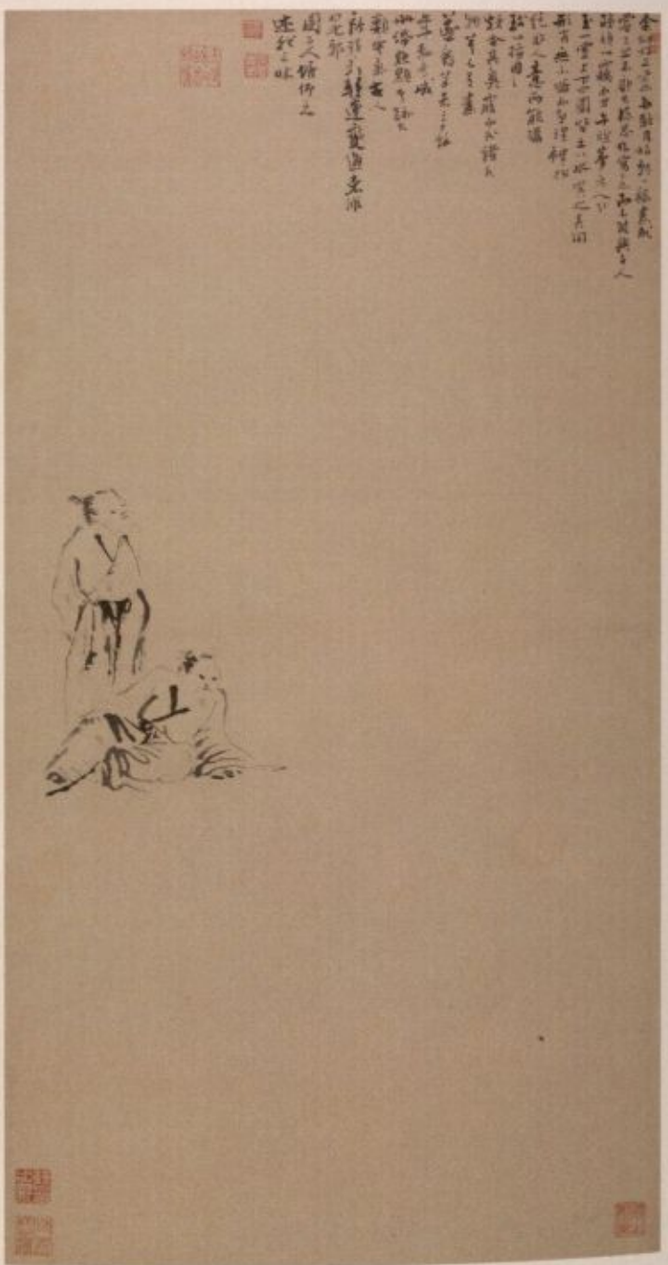
Luo Ping: The Encounter with the Interior Beyond

Jonathan Hay
Institute of Fine Arts, New York University

Fig. 25 / Gao Qipei (1660–1734), *Two Men Gazing into the Distance*, c. 1710. Finger-painted hanging scroll, ink on paper, 70.5 x 38.5 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.



By the second half of the eighteenth century, the commodification of literati painting had long been accepted fact, even if formalized denials of a deceased artist's professionalism were still sometimes felt necessary in a biography. But if there were few true amateurs of any note in the eighteenth century, not every literati painter was a full-time professional. For many, a semi- or occasional professionalism was the norm as they pursued other careers. Luo Ping was an artist of this kind, who seems never to have considered the role of painter as his primary social identity. From a career point of view, his life was largely structured as a series of patronage episodes in which he attached himself to a succession of patron-protectors for whom he fulfilled roles that evolved over the years but were never restricted to painting.[1] For his early patrons, his duties are likely to have been secretarial in a very broad sense, extending to ghost-painting (for Jin Nong) and editing publications (for Jiang Shiquan).[2] During his sojourns in the capital, on the other hand, he benefited from a certain celebrity status. He made himself available for banquets or parties, where he was famously good company, telling ghost stories and drawing on his prodigious memory and discernment to recite choice lines of contemporary poetry, as he played the role of a living link to an older generation of southern bohemians. Living separately, Luo avoided the implacable obligations of an artist-in-residence. He did of course produce paintings for his patrons and others (and was undoubtedly remunerated in one way or another) but appears to have done so selectively, where he saw an intersection between his own artistic interests and those of the recipient.[3]

In all this one may discern, as one factor determining his behavior, a strategic effort to protect his art by embracing a modernized version of the literati ideal. The literati artist was ideally an amateur beholden to none but himself, who could intervene artistically at will on the model of the poet. But painting was more easily commodified than poetry, with the result that literati professionals became common in the art world as early as the sixteenth century. The market offered possibilities of autonomy and independence, to be sure, but could also be imprisoning, especially for the

Fig. 26 / Gao Qipei (1660–1734), *Monkey Beating a Wasp's Nest with a Stick*, dated 1682. From *Flowers, Animals, and Figures*, finger-painted album of twelve leaves, ink and color on paper, 31.8 x 23.3 cm. Liaoning Provincial Museum, Shenyang.

most thoughtful artists. Luo Ping in response positioned himself on the margins of the market, freeing himself to practice painting on the models of poetry and scholarship by taking the role of literati painter seriously as an at least partly livable reality. In the process, he invented new possibilities for literati painting *(wenrenhua)* that were themselves made possible by the earlier innovations of Gao Qipei (1660–1734) during the decades either side of 1700.[4]

In order to appreciate just how radical a disruption of the existing literati painting field was accomplished by Gao Qipei, it is worth briefly considering how *wenrenhua* came into being. When literati painting fully crystallized as a distinctive art form at the beginning of the fourteenth century, it broke with other painting traditions in China, both secular and sacred. Those traditions, which were to continue for many centuries thereafter, took the pictorial image as both starting point and end point. They principally engaged with human experience through the capacity of the image to produce modes of seeing on every level, from optical experience to imaginary visions. Eschewing this focused internal consistency, literati painters working in the wake of the loss of China to the Mongols, from Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322) to the generation of Huang Gongwang (1269–1354) and Wu Zhen (1280–1354), gradually constructed an alternative and heterogeneous artistic space that would make room for the special skills of an educated elite.[5] By the second quarter of the fourteenth century, this new form of painting had found the means to reconcile the capacities of the pictorial image with those of calligraphy and text (both poetry and prose), which participated in the art work in the form of inscriptions on the picture surface. The most important of these means was a reconfiguration of the relation between the physical surface in which the pictorial image crystallized and the space of visual experience that the image conjured up. The literati painters of the Yuan dynasty treated the former as semi-autonomous, continuous if not identical with the surface in which the calligraphic image crystallized. This surface space, which possessed its own specific depth and internal complexity, thus became the interface between the more expansive visual space of the depicted scene and the textual space of the calligraphed inscription. *Wenrenhua* took form in the fourteenth century, therefore, as a practice of painting that was image-centered, certainly – as such justifying its categorization as painting – but not image-identified.[6] None of this would have been possible, however, if literati painting had not also subordinated its image component to the brush trace that generated it. The brush trace, whether used depictively or inscriptionally and regardless of its role in semiotic communication, always indexically referred back to the artist as well. The fact that neither image nor inscriptional text could come into being without the brush trace gave the brush trace an implicit primacy over the pictorial image, itself more closely linked to a sharable act of looking. Image-centered rather than image-identified, literati painting until the end of the seventeenth century largely developed under the hegemony of the indexical brush trace.[7]

During the first half of the eighteenth century, however, just prior to Luo Ping's emergence as an artist, literati painting underwent a revolutionary change.[8] Although, to be sure, many literati artists continued to work in the old manner (as would their successors down to the twentieth century), the most independent-minded artists took the literati tradition in a new direction. The key figure was Gao Qipei, who, at the end of the seventeenth century, took up a minor technique of performance painting – painting using the fingernails, fingers, and palms of the hand rather than the brush – and turned it to serious intellectual purpose. Gao belonged to the world of Han Chinese bannermen, a group that occupied a privileged but awkward position between the Manchu rulers of China and their Han subjects. Although he spent most of his life working as an official in the field administration, he painted prolifically, largely in his leisure time. Gao's decision to discard the brush allowed him to intensify the visceral immediacy that had been a feature of the work of some of the most independent-minded seventeenth-century artists, from Xu Wei (1521–1593) at the beginning of the century to Bada shanren (1626–1705) and Shitao (1642–1707) at the century's end (figs. 25, 26). At the same time, the intensified physicality of finger painting resonated with the importance of martial values among the bannermen; in the eighteenth century the genre was taken up by bannermen artists who used finger painting to connote their socio-ethnic difference.

For our purposes, however, a much more important aspect of Gao's painting was its reconsideration of the status of the pictorial image in literati painting. Absent the brush's codified control, and hence the inherited visual formulae associated with that control, Gao needed to find another way of assuring the aesthetic coherence of his paintings. He solved this problem by expanding the capacity of the pictorial image to resonate with other images. Whereas the classicizing evocation of old master imagery had retained an authority even among artists as iconoclastic as Shitao and Bada shanren, Gao Qipei refused to give the past any absolute authority, devoting even more attention to the visual culture of his own day and to personal observation of the world. With the eccentricity of the finger painting technique as an alibi, Gao deliberately set out to depict what had never been depicted before, exploding the traditional boundaries of literati image-making (figs. 27, 28). Gao's unbridled inventiveness gave the metaphoric density of the image – its capacity to evoke and create relationships between images of diverse kinds – a disjunctive character that allowed "high" and "low" resonances to coexist.[9] The contrast with the unifying layers of art-historical allusion supported by theoretical inscriptions, which characterized the work of contemporary classicizing artists such as Wang Hui (1632– 1717) and Wang Yuanqi (1642–1715), could not have been more striking.

The return to the brute image implied at the same time a thematization of looking as the foundation of the pictorial image, shared between artist and viewer. This fundamental aspect of non-literati painting was not absent from the literati tradition, which evolved in constant dialogue with its non-literati counterparts. In the seventeenth century it was, for example, central to the carefully crafted art of Chen Hongshou (1598–1652), which subsequently became a point of reference for many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century painters, literati or other.[10] Although Gao, too, may be counted among those who learned from Chen Hongshou, a more important influence in his case was Bada shanren, whose explorations of point of view and depictions of the act of looking were in turn indebted to the spectacular non-literati images of Zhe school painters of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries – the great decorators (in the non-pejorative sense of the term) of their time. Not surprisingly, even the inscriptional components of Gao's paintings are treated imagistically, and their texts, too, place a premium on striking visual images. In Gao's painting, the importance of looking tended to relativize the indexical principle of self-reference (embodied in the brush trace). In line with this, his use of the hands and fingers replaced *brush trace* with something closer to *mark*. Overall, his paintings succeed or fail to the degree that they manage to generate a tension between image and mark.

Today, the importance of Gao Qipei's art as a catalyst and model for literati painting outside the court during the second quarter of the eighteenth century has been lost from

Fig. 27 / Gao Qipei (1660–1734), *Tiger*. Finger-painted hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 105.3 x 51.5 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (AK-RAK-1991–10).

Fig. 28 / Gao Qipei (1660–1734), *Mandarin Ducks on a Willow Pond*. Finger-painted hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 183.1 x 96.8 cm. Shenyang Palace Museum, Liaoning Province.

Fig. 29 / Gao Qipei (1660–1734), *Zhong Kui, the Demon Queller*, dated 1728. Finger-painted hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 148.1 x 66.8 cm. Liaoning Provincial Museum, Shenyang.

view. Yet Luo Ping, in addition to being influenced directly by Gao, emerged as a painter within an artistic milieu that owed everything to Gao's revolution. Among the earliest artists to realize the significance of what Gao had done were four from the region of northern Jiangsu and southern Shandong: Gao Fenghan (1683–1749), Li Shan (1686–1762), Li Fangying (1695–1755), and Zheng Xie (1693–1765) – all of whom served at one time or other in the lower levels of the field administration, all of whom had direct contact with Gao, and all of whom were in contact with each other. Apart from some experiments in finger painting that are significant mostly for the way they advertise the artists' debt to Gao, these sometime-magistrate artists did not themselves discard the brush. In the public mind the cultural capital of a government-official identity was associated, in the realm of painting, with brush mastery on the calligraphic model. The ability of these sometime officials to exploit any professionalism in which they engaged depended, therefore, on their capacity to draw on this capital. But Gao Qipei had opened their eyes to the possibilities of mark-making, so in many instances they significantly pushed the brush trace in the direction of the mark (figs. 30, 31). Within the parameters of this enriched concept of the brush trace, they followed Gao in exploring the possibilities of metaphoric density in the pictorial (as well as the calligraphic, inscriptional, and textual) image. This gave them a way of engaging in the social and political debates of their time without putting themselves at risk, for they could use this imagistic density and its accompanying affective layering to address (and at the same time mask) their own complex personal relations to state ideology, the common culture of the population at large, and

Fig. 30 / Li Shan (1686–c. 1760), *Plantain and Sleeping Goose*, dated 1738. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 121.0 x 60.5 cm. Qingdao Museum.

Fig. 31 / Li Fangying (1696–1755), *Fish Swimming*. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 123.3 x 59.9 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.

social convention.[11] The work of these artists was a central presence in the mid-century art world of Luo Ping's younger days and provided him with possibilities that he adopted from time to time throughout his life. *Orchids, Bamboo, and Rock* (cat. 24), for example, reinterprets a compositional mode associated with Zheng Xie; and it was Li Shan's experiments with layered washes that served as the starting point for Luo's own in paintings such as *Drunken Zhong Kui* (cat. 1) and *Colored Lichee* (cat. 23).[12]

A second dimension of Gao Qipei's influence during the second quarter of the eighteenth century can be seen in the reaction of a professionalized literati artist operating between Hangzhou and Yangzhou: Hua Yan (1682–1756). Hua's development of one strain of Gao Qipei's thinking is especially relevant here because it would subsequently prove formative for the art of Luo Ping, who matched Hua's powers of depiction and facility with the brush. What Hua particularly responded to in Gao Qipei's painting was the fact that Gao regularly enriched his unprecedented images with an explicit thematization of visual attention, usually by drawing attention to the act of looking itself. Numerous paintings by Hua Yan similarly stage the immediacy of being in the world via the visual motif of a person or animal intensely engaged in an act of directed looking – a motif that draws from the viewer an equivalent intensity of visual attention (fig. 32). Some of these paintings borrow specific formulae from Gao Qipei. But Hua was careful – and here again he was following Gao – to ensure that the viewer's attention, thus engaged, is further rewarded by the com-

Fig. 32 / Hua Yan (1682–1756), *Traveling Across the Snow-Clad Tianshan*. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 159.1 x 52.8 cm. Palace Museum Beijing.

plexity of the painting's presentational dimension as an ink and color and paper (or silk) surface. The result is a striking tension between registers of visual attention, which can be understood as a knowing acknowledgement of painting's semiotic mediation of visual experience.[13] Like Hua Yan and Gao Qipei before him, Luo Ping possessed the technical skills to translate his observational and imaginative curiosity into pictorial images belonging to almost any genre. Luo's study of Hua Yan's work is on view in his *Drunken Zhong Kui* (cat. 1), which creates a tension between the dramatic materiality of the ink wash of the rock and the narrative element of the figures. Luo's 1774 album *Insects, Birds, and Beasts* (cat. 22) – clearly directly inspired by Gao Qipei – takes the act of looking as its very theme. Numerous other paintings similarly demon-

strate that the thematization of visual attention was part of his inheritance from Hua Yan and Gao Qipei. None, perhaps, does so more vividly than his *Ghost Amusement* handscroll (cat. 21), so it is worth pointing out that Luo's claim to be able to see ghosts can be understood as a metaphor for the autonomy of vision and, by extension, of the psychophysically defined individual.[14]

Ultimately, though, Luo Ping's greatest debt to Gao Qipei came through his teacher, Jin Nong (1687–1763), whose paintings produced between about 1748 and 1763 constitute a third, delayed reaction to Gao's revolutionary approach to the pictorial image. Jin's unacknowledged but profound debt to Gao Qipei was not stylistic – Jin possessed only a very limited pictorial craft and tended to reduce motifs to signs – and only rarely concerned subject matter, but was instead conceptual. No eighteenth-century artist exploited as fully and boldly as Jin Nong the possibilities of image density that Gao opened up. Moreover, no painter outside the court addressed more directly than Jin Nong the court's contemporary harnessing of the image to ideological purpose. This was Jin's own double legacy to Luo Ping, who as a young man was drafted into the production of many of Jin's paintings. Jin's oeuvre took form – most unusually for a Chinese painter – as a systematic and self-conscious pursuit of the unprecedented image, pictorial genre by pictorial genre. In fact, Jin Nong, who had first made his name as a calligrapher during the second quarter of the eighteenth century, had earlier taken the same approach in calligraphy to script types. Like his contemporaries Zheng Xie and Yang Fa (1696–after 1762), he had intensified the image dimension of both individual characters and whole transcribed texts, thereby relativizing the importance of the brush trace. By the time he turned to painting, therefore, he already thought of the brush trace in imagistic terms, a feature that gives his pictorial images a special, graphic character. A purely stylistic assessment of Luo Ping's relation to Jin Nong is no less misleading than a similar assessment of Jin's relation to Gao Qipei, because it can only register the difference between an art that reduces experience to signs and one that is capable of evoking the immediacy of experience. Once again, the most profound debt was of a conceptual nature. It was to Jin that Luo Ping owed the model of a *selective* practice of painting, one that avoided the diary-like, autobiographical documentation of a life in favor of a practice of painting as calculated intervention in a pre-existing genre with historically constituted conventions.[15] Continuing in this line, Luo rediscovered the path not taken by literati painting: that of the early Zhao Mengfu before 1300, prior to the construction of a unified space of literati painting when image and vision had not yet become subject to the ideology of the brush trace.[16] This return to beginnings in literati painting echoes the attention to the earliest sources in the epigraphic scholarship practiced by so many of Luo's friends.

Before Gao Qipei, then, literati painting was image-centered but brush trace-controlled; after him, it remained image-centered, but the possibility existed of sharing authority between the brush trace and the image itself. If we make the mistake of judging Luo Ping's art by pre-Gao Qipei criteria, we will see him as an eclectic artist whose oeuvre lacks coherence, switching between styles and genres with disconcerting regularity. Worse, we will take his refusal to assert the authority of the brush trace to be a mark of timidity – a failure of character. The modern view of Luo Ping as a second-rank painter derives from this misplaced assessment of his art, whose qualities and significance lie elsewhere. Luo Ping's art needs to be seen on its own, post-Gao Qipei terms as an exploration of image and visual attention which has as its backdrop the Qing state's discovery of the ideological potential of the image to manipulate appearances for political profit. Similarly, Luo's openly rhetorical deployment of the resources of style and genre belongs to the same eighteenth-century world in which court painting was subordinating those artistic resources to ideological purpose.

What, then, was Luo Ping's own contribution? The answer helps to explain his elusiveness: his art opens up the territory of what we today call the unconscious. Here one must take the unconscious as much in a social as in a private sense, for his paintings are as concerned with articulating the normally undeclared stakes of Qianlong-period politics and culture as they are with exploring a more purely private terrain.

There was, of course, no concept of the unconscious as such in eighteenth-century China. But if we understand the unconscious to be the concept by which we today acknowledge the existence of such disruptive and only partly controllable forces as desire, envy, fear of death, dissolution of intersubjective boundaries, gender instability, or the compulsion to gain power over others, then it is undeniable that Luo Ping's contemporaries were obsessed by the possibility of articulating these same forces in language. This obsession – expressed most comprehensively in the great novel of the period, *The Story of the Stone (Honglou meng*, also known as *The Dream of the Red Chamber)* – translated a collective dissatisfaction with the claims of organized religions and state ideology to be able to account for psychic forces through fixed cosmologies. Part of the modern difficulty with Luo Ping's art derives from the fact that he was perhaps the first major artist in Chinese history for whom the unconscious was just as central as conscious perception to the personal experience that his painting sought to articulate visually. As Richard Vinograd has shown, by seeking rational, purposeful explanations for his paintings, we largely miss the point of an art concerned with the in-between, the beyond, and the underneath.[17]

The artist's lifelong project is already announced in the great *Ghost Amusement* handscroll painted circa 1766 (cat. 21), through which he declared his independent identity as a painter following the death of Jin Nong. It is characteristic of the handscroll's status as a post-Gao Qipei painting that its imagery can be traced back to such marginal resources as temple painting, pornographic painting, festival masquerades, and even manuals of forensic science that had themselves borrowed from the European anatomical drawings of Andreas Vesalius (p. 195, figs. 38a–b, 39). Yet too much attention to sources ends up betraying the visual effect of the paintings, which is genuinely strange, imposing Luo Ping's visions as *vision* of a unique kind. He painted much of the imagery while the paper was wet. The bodies' bounding edges fade, bleed, and sink into a vaporous and sometimes eerily luminous gloom. Ghostly existence is seen by the artist and by us as the limbo it was believed to be. Embodying the larger eighteenth-century fascination with the supernatural and with concepts of reincarnation, so vividly on display in *The Story of the Stone* and in the explosion of ghost stories, these ghosts are figurations of darker psychic forces, operating as much on the social as on the personal level. In this sense, Luo Ping's well-documented claim that he could actually see ghosts was no gimmick, and his lifelong insistence on their reality was less eccentric than clear-eyed.

Beyond the *Ghost Amusement* handscroll, Luo Ping's œuvre reveals an artist whose conceptualist focus on pictorial ideas consistently serves a preoccupation with what cannot and yet must be said. Included in this exhibition are paintings in which the artist makes us aware of the sexuality of Jin Nong (*Portrait of Mr. Dongxin*, cat. 13); works through the loss of his own artistic identity to his teacher (*Figures and Landscapes, after Poems by Jin Nong*, cat. 8; *Landscapes, Flowers, and Plants*, cat. 9); creates images of male potency whose explicitness brings into view the male fear of impotence (*Orchids, Bamboo, and Rock*, cat. 24; *Portrait of Deng Shiru Standing on the Summit of Mount Tai*, cat. 29); exposes the impossibility of reconciling hedonism and respectability (*Portrait of Yuan Mei*, cat. 14); makes himself a medium (in the strongest sense) of artists of the past, just as he did for the living artist, Jin Nong (*Copy of Three Horse Paintings by Members of the Zhao Family*, cat. 5);[18] calls into question ontological boundaries between reality and representation (*The Su Studio of Weng Fanggang*, cat. 31); presents himself as both of this world and outside it (*Portrait of Mr. Bamboo Hat*, cat. 16); and stages his own transformation into a remembered image (*Portrait of Luo Ping at Age Sixty-Four*, cat. 34).[19] In a more public direction, the *Ghost Amusement* handscroll was far from the only ghost painting by Luo to evoke the underside of the Qianlong-period social order, and *Insects, Birds, and Beasts* (cat. 22) shows him cooperating with Jiang Shiquan in mordant commentaries on the possible destinies of those pursuing government careers in Qing China. Even the apparently decorative painting *Colored Lichee* (cat. 23) conspicuously breaks the literati taboo on public acknowledgement of the importance of commerce.[20]

For all the selectivity of his interventions and conceptual approach to his themes, Luo Ping's principal means re-

mained painterly. All his paintings share a fundamental pictorial craft. He employs a fluid, at times nervous brush trace, which is not calligraphic but form-generating, sometimes combined with layered, interpenetrating washes of ink or color. Brush trace and ink wash together generate an image, a scene, that usually appears to be caught in movement, as if suddenly encountered; in many paintings this effect is intensified by an oblique tilting of the image that gives it the impression of sliding across the field of view. Still, the delicate and yet intense immediacy that characterizes all his work does not serve to reinforce one's confidence in the world of appearances. On the contrary, its rationale lies in the staging of an experience of heightened awareness, through an excess of affect over visual information that was intended, I believe, to destabilize the viewer, enabling the realization that what truly matters lies beyond what one sees. While Luo himself might have articulated this rationale in Chan Buddhist terms, the privilege of historical hindsight allows us to see in it today a familiar, modern attention to forces that operate on us from beyond an invisible boundary and define an interior beyond – of the individual and of the collectivity.

1 The first of his patrons, Jin Nong, for whom he worked as a private secretary, was also the one for whom he did the most painting, in the role of substitute brush. His later patron-protectors included Shen Dacheng (Yangzhou and northern Jiangsu), Gong Xinzhuang (Henan), Jiang Shiquan (Yangzhou and Nanchang), Ying Lian (Beijing), Weng Fanggang (Beijing), Fashishan (Beijing) and, at the end of Luo's life, Zeng Yu (Yangzhou).

2 There are indications that he played an administrative role as well, which helps to explain his appointment as director of an orphanage in the late 1780s, prior to moving to Beijing.

3 Late in life, as we learn from Fashishan's *Wumen shihua*, he called upon his students and family to act as substitute brushes, which in Luo's case is probably less an indication that he was embracing professionalism more fully than it was a way of protecting himself from overproduction.

4 On Gao Qipei, see Ruitenbeek 1992.

5 There is, of course, a still earlier history of literati painting that can be traced back to Su Shi (and beyond), but it is not relevant here except at the thematic level, where Su Shi was commonly evoked by eighteenth-century painters, including Luo Ping.

6 The later expansion of the role of seal impressions in literati painting, which from the late Ming on became expressive as well as documentary, did not disturb this system because literati seal carving, as it emerged in the late Ming, used metal tools to translate the brush trace into the stone format of the seal from which impressions were made, hence the term "iron brush" to describe the seal carver's knife.

7 It should be noted that Gao Qipei's initiative was anticipated to some degree in the seventeenth century both by male artists such as Chen Hongshou, who gave unusual authority to the image, and by the self-constructed tradition of women's painting, which by and large tended to distance itself from a practice based on the controlling brush trace in favor of a practice that foregrounded compositional positioning and necessarily favored the image.

8 I am indebted here to Michele Matteini, who has enriched my thinking on the eighteenth-century attention to image by making me aware of the direct threat to the hegemony of the brush trace that it represented.

9 It is no coincidence that Gao's intervention occurred around the same time that the Qing court was establishing a painting academy. In Qing court painting, all schools and styles, including literati styles, were placed at the rhetorical service of ideological statements embodied in the pictorial image. This imperative obviously undermined the traditional concept of literati painting as described above, because it instrumentalized the brush trace, reducing it to its rhetorical possibilities. Gao was familiar with this development at court, and was eventually drawn into it himself during the 1720s. His painting outside the court, however, at once shared the court's emphasis on the image and stood as a rebuke to court painting, for his fearless originality and visceral mark-making were anti-rhetorical, anti-ideological.

10 A notable example of such influence in the work of Luo Ping is his 1798 hanging scroll *Portrait for Yi'an*, formerly in the Ching Yuan Chai Collection (Vinograd 1992, pl. 16).

11 See cat. 22, *Insects, Birds, and Beasts*, for a clear example of this approach as practiced by Luo Ping himself, in collaboration with Jiang Shiquan.

12 As noted by Michele Matteini in his catalogue entry on *Colored Lichee* (cat. 23).

13 Even if the means are different, this knowingness parallels that seen in court painting's adaptations of perspectival drawing; indeed, Hua subtly adapts perspectival conventions in some of his own paintings. This was noted by Lihong Liu in a seminar paper on Hua Yan, which prompted my thinking about the specific importance in the eighteenth-century context of the relation of image to looking.

14 It is important to distinguish between (a) socially networked personhood *(ren)*, which internalizes the normative structured relations of the collectivity, and (b) the psychophysically defined sense of oneself as a unique individual (*shen*, literally "body") constituted of drives and needs. The sense of self in eighteenth-century China was conditioned by the lifelong necessity to negotiate the relation between the two. For a fuller discussion, see Hay 2001, pp. 278–81.

15 Luo did not entirely avoid this kind of diary-like practice, which is often associated with Shitao and Bada shanren but can also be seen in albums by Gao Qipei, Gao Fenghan, and Li Shan. A 1781 album of finger paintings by Luo in a private Hong Kong collection (Ruitenbeek 1992, cat. no. 86) is an example of this practice.

16 Hay 1989.

17 Vinograd 1992.

18 This is perhaps a good place to mention that I do not share the opinion that Jin Nong's great *Buddha* of 1760 in the Tianjin Museum (cat. 18) was painted by Luo Ping as his substitute brush. In my view the painting is as consistent with Jin's own calligraphically inspired pictorial craft as it is inconsistent with Luo Ping's more painterly craft, which he was never able to disguise completely.

19 If the face of Luo Ping in *Portrait of Liangfeng daoren Wearing a Coir Raincoat and Bamboo Hat* (p. 73, fig. 21) is the work of a professional portraitist, the same is not true, in my view, of the rest of the painting, and in this sense it may be considered a self-portrait. Note also the placement of Luo's inscription and absence of the signature that one would expect if another artist had been responsible for the entire image rather than just the face. The *Portrait of Luo Ping at Age Sixty-Four* (cat. 34) presents a different case. Although not a self-portrait from the point of view of the work's execution, the combination of the presence of Luo's seals and an epitaph-like inscription by Song Baochun, which must postdate Luo's death, make it likely that it was painted according to Luo's instructions in anticipation of its use as a memorial image. The memorial purpose of the image probably explains the absence of the portraitist's signature or seals.

20 Numerous other paintings not included here would extend this field of exploration to include, for example, the intimate territories of love, loss, depression, and parent-child dynamics, as well as the difficult social territory of the government official's own dependence on the state.