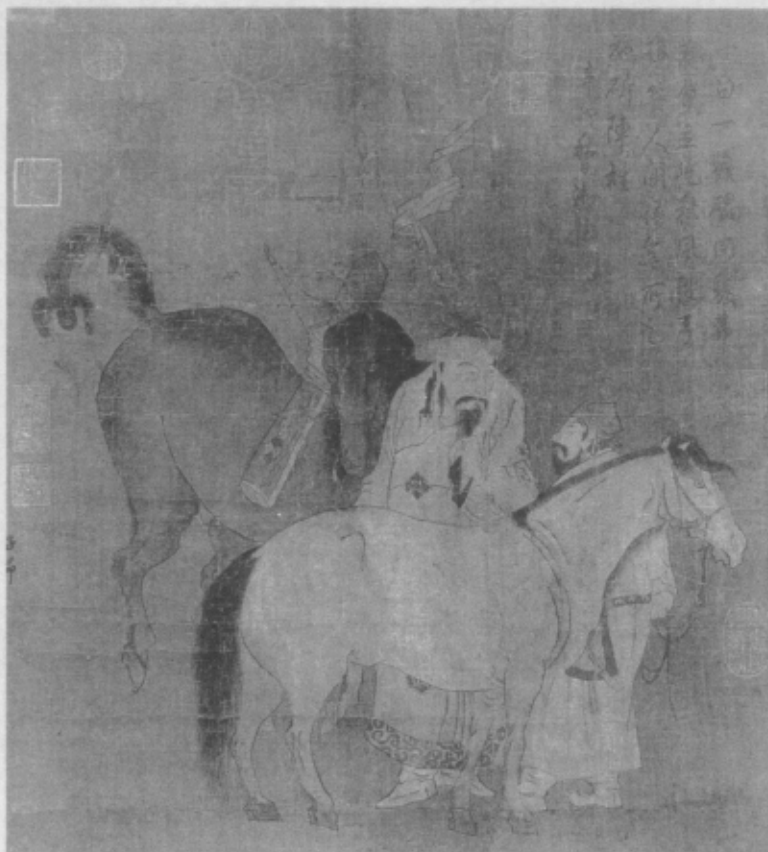


Figure 6. Unidentified artist (attributed to Zhao Mengfu), *Horses and Grooms*. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 52.5 x 48.2 cm. National Palace Museum, Taiwan.

Jin. And while Jin Nong nowhere makes explicit textual reference to the Xinjiang campaign as such, he insists so strongly on Xinjiang as a geographic location (albeit under more narrowly specific and sometimes archaic names like Gugula and Dongguli) that it is hard to see how a contemporary viewer could have avoided making the association with contemporary events.²⁹

Jin's images of this kind are, it seems to me, consistent as a group, united by the empathetic attention (*tongqing*) that Jin extended to all the inhabitants of his horse paintings—human and animal,

Chinese and "barbarian" alike. This, and the psychological characterization that goes along with it, represents perhaps his greatest debt to Li Gonglin, who first defined this particular empathetic gaze in painting at the end of the eleventh century in his representations of horses and Inner Asian grooms. That Jin Nong's empathy in the representation of the non-Chinese was a conscious choice can be seen from a comparison of one of his finest horse-and-groom-paintings, *Foreigners and Horses* (fig. 5), with its source (fig. 6). In the purportedly Yuan original, and again in a version by the sixteenth-century painter Qiu Ying,³⁰

29. For the name Dongguli, see Jin's preface to his *Hua fo tiji*, cited in Zhang Yuming, "Jin Nong nianpu," in *Yangzhou ba guai nianpu*, ed. Bian Xiaoxuan (Nanjing: Jiangsu meishu chubanshe, 1990), vol. 1, p. 262.

30. In the collection of the National Palace Museum. See *Gugong shuhua tulu*, vol. 7 (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1991), pp. 297–299.

both the human figures and the horses have a fierce, warlike appearance. Jin replaced this with a placid, nonthreatening characterization, and at the same time removed the prominent weapon that the left-hand horse originally carried. At the time of presenting his poems to the victorious emperor Qianlong in 1762 on the occasion of the imperial tour of the south, Jin Nong would boast that all his life he had "sung the praises of peace."³¹ His paintings suggest that we should take this clichéd claim seriously despite its special context, for these are indeed images of peace, appropriate to their particular historical moment. Cumulatively, they evoke the multiethnic society that China had become under the Manchus, and they concentrate on harmony; battles, when evoked, are firmly located in the past.

Does Jin Nong's position harmonize, then, with that of the Qing court? No, and the differences are as significant as the points of convergence. One only has to consider the horse paintings sponsored by the court, with their Sino-European pictorial technology and their inscriptions in Manchu, Mongol and sometimes Arabic script as well as Chinese, to see that for all its empathetic attention to the Other, Jin's gaze is first and last a Han Chinese one. In his images, the centrality of Han Chinese culture is preserved. Moreover, Jin's empathy was a particular expression of a general moral stance that derived from his Buddhist faith. It is true that the Qing state was a great sponsor of Buddhism, particularly in its Tibetan Lamaist form. But the political benefits for Qing foreign relations with Inner Asia were clear, and the suppression of the Jinqian rebellion of the Gyarong in Sichuan in the late 1740s (1746–1749) showed that neither the Qing state nor the Tibetan Gelukpa establishment saw a contradiction between Buddhist faith and military aggression.³² In contrast, Jin's Buddhism led to a concept of peace divorced from war and founded on an utopian commitment to empathetic understanding.

The international Buddha

Jin's treatment of Buddhist themes bears closer examination at this point, since it represents an equally explicit involvement with questions of ethnicity and internationalism. Jin himself linked his eventual concentration on Buddhist genres of painting (his first Buddhist images date from 1759) to his abandonment of horse painting in 1761.³³ The question that arises is whether the displacement of questions of ethnicity and internationalism into a religious context suppressed his engagement with the politics of empire, or prolonged it in a new, concealed form.

Jin's involvement with the internationalist potential of Buddhism was of long standing. In 1743, for example, around the time when he created his utopian script-type discussed earlier (possibly there is a connection), he was commissioned to prepare a calligraphic transcription of the *Diamond Sutra* by a Hangzhou patron, who arranged for its translation into printed form and subsequent dissemination in East and Southeast Asia.³⁴ Given that the sutra was a key text of Lamaist Buddhism, this functioned on one level as a response to the Tibetan transcriptions of the sutra used by the Lamaist monks who were being promoted by China's Manchu rulers. Seventeen years later, in his inscription to a remarkable 1760 painting of a Buddha (fig. 7), Jin recalled this event and expressed his hope that a patron could be found to reproduce the present Buddhist icon, too, in printed form and send it by boat all over the world: to Korea, Japan, Southeast Asia, and Europe, so that all those places would know that the Buddhist painter Jin Nong was in China.³⁵ Summoning up a vision of the vast space of oceans, he delineated the drapery of the Buddha's robes in swirling patterns reminiscent of the cartographic conventions of oceanic

31. Zhang Yuming (see note 29), p. 263.

32. Patrick Mansier, "La guerre du Jinchuan (Rgyal-rong): son contexte politico-religieux," in *Tibet: civilisation et société* (Paris: Editions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 1990), pp. 125–142; Susan Naquin and Evelyn J. Rawski, *Chinese Society in the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 19.

33. Jin Nong, *Dongxin huafo tiji* (see note 25), pp. 101–102.

34. According to Marshall Wu (see note 17, pp. 166, 188 n. 32), Jin's transcription of the *Diamond Sutra* was later reproduced in woodblock-printed form. For a facsimile reproduction, see *Kin To-shin no Kongo-hanniya-gyo* (Hand-Copied Diamond Sutra by Jin Nong), Shoseki meihen, vol. 140 (Tokyo: Nigensha, 1971).

35. Jin's Buddhism did not necessarily imply a rosy view of human nature. Explaining himself in the inscription to this painting, Jin evokes the arrival of Buddhism in China from the West under the Han Emperor Mingdi (57–75 C.E.) in the first century C.E. and celebrates the power of the doctrine of karmic retribution to reduce the wise and the cruel alike to utter obedience. For a poem by Luo Ping that may well be a response to this particular painting, see his *Xiangye caotang shicun*, 2b–3b.

representation.³⁶ Conspicuously missing from Jin's list of countries and regions in his inscription are Inner Asia and Tibet; consistent with this, his icon is anything but a Lamaist one—standing Buddhas are very rare in Lamaist art, whereas they were Jin's preferred form, both in icons of this kind and in his depictions of sculpted Buddhas as the object of worship.³⁷

Jin's one other surviving iconic Buddha is his first attempt at such an image, which he painted earlier in the same year of 1760 (fig. 8). It, too, is an extraordinary image of a standing Buddha, archaic in its effect, the figure entirely surrounded by writing like certain stone reliefs from pre-Tang times. In keeping with this, the image's two main visual sources derive directly from contemporary antiquarian interest in early visual documents preserved in stone. One is brought to our attention by Jin himself:

I painted [all in one] the images of the many Buddhas, the Four Great Bodhisattvas, the Sixteen Arhats, and the Ten Saints to make my own unique design. My style is not necessarily the same as those used by Gu [Gu Kaizhi, 344–406], Lu [Lu Tanwei, later fifth century], Xie [Xie He, late fifth–early sixth centuries] and Zhang [Zhang Sengyu, early sixth century]. People should not judge my works only by the achievements of my brushwork. They must stare at my paintings for a long time, as if they were enjoying the stone sculptures at the Longmen site. People should try to appreciate the simple, honest and ancient spirit in my work which will last for hundreds and thousands of years.

The important reference here is not to the four early painters of the period of the Northern and Southern Dynasties, whose work was largely inaccessible, but to the stone sculptures of the Longmen cave temples in Henan Province, which Jin had probably visited during his early travels in the north (circa 1728–1730). Many of

36. There is also a more straightforward reference to Buddhist figures fancifully attributed to the Tang dynasty painter Wu Daozi, preserved in the form of stone engravings, which Jin, as a notable antiquarian, would have known through rubbings. I am thinking, in particular, of a well-known image of Guanyin of uncertain date; see *Zhongguo meishu quanji, huihua bian* 19 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1988), no. 139.

37. Two paintings depicting the worship of sculpted Buddhas are in the Palace Museum, Beijing. One, a hanging scroll, is reproduced in *Yangzhou ba jia huaji* (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin meishu chubanshe, 1994), no. 113; the other, an album leaf, belongs to an *Album of Landscapes and Figures*, which has been published in folio reproduction as *Jin Nong shanshui renwu* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1983).



Figure 7. Jin Nong, *Buddha*, 1760. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 117 x 47.2 cm. Yantai Municipal Museum. From *Zhongguo meishu quanji, Huihua bian* 11 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1988), p. 29.



Figure 8. Jin Nong, *Shākyamuni*, 1760. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 133 x 62.5 cm. Tianjin Municipal History Museum. From *Yangzhou bajia huaji* (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin meishu chubanshe, 1994), p. 105.

the Longmen sculptures dating to the late-fifth–early sixth-century period of Northern Wei patronage have complex drapery patterns that are recalled in Jin's modern image. Jin's other visual source was more specific, and the fact that it was not a Buddhist image at all, but instead a portrait of Confucius commonly found in shrines honoring him (fig. 9) may partly explain why Jin does not acknowledge his debt in the inscription. Jin, who collected rubbings of stone engravings, most likely knew the portrait (attributed in an inscription to the Tang dynasty painter, Wu Daozi) through a rubbing of an early-fourteenth-century re-engraving of the portrait, which was itself executed on the basis of a rubbing of an earlier, stone-engraved version. Did he notice that in his inscription alongside the portrait the patron of the re-engraving presents it as an effective bulwark against the further transgressions of "Buddhist demons?"³⁸ In any event, Jin's combination of unexpected sources did indeed allow him to create an image quite unlike any prior image of the Buddha, in line with his stated ambition to create an icon outside the parameters of established iconography and lineage that would concentrate in itself the entire Buddhist ideal. At the same time, however, by evoking an ancient Buddhist site of the Chinese heartland and above all by depicting the Buddha in the form of a Confucian sage, he also affirmed the centrality of Han Chinese cultural tradition within his conception of Buddhism.³⁹

While avoiding Tibetan Lamaist imagery, Jin did not hesitate to evoke Buddhism's Indian origins, even going so far as to use in signatures a Sanskrit translation of one of his names, Jin Jijin, in a Chinese transliteration reading "Sufaluo Ji Sufaluo." A series of images of curly-headed arhats, monks, and ascetics, for the most part beneath the emblematically Indian bodhi tree, so convincingly revived an early tradition of representation that one of them, minus Jin's signature and seals, found its way into the imperial painting collection within only

38. See the informative catalogue entry on the rubbing in *Zhongguo meishu quanji, huihua bian* 19 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1988), no. 70.

39. Jin's project brings to mind the account given by Zhang Yanyuan in his mid-ninth-century art-historical text, *Lidai minghua ji*, of the invention by the Jin dynasty painter and sculptor Dai Kui (?–396) of a new and specifically Chinese Buddhist image type—an account that the erudite Jin Nong would certainly have known. For the account, see *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts on Chinese Painting*, trans. William R. B. Acker (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954–1974), vol. 2, pp. 94–99.



Figure 9. Unidentified artist (attributed to Wu Daozi), *Confucius*. Ink rubbing of an early-fourteenth-century stone-engraved image. From *Zhongguo meishu quanji*, *Huihua bian* 19 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1988), no. 70.

a few years of Jin's death, and today bears a 1769 inscription by Qianlong identifying it as a Song dynasty painting.⁴⁰ Jin transmitted this fascination with Indian

holy figures to Luo Ping, who, while Jin was still alive, gave it memorable form in a 1762 album leaf depicting an ascetic, inscribed with the text of the *Heart Sutra* (fig. 10). In this case, the figure may be an incarnation of the bodhisattava Avalokiteshvara (Guanyin), the established feminized form of Guanyin here being bypassed in favor of a distinctively Indian one usually associated with

40. As pointed out by Marshall Wu (see note 17), pp. 751–753. For the painting, see *Gugong shuhua tulu*, vol. 3 (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1989), pp. 173–174.



Figure 10. Luo Ping, *Manifestation of Guanyin (?)* inscribed with the text of the *Heart Sutra*, leaf 1 of *Album of Landscapes, Figures and Flowers* (by Luo Ping [5 leaves] and Xiang Jun [5 leaves]), 1762. Ink on paper, 28.9 x 34.1 cm. Wong Nan-p'ing Collection, Seattle Art Museum. Purchased with funds from Bonnie and Gaither Kodis, Robert M. Arnold, Jane and David Davis, William H. Gates, Lyn and Gerald Grinstein, Janet Ketcham, C. Calvert Knudsen, Gaye and Jim Pigott, Vinton H. and Amelia J. Sommerville, Susan H. and William P. Vittoe, and Bagley and Virginia Wright.

Sakyamuni after his enlightenment.⁴¹ The ascetic rests his bony frame on a carpet of several different kinds of leaves and foliage, among which Luo has been careful to include distinctively Chinese pine needles and bamboo leaves. Understated as it is, this affirmation of a Sino-Indian axis gets to the heart of the Jin Nong studio's displaced engagement with empire in Buddhist painting,

which was based on a willful blindness to the contemporary Qing recentring of Chinese Buddhism around Tibetan Lamaism.

Europe acknowledged

The mention of Europe in the inscription to Jin's painted but never-printed Buddhist icon (fig. 7) is a reminder that the cultural presence of Europe in China, continuous since the late sixteenth century, increased during the eighteenth century. An awareness of this entered Jin Nong's visual imagery as well, on occasion. Jin's curiously diagrammatic picture of *The Radiant Moon* (fig. 11), for example, playfully alludes to Sino-European scientific diagrams such as can be seen in the imperially printed *Gujin tushu jicheng* encyclopedia of 1728 (figs. 12–13). In such diagrams can be found the precedent for the composition; for the representation of the moon's light rays (there used for the sun) and for the depiction of the surface topography of the moon

41. Yomi Braester, in his catalogue entry on this album in *The Jade Studio: Masterpieces of Ming and Qing Painting and Calligraphy from the Wong Nan-p'ing Collection* (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1994), pp. 238–243, makes the Avalokitesvara identification, noting the connection to an earlier painting of a similar figure by Chen Zhuan (1686–after 1748) that Jin Nong inscribed and identified as Guanyin, as well as the presence on Luo's painting of a transcription by the artist of *The Heart Sutra*, often associated with Guanyin. Jin uses the more customary Sakyamuni identification in an album leaf in the previously cited *Album of Landscapes and Figures* in the Palace Museum, Beijing. For a recent study of the relevant Sakyamuni iconography, see Howard Rogers, "In Search of Enlightenment," *Kaikodo Journal* (Spring 1999):8–23.

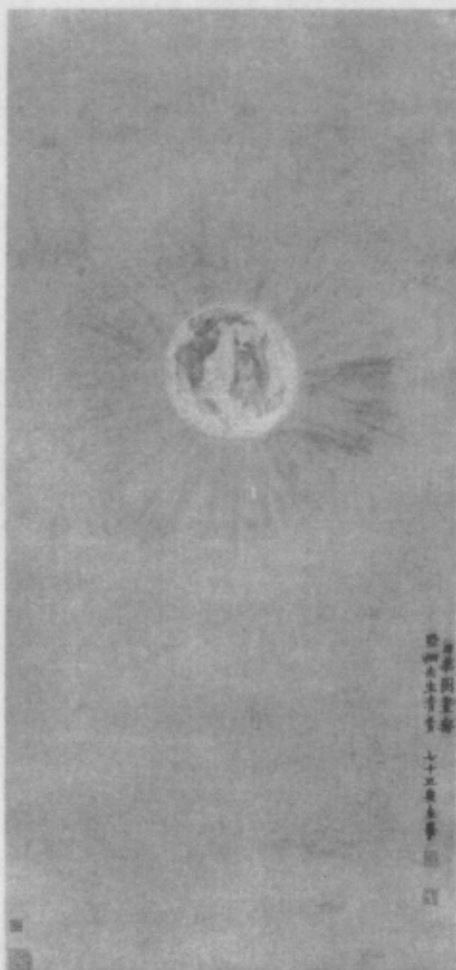


Figure 11. Jin Nong, *The Radiant Moon*, 1761. Hanging scroll, ink and light color on paper, 116 x 54 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing. From Howard Rogers and Sherman E. Lee, *Masterworks of Ming and Qing Painting from the Forbidden City* (Lansdale, Pennsylvania: International Arts Council, 1988), p. 98.

(simply, where the astronomers saw a landscape, Jin chose to see the moon hare of Chinese mythology).⁴² The point here is not to characterize Jin Nong as pursuing an unthinking rejection of European ideas; on the contrary, he was clearly fascinated by the new possibilities they opened up.

42. *Gujin tushu jicheng* (Zhonghua shuju edition), chap. 9, p. 11; chap. 10, pp. 2–3.



Figure 12. Diagram of an eclipse. From *Gujin tushu jicheng* (1728; reprint, Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1934).

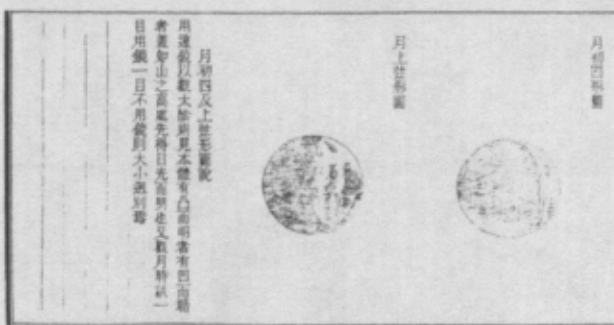


Figure 13. Diagram of lunar topography. From *Gujin tushu jicheng* (1728; reprint, Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1934).

Another example of this fascination can be found among his horse paintings, in the form of a hanging scroll depicting a single horse, without an accompanying groom, devoid of bridle, saddle, or even saddlcloth, the tail un-"dressed" (fig. 14). It gives pause for thought to realize that this, the degree zero of horse imagery, is virtually absent from the tradition of horse painting through the seventeenth century. It is as if, in painting, a horse as horse had little meaning: what really mattered were the metaphors that could be created only by the addition of other elements. Yet, if this painting breaks with the tradition of horse painting, this does not mean that it has no connections to the wider field of horse imagery. For there is an obvious parallel to Jin's singular image in modern horse painting *outside* the tradition, that is, the Sino-European portraits of horses produced at court from the early 1740s



Figure 14. Jin Nong, *The Lone Horse*, 1760. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 120 x 57.5 cm. Xubaizhai Collection, Hong Kong Museum of Art.

onwards in response to the imperial demand for commemorative representations of specific animals, people, and things⁴³ (fig. 15). The court-sponsored portraits of horses had an intricately international character. Sponsored by a Manchu emperor, they were the work of European painters and bore inscriptions in several languages and scripts. At the center of Chinese imperial ideology, they visualized a new discourse of horse painting that incorporated but did not privilege traditional Chinese discourses. In the Sino-European versions of "naked" solitary horses, it is the commemorative character of portraiture that introduces meaning into the vacuum created by the evacuation of secondary signs. In Jin's distinctly odd and darkly humorous painting, the vacuum is partly filled instead by a pointed intertextual reference, as he deliberately evokes and perverts the commemorative ideal of horse representation at the Qing court. His ultimate target, both here and in *The Radiant Moon*, can be taken to be the demotion of Han Chinese culture implicit in contemporary court painting.

An encounter between empires

Jin's curiosity about European images and concern with the ethnic politics of empire were inherited by Luo Ping, who periodically brought the two interests together in paintings that he produced between the early 1760s and the late 1790s. European representations, in the form of imported engravings and Chinese woodblock reworkings of them, had circulated in China since the end of the sixteenth century.⁴⁴ Luo is known, in fact, to have personally owned at least one

43. See note 28.

44. The classic studies are Michael Sullivan, "Some Possible Sources of European Influence on Late Ming and Early Ch'ing Painting," in *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Chinese Painting* (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1972), pp. 595–633; James Cahill, *The Compelling Image: Nature and Style in Seventeenth Century Painting* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982). A more recent, general study is Mayching Kao, "European Influences in Chinese Art, Sixteenth to Early Eighteenth Centuries," in *China and Europe: Images and Influences in Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Thomas C. H. Lee (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1991), pp. 251–303. See also the exhibition catalogue, *Chūgoku no yōfūga ten* (Machida: Machida Shiritsu Kokusai Hanga Bijutsukan, 1995) for a fine selection of Chinese images in Western style.

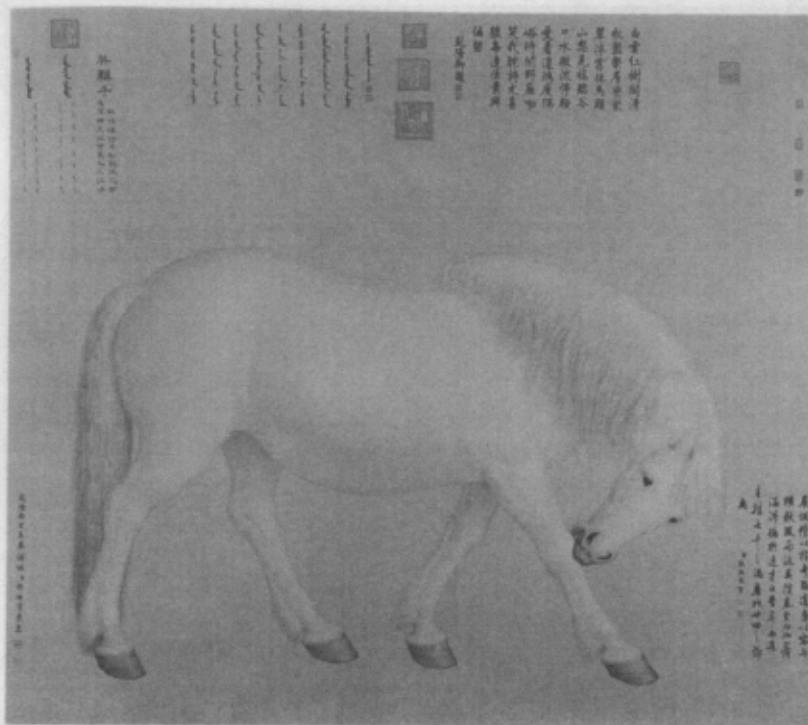


Figure 15. Lang Shining (Giuseppe Castiglione), *Tribute Horse*, 1743. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 138.5 x 270.2 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing. From *Zhongguo meishu quanji, Huihua bian* 10 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1988), p. 154.

such image.⁴⁵ Sino-European representations would have been an even more pervasive element in Luo's visual environment. They were produced in vast quantities in China during his lifetime and were particularly accessible in Beijing and Canton.⁴⁶ In the course of his long career, Luo Ping produced a number of images marked by this cosmopolitanism, but only three, by their engagement with issues of ethnicity and

power, demand our attention here. Unlike Jin's images, which were concerned with ethnocultural politics internal to the Qing empire, Luo Ping's three paintings on this theme are marked by anxiety about European powers that were no longer safely distant.

In 1762 Luo, together with another of Jin Nong's students, Xiang Jun, accompanied Jin on a trip to Hangzhou. A joint album survives today, so superbly painted that it must have been destined for a specific, respected owner (fig. 16). It opens with Luo's portrait of an ascetic Indian figure (fig. 10), discussed earlier, and the interest in ethnicity is picked up again in another of Luo's leaves that depicts an encounter between two barefooted non-Chinese figures. The left-hand figure, Western and apparently clad in a Roman toga, kneels to salute a standing man of less easily determined ethnicity. The form of the Westerner's salute is reminiscent of the Manchu form of greeting, in which

45. In 1779, by which time he was living in Beijing, Luo purchased a European landscape, which his patron and friend Weng Fanggang saw hanging on the wall in Luo's studio. Weng gave the image the title of "Superb View" (*jiajing*) and composed a poem about it. See Weng Fanggang, *Fuchu zhai jiwai shi*, juan 14.

46. See Craig Clunas, *Chinese Export Watercolors* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1984); and David S. Howard's various books, most recently *A Tale of Three Cities: Canton, Shanghai and Hong Kong: Three Centuries of Sino-British Trade in the Decorative Arts* (London: Sotheby's, 1997).

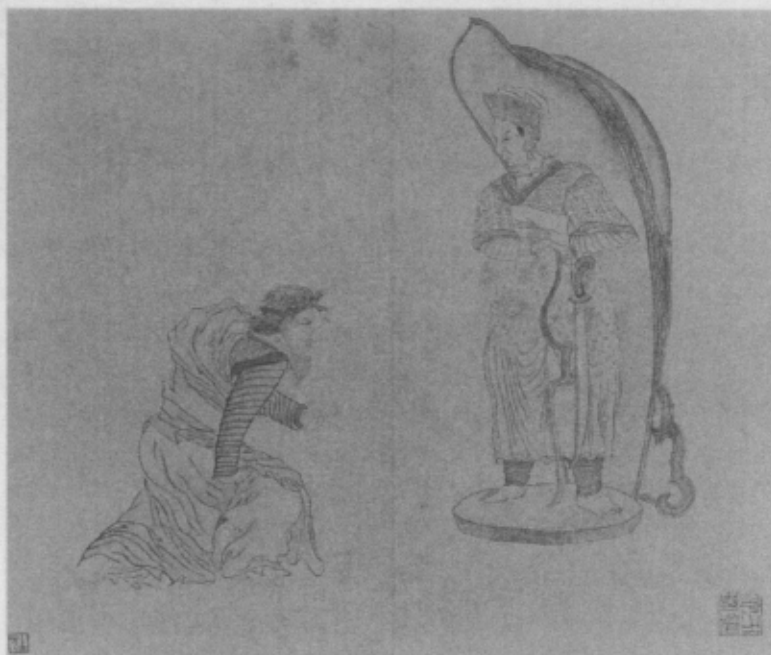


Figure 16. Luo Ping, leaf 3 of *Album of Landscapes, Figures, and Flowers* (by Luo Ping [5 leaves] and Xiang Jun [5 leaves]), 1762. Ink on paper, 28.9 x 34.1 cm. Wong Nan-p'ing Collection, Seattle Art Museum. Purchased with funds from Bonnie and Gaither Kodis, Robert M. Arnold, Jane and David Davis, William H. Gates, Lyn and Gerald Grinstein, Janet Ketcham, C. Calvert Knudsen, Gaye and Jim Pigott, Vinton H. and Amelia J. Sommerville, Susan H. and William P. Vittoe, and Bagley and Virginia Wright.

the subordinate person dropped his right knee to touch the ground with his right hand. The standing figure is clad in armor and furs, wears a fur hat and an earring, carries a scimitar-like sword, and rests both hands on the end of a bow. He is framed within a structure that seems to have a thronelike function, affirming his superior status, whether it be his own or that of the ruler he represents. The structure has been shown to be related to those housing Near Eastern rulers in Geronimo Nadal's 1593 *Evangelicae Historiae Imagines* (Images from Bible Stories), which may also have provided the inspiration for the kneeling Westerner.⁴⁷ The standing figure, however, may be entirely Luo's own creation. Comparison with images of ethnic types in the imperially printed *Huang Qing zhigong tu* (1761) shows that some of its attributes—the scimitar and bare feet—

suggest Turkic culture, while others such as the fur hat, earring, and bow suggest those parts of Inner Asia under Buddhist influence, not excluding Manchuria. The armor, on the other hand, resembles that used in Chinese stage costumes of the time for "barbarian" generals, notably of the Liao or Jin, as well as the padded silk armor employed on ceremonial occasions by the Qing emperor and the officers of the eight banners. The overall effect is of a non-Chinese, Inner Asian warrior (possibly a reference to Qianlong's aspirations to be a Buddhist universal ruler, or *chakravartin*) who confronts the unambiguously Western figure from a clear position of superiority. In all likelihood, this image has a religious character: Buddhist themes are found throughout the album, which was painted at a Hangzhou temple, and Luo himself was a devout Buddhist. The standing warrior is closely related to seventeenth-century images of Heavenly

47. Braester (see note 41).

Kings sent to carry out the Buddha's orders, while the "throne" with its canopy in the shape of a lotus petal can be read as a simplified version of divinities' thrones depicted in Qing dynasty Sino-Tibetan art.⁴⁸ In contrast, the kneeling Westerner, also seemingly a warrior, is derived from a Christian image and as such may have been meant to carry a Christian association here, despite the fact that its model would not have represented a Christian.

The image, while conceivably no more than an isolated experiment, has a suggestive context in contemporary events that points to an encounter between Buddhist and Christian forces as the possible subject. The British had been trading with China since the last years of the Ming dynasty in a small number of southern ports of which the most important was Canton. It was only with the rise of the British East India Company to world importance, in the early eighteenth century, however, that the British sought to establish a base in the Far East. In 1757, five years before this image was painted, the Qing court refused a request from the East India Company to trade at Ningbo on the northern Zhejiang coast, not far from Hangzhou. Two years later, in 1759, the East India Company sent a Chinese-speaking trader, James Flint, to the Qing court. Flint's ship, the *Success*, sailed to Tianjin, but on the way stopped at the forbidden port of Ningbo. As described by Jonathan Spence:

The emperor initially seemed to show flexibility, and agreed to send a commission of investigation to the south. But after the *Success*, sailing back to Canton, was lost at sea with all hands except for Flint (he had traveled south independently) the emperor changed his mind. Flint was arrested and imprisoned for three years for breaking Qing regulations against sailing to northern ports, for improperly presenting petitions, and for having learned Chinese.⁴⁹

In the same year (1759), the export of various kinds of textiles, including Zhejiang silk, was forbidden. Finally, in 1760 the Qing limited all trade to Canton alone, under extremely strict bureaucratic constraints. One may assume that these events were followed closely in Hangzhou, both because Ningbo was nearby and because tea and textiles, for which Western traders provided an important market, were the backbone of the Zhejiang economy. The imperial reference seems

certain, especially since the Qianlong emperor visited Hangzhou in 1762, and Luo's teacher, Jin Nong, on that occasion submitted to the emperor a collection of his writings. Surely Luo Ping's viewers would have read his painting as an image of the contemporary diplomatic negotiations between the Western powers, through their trading companies, and the Qing court, presented as an encounter between different faiths. While the proper relationship of host to guest is clearly affirmed, it is striking that the kneeling, weaponless Westerner is rendered with such sympathy, echoing Jin Nong's compassionate images of non-Chinese from roughly the same period.⁵⁰

Skeletons from Europe

Just a few years later, circa 1766, Luo painted his great series of eight visions of ghosts, which ends with a final image of two skeletons, interpreted by one eighteenth-century colophon writer as an amorous couple (fig. 17). While it is true that one famous Song dynasty image of a skeleton might well have been known to the artist from its publication in woodblock-printed form in an early-seventeenth-century book, as well as others from fourteenth-century Zhong Kui handscrolls, it would nonetheless have been quite impossible for him to create the two skeletons of his own picture on the basis of those very different and anatomically inaccurate representations.⁵¹ His source was, in fact, Andreas Vesalius's (1514–1564) great pioneering work of anatomy, *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* of 1543, in one of its many editions;⁵² his image combines two images in the anatomical work, creating between them a relationship they had not previously had, and placing them in a Chinese setting (figs. 18–19). The fact that Luo's source in this case was European might be nothing more than a curiosity, were it not for his use of the skeletons in the context of a

50. On the host-guest relationship in Qianlong-period diplomatic relations, see James L. Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995).

51. The Song dynasty image is a fan painting by Li Song depicting a skeleton puppeteer, which was later reproduced in *Gu shi huapu*. The Yuan dynasty depictions include Gong Kai's *Zhong Kui Traveling* in the Freer Gallery of Art.

52. New versions of a number of Vesalius's illustrations, including the two used by Luo Ping, were published around the same time in that great monument of the French Enlightenment, Diderot's *Encyclopédie*.

48. For the latter observation, I am indebted to Francesco Pellizzi.

49. Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), p. 121.

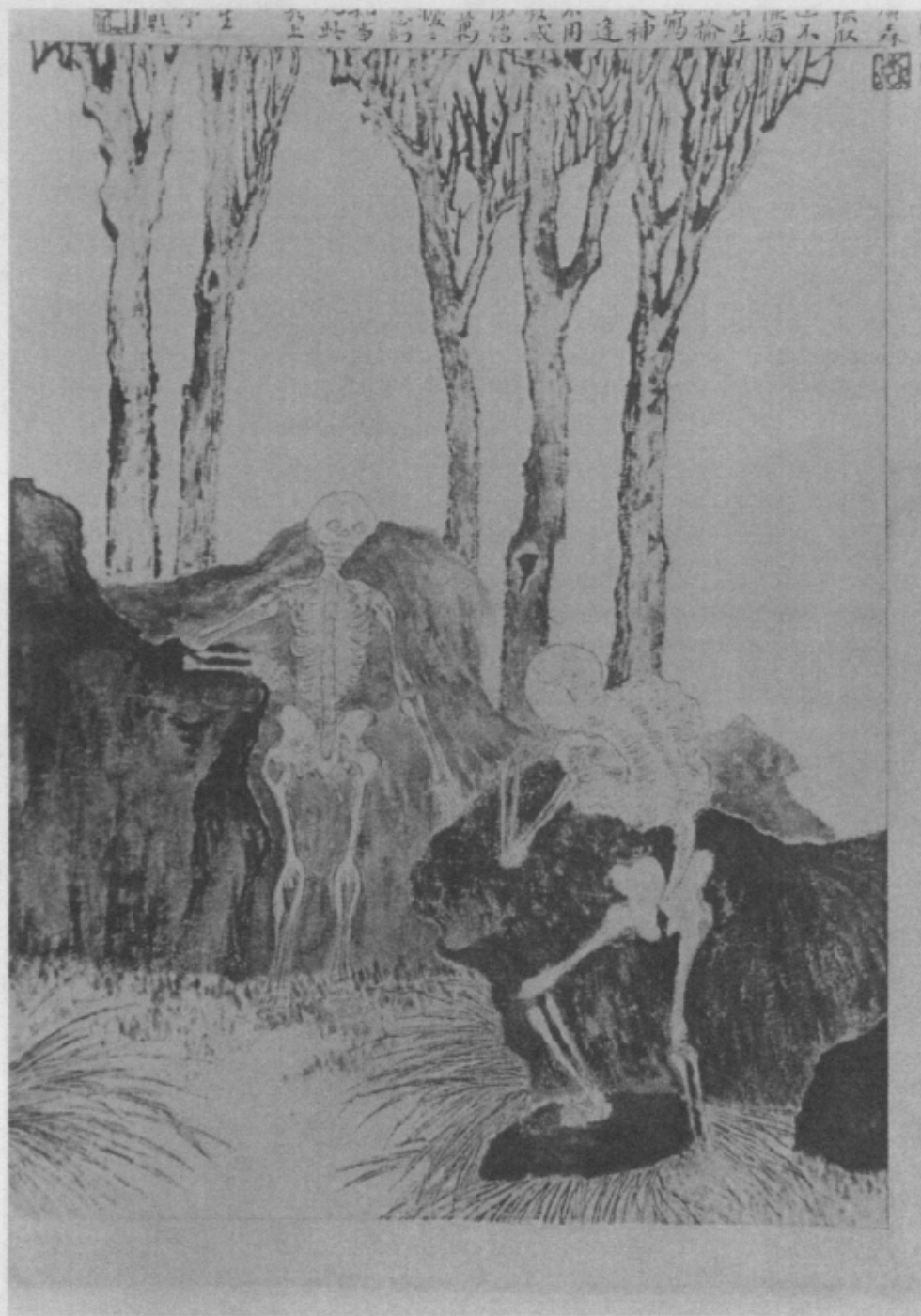


Figure 17. Luo Ping, *Fascination of Ghosts*. Handscroll, section 8, ink on paper, 27.6 x 20.8 cm. P. T. Huo Collection, Hong Kong. From *Luo Ping Guigu tu juan* (Hong Kong: CAFA Co. Ltd., 1970).

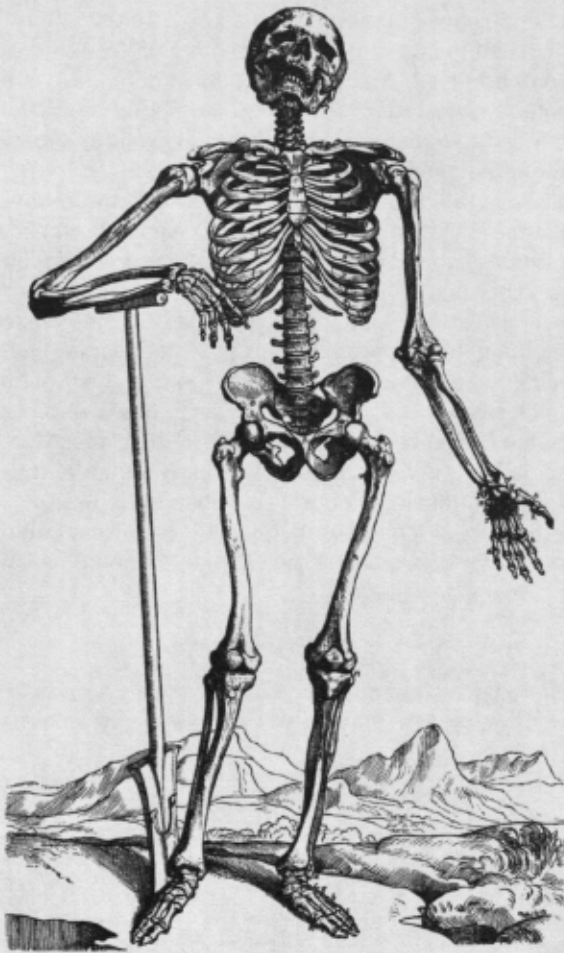


Figure 18. Andreas Vesalius, *De Humani Corporis Fabrica*, first plate of the skeleton, 1543. From *The Illustrations from the Works of Andreas Vesalius of Brussels*, ann. J. B. de C. M. Saunders and Charles D. O'Malley (New York: Dover Publications, 1973).

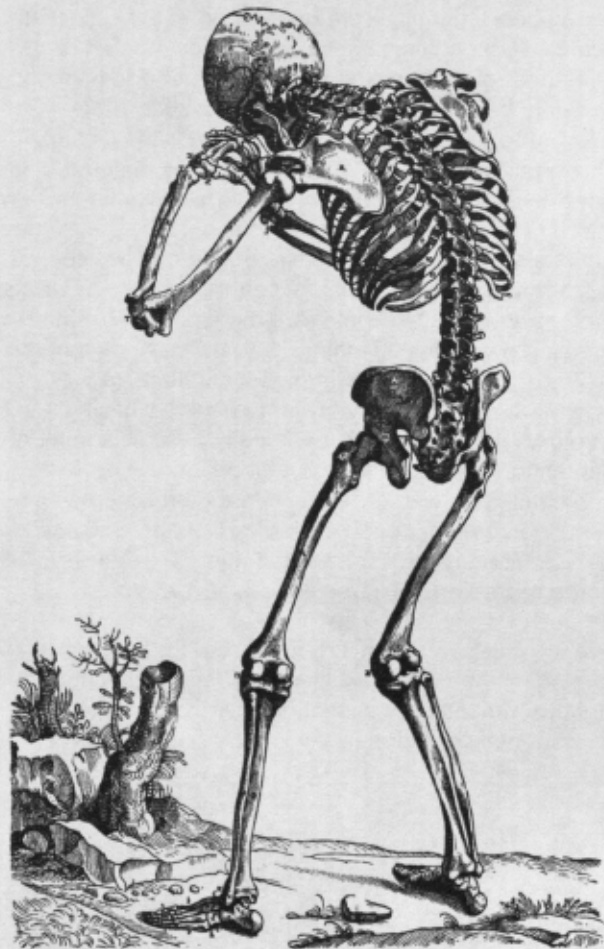


Figure 19. Andreas Vesalius, *De Humani Corporis Fabrica*, third plate of the skeleton, 1543. From *The Illustrations from the Works of Andreas Vesalius of Brussels*, ann. J. B. de C. M. Saunders and Charles D. O'Malley (New York: Dover Publications, 1973).

painting of ghosts. The foreign as one figure of the Other is mapped on to the ghost as a second, and if Luo makes relatively little of the overlay on this occasion, he would make very much of it later, when he came to rework this image at the end of his life.

On that occasion, in 1797, the image of the skeleton was incorporated into a continuous handscroll version of his earlier ghost visions (fig. 20). Billowing clouds envelop most of the figures, but stop short of what is

now a single menacing, confrontational skeleton grasping an hourglass and time's arrow. Today we recognize the image as Death himself, borrowed from an unidentified European source, but nothing authorizes us to assume that Luo was cognizant of this meaning or, even if he was, that he intended it to convey the same thing here. On the contrary, given that the scroll as a whole is identified as a depiction of the limbo world of ghostliness, the skeleton is more likely

to have been intended as one more kind of ghost; its meanings in turn must follow from that status. Because Luo's ghost paintings were understood in the eighteenth century to be commentaries on injustice, one set of references of the skeleton (which I do not discuss here) certainly bears on China's domestic politics. More relevant to the theme of this discussion is the fact that if Death has become, in Luo Ping's painting, a ghost, it does not read comfortably as a *Chinese* ghost in the way that his earlier amorous skeletons had done. The exotic hourglass and arrow see to that. But an obvious context lies at hand in the fact that foreigners, or "foreign ghosts (or demons)," had become ever more present to Chinese thinking over the intervening 35 years. Beginning in the 1770s, British merchants introduced Indian-grown opium into their trade with Chinese merchants in Canton, an innovation that gradually became a point of contention as the social effects of opium use became apparent. Finally, in order to press the British case for expanded trading opportunities, in 1792 an embassy led by Lord Macartney was sent to Beijing. The British ambassador's arrival at the capital, accompanied by a retinue of close to 100 people, was one of the great events of Beijing life in 1793 and could not have been missed by the well-connected Luo Ping, then living in Beijing. The intense negotiations over the protocol for Macartney's salutation to the Emperor, which recent

studies have shown resulted in a hybrid that could be claimed by one side as a kowtow and by the other as the bended knee appropriate to a king, are uncannily anticipated in Luo Ping's 1762 painting of Westerners at China's borders.⁵³ Macartney's political demands were eventually rejected some months later, but the British continued to trade with China through Canton, and the opium problem continued to grow.⁵⁴

Luo Ping's borrowing of the image of Death followed Macartney's departure by some four years and preceded the Chinese government's formal prohibition of opium by another four. Infinitely more sinister than the kneeling Western figure of 35 years before, the skeleton, conjoining in its hands the signs of violence and time, may fairly be surmised to translate some of the growing suspicion felt by Luo's generation of Chinese, who had seen the British become ever more troublesome. More speculatively, one cannot but wonder whether there is not in the billowing clouds a reference to opium's effects. Long since established in Chinese visual culture as a sign for dreams, here they dissipate only to reveal the menacing skeleton.

53. Hevia (see note 50).

54. As Luo was well placed to know through Weng Fanggang (see Spence [see note 49]), who had served as a government official in Canton.



Figure 20. Luo Ping, *Fascination of Ghosts* (detail of final section), 1797. Handscroll, ink and color on paper, 26.7 x 257.2 cm. Xubaizhai Collection, Hong Kong Museum of Art.

GLOSSARY

Beijing	北京	Ren Xiong	任熊
Chen Hongshou	陳洪綬	Sichuan	四川
Chengde	承德	Song	宋
Dongguli	東骨利	Sufaluo Ji Sufaluo	蘇伐羅 吉 蘇伐羅
<i>Dongxin hua fo tiji</i>	冬心畫佛題記	Taizong	太宗
<i>Dongxin hua ma tiji</i>	冬心畫馬題記	Tianjin	天津
Gao Qipei	高其佩	<i>tongqing</i>	同情
Gu Kaizhi	顧愷之	Wei [Northern]	[北] 魏
Guanyin	觀音	Weng Fanggang	翁方綱
Gugula	古骨刺	Wu Daozi	吳道子
<i>Gujin tushu jicheng</i>	古今圖書集成	Xiang Jun	項均
Han	漢	Xiangye caotang shicun	香葉草堂詩存
Hangzhou	杭州	Xie He	謝赫
Henan	河南	Xinjiang	新疆
<i>Huang Qing zhigong tu</i>	皇清職貢圖	Xugu	虛谷
Jin Nong	金農	Yuan	元
Jinchuan	金川	Zhang Sengyou	張僧繇
Li Gonglin	李公麟	Zhao Mengfu	趙孟頫
Liaoning	遼寧	Zhejiang	浙江
Longmen	龍門	Zhong Kui	鍾馗
Lu Tanwei	陸探微		
Luo Ping	羅聘		
Ningbo	寧波		
Qianlong	乾隆		
Qing	清		
<i>qishu</i>	漆書		
Qiu Ying	仇英		
Rehe	熱河		