

3 *The Yüan Dynasty: The Rise of Self-Expression*

DURING THE SUNG DYNASTY PERIOD, the artist characteristically meditated on an object through a universalized self; Yüan painters more commonly concentrated on the personal inner self. As China underwent profound political and social change during the Yüan period, self-expression, or "speaking one's mind" (*yen-chih*), became firmly established as the chief purpose of poetry and painting. In Yüan landscape the artist's inner feelings were the primary subject; the actual scene set down by the artist was secondary.

The factor that most determined the lives of artists during this period was the Mongol conquest. Suspicious of the southern Chinese, the Mongols entrusted administration of their Yüan dynasty to western and central Asians, Tartars, and northern Chinese; Mongol or other alien supervisors (*darughachi*) were found at all levels of local government. The traditional literati elite of the Chiang-nan region, the delta south of the Yangtze River, became a disenfranchised class and turned to the arts both as a way to occupy their time and as a means of expressing themselves. (As never before, works of art became autobiographical in content, and the personal histories of the painters provide the best key to understanding Yüan dynasty paintings.)

From the point of view of style, the reductionism and retreat represented by Southern Sung landscape came to an end with the Mongol conquest. Just as Huang T'ing-chien (1045-1105) and Mi Fu (1052-1107), facing the end of a development in calligraphy in the late eleventh century, had renewed their art through a revival of earlier styles, Chao Meng-fu (1254-1322) now spearheaded in both calligraphy and painting a return to the ancient models. But the Yüan revival of Northern Sung idioms did not bring back the Northern Sung monumental style of landscape. Instead of objectified images of nature, the Yüan scholar-artists, applying calligraphic techniques to painting, created a new calligraphic landscape style expressive of the subjective state of mind of the artist.

Chao Meng-fu: Calligraphy as Landscape

Born in 1254 in Wu-hsing, to the southwest of Lake T'ai, in modern Chekiang province, Chao Meng-fu was an eleventh-generation descendant of the founder of the Sung dynasty, Emperor T'ai-tsung; his great-great-grandfather Po-kuei was a brother of the second Southern Sung emperor, Hsiao-tsung (r. 1162-89). In 1267, two years after his father died, the young Meng-fu received a commission as a guard (*ts'an-chün*) in Chen-chou, Kiangsu. After the Southern Sung capital Lin-an (Hang-chou) fell to the Mongols in 1276, he remained in Wu-hsing in order to pursue his studies. Then, in 1286, the emperor Yüan Shih-tsu, better known as Khubilai Khan (r. 1260-94), in an effort to enlist the support of the literati class in the south, sent the imperial censor Ch'eng Chü-fu (1249-1318), a southerner, to recruit Chiang-nan scholars to serve at the court, and Chao Meng-fu, then thirty-two, agreed to present himself at the Yüan capital Ta-tu (Peking). A well-known scion of the Sung imperial family and a strikingly handsome man, Chao Meng-fu immediately caught Khubilai Khan's attention. At the court, first as a member of the war ministry supervising the postal service (1287), then as a member of the Academy of Worthies (1290), he effectively contributed to a more humane policy regarding criminal code and taxation in the south, argued against the "court beatings" of ministers, and even helped to oust the powerful and feared Muslim councilor Sengge in 1291. In 1292 he was posted to the Chi-nan circuit (modern Shantung province) as director-general. Summoned back to the capital in 1295 to participate in the compiling of the annals of the reign of the emperor, who had died in the preceding year, he was sent in 1297 as prefect of Feng-chou (in Shansi), then dispatched to Hang-chou in 1299 as director of Confucian studies in the Chiang-Che provincial

government, a position he held until 1308. After briefly returning to Wu-hsing in 1309, he was made a reader at the Han-lin Academy in the capital in 1310. With the ascension of the emperor Yüan Jen-tsung in 1312, he became a lecturer of the Academy of Worthies in 1313, and the head of the Han-lin Academy in 1316. After his retirement in 1319, he returned to Wu-hsing and died there in 1322. He was posthumously honored with the title Duke of Wei (Wei-kuo kung).¹

The emperor Yüan Jen-tsung (Ayrubarwada; r. 1312–20) is said to have enumerated seven outstanding qualities in Chao Meng-fu: he was descended from the Sung imperial family, endowed with an elegant appearance, widely learned, of pure character and righteous conduct, accomplished in literature, skilled in calligraphy and painting, and possessed of a profound knowledge of Buddhist and Taoist teachings.² The style of Chao Meng-fu's regular-script calligraphy reflects these qualities, not only providing an acute portrait of an individual, but also, by extension, summing up the outlook of a class and of a period. In serving the Mongols, Chao Meng-fu braved criticism from his Sung loyalist countrymen in the south. Yet the very presence and success of Chao and others like him at the Mongol court played an important role in insuring the continued vitality of Chinese culture and art during the Yüan period. After the last Southern Sung provincial examination in 1274, the Yüan government did not reinstate the examination system until 1315. Only through the presence at court of such eminent scholars and connoisseurs as Chao, Yü Chi (1272–1348), K' o Chiu-szu (1290–1343), and K' ang-li Nao-nao (1295–1345) were the high cultural achievements of the Chinese introduced to the Mongol rulers. Members of the Yüan imperial family, such as the emperor Yüan Jen-tsung, his sister Princess Ta-chang (ca. 1282–1332), the emperor Yüan Wen-tsung (r. 1328–32), and the emperor Yüan Shun-ti (r. 1333–68), all took a lively interest in ancient Chinese calligraphy and painting, and gained at least a superficial understanding of its traditions.³ Among these scholar-artists Chao was the undisputed leader, not only in preserving the ancient arts of painting and calligraphy, but also in advancing them.)

For the most part Southern Sung calligraphers had followed the styles of the Northern Sung masters, especially those of Su Shih, Huang T'ing-chien, and Mi Fu. A distinctive personal style was achieved, however, by the emperor Sung Kao-tsung (r. 1127–62), who at first was an ardent follower of Huang T'ing-chien, but later developed a squat, archaizing regular-script style (fig. 88) by following pre-T'ang models, particularly an early seventh-century work, the *Thousand-character Essay in Regular and Cursive Scripts* (*Chen-ts'ao ch'ien-tzu wen*) by the priest Chih-yung (late 6th–early 7th century; fig. 89), who, in turn, had worked in the style of the first renowned master of the regular script, Chung Yu (A.D. 151–230) of the Wei period (cf. fig. 107). Sung Kao-tsung's style, widely imitated in the court circles, was popular and influential throughout the Southern Sung period, yet, as a primarily small-size-character style, it also epitomized certain inherent weaknesses in Southern Sung calligraphy. At the end of the period the painter and calligrapher Chao Meng-chien (1199–1267), a cousin of Chao Meng-fu's, whose writing style reflected the Sung Kao-tsung legacy, criticized the calligraphy of his day for stressing surface appearance to the detriment of overall structure:)

Following the T'ang is not as good as following the [Eastern] Tsin—this is what everyone says. Yet how can the Tsin be easily followed? To follow the T'ang is to learn basic methods and principles. To follow the Tsin without first mastering the T'ang is to misjudge one's own capabilities. If one merely makes one's characters slant, trying to make them attractive and not succeeding, it is like trying to draw a tiger and making a dog instead. Why so? In calligraphy every character must rest firmly on a frame of supports and walls; only then will it not look weak and crooked. In Ssu-ling's [Emperor Sung Kao-tsung's] calligraphy, which is certainly smooth and fluent, the writer has not paid enough attention to the building of supports and walls. This problem must be discussed among the connoisseurs.⁴

[According to Chao Meng-fu the balance of a written character is a combined function of brushwork (*yung-pi*) and composition (*chieh-tzu*). The problem may be illustrated with examples of a simple character

悲訓夙夜思勉不敢怠忽惟
 外靈太微部秩不全顧惟
 肆筆之書益造神化自
 內禪之後時有篇章
 垂裕後昆者盈于榮牘

Fig. 88. Emperor Sung Kao-tsung, *Preface to the Anthology by Emperor Hui-tsung* [r. 1101–25] (*Hui-tsung wen-chi hsiü*). Dated 1154. Album leaf, ink on paper

五常恭惟鞠養豈敢毀傷
 子為若性稔是出於毀傷
 女慕貞嫗男效才良知過
 為孝與弟男成女志心已

Fig. 89. Attributed to Chih-yung, detail, *Thousand-character Essay in Regular and Cursive Scripts* (*Chen-ts'ao ch'ien-tzu-wen*). Undated, early 7th century. Handscroll, ink on paper. H. 24.7 cm (9³/₄ in.). Ogawa Family collection

san (three), showing three horizontal lines, written in the seal, clerical, and regular scripts. In the seal script, written with a stylus, the character *san* consists of three parallel strokes of uniform thickness and length (fig. 90a); the writer may place the three strokes either horizontally or slightly inclined. In a late Han clerical-script version of the character (fig. 90b), which is written with a brush, the upper two strokes remain parallel and of uniform thickness and length, but the bottom stroke, much longer than the two upper ones, has the pressed-down wavy (*p'o* or *che*) ending, a hallmark of the "spreading [like the character] eight" (*pa-fen*, late clerical) style. As the regular-script writing style evolved, the freedom and complexity of the brushwork and the composition of individual characters increased; brushstrokes in a variety of shapes and forms, turning and responding to one another, are held together in each character in a dynamic equilibrium. In the *san* of Ch'u Sui-liang (596–658; fig. 90c) the shorter upper strokes arch gently upward, while the longer bottom stroke bends subtly downward in response; in spite of the varied angles of the individual strokes, the finished character rests firmly in repose. Ch'u's brushwork likewise combines fluid movement with a stable balance. To insure that each stroke was perfectly executed he reversed direction at each end of the stroke, first pushing to the left before moving to the right, then descending toward the lower right,

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Figs. 90a-e. The character *san*: seal script, detail, inscription on a bronze ritual vessel, the *Ling kuei*. Undated, early 11th century B.C. Rubbing of inscription. David Weill collection (a); detail, *Ritual Implements in Confucius's Temple Stele* (*K'ung-miao li-ch'i pei*). A.D. 156. Ch'ü-fu, Shantung (b); Ch'ü Sui-liang, *Preface to the Sacred Teaching Stele* (*Sheng-chiao-hsi pei*). Dated 654. Rubbing of inscription (c); Huang T'ing-chien, detail, *Scroll for Chang Ta-t'ung* (*T'ung Chang Ta-t'ung ku-wen t'i-chi*), no. 1 (d); and Sung Kao-tsung, detail, *Preface to the Anthology by Emperor Hui-tsung* [*r. 1101-25*] (*Hui-tsung wen-chi hsi*). Dated 1154. Album leaf, ink on paper (e)

moving the brush tip to the upper left again, before finally lifting the brush from the paper. Huang T'ing-chien's asymmetrical style, done in *chung-feng* (round or centered brushwork; fig. 90d), illustrates Mi Fu's statement, cited in chapter II, that "in the character *san* [three] each of the three horizontal strokes is different."⁵ Finally, in the emperor Sung Kao-tsung's *san* (fig. 90e), which is in small writing done with the tip of the brush, the writer has touched down gently, leaving a point at the beginning of each stroke. Compared to Ch'ü Sui-liang's example of T'ang dynasty *san* (cf. fig. 90c), the Southern Sung *san*, with brushstrokes manipulated by the writer's fingers rather than the whole arm, lacks a firm structure. This weakness Chao Meng-fu set out to correct.

Early calligraphy by Chao Meng-fu, however, reflects the influence of Sung Kao-tsung's style; in a colophon he wrote on the inkwork *The Great Tao* (*Ta-tao t'ieh*; fig. 91) attributed to Wang Hsi-chih (ca.



Fig. 91. Chao Meng-fu, colophon, dated 1287, to *The Great Tao* (*Ta-tao t'ieh*) attributed to Wang Hsi-chi. Handscroll, ink on paper. National Palace Museum, Taipei

307-ca. 365) and dated 1287, soon after Chao went to Peking, he used Sung Kao-tsung's squat style, with smooth modulated brushstrokes revealing the pointed brushtip. Throughout the 1290s, apparently agreeing with Chao Meng-chien's view that the T'ang style at least provided a background in basic methods, Chao carefully studied the T'ang masters Ou-yang Hsün (557-641), Yen Chen-ch'ing (709-785), Li Yung (678-747), and others. In a colophon dated 1291 on Ou-yang Hsün's *Confucius Making an Offering in a Dream* (*Chung-ni meng-tien t'ieh*; fig. 92), Chao wrote in the Yen Chen-ch'ing style, while in a poem written for his friend Chou Mi (1232-1298), dated the same year, he followed Li Yung's style (fig. 93).

During his years in Hang-chou, between 1299 and 1308, Chao concentrated on the earlier models of the Wei and Tsin periods, especially that of Wang Hsi-chih. Chao openly acknowledged his indebtedness to his predecessors, insisting that no calligrapher could ever ignore the ancient methods of composing characters. In his *Thirteen Colophons to the Preface to the Orchid Pavilion Gathering* (*Lan-t'ing shih-san pa*), dated 1310, Chao made important observations on brushwork and composition:

In calligraphy brushwork comes first, yet one should also work on the composition of each character.

While the composition of a character changes with time, brushwork remains the same throughout a thousand ages. In Yu-chün's [Wang Hsi-chih's] calligraphy the compositional forces of his characters represent a major transformation of the ancient methods; yet his powerful but elegant qualities are a natural gift. Thus from ancient times until now calligraphers have regarded his work as the exemplary model. As for the masters of the Ch'i and Liang periods, it is not that their compositions are not ancient, but that a certain elegance of the spirit is missing. This is a matter of personal style, but in any case one should never ignore the ancient [compositional] methods.⁶



Fig. 92. Chao Meng-fu, colophon, dated 1291, to *Confucius Making an Offering in a Dream* (*Chung-ni meng-tien t'ieh*) by Ou-yang Hsün. Handscroll, ink on paper. Liaoning Provincial Museum



Fig. 93. Li Yung, Epitaph of the Yün-hui General, Li Ssu-hsün pei (*Yün-hui chiang-chün Li Ssu-hsün pei*). Undated, after 739. 23.6 x 11.2 cm (9 1/4 x 4 3/8 in.). Rubbing of inscription. P'u-ch'eng, Shensi province

For Chao Meng-fu the necessary evolution of "the composition of a character" had to be inspired by a reexamination of the "ancient methods." As a master of the ancient scripts and creator of a new regular-script style, Chao sought the traditional Confucian goal of a Great Synthesis (T'a-ch'eng) of the past; by mastering the Great Tradition he emerged as rescuer and arbiter of history.

Record of the Miaoyen Monastery (*Hu-chou Miaoyen-ssu chi*), written in late 1309 or early 1310, now in the John B. Elliott Collection on loan to The Art Museum, Princeton University (no. 7), is a major work in Chao Meng-fu's mature large regular-script style. Located in the Wu-ch'eng district outside Wuhsing, the monastery of the title was originally the Eastern Temple (Tung-chi-yüan) in the Southern Sung Chia-hsi era (1237-40) and was renamed Miaoyen (Wonderful Countenance) by the well-known Ch'an priest Yen-ch'i Kuang-wen (fl. 1257-81), who headed a popular sect of Buddhism called Pai-yün (White Cloud).⁷ Toward the end of the Southern Sung period, the temple buildings were destroyed by fire. Rebuilt by the then abbot Tao-an (fl. 2nd half 13th century) who during the Chih-yüan era (1264-93) went twice to the Yüan capital to gain permission for the cutting and printing of a new set of the *Tripitaka*, the Buddhist scriptures, the temple was renamed a *ssu*, or a full-fledged monastery, in 1292. Upon the completion of an ambitious building program, Mou Hsien (1227-1311), a renowned Confucian scholar, was invited to compose a temple record, and Chao Meng-fu was asked to write the calligraphy for the inscription (the stone of which, however, was never cut).

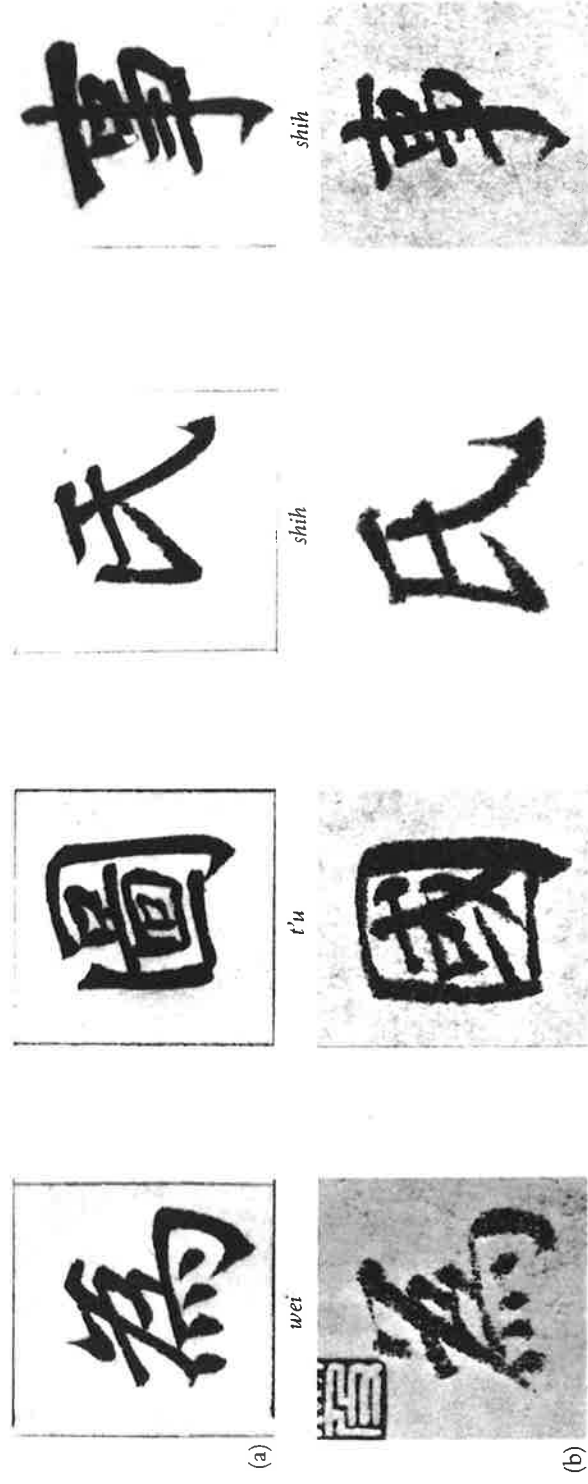
For the *Miaoyen Monastery* inscription Chao took as his primary models Wang Hsi-chih and Yen Chen-ch'ing, adding to them the influences of Ch'u Sui-liang, Li Yung, and Huang T'ing-chien (1045-1105), among others. The four characters *yüing-tai ch'ing-liu* (fig. 94a) recall stroke for stroke those of the principal work attributed to Wang Hsi-chih, the *Preface to the Orchid Pavilion Gathering* (fig. 94b). Having copied the *Orchid Pavilion* innumerable times, Chao remembered every character and every movement of it by heart. The *Orchid Pavilion*, however, is in small writing. In enlarging the characters to almost 1 square inch, Chao had to invent a new repertory of brushstrokes.

Chao's mature brushwork derived mostly from Yen Chen-ch'ing, who was the accepted model for large-size regular script throughout the Sung period. In Chao's *wei*, *t'u*, *shih*, and *shih* (fig. 95a) the influence of Yen's square form and fully modulated brushwork (fig. 95b) remains strong. Chao preferred for the most part, however, a trimmer style, so he turned to Ch'u Sui-liang, who was Yen's model.

The characters *ting*, *ssu*, *hsia*, *wu*, *fang*, *yüeh*, *chiang*, and *wen* (fig. 96a) reveal the influence of the early T'ang master Ch'u Sui-liang. As can be seen in his *ting* and *hsia* (fig. 96b), Ch'u mixed broad horizontal



Figs. 94a, b. The phrase *yüing-tai ch'ing-liu*, details: Chao Meng-fu, *Record of the Miaoyen Monastery* (*Hu-chou Miaoyen-ssu chi*), no. 7 (a) and attributed to Wang Hsi-chih, *Preface to the Orchid Pavilion Gathering* (*Lan-t'ing chi hsiü*). Dated 353 (b)

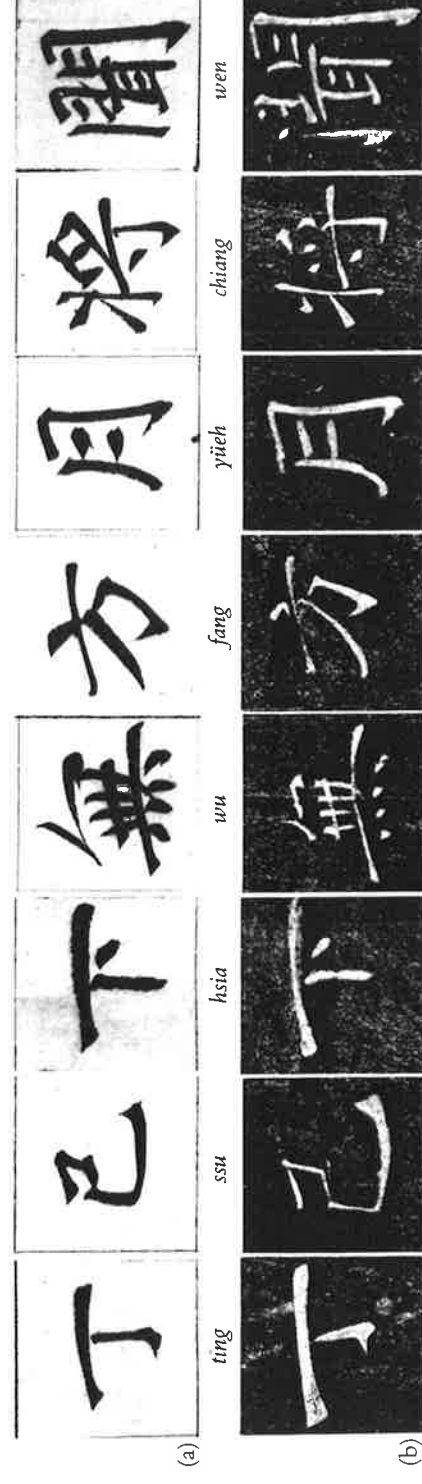


Figs. 95a, b. The characters *wei*, *t'u*, *shih*, and *shih*, details: Chao Meng-fu, *Record of the Miao-yen Monastery* (*Hu-chou Miao-yen-ssu chi*), no. 7 (a) and Yen Chen-ch'ing, *Certificate of Appointment* (*Kao-shen t'ieh*). Dated 780. Handscroll, ink on paper. 30.0 x 220.8 cm (11 7/8 in. x 7 ft. 2 7/8 in.). Museum of Calligraphy, Tokyo (b)

strokes in clerical technique with more elegantly modulated vertical elements; his characters are both lively and structurally stable. Chao's well-modulated individual brushstrokes derive equally from Yen Chen-ch'ing and Ch'u Sui-liang. In his characters with hooked strokes—*ssu*, *fang*, *yüeh*, *chiang*, and *wen*, for example—a moderate bulge on the outside of the stroke and a hook that springs directly from the end of the stroke to form an arrowhead shape recall the style of Ch'u Sui-liang; a fully developed bulge and a hook in which the brush retracts into the stroke before lifting up refers to the brush method of Yen Chen-ch'ing (cf. fig. 95b).

In his later years Chao was increasingly drawn to the style of Li Yung (fig. 97b), whose slanting brushstrokes and angular folds lend speed and momentum to the running script. In certain characters, such as *yeh*, *nai*, *chi*, *hsiu*, *chih*, Li Yung's influence became an integral part of Chao's regular-script style (fig. 97a).

Finally, Chao was not impervious to the powerful influence of the great late Northern Sung master Huang T'ing-chien. The *shu* and *yang* of Huang T'ing-chien (fig. 98b) have no level or upright strokes; all of the normally parallel strokes, both horizontal and vertical, here tilt at different angles and move at a varied speed and rhythm, so that the entire character is tangled and wound up, bursting with tension and liveliness. Huang's round brushwork uses the reversed-brushtip (*ni-feng*) or twisted-brushtip (*chiaio-feng*) technique. Touching the brush to the paper in a reverse motion—hiding the tip—the writer pulls away powerfully with the brushtip folded inside the stroke, keeping his wrist locked and writing with his whole



Figs. 96a, b. The characters *ting*, *ssu*, *hsia*, *wu*, *fang*, *yüeh*, *chiang*, and *wen*, details: Chao Meng-fu, *Record of the Miao-yen Monastery* (*Hu-chou Miao-yen-ssu chi*), no. 7 (a) and Ch'u Sui-liang, *Preface to the Sacred Teaching Stele* (*Sheng-chiao-hsü pei*). Dated 654. Rubbing of inscription (b)

character *shih* (fig. 99a) the form is loose and powerful and the diagonal force is extreme, but in the *yang* (fig. 99b) the diagonal motif is a quadrangular form standing on one corner, a diamond framed by an imaginary square. The balanced geometrical treatment developed from the earlier Han clerical script, as seen in the simple character *fang* (fig. 100b) in the *Ritual Implements in Confucius's Temple Stele* (*K'ung-miao Li-ch'i pei*), dated A.D. 156. Previous masters of regular-script calligraphy, from Chung Yu and Wang Hsi-chih to Ch'u Sui-liang and Yen Chen-ch'ing, had arrived at no clearly defined method for forming this motif, but in his *Miao-yen Monastery* inscription Chao Meng-fu devised a geometric formula to give the character *fang* a look of consistency and solidity (fig. 100a). Indeed all diagonal strokes in Chao's regular-script writing are set at a 45-degree angle, thereby acting as structural braces for the "walls" of individual characters.

The early Ming scholar and patriot Fang Hsiao-ju (1357-1402) commented that Chao Meng-fu's "calligraphy resembles [the famous Han general] Ch'eng Pu-shih's way of commanding an army: the orders are always clear and strict, never allowing a single hair to stray from methods and principles."⁸ Chao's regular script not only has beautifully modulated and well-balanced features, but also displays an easily recognized and repeatable array of brushstrokes. Chao's was the first new regular script since Yen Chen-ch'ing's that could be adapted successfully to both small and large writing, with characters measuring from the size of "the head of a fly" to the height of several inches. By the early decades of the fourteenth century the Chao style easily dominated the calligrapher's universe. Its all-pervasive influence is evident even in printed books, which after the 1330s showed a script type in the attractive, easily legible Chao style.

Yet, despite its fundamental stability, compared to the robust Yen Chen-ch'ing style Chao's seems soft, even effeminate. The early Ming scholar Sung Lien (1310-1381) remarked that "some people denigrate it as resembling a pretty girl wearing flowers."⁹ In the harsh judgment of the chauvinistic Ming period, historians never forgave Chao Meng-fu for agreeing to serve the Mongols and seized upon his sensuous calligraphic style as evidence of moral weakness.

A true reflection of Chao's state of mind during the early years of his service under the Mongols may be seen in his well-known landscape handscroll in the archaic blue and green idiom, *The Mind Landscape of Hsieh Yu-yü* (*Yü-yü ch'iu-ho*), now in the Edward L. Elliott Family Collection at The Art Museum, Princeton University (no. 6). While serving at court in the late 1280s and early 1290s, Chao Meng-fu painted this image of the Eastern Tsin courtier Hsieh K'un (280-322), who claimed to have preserved the purity of his mind in the mountains and valleys even while serving at court.¹⁰ Through this theme of the recluse at court Chao communicated to his countrymen in the south his feelings of conflict between service and reclusion, engagement and withdrawal, the active and the contemplative life. Judging from the colophons attached to this painting, Chao's contemporaries had fully understood and appreciated the inner turmoil he suffered.

Rejecting realistic description, Chao returned to the archaic blue and green idiom. The archaizing calligraphic brush technique was consciously applied to landscape for expressive purposes: every element of the painting is depicted with the same calligraphic brushstroke. Although the composition shows an advanced understanding of spatial continuity, with foreground rocks and shorelines receding along a continuous ground plane, the drawing of trees and rocks follows the seal-cutting principles of positive and negative designs (figs. 101, 102): round, controlled iron-wire (*t'ieh-hsien*) lines are done in the seal-script style of calligraphy, and the outlines of tree and rock forms define the spaces between these forms as well as the spaces within them. Indeed individual tree and rock forms are now visualized as seal-script pictographs. For example, Chao's rendering of the ancient mythological *lien-li* (twin tree with joined roots and branches) may be compared with the designs of his own large seal-script characters at the beginning of the *Miao-yen Monastery* handscroll (fig. 103). Written over a network of squares marked on paper for design reference, the subtle curves and balances of round seal-script strokes that seem to embody in their slow, glacial movements nature's primordial forces. Applied to Chao's blue and green painting, the linear patterns of the mountains, surging like ocean waves, and those of the trees, echoing the sounds of celestial music (*t'ien-lai*),



Fig. 102. Seal of Emperor Sung Kao-tsung on Huang T'ing-chien, *Scroll for Chang Ta-i'ung* (T'ung Chang Ta-i'ung ku-wen ti-chi), no. 1

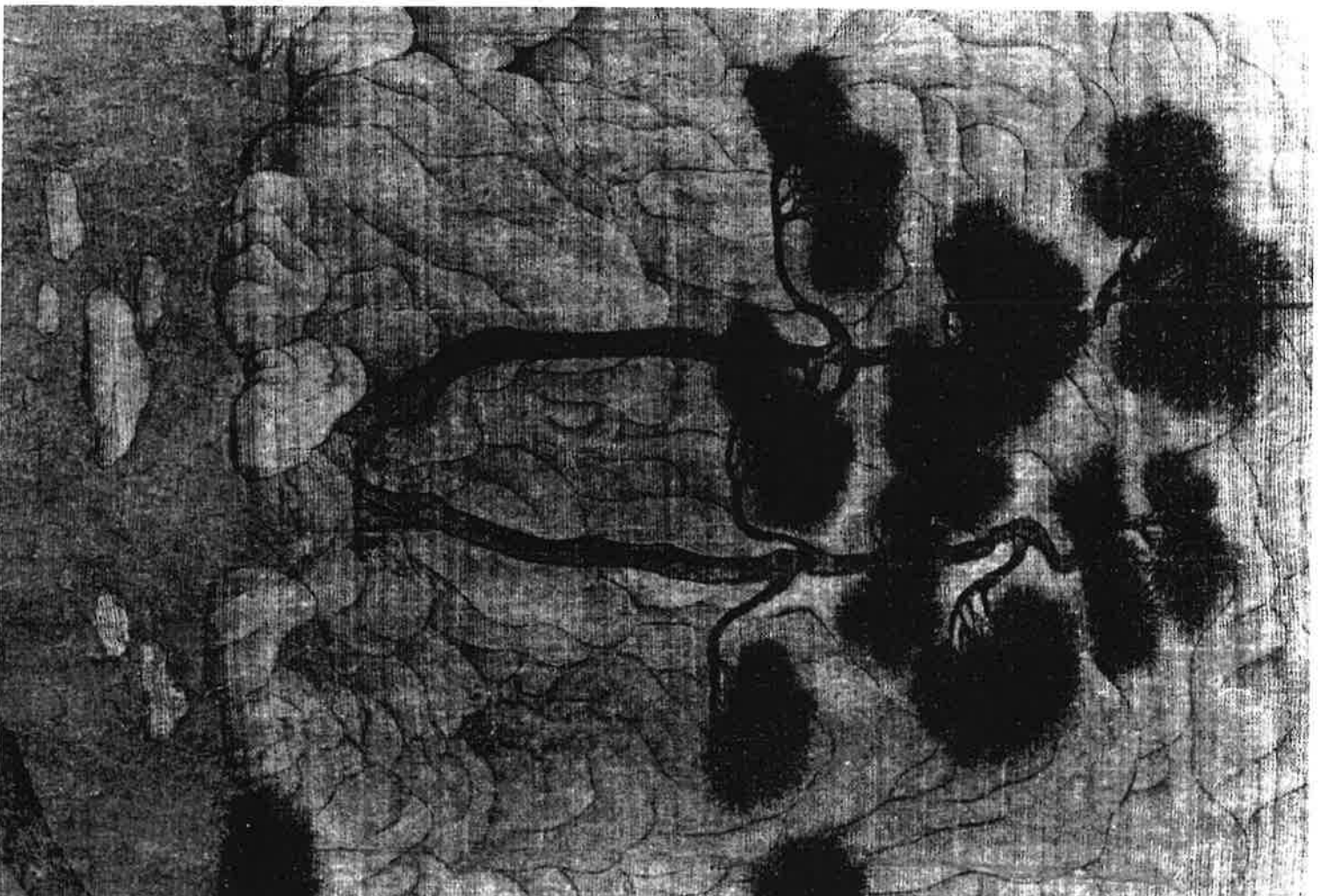


Fig. 101. Chao Meng-fu, detail, *The Mind Landscape of Hsieh Yu-yü* (Yu-yü ch'iu-ho), no. 6

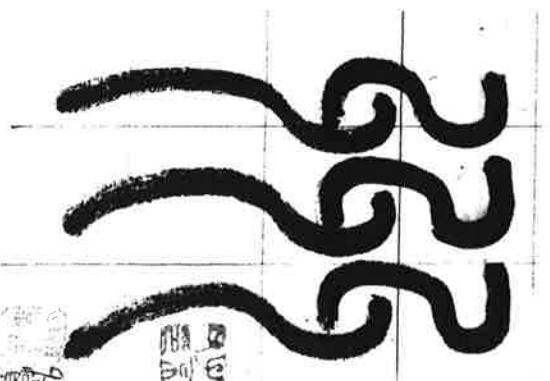


Fig. 103. Chao Meng-fu, detail of frontispiece, *Record of the Miaoyen Monastery* (Hu-chou Miaoyen-ssu chi), no. 7

the calligraphic brushstrokes seem to evoke rocks and trees in their quintessential forms, ageless and vibrantly alive.

In the 1290s and 1300s, when he was posted to Chi-nan in Shantung and Hang-chou in Chekiang, Chao Meng-fu practiced a variety of calligraphic brush idioms in several kinds of figure, animal, and landscape paintings. In *Man Riding Horse* (*Jen-ma t'u*), dated 1296, in the Palace Museum, Peking, he used the iron-wire seal-script technique. In *Autumn Colors on the Chiaiao and Hua Mountains*, dated in early 1296 (cf. fig. 66), he painted in the Tung Yüan (fl. 937-76) idiom using a fine regular-script brushwork style.¹¹ In *Twin Pines against a Flat Vista* (*Shuang-sung p'ing-yüan*), painted about 1310 (now in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; fig. 104), [Chao boldly executed the Li Ch'eng-Kuo Hsi idiom of devil-face (*kuei-mien*) rocks and crab-claw (*hsieh-chao*) tree branches in the cursive and seal-script manners.] In chapter 1



Fig. 104. Chao Meng-fu, detail, *Twin Pines against a Flat Vista* (*Shuang-sung p'ing-yüan*). Undated, ca. 1310. Handscroll, ink on paper. 26.7 x 107.3 cm (10½ in. x 3 ft. 6¼ in.). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

we saw how illusionism was finally achieved in Chao's *Autumn Mountains*. But visual representation was no longer the Yüan painter's principal concern. Executed in calligraphic brushwork, Chao's landscape forms are calligraphically expressive. Like Mi Fu's coral tree (cf. fig. 86), Chao's rocks and trees in *Twin Pines* are "written" as pictographs: the twin trees show trunks and bark patterns drawn calligraphically in the round brushwork of cursive or seal script.

In a poetic colophon appended to a painting of *Elegant Rocks and Sparse Trees* (*Hsiu-shih shu-lin t'u*) in the Palace Museum, Peking (fig. 105), Chao summed up his calligraphic method of painting:

Rocks as in flying white [*fei-pai*], trees as in seal [*chuan*] script;
When painting bamboo, one should master the spreading-eight [*pa-fen*, late clerical script] method.
Those who understand this principle thoroughly
Will recognize that calligraphy and painting have always been one.¹³



Fig. 105. Chao Meng-fu, *Elegant Rocks and Sparse Trees* (*Hsiu-shih shu-lin t'u*). Undated, ca. 1310. Handscroll, ink on paper. 27.3 x 92.8 cm (10³/₄ in. x 3 ft. 1/2 in.). Palace Museum, Peking

In treating painting as calligraphy, the calligraphic painter, rather than investigating nature through painting, sought through calligraphic brushwork to merge self and object.

Unlike his calligraphy, however, Chao's calligraphic explorations of various landscape idioms did not yield a personal stylistic synthesis. While it is possible to recognize the master behind his many guises, Chao Meng-fu invented no single, distinctive style in landscape painting. It was not until the generation after Chao that landscape painting saw the development of unmistakably personal calligraphic styles.

Ni Tsan: *The Noble Recluse*

What is known of Ni Tsan's life is found mostly in three tomb inscriptions composed soon after the artist's death in 1374: one by Wang Pin (ca. 1335–1405), another by Ni's close friend Chou Nan-lao (1308–1383), and a third by Chang Tuan (ca. 1320–1380).¹⁴ According to Chou Nan-lao, in *Tomb Epitaph for the Yüan Dynasty Recluse, Master [Ni] Yün-lin* (*Yüan ch'u-shih Yün-lin hsien-sheng mu-chih-ming*), Ni's family descended from Ni Kuan, an imperial censor of the Han period. Tsan's tenth-generation ancestor Shih went to live among the Hsi-hsia (Tangut) people. Then, sometime during the Ching-yu era (1034–37) of the emperor Sung Jen-tsung, Shih returned to Sung China as the Tangut ambassador. Thereafter the family lived in Tu-liang (modern Anhui province). During the early Chien-yen reign (1127–30) one of Tsan's fifth-generation ancestors, I, journeyed south with the Southern Sung and settled in Chih-t'o village in Wu-hsi.¹⁵ There the Ni family prospered.

Ni Tsan and his elder brother Ying were the sons of their father's concubine Yen. Their father died when the brothers were young, and they were raised by their eldest half brother, Ni Chao-kuei (1279–1328), whose lavish contributions toward the building of temples garnered him important positions in the Taoist hierarchy, culminating in the title of *chen-jen*, or primate, conferred shortly before his death. Since Ying was a mental incompetent, after Chao-kuei's death Ni had to assume the responsibility of managing the large household. Although this role ill suited his personal inclinations, Ni Tsan led a seemingly idyllic, and by choice secluded, existence at his family estate for another twenty years. Through the mid-1340s he spent most of his time among precious books, antique paintings, calligraphy, and flowers, in his favorite studio, which he named the Pure and Secluded Pavilion (*Ch'ing-pi-ko*). According to Chou Nan-lao,

where [Ni Tsan] lived there was a two-storied building called *Ch'ing-pi*, which was quiet, remote, and spotless. In it he kept thousands of volumes of books, which he had personally annotated and collected—classics, histories, anthologies, as well as Buddhist, Taoist, and medical texts, which he read all

day long. There ancient ritual tripods and vessels and well-known zithers were displayed. And around the building grew pines and cassia trees, orchids, bamboo, and chrysanthemums; and beyond these were great hardwood trees and bamboo groves, which were luxuriantly thick and fine. This is why he called himself Yün-lin [Cloudy Forest]. . . . He had no other hobby outside of his love for collecting scrolls of ancient calligraphy and painting. Dealers came and sold them to him at the cost of hundreds of cash, but he never minded the prices.¹⁶

In addition to the Pure and Secluded Studio, Ni Tsan's elaborate garden villa included a Hall of the Cloudy Forest (Yün-lin-t'ang), a Pavilion of Leisurely Immortals (Hsiao-hsien-hsien-t'ing), a Guest House of the Vermilion Sun (Chu-yang-pin-kuan), a Cave of Snowy Cranes (Hsüeh-ho-tung), and a Pavilion of Mi Fu's Calligraphy and Painting (Hai-yüeh-weng-shu-hua-hsüan). According to Chang Tuan, in *Epitaph of Yün-lin, Master Ni* (*Yün-lin Ni hsien-sheng mu-piao*),

The Pure and Secluded Studio was covered with blue carpets and was equipped with a hundred pairs of rope slippers, so that guests could change into them before entering. . . . The Cave of Snowy Cranes was covered with white carpets, and the tables inside were covered by a paper decorated with green cloud patterns. . . . In front of these buildings were planted flowers of many different colors, and the flowerbeds were lined with white glazed tiles. When the flowers were watered, the fallen petals were picked up with a long bamboo pole so that the beds would not be dirtied by footprints.¹⁷

An ardent admirer of the great Northern Sung eccentric artist and connoisseur Mi Fu, Ni shared two of Mi's passions: cleanliness and generosity to friends. Stories about Ni's passion for cleanliness reveal a streak of arrogance in his character. It is said that he would have the large hardwood trees surrounding his studio washed daily, and that, attending a party given by the wealthy well-known poet Yang Wei-chen (1296-1370), he had to leave in disgust because carousing party guests began to pass around a young woman's shoes filled with wine.¹⁸ In Ni Tsan's epitaph Chang Tuan recounted that "if Ni met with some common person asking for a handout, he would lay down the money at some distance for this person to pick up so that he would not be physically touched by such a person."¹⁹

An anonymous portrait of Ni Tsan dated in the early 1340s (a copy of which is in the National Palace Museum, Taipei; fig. 106) shows the artist was something of a dandy, as well as a perfectionist: dressed in immaculate white linen, flanked by two well-groomed attendants—one holding a feather duster and the other carrying a towel and washing implements—he sits on a couch surrounded by a painted screen, scrolls, an inkstone, and antique bronze and ceramic implements. At the left of the painting Ni's close friend the Taoist scholar Chang Yü (1283-1350) wrote a eulogy:

Born in Ching-man [Kiangsu Province],

He lodges at the Cloudy Forest.

His eyes are blue and white,²⁰

His voice is like metal and jade.

For ten days he paints a stretch of water, for five more he draws a rock—this is how he pores over details;

After three paces he turns his head, and after five more he sits down—this is how he spends his time.

He turns his back on the dust of the "lacquer-tree nursery" and the "wild horses,"²¹

And prefers the cool and snowy white complexion of the goddess Ku-she.

Waving a jade-handled duster, he is immaculately neat and supremely elegant.

If an uncouth person washes without using a towel, he is not allowed to speak of cleanliness.

His thoughts follow Wang Wei's,

His spirits befriend Mi Fu's.

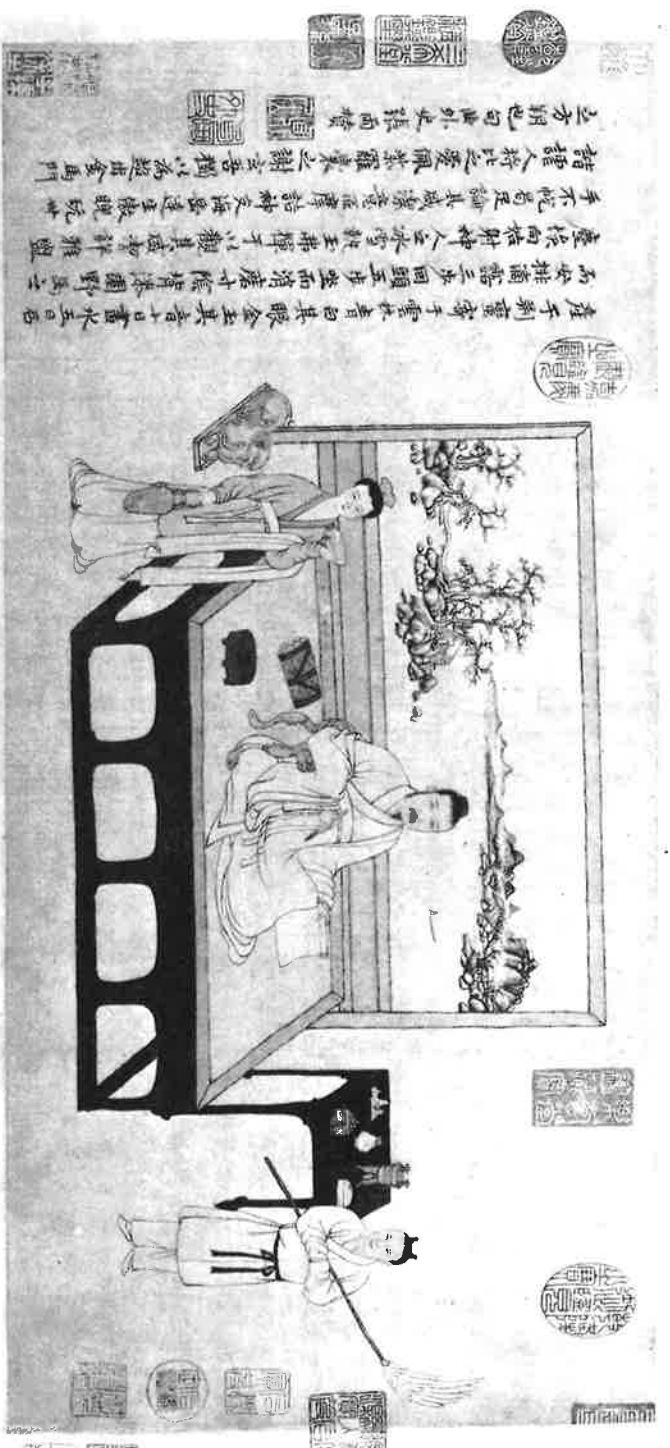


Fig. 106. Anonymous, *Portrait of Ni T'san* (Ni T'san hsiang). Undated, early 1340s. Handscroll, ink and color on paper. 28.2 x 60.9 cm (11¹/₈ x 24 in.). National Palace Museum, Taipei

An enlightened person, yet he looks down upon the world;
He looks upon life as play, full of humorous jokes.

People see him as [an aristocratic] Hsieh Hsiün [fl. ca. 400] beautifully decked out with a purple
silk satchet,

I believe him to be even wiser than Tung-fang Shuo at the Chin-ma [palace] gate.²²

Tung-fang Shuo (ca. 161–87 B.C.) was a Han dynasty court-jester who could challenge the emperor without incurring punishment because he always did so wittily. Beneath Ni T'san's cool and dandish surface Chang Yü saw a similarly troubled but humane and wise person.

Ni's generosity to friends in need was legendary. Wang Pin recounted how Ni had arranged the funeral of his teacher Wang Jen-fu as if he was a member of his own family and made a generous grant of money to his aging friend Chang Yü.²³ According to Chou Nan-lao,

If some out-of-town officials died in Ni's town and their coffins could not be returned to their distant homes, Ni would donate mountain property to bury them. . . . He was kind and generous to relatives and friends, and always gladly helped people in need. His demeanor was bright as the autumn moon and warm and kind as the spring sun.²⁴

Yet his open and often impulsive behavior also brought him awkward moments. T'ao Tsung-i (ca. 1320–after 1402), author of *Notes Taken after Setting Aside the Plow* (*Cho-keng lu*), related how once Ni presented at a party a gift of 100 piculs of rice to a scholar named Ch'en Po, who, feeling publicly embarrassed, distributed the rice among the assembled courtesans and attendants, and broke off his friendship with Ni.²⁵

By the mid-1340s Ni T'san's halcyon days at the Pure and Secluded Pavilion were over. Beginning in the 1330s natural disasters—floods, droughts, and locusts—had struck China year after year, causing relentless famine and plague. From spring to fall in 1335 no rain had fallen in Chiang-nan, which produced the bulk of the country's grain. By 1337, according to one account, Chekiang and Kiangsu provinces alone had more than 400,000 starving families.²⁶ The Mongol government responded by heavily taxing wealthy

families in the region, including Ni T'san's. The government's system of forcing the wealthy to "contribute rice to earn official ranks" (*ju-su pu-kuan*) temporarily forestalled disaster, but soon the officials had to coerce the landowners, on threat of imprisonment and physical punishment, to accept titles and make payments.

Even under the best of circumstances, Ni T'san would probably have found his life difficult, since his bookish predilections and religious friends encouraged him to disdain worldly affairs, including management of his property. As Wang Pin pointed out, "At the beginning of the Chih-cheng era [in the early 1340s], even before insurrections broke out, he started to sell off his family's farm properties. He never worked at what wealthy people usually do, but instead worked hard at being a poet. People would privately laugh at him and think him a fool."²⁷

Reacting to the overly ornate poetic style of the early Yüan dynasty and reflecting the chaotic social conditions of the late Yüan time, mid-fourteenth-century Chinese writers emphasized feelings and self-expression in their works. Ni T'san's poetry was a prominent example of this new realism. In Chou Nan-lao's opinion, Ni T'san's poetry "does not try to be technically perfect, yet its thoughts are harmonious and light, quiet and relaxed [*ch'ung-tan hsiao-san*], and at the same time full of a sense of moral integrity [*ch'i-chieh*]."²⁸ Insisting that "poetry must say things," Ni T'san preferred a realistic approach and stressed feelings over style in his poems. In the late 1360s he compared his time to happier eras:

In the present [Yüan] dynasty earlier poets, such as Chao [Meng-fu] and Yü [Chi] had sung praises of a peaceful and prosperous era, but after nearly forty years of [rebel] warfare few poets these days can refrain from spinning words of pessimism, anxiety, and troubles. . . . There are those who moan and groan without illness, feign and pretend [suffering] with no sense of integrity [*chieh*]. This is the major sickness of some poets: they are worthless people.²⁹

Upholding T'ao Ch'ien (364–427) and Tu Fu (712–770) as his two ideals, Ni T'san found T'ao's work to exemplify a "harmonious, light, and peaceful" (*ch'ung-tan ho-p'ing*) style that "captures the moral aspect of man's nature and emotions" (*hsing-ch'ing chih-cheng*), and Tu's poems to be "inspired by world affairs" (*yin-shih hsing-huai*) and "patriotic, righteous, and passionate" (*chung-i chi-lieh*).³⁰ For Ni it was this moral aspect (*cheng*) in man's nature and emotions that, when released, restored to him his sense of joy and rapture in human existence. A good poet, according to Ni, "never wastes a single sentence without saying something real, never devotes himself to empty decoration alone"; good poetry "is like silk, hemp, and grain, which are immediately needed in the world, and is not like carved ice sculpture or fancily embossed paper, which are merely wasted effort. . . . One must guard against affectation and indolence," he cautioned. "One must never imitate or plagiarize; above all one must avoid using difficult language and superficial ideas."³¹

Throughout his difficult life Ni T'san amused and sustained himself by writing verse. Composing in both the ancient (*ku*) and the regulated (*lü*) styles, he left behind several long autobiographical poems, but wrote mostly shorter ones, especially in the quatrain form, in either five-character or seven-character lines. Composed casually wherever he happened to be, whether at home or traveling, these poems usually record what he was doing, what he saw, or how he felt. Many of them were inscribed on his paintings, and they echo the same feelings and perceptions as his visual expressions. The poems now help us to reconstruct moments of his life in surprising detail.

In a preface to two poems dated 1347, Ni T'san lamented, "Now that I am a farmer, I am tied to sowing and harvesting, and because of burdensome tax duties, I am constantly running between the prefecture and county government offices."³² A sad and urgent note fills every poem, painting, and calligraphic work by Ni T'san at this time. In his autobiographical poem "Speaking My Thoughts" ("Shu-huai"), composed in the late 1340s, the artist bemoaned his past and current circumstances:

THE YÜAN DYNASTY: THE RISE OF SELF-EXPRESSION

Pity me that I lost my father in childhood.
I was raised by my eldest brother.
I was determined to pursue the life of a scholar,
To live by righteous deeds and to uphold pure principles. . . .

Noble positions and great wealth I disdained:
I wished only to leave behind a good name.
Suddenly my eldest brother died,
And our mother [his father's official wife] soon followed. . . .

I fished and farmed, and kept company with my own mother,
But public and private affairs daily troubled me.
I strove hard for twenty years—
Now the whole world is in great confusion.

I pay taxes until I am bled dry.
I handle government business while worrying about a sick child.
I am truly depressed by squalid, vulgar problems;
Unruly disputes upset and frighten me.
Giving everything away, I must bow to government clerks.
Under starlight I wait in the magistrate's courtroom.
In days past I have known the glories of springtime—
Now I struggle to survive in frozen snow.

He considered escaping, but felt trapped by family responsibilities:

How can I not think of running away from all this?
But the thought brings me deeper emotions:
I am afraid of causing my mother worry,
So how can I leave on a long trip?
Even if I gave away my family's inheritance,
I would have to swallow my sorrow and remain to till the land.
It is not that I want to live like an ant;
My real desire is to sail away into the vast sea. . . .

When Yeh-chang [Confucius's disciple] was in prison,
He was highly praised by Confucius;
But when Chi K'ang [223–263 B.C.] indulged in reckless behavior,
His only distinction was to get himself killed.
Even dressed in coarse clothes I can still hold a jade in my heart;
High rank in heaven needs no external trappings.
No physical abuse can blemish my character,
While protesting against violence may amount only to boastfulness.
If an orchid grows in the midst of brambles,
The brambles will not hide its delicate fragrance.³³

Seeking spiritual consolation, Ni Tsan associated more and more frequently with Taoist and Buddhist priests, who counseled total detachment and retreat as a means of escape from physical harm. In a poem composed as a colophon to an early edition of Ni's poems, completed in the late 1340s, Chang Yü wrote:

You are drawn to mountains and valleys.
 A powerless scholar, you find the times against you.
 Like serpents, the strong and mighty will swallow you;
 Like tigers, endlessly greedy, they will gnaw at you.
 Why do you risk so much danger?
 You are merely burdened by your land and property:
 Like an old elephant stuck in the mire,
 To extricate yourself you need courage and resolve.

Who but yourself can break the chain of causality?
 Between morning and night there will be many vicissitudes of fortune.
 Thus only the intelligent and the wise
 Know how to place themselves outside these changes.
 How worthy was Chü Po-yü [Confucius's disciple]
 Who, discovering his errors, had no regrets about them.³⁴

In 1351, after a disastrous flood inundated the Huai region in the north China plain, full-scale rebellions broke out all over China. Soon fires and fierce fighting between rebel forces had lain waste to much of Hang-chou, the city that had been the seat of the Southern Sung dynasty. Su-chou, the nearest city to Ni Tsan's home in Wu-hsi, was relatively safe because of its superior government defenses. The water country of Lake T'ai and the three rivers of Lou, Wu, and Sung—with their network of small streams, innumerable bays, inlets, and islands covered with mulberry trees and aquatic plants—afforded hiding places for many wealthy refugees. In early 1352 Ni Tsan loaded some of his worldly possessions onto a houseboat and set sail. For years he had to maintain this nomadic life, stopping at the homes of friends along the way and moving on at a moment's notice. Like Mi Fu's Calligraphy and Painting Barge, Ni's houseboat was filled with books and scrolls, tea implements, and trays of painting brushes.³⁵

As a moral Neo-Confucian scholar, Ni was deeply offended by the very thought of rebellion, as he wrote in the poem "On Becoming Aware" ("Ching-shih"):

A lamb kneels while it suckles—in order to show deference;
 When birds put food in the beaks of their young—the chicks never disobey.
 These are small creatures that show heaven's principles.
 Deeply I sigh, my tears running down my lapels.³⁶

Instead, as he set down in "Wind and Rain" ("Feng-yü"), he reacted to his life of exile with feelings of defeat and melancholy:

In wind and rain, desolate and bleak, I chant a mournful tune.
 Old memories rush back to me, but already they seem faint.
 My mountain friend urges more wine on me, while the moon rises through the flowers;
 A girl from Ch'in-huai plays on the zither "The Mulberry Trees in the Field."
 The shadow cast by a lamp fills half the window pane, recalling a dream a thousand *li* away.
 Another day spent on the muddy road churns up my stomach a full nine times.
 In this life any hostel may serve as adequate shelter;
 I deceive myself by imagining that every town is my own.³⁷

After a year of wandering he stopped at the home of a relative, Lu Hsüan-su, at Fu-li, in early 1353.³⁸ There he sent for his wife and his mother. In "Composed on the Sixth Day [of the Lunar Month]" ("Liu-jih t'i"), Ni described his family members' flight from Wu-hsi:

THE YÜAN DYNASTY: THE RISE OF SELF-EXPRESSION

Stopping over with the Ch'iu family they stole some rest,
The whole family fleeing, headed for the border pass at night.
The county officials were arresting everyone, emptying entire neighborhoods—
Bringing the family through was like escaping from the gates of hell.³⁹

As Ni Tzan and his family were preparing to take leave from the Lu family at Fu-li (in about April 1353), Ni wrote this poem, "Farewell to a Daughter of the Lu Family" ("Pieh Lu shih nu"):

To leave or to stay—both are sad choices.
The Lord of Heaven must have plans for us.
There may be a safe haven ahead of our journey;
Do not believe everything will go wrong for me.⁴⁰

He asked a friend named Han Po-ch'ing in a poem, "Chi Han Po-ch'ing," about a more permanent home:

Where may I rent a farm property?
I have no dream of a golden hall or a jade-filled room—
Just a place for raising vegetables and herbs, collecting firewood, and fishing,
Preferably close to some mountain or a green lake.⁴¹

And, struggling to maintain his mental equilibrium, he composed "Fair or Foul" ("Shun-ni"):

Fair or foul, I shall have neither love nor resentment,
Like white clouds above untouched by worldly dust.
If worldly affairs are like fire, my mind should be like water;
In my inner house I must remain my own master.⁴²

After hiding his family in a safe place, he often returned to Wu-hsi, surreptitiously visiting his ancestral home. In one "miscellaneous poem" (*tsa-fu*) he wrote:

Once I built a fishing jetty over a river;
Now the vermilion gates and beautiful houses have all changed.
I am like the sparrow of the [once powerful] Wang and Hsieh families [of the Six Dynasties period];
Year after year it flies by the white-boarded windows.⁴³

On one of these surreptitious visits, in 1355, he was seized by the local authorities, and jailed and beaten, as he recalled in "Chih-cheng Era, I-wei Year [1355], Poem on Man in White" ("Chih-cheng i-wei su-i shih"):

My white clothes stained,
A prisoner in the public courtrooms.
Covered with wounds and confined,
My heart is full of fear.
Cruel officials behave like tigers:
They have no pity.
They treat people like swine,
Killing them, heaping abuse on them.
Though I conduct myself with propriety,
I know I have myself to blame.
Even considering the family property,
And my mother in homeless exile,
To linger and not stay away
Is the cause of my sorrow.

To have my body abused and parent endangered
Is against filial piety and righteous behavior. . . .

There are orchids in empty valleys,
Where it is secluded and vast.

There is a quiet little cottage

With simple sustenance, harmony, and happiness.

I can hunt, I can fish,

My heart will not be confused;

Peacefully I can cultivate myself;

Awake or asleep I can forget my troubles.

I shall realize my old resolve:

In retirement I shall find simple enjoyment.⁴⁴

So, returning to their refugee home on the river, Ni Tsan and his family settled down to a life of "simple sustenance, harmony, and happiness." For about ten years, between 1356 and 1366, they lived in the water country of Li-tse, at a place Ni nicknamed the "Snail Hut" (Kua-niu-lu). Compared to the Wu-hsi days, this was "another lifetime," though the family's circumstances seem to have been stable and even well-to-do. In 1357 Ni wrote to the scholar Ch'en Chih (1292-1362) to engage him as a tutor for his youngest son, Yang-cheng, who was seven years old: "To teach him where to go, and how always to aim for propriety and righteousness, we must not neglect the beginning."⁴⁵

In March 1356 the rebel Chang Shih-ch'eng's forces crossed the Yangtze River and seized Su-chou and other areas east of Lake T'ai. Chang established ministries and bureaus in imitation of an imperial administration and invited talented scholars to join his government. Many well-known literary figures around the Su-chou and Sung-chiang areas joined the Chang regime immediately, and more followed in late 1357 and early 1358, when Chang legitimized himself by accepting a Mongol appointment as grand marshal (*t'ai-wei*) for the region he controlled. But Ni Tsan steadfastly declined Chang's repeated invitations. In 1363 Chang again declared himself independent, calling himself prince of Wu. By the summer of 1365 Chu Yüan-chang (1328-1398), the future founder of the Ming dynasty, who started his career as a Red Turban rebel occupying the area west of Lake T'ai with Nanking as his base, began his campaign against Chang Shih-ch'eng to the east. After a long and bitter struggle (from December 1366 to August 1367) Chang surrendered Su-chou to Chu's general, Hsü Ta.

Once again Ni Tsan had to abandon his home, this time to the marauding soldiers. He appears to have been completely alone by this time; his wife, Chiang Yüan-chao, had died in 1363,⁴⁶ and there is no further mention in the poems and other documents of his youngest child. Between December 21, 1366, and January 6, 1368—as he recalled in a preface to a poem—he spent his time sailing on the Mao River.⁴⁷ Soon after the establishment of the Ming dynasty on January 23, 1368, he sailed back briefly to Li-tse and Su-chou, then spent the next few years wandering throughout the Chiang-nan area, visiting old haunts he had not seen for twenty or thirty years. According to his epitaph writer,

(in his late years, he became quieter and more withdrawn than ever. Having lost or given away everything he ever owned, he did his best to forget his worries. Wearing a yellow [Taoist] cap and country clothes, he roamed the lakes and mountains, leading a recluse's life. His appearance became loftier than ever: he would not utter one word of flattery to please an official, nor set foot inside the doors of a grandee. . . . When the world began to settle down [i.e., after January 1368], he came back to the city. Mingling in the crowd of refugees, he carefully hid his light and avoided trouble.⁴⁸

In the autumn of 1374 Ni Tsan finally returned to Wu-hsi from Su-chou. There he fell ill at the home of a relative, Tsou Wei-kao, where he died, according to Chou Nan-lao, on the eleventh day of the eleventh lunar month of the *chia-yin* year (December 13, 1374).

A Rustic Style

As a calligrapher Ni Tsan, the recluse, presents an interesting contrast to Chao Meng-fu, who had practiced his art under the aegis of the Yüan court. In 1359 Chang Ching (Chang Te-chi), the newly appointed magistrate of Su-chou under the rebel government of Chang Shih-ch'eng, refurbished and expanded the buildings of the Su-chou county (*hsien*) school. After commissioning the well-known scholar Cheng Yüan-yü (1292-1369) to compose a eulogy for the dedicatory stele to be placed at the school gate,⁴⁹ the magistrate asked his father Chang Chien (1281-1370), a friend of Ni Tsan's, to inquire if Ni would be the calligrapher for the stone inscription. Ni firmly declined the invitation, replying to the elder Chang:

The essay for the stone has a charming archaic and plain flavor; it is truly a masterpiece by the venerable Cheng. But my faulty calligraphy is not suited for such a formal place of learning; its dots and strokes are not strong and graceful, and its character formations are common and ugly. Furthermore I can write only small-size characters and am no good at all at large-size ones. If the magistrate wants the stele to be a lasting monument, he should ask someone with not only great calligraphic skill, but also an uncommonly superior moral character; then the calligraphy will match the literary composition. How can my faulty calligraphy equal such lofty demands?⁵⁰

The unspoken reason for Ni's firm refusal was probably political. In asking Ni to be the calligrapher on that occasion, the magistrate Chang Ching may well have intended to entangle him officially with the rebel Chang Shih-ch'eng's government. In spite of his friendship with the magistrate's father, Ni may not have wished to appear to lend his personal endorsement to an official function. Yet the reasons that Ni gave for declining the invitation were genuine. As a calligrapher he was not, either by temperament or by training, suited to the writing of a monumental inscription for a commemorative stele. He was exclusively a writer of informal *hsiao-k'ai*, or "small-size script"; his individual characters seldom exceed three-quarters of an inch in height.

Growing up just across Lake T'ai from Wu-hsing, the home of Chao Meng-fu, Ni Tsan absorbed some of Chao's influences. Yet the calligraphic styles of the two men represent, in a psychological as well as a social sense, unalterably different ways of life. As a countrified recluse, Ni could no more be expected to write in Chao's elegant, tightly organized regular script than to assume Chao's official robes and courtly formality.

(By following a primitive, rustic mode of writing, Ni Tsan created a distinctive style for the eccentric, reclusive scholar who lived "in the wilderness" (*tsai-yeh*). The calligrapher he chose as a model was Chung Yu, the Wei dynasty master who developed the archaic clerical form of the Han period into an early regular script. A well-known work attributed to Chung Yu, *Memorial to Recommend Chi-chih* (*Chien Chi-chih piao*; fig. 107) was found at that time in the collection of Lu Hsing-chih (1275-after 1349), a clansman of Ni Tsan's relative Lu Hsüan-su who lived at Lake Fen, not far from Fu-li. In a colophon dated 1349 Lu Hsing-chih, who classified Chung Yu as "of the Han period," wrote of the work as one of "lofty antiquity, pure and simple . . . without a trace of the Tsin-T'ang look of a pretty girl wearing flowers."⁵¹ The phrase "pretty girl wearing flowers" was used by critics of that time to denigrate Chao Meng-fu's overlegant calligraphic style.⁵² While Chao had based his regular script on Tsin and T'ang models, Ni Tsan used Chung Yu's style to re-create an earlier running-clerical style, with squat or square characters, mostly level strokes, generally simplified brushwork, and prominent wavelike ending strokes.

Since his intention was to use calligraphy to express himself, Ni Tsan's handwriting from the mid-1340s on, when he began to roam the lakes to dodge tax collectors, fully reflected his highly charged emotional state. In *The Six Gentlemen* (*Liu chün-tzu*), dated 1345 (fig. 108), a small hanging scroll in the Shanghai Museum, Ni Tsan's colophon to the left of the trees reads:

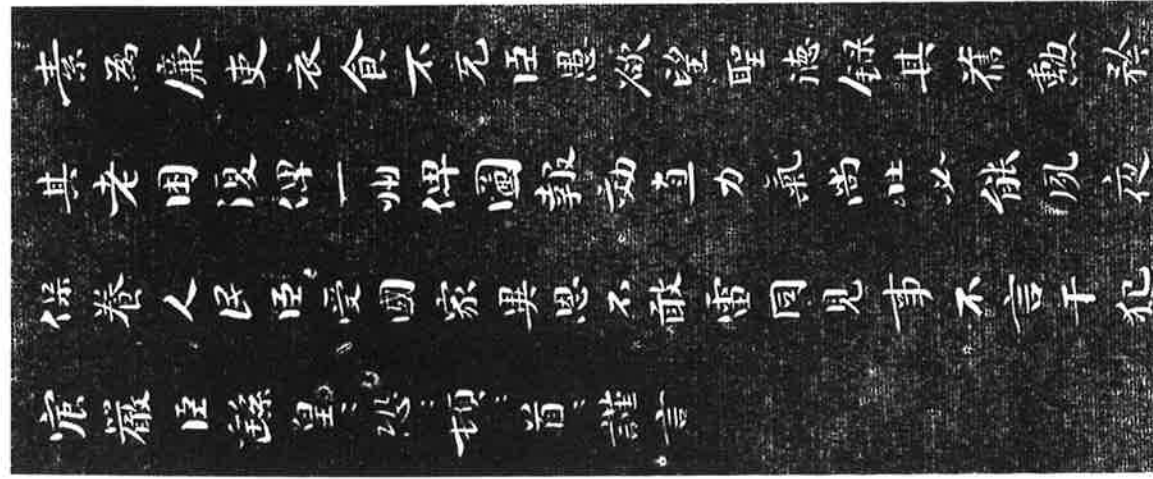


Fig. 107. Attributed to Chung Yu, *Memorial to Recommend Chi-chih* (*Chien Chi-chih piao*). Undated, A.D. 2nd–3rd century. 25.7 x 13.7 cm (10¹/₈ x 5³/₈ in.). Rubbing of inscription

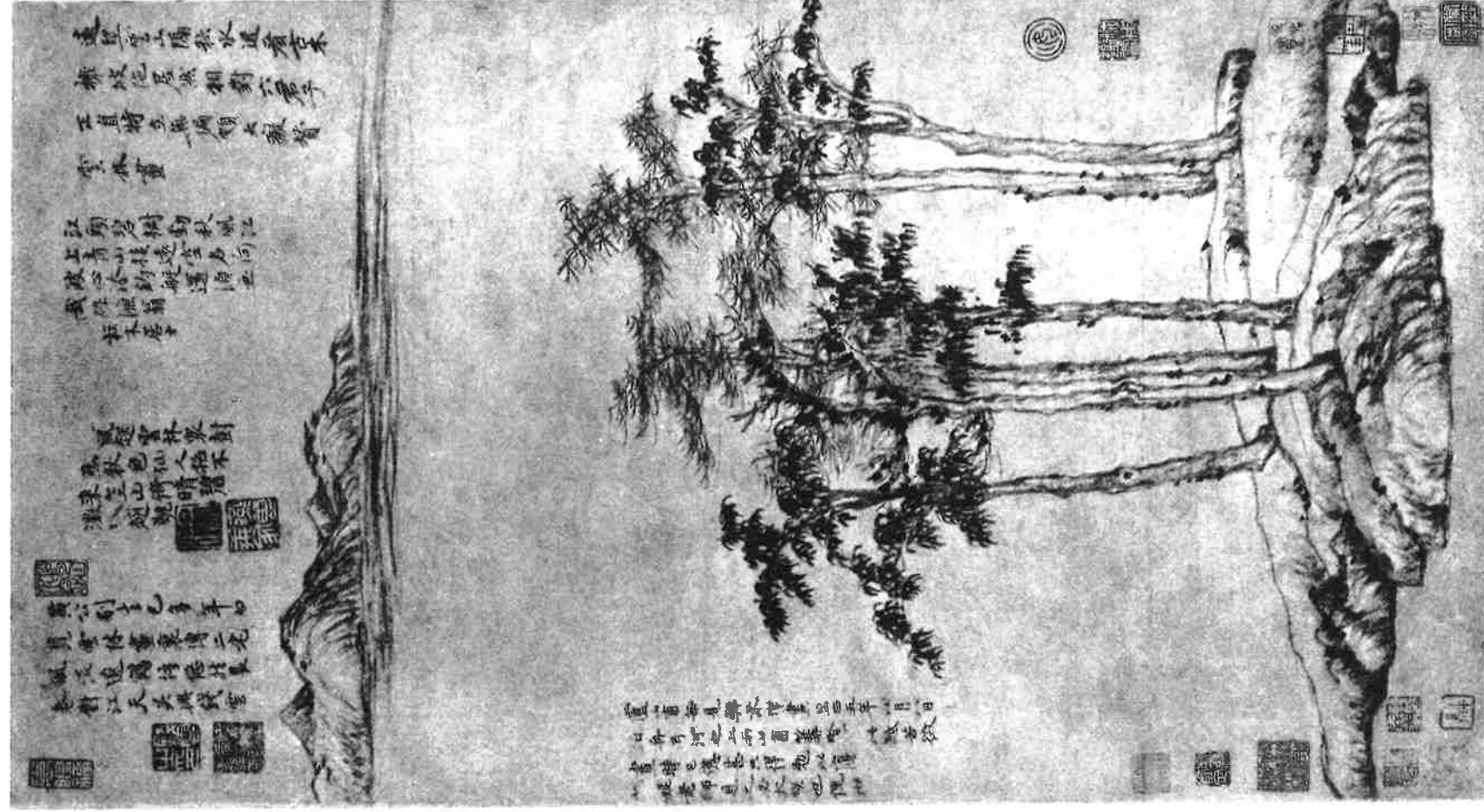


Fig. 108. Nü Tsan, *The Six Gentlemen* (*Liu chün-tzu*). Dated 1345. Hanging scroll, ink on paper. Shanghai Museum

Every time Lu Shan-fu [Lu Heng] sees me, he urges me to paint for him. On the eighth day of the fourth lunar month of the fifth year of the Chih-cheng era [May 10, 1345] I had just docked my boat on the Bow River when he greeted me with a lamp and a piece of paper, insisting strenuously that I paint for him. I was feeling extremely weary from the journey, but did my best to answer his request. When the old master Ta-ch'ih [Huang Kung-wang; 1269–1354] sees this, he will have a good laugh over it.

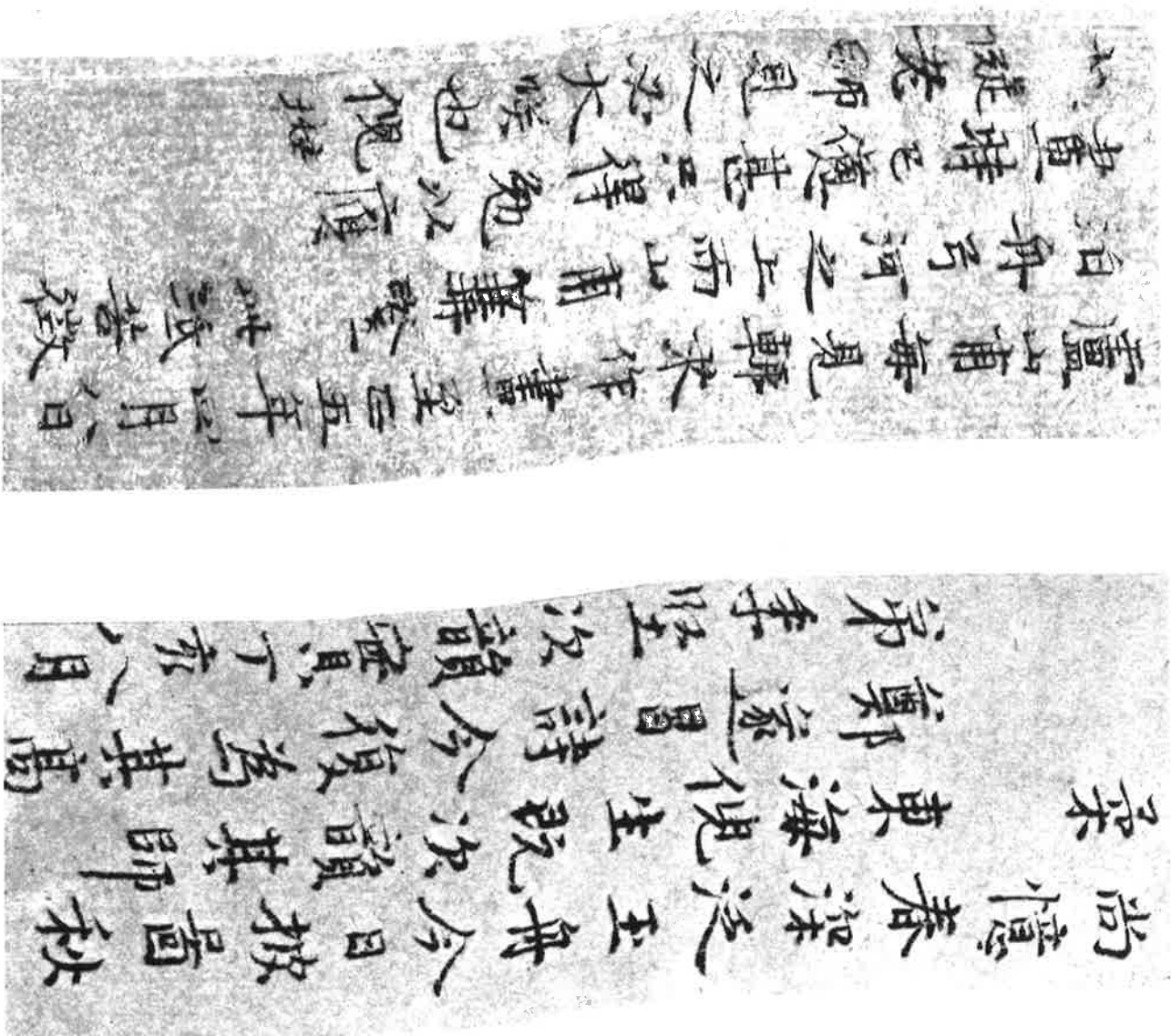


Fig. 108a. Detail of inscription by Ni Tsan, fig. 108

Fig. 109. Ni Tsan, inscription, dated 1347, on *Bright Peonies (Mu-tan)* by Ch'ien Hsüan. Handscroll, ink and color on paper. National Palace Museum, Taipei

The calligraphy (fig. 108a) shows a nervous energy and tensile strength: the brushwork is taut and bony, and certain elements in the writing are tightly wound up and lopsided. The writer deliberately exaggerated the contradictions between the regular- and the clerical-script types to create tension and interest: the naturally slanting regular-script elements are forced into the horizontal clerical compositional structure. In a poetic colophon of 1347 (fig. 109), written on a painting of brightly colored peonies by Ch'ien Hsüan (ca. 1235-1300), a Southern Sung loyalist who felt he had outlived his time, Ni Tsan wrote:

Red and purple filling the table, like a piece of rich brocade from Shu [Szechuan province],
It reminds me of some late spring days when I sailed in a jade-studded boat.
Now I see this painting in autumn, in the eighth moon;
How sad are the bare branches, which have lost their soft fragrant flowers.

The handwriting, that of a frightened fugitive, is spare and unadorned; the mood is somber and subdued. The expression of emotion also influences the style and composition of Ni's paintings. *The Six*

Gentlemen shows six bleak looming spikes dominating the riverbank. A thin mist seems to drift across the river, giving a sense of utter isolation from everything except the river and the lonely trees. Lu Heng, Ni Tsan's host after his tiring journey and the recipient of this painting, was a noted scholar and connoisseur in Su-chou who often played host to well-known scholars and artists of the time.⁵³ It appears that when Ni arrived at Lu's home that night other distinguished guests were present—among them the old Taoist scholar and painter Huang Kung-wang. It was Huang who gave Ni's painting its title, by inscribing in the upper right corner of the painting a four-line poem:

Distant cloudy mountains range across the autumn river;
Nearby, ancient trees huddle by the sloping shore.
Six gentlemen stand facing one another,
Upright, straight, outstanding, and unbending.

Ni's work, painted in homage to Huang Kung-wang, resembles in its brushwork Huang's masterpiece *Dwelling in the Fu-ch'un Mountains*, dated 1350 (cf. fig. 67). The modeling of the rocks in both paintings follows Tung Yüan's hemp-skin (*ma-p'i*) idiom. The loosely directed texture strokes build, layer upon layer, until the forms emerge. The individual brushstrokes are—in Huang Kung-wang's words—"blurred and blended" (*hu-t'u ch'i-pi*)⁵⁴ to suggest atmospheric forms in space; and the tree branches and foliage dots project and recede three-dimensionally. [The composition of the trees and slopes is a fully realized, realistic spatial structure: all the elements near and far extend in an integrated vision along a convincingly receding ground plane.] Ni's round (*chung feng*) brushstrokes "write" the trees and rock forms as in seal and cursive calligraphy. Compared to Chao Meng-fu's *Twin Pines against a Flat Vista* (cf. fig. 104), Ni's round brushwork is "plain, light, and natural." [Ni's slow and gentle cursive brushwork, though full of emotion and inner excitement, struggles to maintain an outward calm and balance, befitting a man who insisted, "In my inner house I must remain my own master."⁵⁵]

Traditionally, tall pine trees, in the words of the tenth-century master Ching Hao, "possess the virtuous air of a gentleman."⁵⁶ In early Yüan painting (fig. 110) a new emotionalism appeared in the rendering of the old theme of "wintry trees," contorted tree trunks with spiky branches, devil-face rocks peeking out from under the snow, an icy river, and restless, hungry crows tumbling and squawking against the dark sky. All of these elements convey a somber, gloomy mood that recalls the patriotic lament of Tu Fu: "The nation is broken, but the mountains and rivers remain."⁵⁷ In Ni Tsan's paintings ordinary trees, many of them gaunt and dry, stripped by age or harsh weather, seem larger than life. They emanate an impression of grandeur that seems to symbolize the artist's own noble and unbending spirit.]

[The metaphor of clustered trees as lonely friends

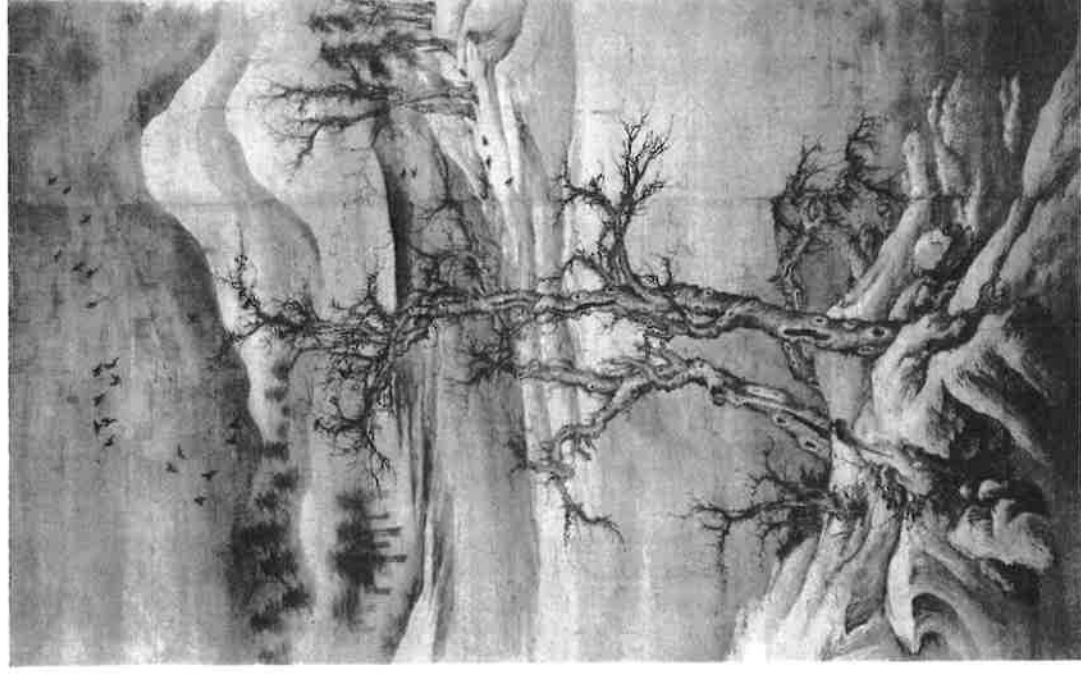


Fig. 110. Lo Chih-ch'uan, *Crows in Old Trees* (*Han-lin kuei-yü*). Undated, early 14th century. Hanging scroll, ink and light color on silk. 150.8 x 80.0 cm (4 ft. 11³/₈ in. x 31¹/₂ in.). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

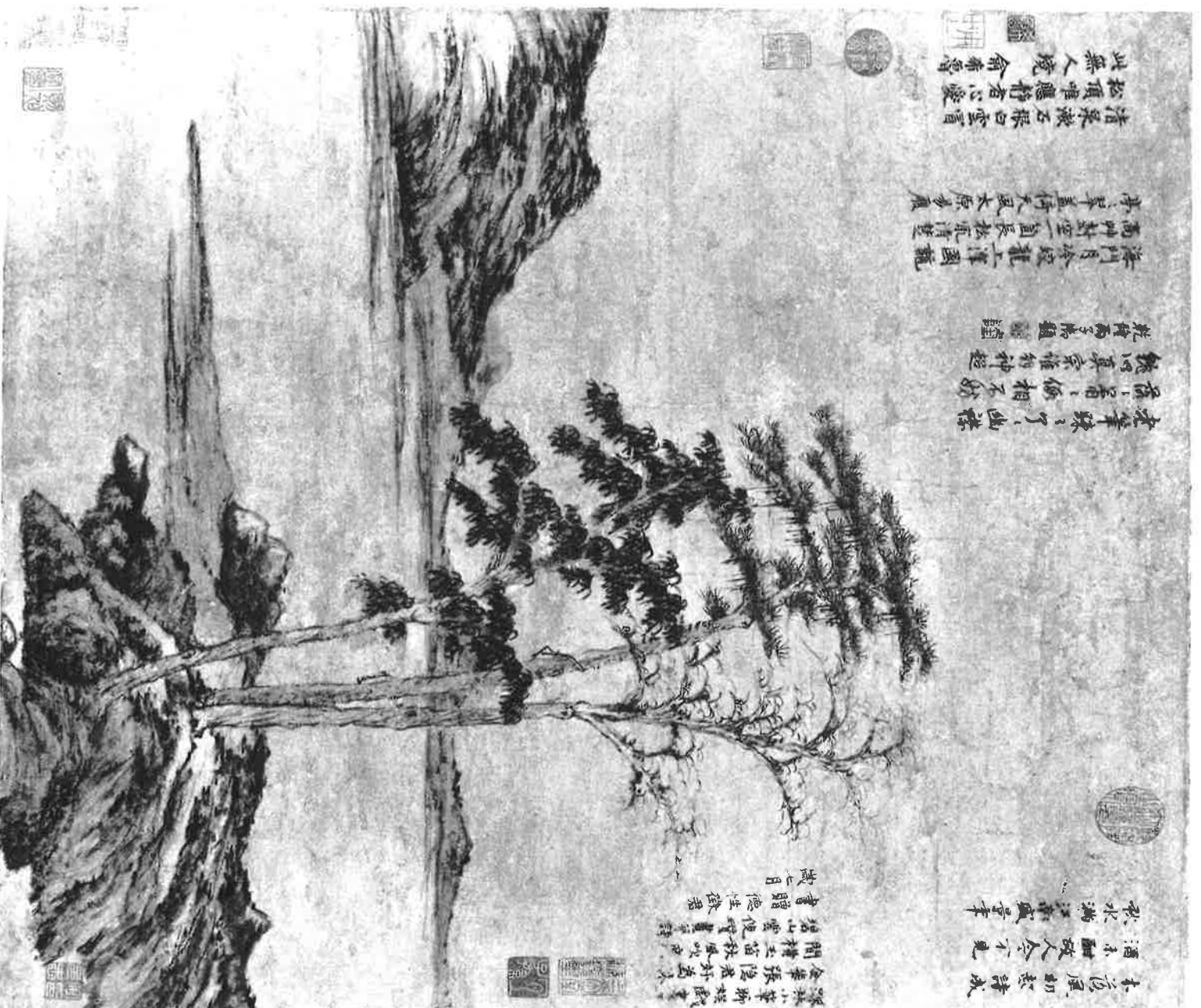


Fig. 111. Ni Tsan, *A Sparse Grove* (*Shu-lin hsiao-pi*). Undated, ca. 1345. Hanging scroll, ink on paper. Osaka Municipal Museum of Fine Art

is used in many of Ni Tsan's works during this period. In *A Sparse Grove* (*Shu-lin hsiao-pi*), painted about 1345 for Ni's friend Chang Te-hsing (another son of Chang Chien's) (Abe Collection, Osaka Municipal Museum of Fine Art; fig. 111), the artist shows three trees huddled together by a deserted riverbank. On the painting Ni inscribed this poem:

A sparse grove done with a playful small brush;
I painted this for the recluse Master Chang from Chin-hua [in Chekiang province].
You enjoy playing a jade lute in the forest,
When autumn wind blows the cloud away from the green hills.

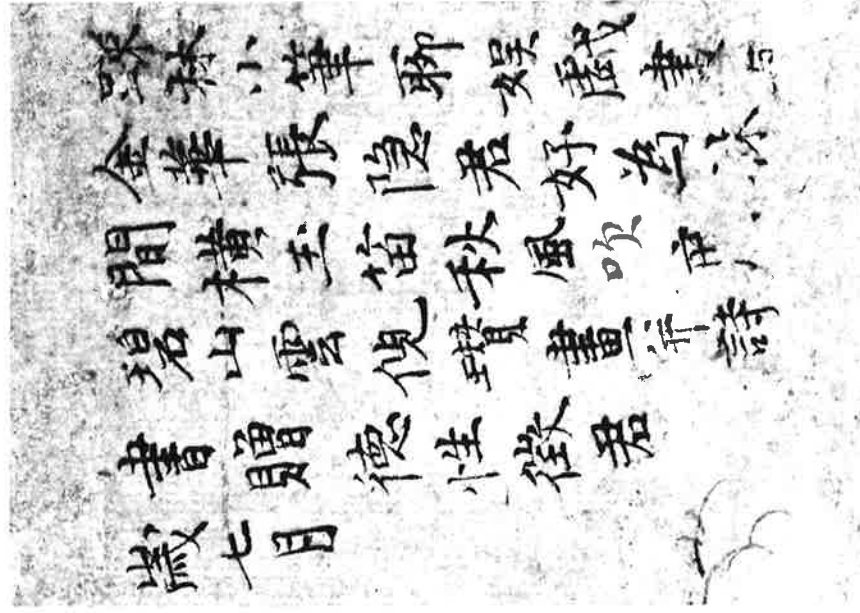
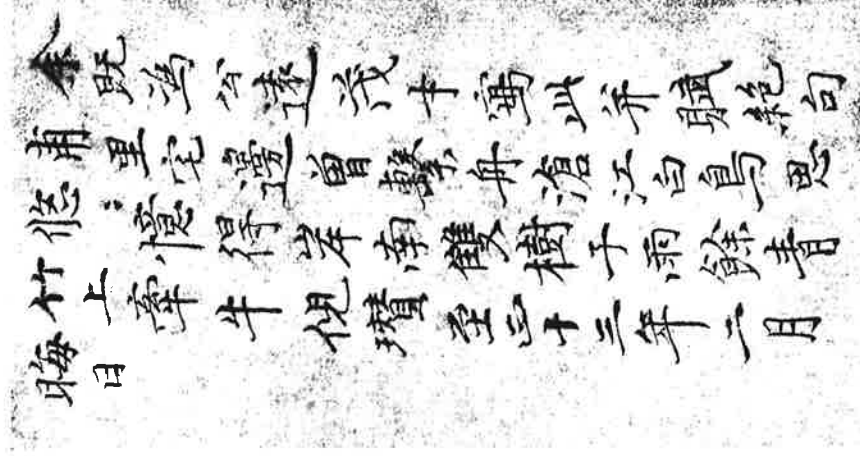


Fig. 111a. Detail of inscription by Ni T'san, fig. 111

Fig. 112a. Ni T'san, inscription on *Twin Trees by the South Bank* (*An-nan shuang-shu*), no. 10

Although the calligraphy of this inscription (fig. 111a) compares closely with that of *The Six Gentlemen* (cf. fig. 108a), the painting has a completely different overall appearance. The rock forms, covered with seemingly careless, almost messy strokes and horizontal dots, reflect an educated taste for childish daubing. For Ni T'san brushwork, here delightfully playful (*hsi*), is painting—the blending of the various kinds of brushstrokes to reveal not only the true landscape, but also the anxious feelings of the artist. (The painting records the moment when transient emotion becomes pure feeling (*ch'ing*), combining urgency with detachment, a characteristic that is uniquely Ni T'san's.)

Another of these symbolic friendship paintings, *Twin Trees by the South Bank* (*An-nan shuang-shu*), was executed at the end of his stay at Fu-li. A small hanging-scroll painting on paper dated “on the last day of the second lunar month of the thirteenth year of the Chih-cheng era,” or April 4, 1353 (now in The Art Museum, Princeton University; no. 10), *Twin Trees* was a farewell present for a younger friend, perhaps one of Ni T'san's hosts. In the upper right corner of the composition the artist inscribed a poem with a prefatory remark (fig. 112a):

Having “written” this picture for the young scholar Kung-yüan, I further composed a quatrain:

I once tied my boat near the cottage at Fu-li,

Where the green river and white gulls stirred my melancholy thoughts.

I shall remember the two trees on the south bank,

How the blue-green bamboo clings, after rain, like morning glories.⁵⁸

In *Twin Trees* the space evoked is open and natural. It shows two beautifully composed trees—one taller, bristling with dry twigs, standing upright, accompanied and balanced by a shorter tree with tender growths, leaning gracefully to one side (fig. 112b); these clearly represent Ni and the friend, Kung-yüan, to whom the painting is dedicated, as close companions who, during Ni's four months' stay at Fu-li, must

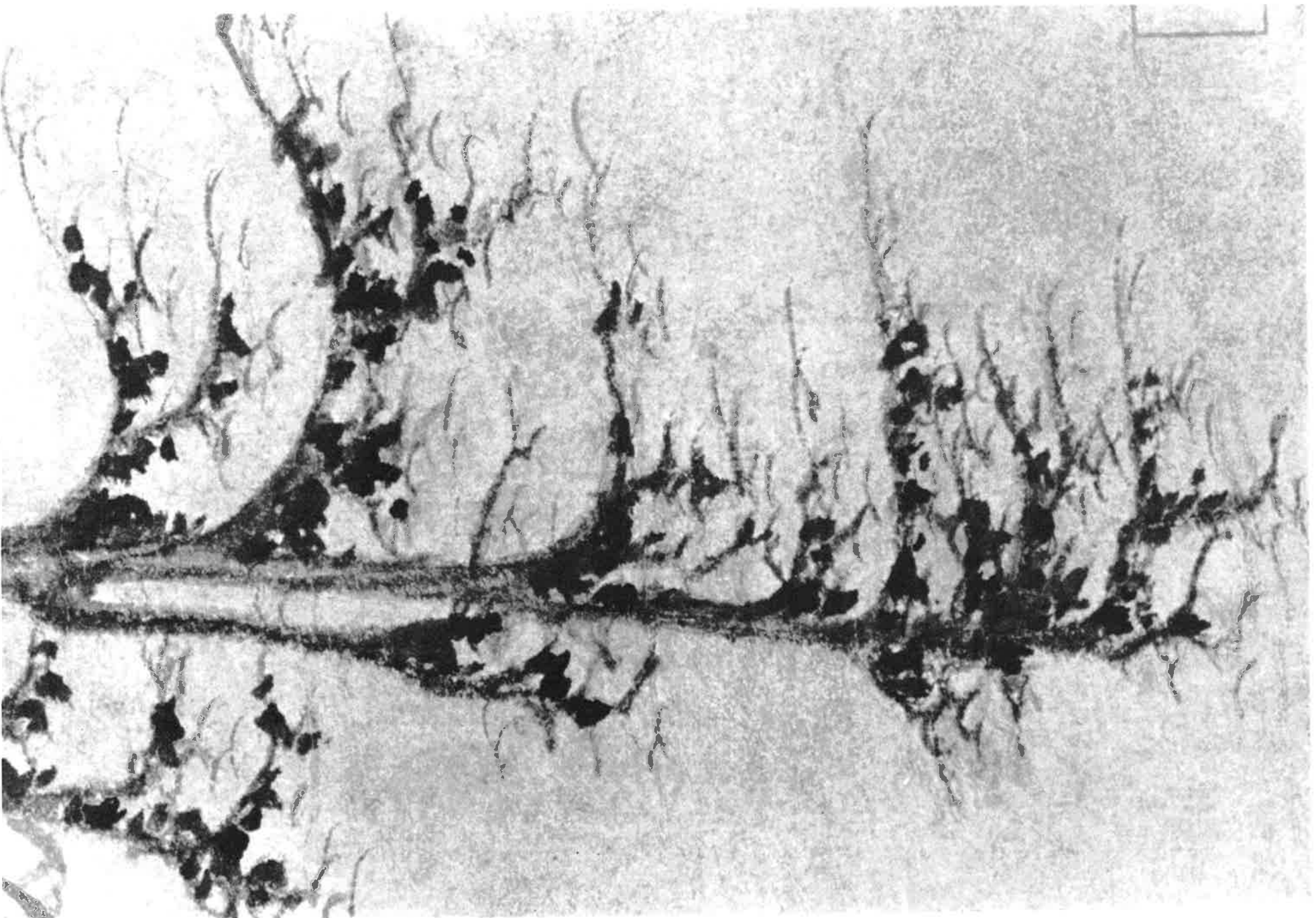


Fig. 112b. Ni Tsan, detail, *Twin Trees by the South Bank* (*Ar-nan shuang-shu*), no. 10



Fig. 112c. Ni Tsan, detail, *Twin Trees by the South Bank* (*An-nan shuang-shu*), no. 10

have spent long hours together on the south bank, exchanging ideas and thoughts while watching the green river, the white gulls, and the clinging blue-green bamboo mentioned in Ni's poem. These paintings and poems, which Ni Tsan created for friends as personal gifts and exchanges, capture isolated moments in what must have been a continual outpouring of feelings and thoughts between close friends. Though outwardly quiet, they are fiercely impassioned. The poem on each painting tempts us to eavesdrop on a private world of intimacies and lost conversations, but the sublime image admits no superfluous details, and presents instead a pure and privileged domain of trees and rocks. [Ni Tsan repeated this composition of trees and rocks over and over, refining and distilling, until each work emerged as a pure image of the mind.]

The manner of painting these two trees was something Ni Tsan had studied and considered carefully over a long time. [Echoing Huang Kung-wang's advice that "a painter should carry his brushes in a leather satchel . . . to draw and record [from nature],"⁵⁹ Ni Tsan once wrote in a poem presented to Fang Yai, a Buddhist priest and painter in Su-chou:

When I first learned to use a brush,

Seeing an object I tried to capture its likeness.

Whenever I traveled, in country or in town,

I sketched object after object, keeping them in my painting basket.

I ask my master Fang I,

What is illusion, what is real?

From the inkwell I take some inkdrops,

To lodge in my painting a boundless feeling of spring.⁶⁰

In the *Painting Manual* (*Hua-p'u*), in the National Palace Museum, Taipei—which is attributed to Ni Tsan and dated 1350, and seems to be an accurate, though not brilliant, copy of an original—the artist shows how two trees with a clump of bamboo between them may be composed (fig. 113); Ni's comments on the left of the illustration read:

For the larger tree the brushwork should be soft, so that its branches look tender; for the smaller tree the brushwork should be ancient, so that it looks archaic. If the larger tree is seen from the front, the smaller tree should grow to one side. These are things a beginner must learn to master. In painting trees the space between them may be filled with bamboo, which need not be done with too much precision. But if the trees are seen on a sunny day, then they should be matched with sunny bamboo. This means the bamboo leaves should all point upward.⁶¹

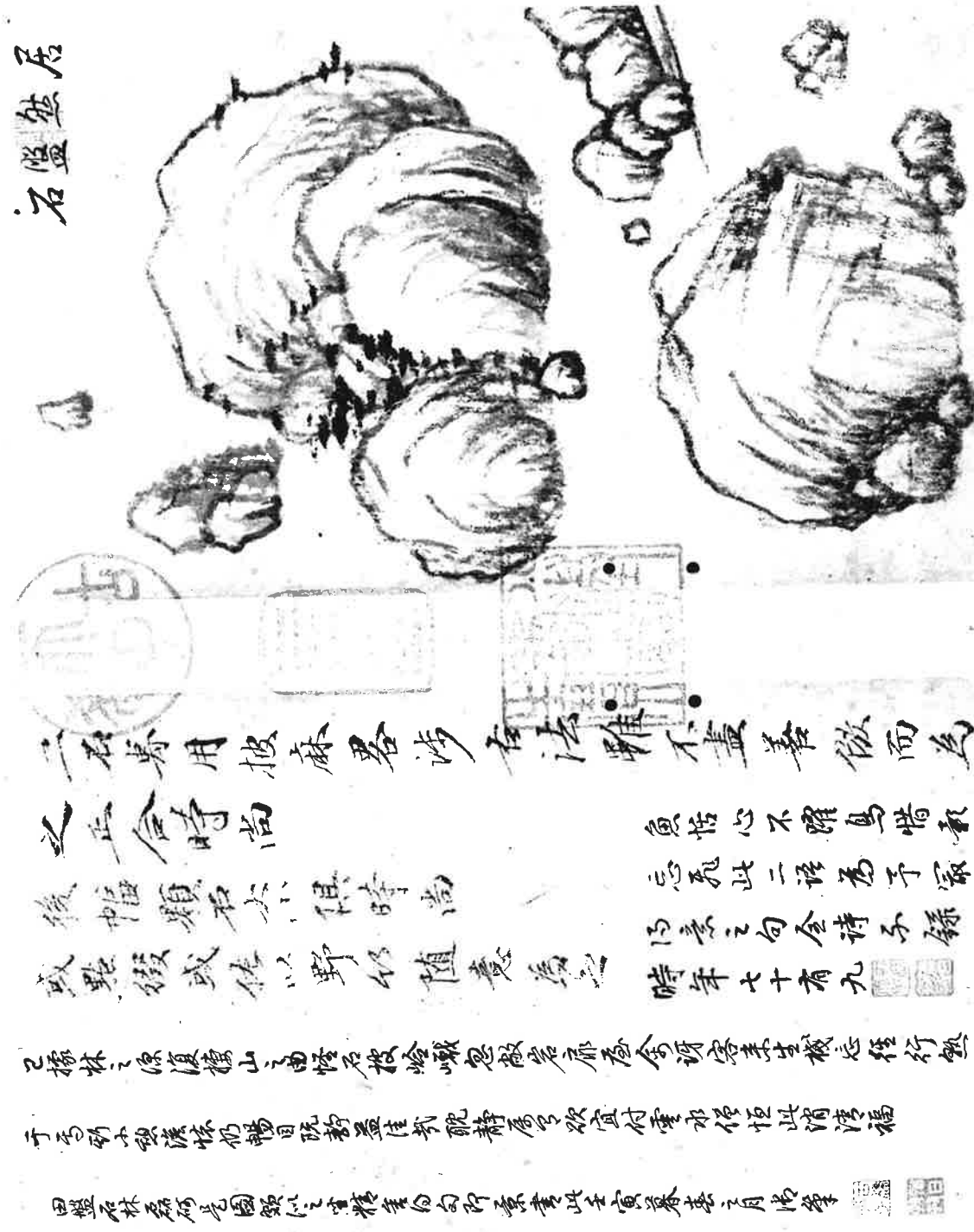


Fig. 115. Anonymous, after Ni Tsan, "Round Boulders." Album leaf 7 of *Painting Manual* (Hua-p'u), ink on paper. 23.6 x 14.2 cm (9 1/4 x 5 5/8 in.). National Palace Museum, Taipei

In *Twin Trees*, which its poem says is "after rain," the tree branches droop toward the ground, and the bamboo leaves also point downward. The next illustration in the *Painting Manual* (fig. 114) is captioned: "Bamboo with leaves drooping downward describe a scene after rain."⁶²

The rocks in *Twin Trees* are round boulders done with parallel draping hemp-fiber texture strokes (cf. fig. 112c). In another illustration in the *Painting Manual* (fig. 115), Ni Tsan pictures the round boulders, noting that "in these two groups of rocks I use especially the draping hemp-fiber [*p'i-ma*] technique, bringing it somewhat closer to the ancient method. Even if a student does not do this perfectly, by following it he will be in step with the taste of the time."⁶³

By "taste of the time" Ni Tsan meant the brush idiom of Tung Yüan. By the mid-fourteenth century the southern landscape tradition of Tung Yüan—which Kuo Hsi had characterized as the "earthen" mode of the landscape—had become the preferred idiom of the scholar-painters in Chiang-nan. By the very nature of its brush techniques, the Li Ch'eng idiom was more suited for descriptive realism, while the Tung Yüan hemp-fiber pattern encouraged free calligraphic expression. The contrast between styles of representational realism and self-expression can be seen in Ni Tsan's *Twin Trees* and Ts'ao Chih-po's (1272–1355) fan painting *Trees and Rocks* (*Shu shih t'u*) done about 1340 (The Art Museum, Princeton University; fig. 116).⁶⁴ Ts'ao, a wealthy gentleman-painter from the Hua-t'ing district (modern Sung-chiang), on the Wu-sung River, specialized in the Li Ch'eng and Kuo Hsi idioms; like his hanging scroll *Twin Pines*, dated 1329 (now in the National Palace Museum, Taipei), the Princeton fan follows the style of Li Ch'eng. In the Princeton painting, the tree and rock motifs complement and echo the curved edge of the silk fan, subtly creating a

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series of richly interacting large-and-small, high-and-low, front-and-back, dry-and-moist, spiky-and-smooth yin-yang relationships. Two large trees accompanied by two small rocks in the left foreground, for example, are balanced by a group of small trees and a large cluster of rocks in the right background; the leafless tall tree in the front, covered with a desiccated vine, raises its branches, while the shorter, luxuriant broad-leaved tree behind it bends and spreads its foliage. Ts'ao's brushwork is highly descriptive: the devil-face rocks and "crab-claw" (*hsieh-chao*) tree branches are first drawn with thickening-and-thinning brushstrokes, then modeled with softly rubbed texture strokes and a modulated ink wash, and finished with moss-dot accents; individual brushstrokes, in serving the representational purpose, do not stand out as independent kinesthetic brush movements. In composition the artist shows a keen awareness of foreshortening and three-dimensional spatial relationships in his treatment of the foreground rocks, the intertwining tree branches, and the physically described receding ground plane. The small fan painting offers no revelation of cosmic significance, but it is nevertheless an exquisite example of a fourteenth-century scholar-painter's thorough mastery of nature's "principles" in pictorial representation.

For Ni Tzan, as for Huang Kung-wang, however, painting had to be more than an accurate rendering of nature. According to Huang, "When every boulder or rock shows free and untrammelled ink [strokes], then the painting will have a scholar's air [*shih-ch'i*]. If it is too laborious, the painting will resemble the work of a craftsman."⁶⁵ In the *Painting Manual* Ni Tzan wrote: "You should try to do it in a sketchy manner . . . Develop the form with a free hand . . . by following your ideas and feelings. . . . Too much precision will give a work the air of craftsmanship [*kung-ch'i*]." ⁶⁶

When Ni used the Tung Yüan idiom of hemp-fiber pattern, he reaffirmed his belief in the continuity of the ancient and the present. Although in Ni's paintings references to ancient masters were made not as

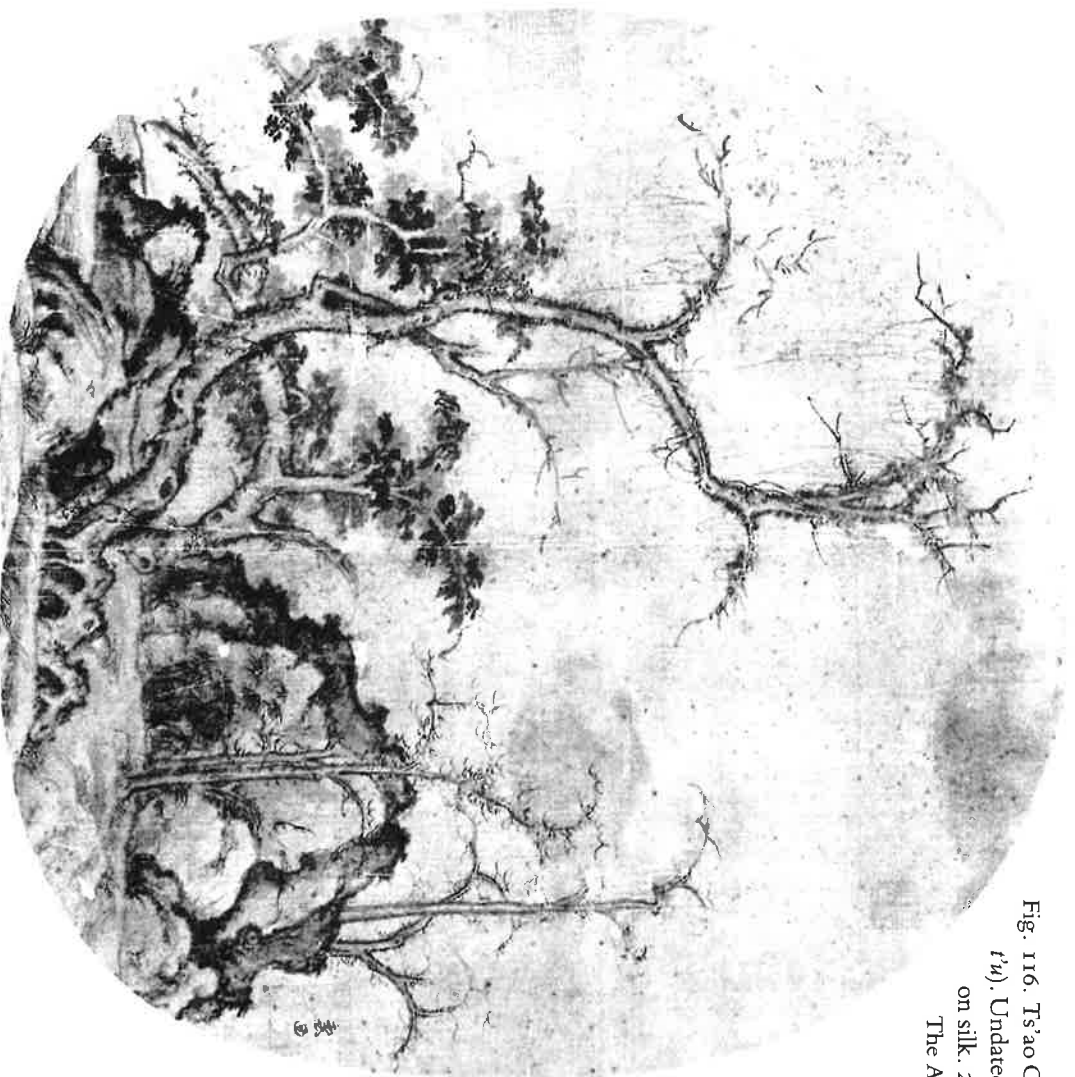


Fig. 116. Ts'ao Chih-po, *Trees and Rocks* (*Shu shih t'u*). Undated, ca. 1340. Fan, ink and light color on silk. 27.0 x 27.4 cm (10⁵/₈ x 10³/₄ in.). The Art Museum, Princeton University

imitations but as expressions of feelings and moods.] Ni had also sought in his works to combine and sum up the best of the ancient styles. In the *Painting Manual* he wrote:

In drawing rocks, one should not use the outlined [*kou*, "hooked"] method. Outlines make the rocks look stiff. One should develop the form with a free hand. . . . (To make the rocks look ancient and simple, one should use texture strokes only sparingly) and to make them look elegant and beautiful, one should make use of a wash [*jan*] technique. . . . In placing two rocks [as illustrated], with an elegant one above and a simple one below, one should use whatever is best for the situation and avoid the unsuitable. (Never limit oneself to using only one kind of texture method.) The ancients had used the ax-cut [*su-p'i*], the clove or T-shaped [*ting-hsiang*], the "horse-teeth" [*ma-ch'ih*], and other kinds of texture methods. But some modern painters, unable to master all the methods, claiming that some of them have a vulgar, craftsmanlike quality, follow only the [ax-cut of] Li T'ang and the [Tung Yüan] draping hemp-fiber methods. To try to follow the ancients and fail is to be twice a loser. In these two rocks I have used a mixture of several ancient and modern methods.⁶⁷

In the accompanying illustration (fig. 117) are two rocks, the rounded one at the lower left done in hemp-fiber strokes, and the angular one above in a mixture of ax-cut, T-shaped, and horse-teeth patterns. Compared to the angular rock forms in *Travelers among Rivers and Mountains* by T'ai-ku i-min (cf. fig. 65a), a painting that Ni Tsan had owned in the 1340s, (Ni's rocks avoid a stiff, outlined approach, and develop their forms by building with dry, blurred brushstrokes—Ni called the technique *jan* (wash)—which create a visually fused pictorial surface.)

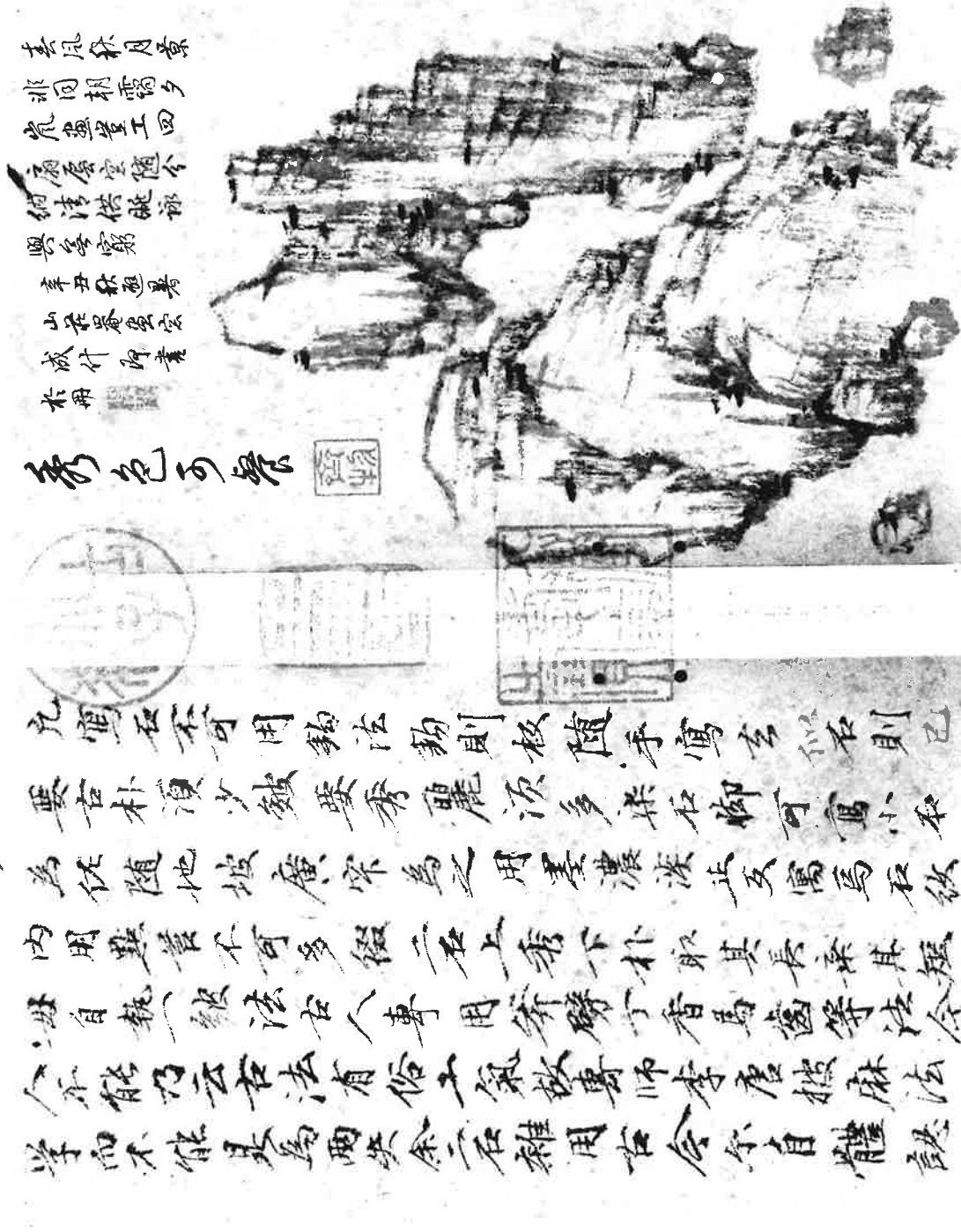


Fig. 117. Anonymous, after Ni Tsan, "Two Rocks." Album leaf 8 of *Painting Manual* (*Hua-p'u*), ink on paper. 23.6 x 14.2 cm (9¹/₄ x 5⁵/₈ in.). National Palace Museum, Taipei

By mixing in his brushwork the hemp-fiber and ax-cut idioms, which were popular in the mid-fourteenth century, with T-shaped, horse-teeth, and other less familiar methods of the Northern Sung landscape styles, Ni Tsan thus forged a new creative synthesis in the great tradition of landscape painting. As a scholar-connoisseur, Ni Tsan saw every great work of art, ancient or modern, as a vital link in the great tradition. Admiring a brilliant composition by Hsia Kuei, *A Thousand Peaks Competing in Elegance* (*Ch'ien-yen ching-hsin*), Ni allowed in a colophon, dated 1344, that "it was because Li T'ang [ca. 1070s-ca. 1150s] had derived himself from Ching Hao [fl. ca. 870-930] and Fan K'uan [ca. 960-1030]: and Hsia Kuei [fl. 1st half 13th century], Ma Yüan [fl. ca. 1190-1264], and others had followed Li T'ang, that this painting [by Hsia Kuei] could have such impressive forms."⁶⁸

In a well-known colophon written on the handscroll *Lion Grove Garden* (*Shih-tzu-lin-t'u*), dated 1373, Ni Tsan wrote: "Master Chao Shan-ch'ang [Chao Yüan; fl. ca. 1360-75] and I, after some discussion, made this painting of the Lion Grove Garden. Truly it attains the ideas Ching [Hao] and Kuan [T'ung; fl. 907-23]. It is not something that Wang Meng [ca. 1308-1385] and others could have imagined in their dreams."⁶⁹ In *Woods and Valleys of Mount Yü* (*Yü-shan lin-ho*), dated 1372 (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; fig. 118), the angular, crystalline rock forms—perhaps echoing the sharp-edged rocks in *A Buddhist Monastery in Autumn Mountains* attributed to Yen Wen-kuei (cf. fig. 64a), which Ni saw and inscribed in 1369—are done with a dry wash (*jan*) technique of softly rubbed, richly fused brushstrokes, "a mixture of several ancient and modern methods." Developing his forms with a free hand, Ni combined the different ax-cut, T-shaped, and horse-teeth patterns in his protean brushwork, creating a new calligraphic, illusionistic style that, in perpetuating the essence of the ancient, rocky landscape mode, "attains the ideas inherited from Ching [Hao] and Kuan [T'ung]."

The secret of Ni's painting lies in the wide range of effects he achieved with his brushwork. In *The Six Gentlemen* of 1345 (cf. fig. 108) he acknowledged Huang Kung-wang's achievements while convincingly standing on his own stylistic ground, and in *A Sparse Grove* of about the same time (cf. fig. 111) he gave his rock modeling a purposely casual and "clumsy" (*cho*) quality. In *Twin Trees* of 1353, the painting does not imitate the calligraphy, but the same rhythmic cadence and "brush ideas" pervade both (cf. figs. 112a, b, c).



Fig. 118. Ni Tsan, *Woods and Valleys of Mount Yü* (*Yü-shan lin-ho*). Dated 1372. Hanging scroll, ink on paper. 95.2 x 33.2 cm (3 ft. 1 1/2 in. x 13 1/8 in.). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

The movement of the brush, gentle yet incisive, speaks in a voice that is both plaintive and lyrical. Dry and moist brushstrokes combine to form flowing patterns and tonal passages, achieving an effect that is pure mood and poetry. Finally, in Ni's late masterpiece *Woods and Valleys of Mount Yü* of 1372 (cf. fig. 118), the artist invests so much personal vitality in the dry-brush wash strokes that the sparse landscape appears monumental.

Thus Ni Tsan's style, though deceptively simple and unassuming, proved to be inimitable. Shen Chou (1427-1509) nurtured a lifelong ambition to imitate Ni Tsan, yet, according to one story, every time he applied his brush to paper his teacher would shout: "No, no, you have overdone it again."⁷⁰ Ni Tsan succeeded in maintaining an exquisite balance and tension in every stroke, conveying his inner sentiments of protest and urgent communication without resorting to overstatement. As products of a brutal, disorderly time, Ni Tsan's simple rocks and trees represent—if we could only decode them—poignant and vivid testimony to his extraordinary emotional and artistic energy, his indomitable personality, and his longing for peace and beauty.)

The Legend of Ni Tsan

The irony was that just as Ni Tsan, the meek and eccentric recluse, was lionized in spite of his distaste for celebrity, his paintings, however private and undecorative, attracted a large public audience. (He was harassed by demands for his paintings) as his dilemma was clearly expressed in a letter he wrote to someone named Chang Tsao-chung:

I, Tsan, having received your command to illustrate the story of Ch'en Tzu-ching's Hsien-yüan, do not wish to disobey you. Lately I have spent much time in town and have not had any time for quiet thought. Only today, after coming to a place outside the city, have I finally read the story of the Hsien-yüan. Unfortunately, to portray all the elaborate scenery, vividly describing every detail, is beyond my ability. Yet, to do the job sketchily, without the necessary colors and descriptions, would only fail your purpose in having such a painting. [What I call painting is merely sketching with a few untrammelled brushstrokes. I never seek for formal likeness, because I paint only for my own amusement. Lately when I come to town people asking me to paint often insist that I paint in a certain way and finish at a certain time. They even resort to insults, angry words, or worse. This is not fair. Would anyone blame a eunuch for not growing a beard? What have I done to deserve such trouble?] ⁷¹

In the course of time Ni Tsan, the "noble recluse," became something of a legend, and his life story was frequently retold. (He was admired first of all for his genuine and total detachment; in the face of brute force Ni responded like a truly civilized person, retreating into an egocentric, self-imposed isolation.) As Ch'ien P'u, a prominent Ming scholar-official from Wu-hsi, wrote in 1460 in a preface to a collection of Ni Tsan's poems, the political turmoil of Ni Tsan's time bred fierce opportunism, with only those who truly believed in themselves managing to remain principled and aloof:

Those who achieved success and fame at that time all vanished like wind or flashes of lightning, leaving not a trace behind. Yet Master Ni's poems and paintings have survived in this world; every scrap of paper bearing his work is regarded as a prized treasure. And as we peruse them, we feel ourselves refreshed and exhilarated as if by a pure breeze. How could this have happened if the man did not have supreme faith in himself? ⁷²

In a popular story about Ni Tsan's courageous refusal to join Chang Shih-ch'eng's rebel government, Chang's younger brother Shih-hsin was said to have sent Ni Tsan a large present of money and bolts of silk, only to have Ni tear up the silk and return the money. One day sometime after this incident, as the younger Chang was entertaining on a boat on the lake, he and his guests detected the aroma of an exotic incense issuing from the water reeds, and concluded that Ni Tsan must be nearby. Chang's bodyguards had him

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brought to Chang and beat him nearly to death. Throughout the ordeal Ni never uttered a word. Asked about it later, he replied, "To open my mouth would be vulgar!"⁷³

In *Biographies of Worthies of Chin-ling* (*Chin-ling ch'ung-ssu hsien-hsien chuan*), a work compiled in the 1550s, the editors summed up Ni Tsan's outstanding qualities:

The recluse, in abandoning his fortune, showed heroism [*hsia*]; in tearing up a gift of silks, he showed integrity [*chieh*]; in safely preserving himself, he showed wisdom [*chih*]; and in refusing to serve in either war or peace, he showed singularity of conduct [*tu-hsing*]. The important thing is that he did all this because he was by nature independent and forthright, and not because he wanted to show his heroism, integrity, wisdom, or exceptional conduct.⁷⁴

In the late Ming period, with ominous signs of "barbarian" (Manchu) trouble reappearing on China's northeastern border, and a growing sense of moral and political decline at home, Ni Tsan became a symbol of patriotism and moral regeneration. In the expanded edition of Ni's poems and prose writings, called *Manuscripts from the Pure and Secluded Studio* (*Ch'ing-pi-ko i-kuo*; 1591-1600), a nascent nationalism appeared. A colophon dated 1600 by a descendant named Ni Ching begins with the words "My ancestor Yün-lin lived in the days when the barbarian Yüan dynasty contaminated the world."⁷⁵ And, in a preface to the same compilation, dated 1599, the essayist T'u Lung (1542-1605) tried to portray Ni Tsan as a resistance hero under the Mongols: "In the spirit of resistance he refused to serve the Yüan. [In his works] he wrote only cyclical dates and never the reigning titles of the Yüan emperors."⁷⁶ The truth was quite the reverse. Ni Tsan, for all his personal misfortunes, always considered himself a loyal subject of the Yüan. In his works he consistently used Chih-cheng, the reign designation for the last emperor of the Yüan dynasty, and it was only after the establishment of the Ming in 1368 that he used cyclical dates alone, steadfastly avoiding use of the reigning title of the first Ming emperor, Hung-wu.⁷⁷ For the late Ming writers, however, it was important that Ni Tsan, the noble recluse, be exalted as a cultural hero through whom the human mind might gain a new strength in adverse times. In times of trouble, when human institutions apparently failed, the one person who stood "unmatched in shining glory" was the noble recluse, whose quiet but constant effort to keep faith with himself represented man's ultimate stand for sanity.

Moreover, in the Confucian scheme of things, if the emperor was supposed to govern with the mandate of heaven, it was the recluse, the antiruler, who was thought to embody all the moral principles that underlay this mandate. Thus toward the end of the Ming period an elaborate argument upheld Ni Tsan as a moral ally of the first Ming emperor. In 1600 Ku Hsien-ch'eng (1550-1612), founder of the Tung-lin Academy in Wu-hsi, a martinet who fancied himself both an adviser to the throne and a noble scholar, invented a Ni Tsan who was an imaginary precursor for himself:

When the world is in great turmoil, and evil forces have finally run their course, there usually appear a sage ruler to sweep things clean from the top and some extraordinary scholar to cause radical changes from below. Their respective functions reinforce each other, and they are incomplete without one another. . . . It is said that when our First Emperor eagerly recruited scholars [to serve], signal bows and banners were sent around the empire, yet Master Ni Tsan could not be recruited. . . . In those days, for planning and devising stratagems there were men like Liu Chi, Li Shan-ch'ang, and others; and for winning battles and taking cities there were generals like Hsü Ta, Ch'ang Yü-ch'un, and others; and for establishing rituals and music there were learned scholars like Sung Lien, T'ao An, and others. . . .

While all those great officials accomplished their work in state and territorial affairs, it was Master Ni who upheld moral standards in people's hearts, social mores, and customs. . . . Thus our first emperor used Master Ni, and Master Ni allowed himself to be used by our emperor, and both did so by silent mutual consent.⁷⁸

If Ni Tsan were to read this, his only response might be: "To open my mouth would be vulgar!"

NOTES

1. For Chao Meng-fu's biography, see *Yüan-shih* (History of the Yüan dynasty), P'ai-na-pen erh-shih-ssu shih, vol. 36 (1369; repr. ed., Taipei: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, 1967), *chüan* 172, pp. 28, 607–10. See also Chu-tsing Li, *The Autumn Colors on the Ch'iao and Hua Mountains: A Landscape by Chao Meng-fu*, *Artibus Asiae Supplementum* 21 (1964); Chu-tsing Li, "Chao Meng-fu chih yen-chiu" (Studies on Chao Meng-fu), pts. I, II, *National Palace Museum Quarterly* 16, no. 2 (Winter 1981): 33–40; no. 3 (Spring 1982): 1–13.
2. See Yang Tsai, "Chao Meng-fu hsing-chuang" (Biography of Chao Meng-fu), in *Sung-hsieh-chai ch'üan-chi* (Collected works of the Sung-hsieh Studio [of Chao Meng-fu]), Li-tai hua-chia shih-wen chi, vol. 3 (Taipei: Hsieh-sheng shu-chü, 1970), addenda, pp. 487–510.
3. See Fu Shen, *Yüan-tai huang-shih shu-hua shou-ts'ang shih-lüeh* (A brief history of Yüan dynasty imperial collections of calligraphy and painting) (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1981); see also Chiang I-han, *Yüan-tai K'uei-chang-ko chi K'uei-chang-ko jen-wu* (The K'uei-chang palace during the Yüan period and some personalities at the K'uei-chang palace) (Taipei: Lien-ching shu-chü, 1981).
4. Chao Meng-chien, "Chao Tzu-ku shu-fa lun" (Chao Meng-chien's discussion of calligraphy), in Pien Yung-yü, ed., *Shih-ku-t'ang shu-hua hui-kao* (Classified record of calligraphy and painting of Shih-ku Hall) (1982; repr. ed., Taipei: Cheng-chung shu-chü, 1956), vol. 1, *chüan* 3, p. 506.
5. Mi Fu, *Pao-Tsin Ying-kuang chi* (Collections of Treasuring the Tsin and the Brilliant Lights [Mi Fu's studios]), Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng chieh-pien (Taipei: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, 1966), *chüan* 8, p. 66.
6. An Ch'i, *Mo-yüan hui-kuan lu* (A comprehensive record of ink acquaintances: a catalogue of An Ch'i's collection of calligraphy and painting), Kuo-hsüeh ch'i-pen ts'ung-shu, vol. 155 (1742; repr. ed., Taipei: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, 1968), *chüan* 2, pp. 111–13. A complete rubbing version of Chao Meng-fu's thirteen colophons is found in Feng Ch'üan, ed., *K'uai-hsüeh-t'ang fa-shu* (Anthology of calligraphy in the K'uai-hsüeh Hall collection) (preface 1779), *chüan* 5, pp. 32b–42b; fragments of the original, which has been damaged by fire, are reproduced in Kanda Kiichiro et al., eds., *Shodō zenshū* (Reproductions of well-known works of calligraphy) (Tokyo: Heibon-sha, 1966–69), vol. 17, pls. 6–9. See Nakata Yūjirō, "Rantei jōyō sanbatsu" (Preface to the *Orchid Pavilion Gathering*), in *Shodō zenshū*, vol. 17, pp. 154–56.
7. See Chiang I-han, "Record of Miao-yen Monastery, A Calligraphic Handscroll by Chao Meng-fu (1254–1322)," *National Palace Museum Quarterly* 10, no. 3 (Spring 1976): 59–80.
8. See Ma Tsung-ho, *Shu-lin tsao-chien* (Collected writings on calligraphy) (1936; repr. ed., Taipei: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, 1965), vol. 2, *chüan* 10, p. 260a.
9. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, *chüan* 10, p. 259b.
10. For the story of Hsieh K'un, see Richard B. Mather, trans., *A New Account of Tales of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), pp. 253–54.
11. See Chu-tsing Li, *Autumn Colors on the Ch'iao and Hua Mountains*.
12. See Wen C. Fong and Marilyn Fu, *Sung and Yüan Paintings* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1975), pp. 88–91.
13. Reproduced in Wango H. C. Weng and Yang Boda, *The Palace Museum: Treasures of the Forbidden City* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1982), p. 192, pl. 95.
14. See Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi* (The complete collected works of the Pure and Secluded Pavilion [of Ni Tsan]), Yüan-tai chen-pen wen-chi hui-k'an, vol. 10 (Taipei: Kuo-li chung-yang t'u-shu-kuan, 1970), *chüan* 11/7b–11a, pp. 488–95. For modern studies on Ni Tsan, see Huang Miao-tzu, "Tu Ni Yün-lin chuan cha-chi" (Notes on reading Ni Tsan's biography), in *Chung-hua wen-shih lun-ts'ung* (Collected essays on Chinese literature and history) (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1962), 3rd set., pp. 247–72; biography and chronology of Ni Tsan in Chang Kuang-pin, ed., *Yüan ssu-ta-chia* (The four great masters of the Yüan) (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1975), pp. 20–27, 87–198.
15. Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 11/8b, p. 490.
16. *Ibid.*, *chüan* 11/9a–9b, pp. 491–92.
17. *Ibid.*, *chüan* 11/11a, p. 495.
18. See Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., "Yün-lin i-shih" (Anecdotes of Ni Tsan), in *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 11/5a, p. 483.
19. Chang Tuan, "Yün-lin Ni hsien-sheng mu-piao" (Epitaph of Yün-lin, Master Ni), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 11/11a, p. 495.
20. It is possible that Ni Tsan, indeed, had blue or green eyes. In a poem on a painting by Ni dated 1363, a friend of Ni's wrote: "Master Ni Tsan who has green pupils" (*ibid.*, *chüan* 8/26b, p. 400).
21. "Lacquer-tree nursery" and "wild horses" are allusions to Chuang-tzu; see Kuo Ch'ang-fen, comp., *Chuang-tzu chi-shih* (Collected annotations of Chuang-tzu) (1894; repr. ed., Taipei: Shih-chieh shu-chü, 1967), *chüan* 1, p. 3.
22. A version of Ni Tsan's portrait with Chang Yü's eulogy is described in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, "Yün-lin i-shih," *chüan* 11/2b, p. 478.
23. Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 11/8a, p. 489.
24. Chou Nan-lao, "Yüan ch'u-shih Yün-lin hsien-sheng mu-chih-ming" (Tomb epitaph for the Yüan dynasty recluse Master [Ni] Yün-lin), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 11/9a, p. 491.
25. T'ao Tsung-i, "Ch'en kung-tzu" (Young gentleman Ch'en), in *Cho-keng lu* (Notes taken after setting aside the plow), Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng chieh-pien, vol. 83 (Taipei, 1965–66), *chüan* 24, p. 347.
26. See Huang Miao-tzu, "Tu Ni Yün-lin chuan cha-chi," p. 256.
27. Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 11/7b, p. 488.
28. Chou Nan-lao, "Yüan ch'u-shih Yün-lin hsien-sheng mu-chih-ming," *chüan* 11/8b, p. 490.
29. Ni Tsan, "Ch'iao-hai shih-chi hsiao-yin" (Introduction to collected poems by [Ch'in] Ch'iao-hai), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 10/3b–4a, pp. 444–45.
30. Ni Tsan, "Cho-i-chai shih-kao hsiü" (Preface to collected poems of the Cho-i Studio [by Chou Cheng-tao]), dated 1373, in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 10/1b, p. 440.
31. *Ibid.*, *chüan* 10/1a–2a, pp. 439–41.
32. Ni Tsan, preface to "Yü-pu-ch'i yung" (Chanted poetry on Yü-pu-ch'i [in Chekiang]), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 4/2a–2b, pp. 145–46.
33. Ni Tsan, "Shu-huai" (Speaking my thoughts), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 1/10b–11a, pp. 48–49.
34. Chang Yü, "T'i Yün-lin shih-chi" (Colophon to Ni Tsan's collected poems), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 12/1a, p. 517.
35. Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 12/4b, p. 534; Huang Miao-tzu, "Tu Ni Yün-lin chuan cha-chi," p. 259.
36. Ni Tsan, "Ching-shih" (On becoming aware), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 8/8b, p. 364.
37. Ni Tsan, "Feng-yü" (Wind and rain), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 5/28a, p. 239.
38. See Chang Kuang-pin, ed., *Yüan ssu-ta-chia*, p. 156.
39. Ni Tsan, "Liu-jih t'i" (Composed on the sixth day [of the lunar month]), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 8/8b, p. 364.
40. Ni Tsan, "Pieh Lu shih nu" (Farewell to a daughter of the Lu family), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 8/2b, p. 352.
41. Ni Tsan, "Chi Han Po-ch'ing" (Poem to Han Po-ch'ing), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 8/3a, p. 353.
42. Ni Tsan, "Shun-ni" (Fair or foul), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 8/2b, p. 352.
43. Ni Tsan, "Tsa-fu" (Miscellaneous poem), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 7/11a, p. 315.
44. Ni Tsan, "Chih-cheng i-wei su-i shih" (Chih-cheng era, i-wei year [1355], poem on man in white), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 1/2a, p. 31.
45. Ni Tsan, "Yü Ch'en Shu-fang" (Letter to Master Ch'en), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 10/18a, p. 473.
46. Ni Tsan, preface to "T'i Chi-chao Chiang-chün i-hsiang" (Colophon to posthumous portrait of [Ni] Tsan's wife) Chiang Yüan-chao), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 7/21a, p. 335.
47. Ni Tsan, "Ch'iao k'o chu shih" (Tall evergreens, bamboo, and rocks), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 6/9b, p. 258.

48. Chou Nan-lao, "Yüan ch'ü-shih Yün-lin hsien-sheng mu-chih-ming," in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 11/9b, p. 492.
49. Cheng Yüan-yü, *Ch'iao-Wü chi* (Collected works of sojourning at Su-chou), Yüan-tai chen-pen wen-chi hui-k'an, vol. 9 (Taipei: Kuo-li chung-yüing t'ü-shu-kuan, 1970), *chüan* 7/1a-b, pp. 233-34.
50. Ni Tsan, "Tsa-chu" (Miscellaneous writings), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 10/8b, p. 454.
51. See [*Ch'ün-ting*] *San-hsi-t'ang fa-t'ieh* (Rubbings of the Ch'ien-lung emperor's collection of masterpieces of ancient calligraphy kept at the Hall of Three Rarities), in Liang Shih-cheng et al., comps., *Yü k'o San-hsi-t'ang shih-ch'ü-pao-chi fa-t'ieh* (1747; repr. ed., Shanghai: Chung-hua t'ü-shu-kuan, 1909), *chüan* 1, p. 3a.
52. Ma Tsung-ho, *Shu-lin tsao-chien*, vol. 2, *chüan* 10, p. 259b.
53. A famous record of Lu Heng's association with scholar-artists and poets is a handscroll, *T'ing-yü-lou t'ü* (The Listening-to-Rain Pavilion), by Wang Meng, dated 1365, which was mounted with poems and colophons (dated 1348) written for Lu by Chang Yü, Ni Tsan, and fifteen other well-known poets and scholars of the time, including Chou Po-ch'i (d. ca. 1367), Chang Yü (1333-1385), Kao Ch'ü (1336-1374), and the monk Tao-yen (Yao Kuang-hsiao, 1335-1419). See Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 12/5a-14b, pp. 525-44. Pien Yung-yü, *Shih-fu-t'ang shu-hua hui k'ao* (Classified record of calligraphy and painting of Shih-ku Hall) (Taipei: Cheng-chung shu-chü, 1958), vol. 4, *chüan* 21, pp. 283-88.
54. Huang Kung-wang, *Hsieh shan-shui chüeh* (Secrets of landscape painting), in Yü Chien-hua, ed., *Chung-kuo hua-lun lei-pien* (Classified compilation of writings on Chinese painting) (Hong Kong: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1973), vol. 1, p. 607; see Richard Barnhart, *Wmty Forest, Old Trees: Some Landscape Themes in Chinese Painting* (New York: China Institute of America, 1972), pp. 14 ff.
57. Tu Fu, "Ch'ün wang" (Looking forward to spring), in *T'ang shih san-pai-shou* (Three hundred poems of the T'ang dynasty) (1763; repr. ed., Hong Kong: Shih-chieh t'ü-shu kung-ssu, n.d.), p. 142.
58. Ni Tsan, "Ku-mu chu shih ping fu" (Old trees, bamboo, rocks, and poem), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 8/10b, p. 380; for another poem written for Kung-yüan, see *ibid.*, *chüan* 3/6b, p. 104.
59. Huang Kung-wang, *Hsieh shan-shui chüeh*, p. 697.
60. Ni Tsan, "Wei Fang Yai hua shan chiu t'ü" (Inscription for Fang Yai), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 2/4a, p. 69.
61. See National Palace Museum, Taipei, comp., *Ku-kung shu-hua lu* (A descriptive catalogue of the painting and calligraphy in the National Palace Museum) (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1965), vol. 3, *chüan* 6, pp. 20-21.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
63. *Ibid.*
64. For publication of Ts'ao Chih-po's fan painting at Princeton, see Chutsing Li, "Rocks and Trees and the Art of Ts'ao Chih-po," *Artibus Asiae* 23, no. 3/4 (1960): 153-92.
65. Huang Kung-wang, *Hsieh shan-shui chüeh*, vol. 2, p. 698.
66. National Palace Museum, comp., *Ku-kung shu-hua lu*, vol. 3, *chüan* 6, pp. 20-21.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
68. Ni Tsan, "T'ü-hua" (Colophon on a painting), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 9/15b, p. 434.
69. Ni Tsan, "T'ü Shih-tzu-lin t'ü" (Inscription on the Lion Grove Garden painting), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 9/11b, p. 426; see Tung Ch'ü-ch'ang, *Hua-yen* (The eye of painting), I-shu ts'ung-pien, vol. 12 (Taipei: Shih chieh shu-chü, 1962), p. 52.
70. Tung Ch'ü-ch'ang, *Hua-yen*, p. 45.
71. Ni Tsan, "Ta Chang Tsao-chung shu" (Answering Chang Tsao-chung's letter), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 10/7a-b, pp. 451-52.
72. Ch'ien Po, preface, in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, p. 1.
73. Anonymous, "Chin-ling ch'ung-ssu hsien-hsien chuan" (Biographies of worthies of Chin-ling), in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 11/1b, p. 476, and *chüan* 11/12a, p. 497.
74. *Ibid.*, *chüan* 4/12b, p. 498.
75. Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, addenda, p. 681.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 599.
77. See comments by Wu K'uan, dated 1491, in "Yün-lin i-shih," in Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, *chüan* 11/3a-b, pp. 479-80.
78. Ts'ao P'ei-lien, ed., *Ch'ing-pi-ko ch'üan-chi*, prefaces, pp. 9-11.