

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE MATERIALITY OF AZURITE BLUE AND MALACHITE GREEN
IN THE AGE OF THE CHINESE COLORIST QIU YING (ca. 1498 - ca. 1552)

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
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ABSTRACT

Exploring the materiality of pigment in traditional Chinese painting, this dissertation focuses on the mineral azurite blue and its connatural counterpart, malachite green—two of the most versatile, expensive, and ancient colors in the history of Chinese art. It investigates how the production and circulation of azurite and malachite, as well as any point of view about the two minerals, enhanced the depth of meaning in pictorial motifs and subject matters. Exploring these issues through a case study, this dissertation focuses on the famous but understudied colorist Qiu Ying (ca. 1498 – ca.1552), whose oeuvre consisted chiefly of landscape and figure paintings made with azurite and malachite.

Chapter 1 investigates how azurite and malachite engaged with premodern China and developed a wide swathe of connotations. Chapter 2 reconstructs the way that Qiu Ying and his contemporaries saw, thought about, and discussed various applications of azurite and malachite on landscape elements by doing close readings of their paintings and also of art treatises and works of art criticism that were in circulation at that time. Having explored the sixteenth-century worldview and art-historical understanding of the two minerals, the focus shifts to Qiu's *Study Studio Amid Wutong Trees and Bamboo*, a datable work that provides a relatively clear context of the use of color. Investigating the relationships between poetry, pictorial contents, and coloration in this painting, chapter 3 argues that Qiu understood and utilized the communicative power of azurite and malachite as early as 1527. With his conscious use of color as a communicative tool established, the last two chapters explore more complex meanings of azurite and malachite in Qiu's

paintings. Chapter 4 focuses on how the high cost of azurite affected Qiu's placement of the pigment in a composition. It argues that Qiu used azurite to convert the inward desires of his patrons into outward signs by reserving the prized pigment for pictorial motifs that were important to his patrons. Finally, Chapter 5 uses Qiu's paintings to explore the elusive and prolonged relationship between azurite and malachite and various aspects of immortality, not only in landscape paintings, but also in figure and bird-and-flower paintings.

By demonstrating how colors signify meaning beyond coloration, this dissertation challenges the conventional wisdom in the field of Chinese painting that color was less important than ink in the late imperial era and demonstrates that color is a powerful focal point around which to study traditional Chinese painting. It also invites a dialogue between traditional Chinese painting and recent scholarship on the significance of pigments and dyes in the European and Latin American manuscripts, paintings, and murals, demonstrating that color is an important topic of inquiry. Reexamining the uses of color can bring together paintings that have long been studied separately and provide refreshing new interpretations of much-neglected pictorial elements such as technique, composition, and the color of pictorial motifs in traditional Chinese painting.

INTRODUCTION

In almost all surveys of Chinese painting, the sixteenth-century painter Qiu Ying (仇英; ca. 1498 – ca. 1552) is seen as notable for his exceptional skill and repertoire in applying colors.¹ Indeed, as the influential art historian Dong Qichang (董其昌; 1555–1636) stated, Qiu Ying's mastery of color was so phenomenal, he was able to emulate great masters of the Tang (618–907) and Song (960–1127) dynasties.² However, this understanding of his achievement is not represented in a corpus of monographic studies on Qiu Ying, in which the discussion of color is almost nonexistent. The stylistic traits of his coloring technique, as well as the economic, social, and cultural issues involved in his uses of color, have never been singled out for investigation to justify and contextualize his fame. Providing what is missing in the field, this dissertation takes Qiu Ying's use of azurite blue and malachite green—two of the most costly, versatile, and historic pigments available in traditional China—as a case study, situating his use of these two pigments in the long and understudied history of using and seeing color in traditional Chinese painting. This endeavor aims to show that there are painters who understood the special meanings of azurite and malachite in art history, economic production, and religious and

¹ Yang Xin et al., *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting* (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1997), 224-227; Wen Fong et al., *Possessing the Past: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei* (Harry N Abrams, 1996), 401-402; Chen Chuanxi 陳傳席, *Zhongguo shanshui huashi* 中國山水畫史 (A history of Chinese landscape painting) (Tianjin renmin meishu chubanshe, 2011), 368-9. James F. Cahill, *Chinese Painting* (Skira, 1977), 144.

² Dong Qichang 董其昌, fascicle 2 of *Huachan shi suibi* 畫禪室隨筆 (Essay of the Huachan studio), *Siku quanshu* electronic version.

folkloric beliefs, and argues that Qiu Ying utilized these connotations to enhance the meaning of his pictorial motifs and subject matter.

This dissertation explores the materiality of azurite and malachite in the age of Qiu Ying. Despite its infamous government corruption and deadweight taxation, the Ming dynasty was a time when every male, including Qiu Ying himself, had an opportunity to move up the social ladder. Due to his artistic talent, Qiu Ying overcame his humble background and became a friend and protégé of the leading scholar-painters Wen Zhengming (文徵明; 1470–1559) and Tang Yin (唐寅; 1470–1524). Qiu Ying's paintings also stood as a type of cultural capital: buying and patronizing his works enabled aspiring merchants and nouveaux riches to increase their social status by becoming art connoisseurs and cultured gentlemen.³ As Qiu's wealthy patrons provided him with expensive pigments and the opportunity to view the works in their collections, Qiu emulated the uses of color in ancient paintings under the guidance of his mentors. A confluence of these dynamics shaped Qiu Ying's understanding and application of azurite and its congenital counterpart, malachite green. Qiu became attentive to the art-historical and social-economic significances of, as well as the folkloric beliefs associated with, the ancient colorants azurite blue and malachite green. Apparently, his achievement as one the greatest colorists in the history of Chinese painting was closely intertwined with the influences of his mentors and patrons. Investigating his uses of azurite and malachite can reveal the broader materiality of pigments in his time.

³ See Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2004).

By demonstrating how colors signify meaning beyond coloration, this dissertation challenges the conventional wisdom in the field of Chinese painting that color was less important than ink in the late imperial era and demonstrates that color is a powerful focal point around which to study traditional Chinese painting. It also invites a dialogue between traditional Chinese painting and recent scholarship on the significance of pigments and dyes in the European and Latin American manuscripts, paintings, and murals, demonstrating that color is an important topic of inquiry. Reexamining the uses of color can bring together paintings that have long been studied separately and provide refreshing new interpretations of much-neglected pictorial elements such as technique, composition, and the color of pictorial motifs in traditional Chinese painting.

Color: A Historiographical Lacuna in Studies of Qiu Ying's Paintings

While color has not been singled out as a focal point in past studies of Qiu Ying's paintings, existing scholarship provides important insight into how such an investigation should begin. It is thus fundamental to review these studies. The majority of monographic studies on Qiu Ying investigate his stylistic development and characteristics in using ink and brushwork to represent figures and landscape elements. Martie W. Young was the first scholar who put together a corpus of paintings by and attributed to Qiu Ying, which served to pin down his "artistic personality."⁴ In this process, Young also pointed out the paintings that appear to be problematic: later copies, forgeries, and misattributed works. Continuing this inquiry of style,

⁴ Martie W. Young, "The Paintings of Ch'iu Ying: A Preliminary Survey" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1961), 3.

Ellen J. Laing studied Qiu Ying's late⁵ and delicate styles⁶, and she also identified some forgeries in his received oeuvre.⁷ This focus on style coheres with a branch of scholarship that was prevalent during the 1960s and 1970s⁸, in which scholars studied individual artists. It also coheres with the studies of connoisseurship in Chinese painting, which began under the leadership of Wen Fong in the 1960s.⁹ These studies have proven Qiu's mastery of representing elegant forms and accuracy in capturing the postures of figures. In addition to these skills, Qiu is also well known for his ability to imitate the styles and paintings of ancient masters. Mette Siggstedt challenges Max Loehr's comment that Qiu Ying is a mere copyist—instead, Siggstedt holds that Qiu only copied works from the Southern Song dynasty and the Zhe School. This dialogue is continued in Hsu Wenmei's assessment of Qiu's stylistic achievement in her recent articles.¹⁰ Hsu takes a more open attitude to Qiu Ying and demonstrates that he synthesized many different traditions into a unique personal style. Despite color being an important stylistic feature of Qiu, there has not been a through discussion of his techniques in using color within any of these stylistic studies.

⁵ Ellen J. Laing, "Qiu Ying's Late Landscape Painting," *Oriental Art* 43 (1987): 28-36.

⁶ Ibid., "Qiu Ying's Delicate Style," *Ars Orientalis* 27 (1997): 39-66.

⁷ Ibid., "'Suzhou Pian' and Other Dubious Paintings in the Received 'Oeuvre' of Qiu Ying," *Artibus Asiae* 59.3/4 (2000): 265-295.

⁸ See Jerome Silbergeld, "Chinese Painting Studies in the West: A State-of-the Field Article," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 46.4 (1987): 856.

⁹ See Wen Fong, "The Problem of Ch'ien Hsüan," *Art Bulletin* 42 (1960): 173-89; idem., "The Problem of Forgeries in Chinese Painting," *Artibus Asiae* 25 (1962): 95-141; idem., "Chinese Painting: A Statement of Method," *Oriental Art* 9 (1963): 73-8.

¹⁰ Hsu Wenmei 許文美, "Huanhua haoduan wucan guren: Qiu Ying tezhan xuanjian jieshao 幻化毫端 無慚古人: 仇英特展選件介紹 (Magical brush and emulating the ancient: introduction to selected works from a special exhibition of Qiu Ying)," *Gugong wenwu yuekan* 故宮文物月刊10 (2014): 13-23.

Since Qiu Ying came from a humble background and worked as a professional painter,¹¹ his indebtedness to the style of other literati painters attracts scholars' attention. As a result, a large focus of the above stylistic studies is Qiu's stylistic relationship with the scholar-painters of his time who influenced his development, especially given the sharp contrast in their social statuses. This is exemplified in Hsu Wenmei's recent monograph in the catalog to the National Palace Museum's exhibition on Qiu Ying.¹² Hsu discusses at length Qiu's stylistic indebtedness to Zhou Chen, Tang Yin, and Wen Zhengming and shows how his paintings share similar compositions with ancient paintings. Qiu's friendships with and stylistic references to the literati are also singled out as topics of investigation in Stephen Little's article, which primarily compares Qiu Ying's *Demon Queller* with other versions of the same subject matter.¹³ These works show that Qiu Ying studied under the leading professional painter Zhou Chen (周臣; active during the late fourteenth to fifteenth centuries). Through Zhou, Qiu met the poet, painter, and scholar Tang Yin. And through Tang Yin, Qiu Ying had contact with Wen Zhengming, who was a vital figure in the sixteenth century art scene. It should be noted that, as seen from the inscription on Wen Zhengming's *The Goddess of Xiang and the Lady of Xiang* in Beijing Palace Museum, Wen Zhengming asked Qiu Ying to apply the colors for him. Despite Qiu Ying greatly

¹¹ Ellen J. Laing, "Problems in Reconstructing the Life of Qiu Ying," *Ars Orientalis* 29 (1999): 69-89.

¹² The exhibition is a part of the four exhibitions which also showcase Qiu's elite contemporaries: Shen Zhou, Wen Zhengming, and Tang Yin.

¹³ Hsu (2014); Stephen Little, "Demon Queller and the Art of Qiu Ying [Ch'iu Ying]," *Artibus Asiae* vol 46, no. ½ (1985): 62; Li Te'er 利特爾 (Stephen Little), "Qiu Ying he Wen Zhengming de guanxi 仇英和文徵明的關係 (The relationship between Qiu Ying and Wen Zhengming)," in *Wumen huapai yanjiu* 吳門畫派研究, ed. Gugong bowuyuan 故宮博物院 (Beijing: Zhijincheng chubanshe, 1993), 132-227.

changing the coloration twice, Wen was still unsatisfied and eventually applied the colors on his own. This critical moment that is pertinent to different ideas about color applications, as well as to what Qiu Ying might have gained from Wen, has not been scrutinized in past studies, which instead focus on Qiu and his literati relationships.

In addition to investigating styles and other closely related issues, Ellen J. Laing and Hsu Wenmei also studied the painter's patrons, namely Xiang Yuanbian (項元汴; 1525–1590) and Zhou Fenglai (周鳳來; 1523–1555).¹⁴ James Cahill mentions in passing the importance of patronage in shaping Qiu's oeuvre and style. He states that Qiu did not leave any traces of himself or his life in his paintings. Rather, judging from their subject matter and pictorial motifs, all of his paintings were painted for his patrons.¹⁵ Laing's, Hsu's, and Cahill's studies show that Qiu won the favor and generosity of wealthy patrons who allowed him to study the ancient Chinese paintings in their collections, leading to a great advancement in his pursuit of celebrated ancient styles.¹⁶ In fact, patronage is not only a historically important force that shaped Qiu Ying's stylistic repertoire and achievement, but also the primary focus of a branch of scholarship on the imperial patronage of Tang, Song, Yuan, and Qing emperors carried out in the 1970s and 1980s.¹⁷ Much of Laing's work fits into this corpus of scholarship. She carried out studies

¹⁴ Ellen J. Laing, "Ch'iu Ying's Three Patrons," *Ming Studies* 8 (1979): 49-56; idem., "Sixteenth Century Pattern of Art Patronage: Qiu Ying and the Xiang Family," *Journal of American Oriental Society* 111.1 (1991): 1-7; idem., "Qiu Ying's Other Patrons," *Journal of American Oriental Society* 117.4 (1997): 686-692.

¹⁵ James F. Cahill, *Parting at the Shores: Chinese Painting of the Early and Middle Ming Dynasty, 1368-1580* (Weatherhall, 1978), 209-10.

¹⁶ Laing (1979), 52-3 and Hsu (2014), 23-27.

¹⁷ Silbergeld (1987): 875-80.

focusing on the garden, woman, and erotic themes in Qiu Ying's oeuvre—all of which subject matters also interested Qiu's patrons.¹⁸ In her work, Laing provides the historical and cultural dimensions associated with these pictorial motifs. Importantly, she points out that Qiu Ying's landscape paintings done in a blue-and-green palette, generously colored with azurite and malachite, were favorites among forgers in the Suzhou area, a hub of producing forgeries between the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.¹⁹ Her observation implies that there was a market for Qiu Ying's colored paintings. However, there is still no study probing into why Qiu Ying's paintings done in a heavy blue-and-green palette were so popular.

A turning point in the awareness of Qiu Ying's unique coloration appears in the past few years among studies of Qiu Ying's paintings with Taoist or folkloric themes. These studies are a part of the field's long interest in objects that reveal Chinese religious or folkloric beliefs.²⁰ For example, Hsu Wenmei's article on Qiu Ying paintings with the theme of *Peach Blossom Spring*

¹⁸ Ellen J. Laing, "Qiu Ying's Depiction of Sima Qian's *Duluo Yuan* and the View from the Chinese Garden," *Oriental Art* 33.4 (1987): 375-80; Ellen J. Laing, "Erotic Themes and Romantic Heroines Depicted by Ch'iu Ying," *Archives of Asian Art* 49 (1996): 68-91. Craig Clunas has cast Qiu Ying's paintings under the light of commodities, see *idem.*, *Art in China, Second Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 177-181.

¹⁹ Laing (2000), 267.

²⁰ Munakata Kiyohiko, *Sacred Mountains in Chinese Art* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991); Stephen Little, *Realm of the Immortals: Daoism in the Arts of China* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1988); *idem.*, *Taoism and the Art of China* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 2000); John Hay, "Huang Kung-wang's Dwelling in the Fu-ch'un Mountains: the Dimensions of a Landscape" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 1994); Susan E. Nelson, "On Through to the Beyond: The Peach Blossom Spring as Paradise," *Archives of Asian Art* 39 (1986): 23-47.

investigates three paintings colored heavily with azurite and malachite.²¹ Hsu laconically describes Qiu Ying's technique of applying color while discussing in detail Qiu's pictorial compositions and pursuit of archaic styles.²² Through meticulous analyses of later copies of Qiu Ying paintings and textual sources, Hsu concludes that Qiu modeled his work on Zhao Boju (趙伯駒; active during the twelfth century)—a master from the Southern Song dynasty who is also famous for his use of azurite and malachite—and produced the painting *Peach Blossom Spring* (*Taoyuan tu* 桃源圖) in Zhao's style.²³ In her attempt to reconstruct the compositional features of this now-lost painting, Hsu argues that Qiu's *Peach Blossom Spring* must have had a grotto motif, because Qiu has repeatedly used this motif in his paintings with a blue-and-green palette and it is also a common motif for the subject matter.²⁴ Importantly, Hsu's study shows that Qiu Ying's painting with the theme of peach blossoms in spring often enjoys a heavy coloration of azurite and malachite.

Sharing Hsu's research interest, Yeung Chun Yi uses iconology to study a group of paintings made between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that all share the theme of

²¹ Hsu Wenmei 許文美, *Xilun Qiu Ying jifu qingliu shese zuopin de taoyuan yixiang* 析論仇英幾幅青綠設色作品的桃源意象 (A discussion of the theme “peach blossom” in several blue-and-green paintings by Qiu Ying),” *Gugong xueshu jikan* 故宮學術季刊 30.2 (2012): 205-56; idem., “*Xianqi piaopiao changleweiyang — Ming Qiu Ying Xianshan louge* 仙氣飄飄長樂未央—明仇英仙山樓閣 (Wafting vapor of immortality; eternal music has yet to end—Ming Qiu Ying's building and pavilions in immortal mountains),” *Gugong wenwu yuekan* 故宮文物月刊 282 (2006): 71-80.

²² Hsu (2012), 214.

²³ Ibid., 215-221.

²⁴ Ibid., 222-224

immortality produced by and attributed to Qiu Ying.²⁵ Yueng further divides these paintings into four: the first group contains landscape paintings with the appearance of the immortals; the second includes paintings that depict adepts refining elixirs; the third is of paintings of figures who are destined to become immortals in Chinese folklore; and the fourth is *Peach Blossom Spring*. Concerning the color palette of these paintings, Yueng comments that scholar-painters more often than not depict the same subject matters without the use of color.²⁶ In contrast, the majority of this large group of paintings associated with Qiu Ying have been generously colored with azurite and malachite. Yueng then briefly touches on the meaning of the two minerals in Chinese religious and folkloric beliefs. Citing John Hay and an unpublished article of mine, Yueng explains that since azurite and malachite are medicinal and elixir ingredients, the appearance of the two minerals in paintings with the theme of immortality probably hint at such practical functions.²⁷ However, the precise meaning of azurite and malachite in Chinese religious and folkloric beliefs and the relationship between that meaning and the appearance of azurite and malachite on paintings requires further study, because almost all painting mediums, such as ink and other plant-dye colors, are also medicinal ingredients.²⁸ There are thus more complex

²⁵ Yeung Chun Yi 楊晉宜, *Qiu Ying xianjing tu yanjiu* 仇英仙境圖研究 (A study of “realm of the immortals” paintings by Qiu Ying) (M.A. Thesis, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2012).

²⁶ Ibid., 34.

²⁷ Ibid., 35. See, John Hay, *Kernels of Energy, Bones of Earth: The Rock in Chinese Art* (China House Gallery, 1985), 44-50; Quincy Ngan, “The Connotation of Immortality in the Blue-and-Green Style: The Hope Evolves from the Medicinal Functions of Azurite and Malachite” (2009).

²⁸ See, Li Shizhen 李時珍, *Bencao gangmu* 本草綱目 (*Jinling ban paiyin ben* 金陵版排印本) (*Materia medica*, the version of movable type printing produced in Jinling) (Beijing: Renmin weishen chubanshe, 2004).

relationships between the blue-and-green palette and the subject matter of immortality in Qiu Ying's paintings.

In sum, while surveys of Chinese paintings have positioned Qiu Ying as one of the most important and ground-breaking colorists in history, there is no study zeroing in on this issue. Ellen Laing shows that many of Qiu Ying's heavily pigmented paintings are forgeries, but there is no thorough discussion of Qiu's coloring technique, which can contribute to the authentication of his works. While Little and Hsu have demonstrated that there are similarities between some Wen Zhengming paintings and Qiu Ying paintings, and that Qiu learned from Wen when it came to the application of color, there is no discussion on what these stylistic similarities say to the larger principles of applying and evaluating color in Chinese painting aesthetics. Despite the fact that Hsu Wenmei and Yueng Chun Yi's studies of Qiu Ying have unprecedentedly focused on his heavily colored paintings, their discussions rest on iconography of pictorial motifs, reconstructing the compositional arrangements, and the meaning of *Peach Blossom Spring* in Chinese folklore. An investigation of Qiu's uses of color is thus sorely needed, because it would provide a missing piece in the study of this historically famous artist, and it would also prompt art historians to reassess the place of color in traditional Chinese painting.

In fact, the lack of in-depth discussion of Qiu Ying's use of color speaks to the field's deep-seated bias against color. While there is a plethora of scholarship on the significance and history of color in paintings of the Western art tradition,²⁹ color is the least-studied subject in the field of traditional Chinese painting. The majority of scholarship produced in China, Japan,

²⁹ Roy Osborne, *Books on Colour Since 1500: A History and Bibliography of Colour Literature* (Universal Publishers, 2013).

Korea, Europe, and the United States persistently presents Chinese painting as a tradition that rejects color but treasures ink and brushwork.³⁰ The only exception is Niu Kecheng's groundbreaking study on the stylistic history of color, which focuses on the stylistic paradigms in the Tang and Song dynasties and explores how these paradigms evolved in subsequent periods.³¹ In 1988, Jerome Silbergeld and Amy McNair, in their translation of *Chinese Painting Color: Studies of their Preparation and Application in Traditional and Modern Times*, originally published in Chinese by the painter Yu Feian (于非闇; 1888–1959), address the bias against color in the field. They point out that

Very little has been written about the use of color in Chinese painting. Over the centuries, many artists and writers about the art of painting cultivated an unspoken prejudice against any prominent use of, or even discussion of, color in painting. The intellectual outlook of the literati class helped shape this aesthetic sensibility, which was derived from the great value they laid on detachment from worldly things and the stilling of human emotions, on harmony and simplicity... These scholars, who monopolized the writing of art history, art theory, and criticism, should have found it similarly displeasing to discourse on the techniques of painting in color.³²

Despite the fact that Silbergeld and McNair's study was published almost thirty years ago, the field has yet to recognize the place of color in traditional Chinese painting. Maxwell K. Hearn, in his *How to Read Chinese Painting*, published in 2008, said

³⁰ Silbergeld (1987): 854.

³¹ Niu Kecheng 牛克誠, *Secai de Zhongguo huihua: Zhongguo hui hua yang shi yu feng ge li shi de zhan kai* 色彩的中国绘画：中国绘画样式与风格历史的展开 (The coloured Chinese painting : the historic development of the manner and style of the Chinese painting) (Changsha Shi: Hunan meishu chubanshe, 2002).

³² Jerome Silbergeld and Amy McNair trans, *Chinese Painting Color: Studies of their Preparation and Application in Traditional and Modern Times*, by Yu Fei'an (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1988), ix-x.

This is the aim of [the] traditional Chinese painter: to capture not only the outer appearance of a subject but its inner essence as well—its energy, life force, spirit. To accomplish his goal, the Chinese painter more often than not rejects the use of color. Like the photographer who prefers to work in black and white, the Chinese artist regarded color as a distraction. He also rejected the changeable qualities of light and shadow as a means of modeling, along with opaque pigments to conceal mistakes. Instead, he relied on line—the indelible mark of the inked brush.³³

Hearn's opinion affirms an aesthetic emphasizing ink and brushwork that emerged as early as the ninth century and was put forward by the painter and art theorist Jing Hao (荊浩; active during the tenth century).³⁴ Since then, many scholar painters, royal members, and painters serving in the court maintained and advocated this aesthetic.³⁵ The importance of this aesthetic is also reflected in existing scholarship that probes into the emergence of the ink aesthetic and its later development.³⁶ Also, the majority of paintings by time-celebrated scholar-

³³ Maxwell K. Hearn, *How to Read Chinese Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 3.

³⁴ Munakata Kiyohiko, *Ching Hao's Pi-fa-chi: A Note on the Art of the Brush* (Ascona: Artibus Asiae, 1975).

³⁵ Okayama Taizo 岡山泰造, "Suibokuga no seiritsu ni tsuite: Reikidaimeigaki ni oyo shite 水墨画の成立について: 《歴代名画記》に及して (Concerning the birth of ink-monochromatic painting: up to Records of Famous Paintings through the ages)," *Bukkyō geijiutsu* 佛教藝術 102 (1975); Tanaka Ichimatsu 田中一松 and Yonezawa Yoshiho 米澤嘉圃, *Hakubyōga kara suibokuga e no tenkai* 白描画から水墨画への展開 (From ink-outline drawing to ink wash painting, a development) (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1975); Ping Foong, *The Efficacious Landscape: On the Authorities of Painting at the Northern Song Court* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2015).

³⁶ James Cahill, "Wu Chen, A Chinese Landscapist and Bamboo Painter of the Fourteenth Century" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1958); Munakata Kiyohiko, "The Rise of Ink-Wash Landscape Painting in the Tang Dynasty," Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 1965; Susan Bush, *The Chinese Literati on Painting: Su Shih (1037-1101) to Tung Ch'i-ch'ang (1555-1636)* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970); Sungmi Han, "Wu Chen's 'Mo-chu P'u': Literati Painter's Manual on Ink Bamboo" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 1983).

painters like Li Gonglin (李公麟; 1049–1106), Mi Fu (米芾; 1051–1107), Mi Youren (米友仁; 1047–1153), Zhao Mengfu (趙孟頫; 1254–1322), Ni Zan (倪瓚; 1301–1374), Wu Zhen (吳鎮; 1280–1354), Shen Zhou (沈周; 1427–1509), Wen Zhengming (文徵明; 1470–1559), Dong Qichang (董其昌; 1555–1636), Hong Ren (弘仁; 1610–1664), and Zhu Da (朱耷; 1626–1705) indeed represent a strong tradition of ink brushwork and show that ink-monochromatic painting was maintained by a pedigree of scholar-painters.

In fact, according to the influential art historian and painter Dong Qichang (155–1636), Qiu Ying belongs to a long and equally strong tradition of using color in Chinese painting, coexisting with the above ink aesthetic.³⁷ Archaeological findings from the Han (206 BCE–220 CE) and Tang (618–907) dynasties show that tomb murals and cave temples were painted with pictorial motifs colored in red, blue, green, and black.³⁸ Later copies of early Chinese figure paintings, like the works of Gu Kaizhi (顧愷之; ca. 345 – ca. 406) and Yan Liben (閻立本; ca. 600 – 673), are all colored. The founders of Chinese landscape painting, Li Sixun (李思訓; 651–716) and Li Zhaodao (李昭道; ca. 615 – 741), are famous for painting the landscape in azurite blue and malachite green. Since the rise of ink washes and ink brushwork aesthetics, painters like Wang Ximeng (王希孟; 1096–1119), Wang Shen (王誥; ca. 1048 – ca. 1103), Li Tang (李唐; ca. 1050 – after 1130), Zhao Mengfu, and Sheng Mao (盛懋; active 1320–1360) all incorporated ink brushwork and ink washes into their colored landscapes. This synthesized style influenced many

³⁷ Yang Xin (1997), 225.

³⁸ Silbergeld (1988), 869; Zhao Shengliang 趙聲良 edited, Volume 18 of *Dunhuang shiku quanji* 敦煌石窟全集 (Hong Kong: Shangwu yin shuguan, 2002).

Ming- (1368–1644) and Qing-dynasty (1644–1911) painters who incorporated subtle color washes into compositions largely depicted by ink brushwork.³⁹ Other than Qiu Ying, professional painters in the seventeenth-century Suzhou area, Qing-dynasty painters Yuan Jiang (袁江; active ca. 1680–1730) and Yuan Yao (袁耀; active ca. 1739–1788), and painters in the Qing court all painted landscape and figure paintings with a generous use of color.

Even one historical textual source, attributed to the influential scholar-painter Wen Zhengming, a contemporary of Qiu Ying, succinctly outlined the interwoven history of ink and colored paintings and their equal importance in the history of Chinese painting. It said

³⁹ Niu Kecheng (2002), 287-316.

It is known to me that paintings in the great ancient time were all colored, while ink work was of less importance; therefore, [ancient paintings] were usually colored. Later on, in the middle ancient period, the practice changed: tinting, color washes, and ink work became more welcomed. This means that paintings in the ancient time excelled in the sense of spiritedness, whereas [the style] of the paintings later on, [which have deployed tinting, color washes, and ink work], had culminated in a sense of ease. There is truth that lies in [these two qualities: between the sense of spiritedness and ease], and [neither] one can prevail over the other.⁴⁰

余聞上古之畫全尚設色，墨法次之，故多用青綠；中古始變為淺絳，水墨雜出。故上古之畫盡於神，中古之畫入於逸；均之各有至理，未可以優劣論也。

Apparently, it is not always true that Chinese painters solely appreciate ink and brushwork. Qiu Ying's contemporary, the scholar-official Wang Shizhen (王世貞; 1526–1590), in his colophon to a painting by Shen Zhou, praised the light and diluted coloration of Zhou's depiction of plants and flowers. He also praised the thick application of colors and the use of

⁴⁰ Kong Guangtao 孔廣陶 and Kong Guangyong 孔廣鏞 edited, fascicle 1 of *Yuexue lou shuhua lu* 嶽雪樓書畫錄 (Record of the painting and calligraphy in the Yuexue tower) (Wangjuan tang, 1907), folio 8b and 10a-b. Wen Zhengming's comment was recorded in the Qing dynasty *Yuexue lou shuhua lu*. Although scholars who studied this treatise do not doubt the authenticity of the colophon, we should not take its reliability for granted. One major reason to doubt the authenticity of Wen's colophon is that it was recorded in a compiled volume of a later time period and there is no way to verify its authenticity. The second reason is that Wen's colophon was written on a painting that is no longer extant: Yan Liben's (閻立本) *Autumn Mountains and Returning Clouds* (秋嶺歸雲圖; *Qiuling guiyun tu*). According to Kong's record, there are additional colophons by an array of great painters and collectors, including Ke Jiesi, Huang Gongwang, and Wang Meng—perhaps a case too good to be true. Furthermore, Kong's record said that the painting's title that was inscribed on the exterior of the wrapping silk of the scroll was written by the Emperor Huizong. There is also a seal of the Huizong court, the double dragon seal, on the painting. However, this painting was not mentioned in the Xuanhe painting catalog, which recorded the paintings in Huizong's collection. At any rate, Wen Zhengming acknowledged the equal importance of ink, brushwork, and colors, echoing many painting treatises circulated in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Even though the text itself may be problematic, the opinion about colored paintings embodied in this text coheres with historical truth.

white powder in the bird-and-flower painting of the Five Dynasties period (907–960). The pigments on these paintings, according to Wang, rise up slightly from the painting surface. The colorations and representations are extremely minute, and they look as if they are alive and real.⁴¹ Scholar Shen Hao (沈顥; active during the seventeenth century), when discussing the process of compositional design, also expressed an equal appreciation of both color and ink. He said

Wang Youchen (i.e., Wang Wei; 王維; 699–759) said, “Ink is the supreme element in [the practice of] painting.” This is true. But if one, when executing the brush, is not capable of thinking about [the application of] water and ink as color and comes to a state when one does not know how to continue. The varied tones of ink are settled. Then, why not add some color?⁴²
右承云：水墨为上。诚然。然操笔时不可作水墨刷色想，直至了局。墨韵既定，则刷色不防。

By the seventeenth century, the poet and politician Wang Wei was remembered as the fountainhead of literati and ink-monochromatic painting traditions. Using Wang Wei as a point of reference to introduce the usefulness of color indicates that Shen Hao had no bias against color or toward ink. Instead, he sees the two materials as reciprocal.

Literati-centralism also caused existing scholarship to overlook Qiu Ying’s use of color. Unlike his elite contemporaries Shen Zhou (沈周; 1427–1509), Wen Zhengming, and Tang Yin, who all participated in the national exam system and received training in literature, poetry,

⁴¹ Wang Shizhen 王世貞, fascicle 148 of *Yanzhou shanren tiba* 弇州山人題跋 (Inscriptions written by Wang Shizhen), as cited in *Zhongguo hualun jiyao* 中國畫論輯要, ed. Zhao Jiyin 周積寅 (Jiangsu meishu chubanshe, 2007), 489.

⁴² Shen Hao 沈顥, *Huachen* 畫塵 (The dust of painting), as cited in *Zhongguo hualun jiyao* 中國畫論輯要, ed. Zhao Jiyin 周積寅 (Jiangsu meishu chubanshe, 2007), 489.

painting, and calligraphy, Qiu Ying was a professional painter with a humble background. His social status generated negligence in investigating the place of color in most monographic studies of the artist produced before the turn of the twenty-first century. The use of color in paintings by his literati contemporaries and by painters from the Tang, Song, and Yuan dynasties, all of which are overemphasized as hallmarks of Chinese aesthetics in the scholarship at that time, overshadow Qiu's achievement.⁴³ It is thus no surprise that most studies produced before the turn of the twenty-first century that actually discuss the power of color are studies of paintings by the literati, focusing on the literati's penchant for emulating great ancient painters in using colors. Richard Barnhart once wrote that "[f]or years in the West only Song and Song-inspired painting was understood and appreciated. Then, in the [19]50s and [19]60s we began to learn about and admire *wenren* [文人 (i.e., literati)] ideals in the Yuan, Ming, and Qing periods... then, later, we all began to dump on the professionals."⁴⁴ Barnhart's reflection aptly attests to how literati-centralism has preoccupied the view of modern art-historians. Recent scholarship has already confirmed the limitation of this notion. Silbergeld and Craig Clunas put forward that "rather than seeing the scholar ideal in painting as synonymous with 'Chinese art,' it may be helpful to see it as only one, albeit socially privileged, type of visuality, coexisting with and interacting with others."⁴⁵

⁴³ For a detail discussion of these problems in the historiography of Chinese painting, see Jerome Silbergeld, "The Evolution of a 'Revolution': Unsettled Reflections on the Art-Historical Mission," *Archives of Asian Art* 55 (2005): 41.

⁴⁴ James F. Cahill et al., *The Barnhart-Cahill-Rogers Correspondence, 1981* (Institute of East Asian Studies, 1982), 4.

⁴⁵ Craig Clunas, *Art in China* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 143; as cited in Jerome Silbergeld, "The Yuan 'Revolutionary' Picnic Feasting on the Fruits of Song (A Historiographic Menu)," *Ars Orientalis* 37 (2009): 24.

Indeed, this literati-centralism did not exist in Qiu Ying's time. Not only was Qiu a friend of Tang Yin and Wen Zhengming, his use of color also won the praises of a contemporary scholar. The poet, writer, calligrapher, and prodigy Yu Yunwen (俞允文; 1513–1579)⁴⁶ states

The Tang dynasty general, father, and son Lee did not leave many paintings. There is one, as shown by Wang Shizhen, [which] shows *Haitain luozhao tu*, a work that Qiu copied for Mr. Tang (*Tang shi* 湯氏). This painting is exceptionally unique and cannot be repeated. It looks as if a bright and steaming cloud cannot fill the sky. And the strange air is yellow. It will change its color. The sea and isle are colorful, the village and tree are crystalized and bright, they are in various heights, [and you] can see them clearly. [They] look as if [they are] a mirage. This painting is exceptionally focused on color. It is not what other copies can emulate.⁴⁷

唐李將軍父子畫世不多。有王大理元美遺示仇實父所為湯氏摹昭道《海天落照》圖。特為奇絕。若其晴蛟蒸雲。不能彌天。而怪氣熏黃。悉變初色。海島激灩。村樹晶熒。參差縷分。如出幻景。措意著色。尤非平時落照可比。

Importantly, Yu Yunwen's comment shows that literati interest was not merely in the archaic aesthetics that certain methods of applying color can bring—a topic that predominates modern scholarship. What is more is that Yu responds to the pure visual impact of Qiu Ying's use of color, being amazed by the illusion that it creates.

Qiu Ying's paintings serve as the best case study to address these historiographical lacunae. Since Qiu Ying often drew stylistic references from ancient masters, including those ancient masters who painted landscapes in a blue-and-green palette, taking his oeuvre as the center of an investigation could also serve as an inquiry into the works produced before his time

⁴⁶ Guoli zhongyang tushuguan 國立中央圖書館 and Wang Deyi 王德毅 edited, *Mingren zhuanji ziliao suoyin* 明人傳記資料索引 (Taipei: Guoli zhongyang tushuguan, 1978), 369.

⁴⁷ Yu Yunwen 俞允文, fascicle 24 of *Zhongwei xiansheng ji* 仲蔚先生集 (An anthology of Mr. Zhongwei) (Chengshan ding xiye shuwu 程善定西野書屋, 1581 edition), folio 5a. A copy printed in 1581 of the book is kept in the National Library of Taiwan.

and dovetail with the field's interest in the archaic aesthetics that color can yield. Since Qiu Ying left us with a huge corpus of colored paintings that dwarfs the output of other painters, his paintings are the best case study to explore many different contexts in which azurite and malachite exhibit meaning beyond simple coloration.

Indeed, studying azurite blue and malachite green, the two pigments that most frequently appear in Qiu Ying's paintings, takes an investigation of his use of colors beyond the scope of stylistic studies, and further open a wide swathe of questions that continues to interest the field of art history at large. The two naturally-coexisting minerals are composed of crystalline and matte granules of copper carbonate and mottled with the colors of clear blue sky and verdant foliage. As early as the sixth century, the alchemist Tao Hongjing (陶弘景; 456–536) exclaimed that azurite was the most expensive ingredient in the mineral-drug category. Tao found it to be pitiful that the mineral was used as a colorant.⁴⁸ At the same time, azurite and malachite were two of the most popular colors used in the decoration of imperial architecture and murals in temples and cave temples. Thought to absorb the vapor of the universe, the two minerals were precious and expensive treasures rigorously sought after by many. They were believed to be the most effective ingredients for curing eyes and kidney diseases, and they were also key substances used in refining age-defying elixirs.⁴⁹ They are also well-known tropes of immortality and transcendence in Chinese literary tradition.

⁴⁸ Li Shizhen 李時珍, *Bencao gangmu [jinling ban paiyin ben]* 本草綱目[金陵版排印本] (Compendium of *materia medica* [typesetting edition of the Jinling version]) (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 2010), 476, 478-9.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Furthermore, almost all of the Qiu Ying paintings discussed in this dissertation are blue-and-green landscape paintings with human figures depicted in prominent positions. Song- and Yuan-dynasty scholar-painters often use this type of landscape painting for self-expression, revealing their inclinations to archaism and reclusion.⁵⁰ By the early Yuan dynasty, the color scheme had become an archaic mode of representation and taken up the connotation of eremitism.⁵¹ Furthermore, since the rise of ink-monochrome landscape painting, literati-painters derived countless variations of the stylistic paradigm established by Li Sixun and Li Zhaodao, who established the tradition of landscape painting with a blue-and-green palette. According to modern scholars, painters like Dong Yuan, Wang Ximeng, Wang Shen, Qian Xuan, and Zhao Mengfu, each in varying degrees, contributed to this scenario by elevating brushwork into a more prominent place, repacking the blue-and-green landscape theme as an archaistic practice through reviving its ancient stylistic models, and, in turn, appropriating these formal elements as a means of expressing their eremitic inclinations. The result of this long process was that, by the early Yuan dynasty, blue-and-green landscape paintings were no longer merely a mode of representing landscapes substantiated by azurite and malachite—they were a parameter of one’s art-historical knowledge and refinement in formal explorations, as well as a viable communicative means of self-expression. This historical precedence indicates that Qiu Ying’s blue-and-green landscape

⁵⁰ Richard Vinograd, “Some Landscape Related to the Blue-and-Green Manner from the Early Yuan Period,” *Artibus Asiae* 2/3 (1979): 101-131; Claudia Brown, “Chen Ju-yen and Late Yuan Painting in Suchou” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1985), 145-159; Shih Shou-chien, “Eremitism in Landscape Painting by Ch’ien Hsuan” (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1984), 279-291; Feng Youheng, “Fishing Society at Hsi-Sai Mountain by Li Chieh (1124-before 1197): a Study of Scholar-Official’s Art in the Southern Sung period” (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1996), 281.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

paintings with figures can also be imbued with the desires and messages of Qiu Ying himself and his patrons.

Thus, this dissertation focuses on Qiu Ying's handling of azurite and malachite, so as to provide a missing piece in the field of Chinese painting, taking into account the originality, development, and other socioeconomic and cultural issues in Qiu Ying's uses of these two pigments.

Methodological Approach and the Significance of this Project

To elucidate the multiple meanings of azurite and malachite in Qiu Ying's paintings, this dissertation deploys a methodology that has been proven effective in studies of pigment in the European and Latin American arts. Scholars like Michael Baxandall,⁵² Claudia Brittenham,⁵³ Gabriela Siracusano,⁵⁴ Spike Bucklow,⁵⁵ Maureen Daly Goggin,⁵⁶ and Diana Magaloni Kerpel⁵⁷

⁵² Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer in a Social History of Pictorial Style* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 11.

⁵³ Claudia Brittenham and Diana Magaloni, "The Eloquence of Color: Material and Meaning in the Cacaxtla Murals," in *Making Value, Making Meaning: Techné in the Pre-Columbian World*, ed. Cathy Lynne Costin (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collections, forthcoming, 2017).

⁵⁴ Gabriela Siracusano, *Pigments and Power in the Andes: From the Material to the Symbolic in Andean Cultural Practices, 1500-1800* (Archetype Publications, 2011).

⁵⁵ Spike Bucklow, *The Alchemy of Paint: Art, Science and Secrets from the Middle Ages* (Marion Boyars Publishers, 2009).

⁵⁶ Maureen Daly Goggin, "The Extra-Ordinary Powers of Red in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century English Needlework," in *The Materiality of Color: The Production, Circulation and Application of Dyes and Pigments, 1400-1800*, ed. Andrea Fesser (Burlington: Ashgate, 2012), 40.

⁵⁷ Diana Magaloni Kerpel, "Painters of the New World: The Process of Making the Florentine Codex," in *Colors between Two Worlds: The Florentine Codex of Bernardino de Shagún*, ed. Gerhard Wolf et al. (Harvard University Press, 2011), 66-76.

have in various degrees introduced and ameliorated a methodology to scrutinize whether pigments add meaning to a work of art and serve as communicative conduits for painters, patrons, and viewers. This dissertation synthesizes their approaches into a method composed of their interrelated steps.

First, one must explore how a pigment entangles with the wider world.⁵⁸ In order to fully understand the place of azurite and malachite in sixteenth-century Chinese painting, it is necessary to investigate how the two minerals transformed into precious commodities purchased and used by artists, physicians, alchemists, and emperors; and, as time went by, how these two minerals were enveloped in complex networks of meaning. The second step is thus to fathom whether artists used a pigment—including its symbolism—to enrich, connect, reinforce, or magnify the meaning or function of a particular pictorial motif, subject matter, or space.⁵⁹ Only with a close reading of the pictorial contents, iconography, and even the larger context of a work, like the location and function of a mural in religious architecture, could one decipher and accurately elucidate the artist's intention, plan, or agenda for what and where pigments are applied. Thirdly, in order to convincingly demonstrate the intentional and symbolic uses of pigment, one must compare, contrast, attest, and strengthen the interpretations by finding other

⁵⁸ Baxandall, Goggin, and Brittenham and Kerpel have discussed the high cost and trade of lapis lazuli, cochineal, and Maya blue, respectively. Kerpel probed into the meaning of earth-bounded mineral pigments in Nahua cosmology, while Bucklow detailed the uses of lapis lazuli and cinnabar in European alchemical practices.

⁵⁹ Baxandall (1972), 11. Goggin (2012), 40. Baxandall observes that, in *St. Francis Renouncing His Heritage* of the famous Sassetta's panel (National Gallery, London), the gown that St. Francis discards is an ultramarine (lapis lazuli) gown, symbolizing a large amount of wealth that St. Francis gave away. In her study of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English needlework, Goggin states that cochineal, an expensive red pigment being traded and transported across the North Atlantic Ocean, assumes the color of the thread rendering high moral texts.

examples in the long history of using and seeing colors in the civilization in question, as well as in an artist's oeuvre.⁶⁰

With its methodological approach and inquiry outlined in the above, this dissertation invites a dialogue about the materiality of color between traditional Chinese painting and recent scholarship on this topic in the Euro-American and Latin American arts. The materiality of color, as demonstrated in the five chapters of this dissertation and the studies by the abovementioned scholars, composes two fundamentally different but reciprocal inquiries. The first is to study how pigments and dyes intertwine with the wider world, reconstructing the history of their production and circulation along with the worldview of minerals and colorants in a given civilization. This inquiry leads to a better understanding of the history of trade, economy, science, medicine, chemistry, technology, and culture.⁶¹ The second inquiry, which fundamentally concerns art historians, studies how the production and circulation of pigments and dyes—as well as any point of view about the material used—permeates the conceptual property of artworks, such as paintings and murals, and colored objects, such as textiles and porcelain.⁶² These two specific inquiries define this dissertation with a scope that is distant from the study of color in optics,

⁶⁰ For example, in their discussions of the Red Temple at Cacaxtla, they observe that, “most of the precious things in [the] mural about luxury and preciousness are painted in a single blue hue.” This blue pigment is the costly Maya blue, imported to Cacaxtla. There is thus a tight circuit between the luxuriousness of the pigment and pictorial motifs of precious things that were painted in this color. Brittenham and Kerpel also support their interpretations by showing that painters at Cacaxtla had technical knowledge of producing other colors and applying colors with different techniques, and that contemporary painters were deeply attentive to the materiality and symbolic meaning of colors. Thus, the use of Maya blue for all precious things in the Red Temple would seem intentional.

⁶¹ For example, see Feeser et al. (2012), 101-184.

⁶² Notable studies include but not limited to Claudia Brittenham and Diana Magaloni (2017); Diana Magaloni Kerpel (2011); Maureen Daly Goggin (2012); Gabriela Siracusano (2011).

vision, digital imaging, and psychology and goes beyond the age-old debate in Western art between *disegno* and *colore*.⁶³ Instead, the topic of the materiality of color embodied in this dissertation investigates how azurite and malachite transmit meanings that form, iconography, the process of making, and textual elements cannot entirely express.

While the above methodological approach and inquiry would seem to stem out of the historiography of the Euro-American and Latin American arts, several texts in the Chinese art tradition legitimize this adaptation. The time-celebrated painter Gu Kaizhi (顧愷之; ca. 344–405) states that when depicting figures in far away distant mountains, one should use lighter and subtler colors, as opposed to thicker and more intense colors in the foreground—the planned variegation of color thus reinforces and corresponds to compositional design.⁶⁴ *The Standards of Depicting Landscape, Trees, and Rocks* (*Shanshui songshi ge* 山水松石格), a painting treatise attributed to the Liang-dynasty emperor Xiao Yi (蕭繹; 508–555), extols the sophistication of compositional arrangement, uses of ink and color, and renditions of formal likenesses in the art of painting. The treatise states that red colors denote a sense of heat, whereas blue-green colors denote coolness.⁶⁵ This is evidence of a long tradition of seeing and using colors together with

⁶³ For scholarship on these aspects of color, see Osborne (2013). For the debate between *disegno* and *colore*, see Jacqueline Lichtenstein, *The Eloquence of Color: Rhetoric and Painting in the French Classical Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). See also Rebecca Zorach, “Reviews of *The Materiality of Color: The Production, Circulation, and Application of Dyes and Pigments, 1400-1800* and *Prismatic Ecology: Ecotheory beyond Green*,” *The Art Bulletin* XCVI. 4 (2014): 489-91.

⁶⁴ The original text reads as 衣服彩色殊鮮微，此正山高而人遠耳。

⁶⁵ Xiao Yi 蕭繹, *Shanshui songshi ge* 山水松石格, as cited in *Zhongguo hualun jiyao* 中國畫論輯要, ed. Zhao Jiyan 周積寅 (Jiangsu meishu chubanshe, 2007), 485.

their associations, implying that there were painters who were aware of the multiple meanings of azurite and malachite. Even during the time of Qiu Ying, the art critic Zhan Jingfeng (詹景鳳; 1532–1602) was particularly interested in what, where, and how pigments, dyes, and brushwork were applied; he described in detail how these visual elements worked to construct the landscape. Such meticulous descriptions of technique pervade every page of his painting treatise *The Thoughts of Mr. Dongtu* (*Dongtu xunlan* 東圖玄覽). Apparently, informed viewers of Qiu Ying's paintings would also conduct close readings of the pictorial contents depicted and his technical skills, which in turn would inevitably detect the tight conceptual affinity between the symbolic meanings of azurite and malachite and his pictorial motifs and subject matter.

Rethinking Chinese Painting through Qiu Ying's Uses of Azurite and Malachite

The five chapters in this dissertation provide different perspectives on the materiality of azurite and malachite in Qiu Ying's paintings. Chapters 1 and 2 situate azurite and malachite in the worldview of sixteenth-century China and reveal how they were perceived at that time. Focusing on how azurite and malachite entangle with the wider world and situating the two minerals in the Chinese worldview, chapter 1 first introduces the two minerals by discussing their nomenclatures, colors, and appearances. It then discusses the geographical origins of the two minerals and how they are formed in the Chinese cosmological belief. It also presents the two minerals as alchemical and pharmaceutical ingredients and discuss their mining sites and methods, economic values, and their places among other colorants and in Chinese literary tradition.

Chapter 2 reconstructs how Qiu Ying and his contemporaries would have confronted the art-historical significance of azurite and malachite. It begins with using Wen Zhengming's *Lady of Xiang and Goddess of Xiang* (*Xiangjun Xiangfuren tu* 湘君湘夫人圖; dated 1517), a painting that involved Qiu Ying, to reveal that color was considered high stakes in the art of sixteenth-century painting. It then uses textual materials circulated at that time to explore the anxiety and burden of using azurite and malachite in particular. Finally, it analyzes the use of azurite and malachite in Qiu Ying's *Picture Album: Imitating Song and Yuan Models* (*Songyuan liujing tuce* 宋元六景圖冊; dated 1547) to show how he responded to the anxiety and burden of using the two minerals.

Probing into the relationship between color, pictorial contents, and poetry, chapter 3 focuses on Qiu Ying's *Study Studio Amid Wutong Trees and Bamboo* (*Wuzhu shutang tu* 梧竹書堂圖; Shanghai Museum; datable to 1527). This painting depicts a scholar sitting on a reclining chair in a thatched hut and is inscribed with the poems of Wen Zhengming, Wang Chong, and Peng Nian. Modern scholars suggest that the scholar depicted in the work is Wen Zhengming, who returned to Suzhou from Beijing in 1527. This chapter argues that Qiu Ying appropriates the literary trope of azurite as a metaphor for a rare, precious, and erudite scholar in order to strengthen the identity and achievement of the scholar depicted. This particular connotation of azurite comes from Jiang Yan's (江淹) *Rhapsody of Kongqing Azurite* (*Kongqing fu* 空青賦). In fact, Wang Guxiang (王穀祥; 1501–1586), a student of Wen Zhengming, also painted the hanging scroll *Pines, Prunus, Orchids, and Fungus* (*Songmei lanzhi tu* 松梅蘭芝圖; dated and

inscribed in 1557; Beijing Palace Museum) using the motif of azurite rock to evoke the erudition of a scholar. Given the close relationship between Wang Guxiang, Wen Zhengming, and Qiu Ying, Qiu would have been familiar with Jiang Yan's rhapsody. Thus, *Study Studio* shows that Qiu Ying would have known all the connotations of azurite (including its medicinal function and high cost) mentioned in Jiang's rhapsody. This painting thus prompts an exploration of more interesting uses of azurite in other paintings, which leads to chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 4 investigates how the high cost of azurite affected Qiu Ying's placement of the mineral in his pictorial compositions. It demonstrates that Qiu Ying, toward the late period of his career, often reserved azurite blue for the pictorial motifs that were most important to his patrons. This practice seems to grow out of a traditional convention in which a painter would carefully coordinate the colorations of the pictorial motifs in a composition so as to emphasize and draw viewers' attention to certain motifs in particular.

Previous chapters reveal how Qiu Ying appropriated the economic value and literary trope of azurite blue to enhance the depth of meaning in his pictorial motifs. With that level of appropriation established, the question then becomes whether Qiu Ying was aware of the associations between azurite and multiple connotations of immortality. Qiu's *Towers and Pavilions in Immortal Mountains* (*Xianshan louge tu* 仙山樓閣圖) and *The Transcendent Woman of the Sweet Olive Grove* (*Guilin xianzi tu* 桂林仙子圖) serve as the best focal points to explore this question in chapter 5, because both paintings single out azurite as the sole colorant used for landscape elements. The inscription and poem on *The Transcendent Woman* provides clues for understanding the meaning of the large azurite rock in the composition and imply that

Qiu Ying was familiar with azurite's connotation of immortality. This chapter also brings in *Playing the Flute to Attract Phoenixes* (*Chuixiao yinfeng tu* 吹簫引鳳圖) and *Jade Grotto in Transcendental Spring* (*Yudongxian yuan tu* 玉洞仙源圖), both of which are—to a certain extent—related to the theme of immortality. These paintings feature both azurite and malachite in the color of their landscapes and represent completely different ideas about immortality. All of the aforementioned paintings reveal that, Qiu Ying changed color palette to represent different meanings of immortality.

The above contextualizing of Qiu Ying's uses of color thus fills in what has been missing in the field. It provides a deeper understanding of his style and other styles in traditional Chinese painting through the lens of color. My discussion of the ambitions and desires encoded in pigments allows us to probe into the anxiety and power struggles among social classes and delve into the politic of color in the sixteenth-century elite community that propelled its participants to invest in color. The complex relations between azurite blue, affluence, and immortality evince the excitement and gratification that color can bring, and enhance our understanding of color perception in Chinese culture. Azurite blue in Qiu Ying's paintings can thus be understood as a blueprint showing how these seemingly disparate fields of knowledge dovetailed with and synergized the unique chromatic experience of sixteenth-century China. More broadly, The discussion of how azurite and malachite enhance the meaning of pictorial motifs and subject matters prompts a broader investigation of the use of pigments in architecture, cave temples, and tombs, as well as warranting a closer look at the place of pigment in Chinese painting, demonstrating the power of color as a viable entry point to understanding this tradition.

The dialogue within the larger field of art history embodied in this dissertation builds on a conceptual affinity of materiality between traditional Chinese painting and artworks from other cultures. Such a cross-cultural dialogue rests on the intellectual sphere of modern scholars, but could not actually take place during the time of Qiu Ying. There is no evidence showing that Qiu Ying had any means to know how artists in pre-Columbian Latin America and the Italian Renaissance used pigments. However, from the eighteenth century onward, the uses of linear perspective, chiaroscuro, and shading in European art have exerted strong influences on Chinese painting. There was a true cross-cultural dialogue between the court painters of the eighteenth century onward and the European missionary-painters who served in the court.⁶⁶ Chinese painters and print-makers outside the court at that time also synthesized European representation techniques in their works.⁶⁷ The present study on Qiu Ying's paintings, which also situates his uses of color in the long tradition of Chinese painting prior to the late sixteenth century, thus reveals how traditional Chinese painters used and perceived colors before the conspicuous European influence began to show in the seventeenth century.⁶⁸ In other words, the present study allows us to discern the elements of the traditional uses of color in paintings that show the

⁶⁶ Michael Sullivan, *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art* (University of California Press, 1989); Kao Mayching, "China's Response to the West in Art: 1898-1937," Ph.D. Dissertation, Stanford University, 1972; Marie-Catherine Rey, *Les Très Riches Heures de la Cour de Chine* (Paris: Musée des Arts Asiatiques Guimet, 2006); Cheng-hua Wang, "Whither Art History: Global Perspective on Eighteenth-Century Chinese Art and Visual Culture," *The Art Bulletin* XCVI.4 (2014), 379-394.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ James Cahill, "Wu Bin: Influences from Europe, and the Northern Sung Revival," in *Compelling Images: Nature and Style in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Painting* (Harvard University Press, 1982), 70-2; Craig Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China* (Reaktion Books, 1997), 172-82.

influence of European technique, leading to a better understanding of the perceptions of color in both seventeenth- and eighteenth-century China and Europe. But before such an understanding of color can take place, we must first investigate the use of color in Qiu Ying's paintings.

CHAPTER ONE

THE WORLDVIEW OF AZURITE AND MALACHITE IN TRADITIONAL CHINA

Introduction

In an attempt to explain why azurite blue and its native counterpart malachite green were often used to depict the theme of immortal lands in traditional Chinese painting, scholars suggest that the two minerals were once ingredients in elixirs and pharmaceutical recipes, and that their appearance in paintings thus evokes immortality.¹ However, in his famous *Materia Medica* (*Bencao gangmu* 本草綱目), the sixteenth-century physician and scholar Li Shizhen reveals many different aspects of the two minerals by citing a handsome number of textual sources. According to Li, the two minerals absorb the vapor of the universe; it follows that they were precious treasures rigorously sought after by many. They were the most expensive mineral drugs and the most effective ingredients for curing eye and kidney diseases. In his discussion of these two minerals, Li also mentions where they can be found, associated mining activities, and their relation to copper. With such a wide swathe of significance, weaving in the Chinese worldview of minerals, mining sites and technologies, medical and alchemical theories, and economic and

¹ Amy McNair, "On the Meaning of the 'Blue-and-Green Manner' in Chinese Landscape Painting," in *Perspectives on the Heritage of the Brush: Papers Presented at a Symposium on the Heritage of the Brush*, ed. Marsha Weidner (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1997); John Hay, *Kernels of Energy, Bones of Earth: the Rock in Chinese Art* (New York: China House Gallery: China Institute in America, 1985), 48; Susan E. Nelson, "Imitation of Immortality in Chinese Landscape Painting of the Fourteenth Century," *Oriental Art* 3 (1987): 279-80; Stephen Little, *Realm of the Immortals: Daoism in the Arts of China* (Cleveland, Ohio: Cleveland Museum of Art in cooperation with Indiana University Press; Bloomington, Ind.: Distributed by Indiana University Press, 1988), 31-2.

socioeconomic mechanisms, it is hard to imagine azurite and malachite as merely pharmaceutical ingredients in the sixteenth-century Chinese consciousness. To fully understand the depth and diversity of the many meanings of azurite and malachite in Qiu Ying paintings, we must first reconstruct their multilayered lives.

Through a close inspection of a large and diverse corpus of textual sources produced between the fourth century BCE and the seventeenth century CE, this chapter calibrates our understanding of the two minerals to that of Qiu Ying, his contemporaries, and their predecessors. In the interval of time that these textual sources represent, the minerals that we call azurite and malachite today were equivalent to a variety of blue and green minerals that coexist with copper. This group of minerals, differentiated in terms of their colors and shapes, were namely *kongqing* (空青), *cengqing* (曾青), *pianqing* (扁青), *lüqing* (綠青), *baiqing* (白青), and *bqing* (碧青). By the sixteenth century, *shiqing* (石青; stone blue) and *shilü* (石綠; stone green) became the two terms that encompassed all of these minerals in direct opposition with *tongqing* (銅青; copper blue) and *tonglü* (銅綠; copper green), which were made from chemical reactions. The convenience and inclusiveness of the category *shiqing* also included lapis lazuli, which was called *huiqing* (回青) or *xiyi huihui qing* (西夷回回青) in Chinese.

Ancient texts that reveal mystical and religious beliefs describe azurite as a substance appearing in Taoist paradises and remote mountains that are filled with precious gemstones, deities, and beasts. From the ninth century, mining sites of azurite and malachite began to appear in painting treatises and state records. Despite a much more logical understanding of where the

two minerals came from, poets continued to take advantage of their mythical natures and used them to evoke imagery of otherworldliness and transcendence in their literary works.

Furthermore, state records and encyclopedias have implied how costly and time consuming the mining and pigment extracting processes of the two minerals were. These costs were so high that being able to use the minerals immediately delivered a strong message of one's financial power. As a result, azurite and malachite were popular materials and pigments in imperial architecture.

Since the Tang dynasty (618-907), artists have used different gradations of azurite and malachite to create a stunning spectrum of tonal variation. By nature, coarse particles of the pigments have deep and rich colors. Finely ground azurite and malachite appear in paler shades are more expensive because they required more time, effort, and skill to produce.

The significance of this chapter rests in its ability to broaden the understanding of azurite, which has long been dismissed as merely an outer-alchemical and pharmaceutical ingredient among art historians. It provides a historical account of mineral mining, the manufacturing of the pigments and their economic values, and the medical theories that substantiate the history of two minerals as drugs. It joins a field of cultural studies that focuses on how pigments and dyes, like indigo², cochineal³, and mauve⁴, entangle with the wider world. It also reveals the factors that

² Jenny Balfour-Paul, *Indigo: Egyptian Mummies to Blue Jeans* (Firefly Books, 2011).

³ Elena Phipps, *Cochineal Red: The Art History of a Color* (*The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, Winter 2010) (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2010); Carmella Padilla and Barbara Anderson edited, *A Red Like No Other: How Cochineal Colored the World* (Skira Rizzoli, 2015).

⁴ Simon Garfield, *Mauve: How One Man Invented a Color that Changed the World* (W.W. Norton, 2002).

allow Qiu Ying's blue and green pigments to exhibit meaning beyond simple coloration, laying a solid foundation for subsequent chapters. The high cost of the two pigments, as well as their long history as painting colors and mythical substances, prepares subsequent discussion on the ambitions and desires encoded within them. In other words, this chapter demonstrates to the field of Chinese painting a viable method of approaching the materiality of color that is widely deployed in Euro-American scholarship: to fully understand the meaning of the color on a painting's surface, one must look beyond the milieu of the painting.

This chapter first introduces the nomenclatures, colors, and shapes of azurite and malachite in Chinese understanding. It then discerns the significance of the two pigments from diverse texts by synthesizing these historical records under the topics of geographical origins and formation, alchemical and pharmaceutical ingredients, mining sites and methods, economic value, colorants, and tropes in the literary tradition.

Nomenclatures, Colors, and Shapes of Azurite and Malachite

Much scholarship on conservation has revealed that the majority of the blue and green pigments used on silk and in murals in Chinese painting are the minerals azurite and malachite, both of which are forms of copper carbonate.⁵ According to the 1885 edition of Oxford English

⁵ Yu Fei'an, *Chinese Painting Colors: Studies of their Preparation and Application in Traditional and Modern Times*, trans. Jerome Silbergeld and Amy McNair (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1988); Li Zuixiong, "Deterioration and Treatment of Wall Paintings in Grottoes along the Silk Road in China and Related Conservation Efforts," in *Conservation of Ancient Sites on the Silk Road*, ed. Neville Agnew (Los Angeles: the Getty Conservation Institute, 2010), 46-55; John Winter, *East Asian Painting: Materials, Structures, and Deterioration Mechanisms* (Archetype Books, 2008).

Dictionary, the word *azurite* means “blue carbonate of copper, a valuable ore, closely allied to malachite.” It first appears in 1868 in James D. Dana’s *A System of Mineralogy*.⁶ Etymologically speaking, it is composed of the noun and adjective *azure* and the suffix *-ite*. *Azure* originates from the Greek *λαζούριον* and the medieval Latin *lazurius*, referring to the stone lapis lazuli, or the color azure. The suffix *-ite* means “connected with,” “belonging to,” or “a member of.”⁷ The word *azurite* thus shares the same roots as lapis lazuli and refers to a stone whose colors are similar to the latter. The word *malachite*, however, has a much longer history than *azurite*. It has appeared in texts since the twelfth century. Oxford English Dictionary defines malachite as “a dense subtranslucent or opaque Arabian stone, having the color of the mallow.” It is composed of the noun *malva* (i.e., mallow) and the suffix *-ite*.

According to the sixteenth-century physician and pharmacologist Li Shizhen 李時珍 (1518–1593), the blue mineral pigments used in painting are called *kongqing* (空青) and *pianping* (扁青), whereas the green minerals are called *lüqing* (綠青) and *shilü* (石綠).⁸ Numerous alchemical treatises and painting manuals prior to Li Shizhen’s *Materia Medica* also recognized the function of these minerals and their variants as pigments. To name a few, *kongqing* first appeared in the sixth-century painting treatise *Record of Painting the Cloud Terrace Mountain* (*Hua Yuantai Shan ji* 畫雲台山記), attributed to Gu Kaizhi. Zhang Yanyuan

⁶ Oxford English Dictionary (University of Chicago’s library database). “Azurite”, <http://www.oed.com.proxy.uchicago.edu/view/Entry/14158?redirectedFrom=azurite#eid>

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Li Shizhen 李時珍, *Bencao gangmu [jinling ban paiyin ben]* 本草綱目[金陵版排印本] (Compendium of *materia medica* [typesetting edition of the Jinling version]) (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 2010), 476, 478-9. This edition is the computer-font version of the original 1590 imprint.

(張彥遠), author of *Record of Famous Paintings of Successive Dynasties* (*Lidai minghua ji* 歷代名畫記), also mentioned *kongqing*, *bianqing*, and *cengqing* (曾青). The Taoist adept Tao Hongjing stated that *liuqing* is the color green used in painting.⁹ According to Tao, *Baiqing* (白青), *bqing* (碧青), and *tongqing* (銅青) are also blue pigments used for painting.¹⁰

Most of these terms come with the suffix *-qing* (青), which is a color term that emerged as early as the Shang dynasty and, at that time, stood for a spectrum of hues including black, blue, and green.¹¹ The Japanese scholar Shimizu Shigeru's recent study of color terms traced the development of the meaning of *qing* over time. In his work, he states that the passage Qi Ming (七命), written by the Western Jin (265–420 CE) essayist and official Zhang Xie (張協; active 303–313 CE), contains the line, “the upper side of a leaf is the color *qing* of springtime, the down side of a leaf is the color *liu* of autumntime” (陽葉春青，陰葉秋綠).¹² Judging from the fact that the tonal alteration happened to leaves in autumn, Shimizu puts forward that *liu* is a hue yellower than *qing*, and thus akin to the modern contemporary understanding of green.

The above terms of azurite have different prefixes. *Kongqing* (meaning, literally, empty blue) refers to the mineral from an ore composed of circular boulders that are empty on the inside. Because of the boulders' circular shape and texture, the mineral is also called *yangmei*

⁹ The original text reads as: “此則用畫綠色。畫工呼為碧青，而喚空青為綠青矣。”

¹⁰ Ibid.; *Dazang jing kanhang hui* 大藏經刊行會 edited, fascicle 53 of *Dazheng xinxiu Dazang jing* 大正新修大藏經 (The Taishō Tripiṭaka) (Taipei: Xin wenfeng, 1983), 428-9.

¹¹ Shimizu Shigeru 清水茂, “*Shuoqing* 說青 (On blue),” in *Wang Li Xiangsheng Jinian Wenji* 王力先生紀念文集 (Collected essays in memory of Mr. Wang Li), edited by Xianggang Yuwen Xuehui 香港語文學會 (Hong Kong: Xianggang Sanlian shudian, 1987): 141-62.

¹² Shimizu, 154.

qing (楊梅青; Chinese bayberry, or *Myrica rubra*, blue-green).¹³ Zhang Yanyuan states that “a mountain is verdant (*cui* 翠) without the need of *kongqing*.”¹⁴ *Cui* is a hue that is best exemplified by the feather of the kingfisher bird (*cuinia* 翠鳥), whose feathers exude a radiant color ranging from blue to green. *Cengqing* (literally, layered blue) refers to the mineral from an ore that is shaped like piled-up wooden bricks, with its color as deep as that of Iranian indigo.¹⁵ The word *pianqing* (flat blue; equal to *daqing* and *shiqing*) refers to the mineral from a disk-shape ore, which has a kingfisher-like color that never fades.¹⁶ *Baiqing* (literally, white green; also known as *biquing*) refers to a mineral that is, when grinded, as white as nephrite.¹⁷ *Shilü*, also known as *lüqing*, appears together with *kongqing*. Its hue is referred to as a pale blue-green (*qingbai* 青白) and as the color green used in painting.¹⁸

In the sixteenth century, the above blue and green minerals belonged to a larger taxonomy that Li Shizhen called “metals and stones” (*jinshi* 金石), which also includes metals such as gold, silver, jade, and cinnabar, along with a great variety of rocks and precious stones.¹⁹ The term “stone blue” (*shiqing* 石青) covers all the above, including other blue minerals, with the

¹³ Li (2010), 476.

¹⁴ Tang Zhiqi 唐志契, *Hui shi wei yen* 繪事微言 (Subtle complaints on the practice of painting), in vol. 2 of *Zhongguo lidai hualun xuan* 中國歷代畫論選 (Selected articles on painting of Chinese past dynasties), ed. Pan Yungao 潘運告 (Changsha: Hunan meishu chubanshe, 2007), 139.

¹⁵ Li (2010), 478.

¹⁶ Ibid., 479.

¹⁷ Ibid., 480.

¹⁸ Zhang Yuchu 張宇初 edited, Book 31 of *Zhengtong daoze* 正統道藏 (Taoist canon) (Taipei: Xin wenfeng, 1985), 653.

¹⁹ Ibid., 476-480.

exception of *kongqing*. Li Shizhen articulated that “those who sell stone blue (*shiqing* 石膏) today have [different kinds to offer]: *tianqing* (天青; sky blue), *daqing* (大青; grand blue), *xiyi huihui qing* (西夷回回青; western foreign blue of the Muslim), and *fotou qing* (佛頭青; Buddha head blue).²⁰ All of these kinds are not the same. *Huiqing* (回青) is particularly expensive. *Pianqing*, *cengqing*, *bqing*, and *baiqing*, recoded in *Materia Medica*, all belong to this group.”²¹

Despite recent scientific analysis that identified lapis lazuli and atacamite (copper hydroxychloride) as minerals used as pigments on Dunhuang murals and that recognized their chemical differences from azurite and malachite, they all may be regarded as types of “stone blue” or *kongqing* azurite in premodern China. According to Li, *kongqing* has one variant that is flat in shape and radiantly purplish in color, and another variant that emits golden light coming from gold mines.²² Lapis lazuli, which bears an intense purplish-blue color with traces of golden metallic yellow (pyrite), may as well be regarded as *kongqing*. Because of their exceptional whiteness, *baiqing* and *bqing* could be atacamite, a rare pale bluish-green mineral that occurs when copper interacts with chloride.

²⁰ In his discussion of the blue pigments used in Ming ceramics through scientific analysis and textual materials, James Watt states that *huiqing* and *huihui qing* are imported cobalt blue (arsenic cobalt ore) or azurite. China also produced arsenic cobalt ore natively. See, James C. Watt, “Notes on the Use of Cobalt in Later Chinese Ceramics,” *Ars Orientalis* 11 (1979): 65, 72. Watt’s speculation coheres with Song Yingxing’s *Tiangong kaiwu* (and the above quotation from Li Shizhen), in which *huiqing* and *huihui qing*, together with *daqing* and other minerals in *kongqing* category, are regard as blue-green gemstone.

²¹ Li (2010), 478.

²² Li (2010), 476.

Geographical Origins and the Formation of Azurite and Malachite

Modern science understands azurite and malachite as mineral resources found in the Earth's crust, resulting from chemical reactions. In contrast, evidence shows that in the ancient Chinese mindset, the places where these minerals could be found were often associated with myths and supernatural power. Toward the late imperial era, their formations were understood as being governed by *qi*-vapor and *dao*. Being two major ideas in Chinese cosmology and philosophy, *qi*-vapor is the energy or the force of the universe,²³ whereas *dao* is the will or the principle of the universe.²⁴

According to *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, a book about the geography and habitats of the mythical realm that was written in the fourth century BCE with some later

²³ See, Feng Youlan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* (New York, Macmillan Co., 1948), 278. Feng explains, "The word *Chi* [i.e.: *qi*] literally means gas or ether. In Neo-Confucianism its meaning is sometimes more abstract and sometimes more concrete, according to the different systems of the particular philosophers. When its meaning is more abstract, it approaches the concept of matter, as found in the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, in contrast to the Platonic Idea or the Aristotelian form. In this sense, it means the primary undifferentiated material out of which all individual things are formed. When, however, its meaning is concrete, it means the physical matter that makes up all existing individual things."

²⁴ See, Jiefu Xiao and Jinqun Li, *A Concise History of Chinese Philosophy* (San Francisco: Long River Press, 2012), 66. Xiao and Li explain, "From the last years of the Spring and Autumn period onwards, on the philosophical front, thinkers of different schools engaged in heated arguments on what was called the "Way of Heaven."... The way is the supreme substance, the origin of all things in the world, and contains within it the law of their change and movement. The "way" is also the norm that human society must observe and the general term for the origin, essence, and law of all things. Thus, a philosophical system was set up, with the way as its kernel.... in the Spring and Autumn Period, people used it to express the law of the movement of Nature and celestial phenomena as well as the norm of human behavior - the way of heaven and way of man. It is the Laozi that first takes the way to refer to the supreme substance, the general origin of all things in the world, and gives it a systematic demonstration in the philosophical sense."

additions, mineral blue appears in the ancient mythical mountains.²⁵ In this classic, a type of rock called *qinghuo* (青腹) is an underground substance found mostly in remote mountains that are in the East.²⁶ According to the Tang dynasty annotation to *The Book of the Han Dynasty* (*Han shu* 漢書), *qinghuo* is equivalent to *kongqing* azurite blue.²⁷ In *The Classic*, *qinghuo* is found together with a great variety of natural and mythical elements, including gold, jade, trees, plants, birds, and especially mystical animals.²⁸ Such images of the mineral are repeated in *Primer for New Learners* (*Chu xue ji* 初學記), a Tang dynasty encyclopedia for children.²⁹ Both *The Classic*

²⁵ Guo Pu 郭璞, fascicle 1 of *Shan hai jing tushuo* 山海經圖說 (Illustrated classic of the mountains and seas) (Shanghai; Jinzhang shuju, 1925), 2. For the date of Shanhai jin, see Yong Rong 永瑢 et al., *Siku quanshu congmu tiyao* 四庫全書總目提要 (Annotated bibliography of the Four Treasures) (Shanghai: Shangwu yon shuguan, 1933), 2983-9. And, Kristofer Schipper and Francisus Verellen edited, *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 112.

²⁶ For instance, in the chapter on South Mountain, all the four mounts where *qinghuo* appears locate in the east. And in the 8th chapter of Central Mountain 中次八經, among the 14 mounts that have *qinghuo*, twelve are in the northeast or southeast. See Guo Pu 郭璞, fascicle 1 of *Shan hai jing tushuo* 山海經圖說 (Shanghai; Jinzhang shuju, 1925), 2.

²⁷ Ban Gu 班固, fascicle 57 of *Hanshu* 漢書 (The history of Han dynasty), in *Bajia hou hanshu jizhu* 八家後漢書輯注, ed. Zhou Tianyou 周天游 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986), 2535.

²⁸ These mystical animals found together with *qinghuo* include nine-tail wolves, *zhuan* 鱓fishes, trees that look like red millet and have fluid like lacquer, and beasts that possess the features of mice, hare, and deer. There are also divine bugs 神蟲 and birds whose bodies are blue-green whereas beaks and tails are white. All these mystical animals, when being consumed, are beneficial to human body. They can fight against poisonous substances, epidemics, and hunger. But some of these animals can also consume humans and stands as bad omens.

²⁹ Xu Jian 徐堅, fascicle 5 of *Chu xue ji* 初學記 (The reference of beginners) (Guxiang zhai, 1883), folio 8a.

of *Mountains and Seas* and *Primer for New Learners* were frequently reprinted³⁰, which would help perpetuate the ancient and mythical connotations of the term *qinghuo* and the mineral *kongqing*.

As explained by Isabelle Robinet, the mythical landscape in *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* shaped the visualization (*cunsi* 存思) of ecstatic flight in Taoist practices.³¹ It is thus not surprising that several early Taoist scriptures used *kongqing* azurite to color the descriptions of paradise in visualization practices. The longest scripture that belonged to the fifth-century liturgical Lingbao tradition, *Most Excellent and Mysterious Book of the Marvelous Jewel that Saves Innumerable Human Beings* (*Lingbao wuliang duoren shangpin miaojing* 靈寶無量度人上品妙經), mentions the visualization of a divine maiden with a long stripe of ribbon (*fu* 紵) in the color of *kongqing* after chanting the scripture ten times.³² The blue mineral in the same scripture is also the color or material that forms the grove in paradise (*kongqing zhi lin* 空青之林).³³ A fifth-century Lingbao scripture titled *Most High Miraculous Book of Salvation in the Numinous Writing of the Numerous Heavens* (*Taishang zhutian lingshu duming miaojing* 太上諸天靈書度命妙經) mentions that the Heavenly Worthy of Primordial Beginning (*Yuanshi tianzun*

³⁰ Weng Lianxi 翁連溪, *Zhongguo guji shanbenshu zongmu* 中國古籍善本書總目 (Beijing: Xianzhuang shuji, 2005), 1042-3, 1054, 1937. According to Weng, all extant copies of *Chu xue ji* were printed in the Ming dynasty.

³¹ Isabelle Robinet, “Visualization and Ecstatic Flight in Shangqing Taoism,” in *Taoist Meditation and Longevity Techniques*, ed. Livia Kohn (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, Center for the Chinese Studies Publications, 1989), 163-4.

³² Kristofer Schipper and Fransiscus Verellen edited, *The Taoist Canon: a Historical Companion to the Daozang*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, c2004): 214.

³³ Zhang Yuchu edited, Book 1 of *Zhengtong daozaog* (Taoist canon) (Taipei: Xin wenfeng, 1985), 140.

元始天尊) reveals the scripture in one of the five paradisiacal regions.³⁴ The deity uses a purple brush to write the scripture on a grove of azurite.³⁵ Into the Song and Yuan dynasties, the visualization of deities with accessories in the color of *kongqing* and the image of the azurite grove are common in numerous liturgical texts.³⁶

The imagery of the deity *Yuanshi tianjun* writing on an azurite grove may have inspired the use of the mineral as a talisman and a means of communicating with the divine. For instance, contemporary to the above visualization, the mineral *kongqing*, together with *cengqing* azurite, were shown as ideal media for writing talismans. The practical manual for Taoist adepts *Secret Instructions for the Ascent as a Zhenren* (*Dengzhen yinjue* 登真隱訣),³⁷ compiled and annotated around 492–499 by Tao Hongjing, tells the use of *kongqing* and *cengqing* as media for writing. Tao instructs adepts to “choose *kongqing* or *cengqing* in good quality, finely grinding and soaking [them] in water for repelling the vapor (*qi* 氣) of copper. [Adepts should then] mix [the minerals] with glue and write a thin layer [of talismanic graphs] on white paper.”³⁸ To give another example, the early Qing dynasty historian, Buddhologist, and linguist Liu Xianting (劉獻廷; 1648–1695) mentions in his *Miscellaneous Travel Records of Guangyang* (廣陽雜記) an anecdote about the controversial historical figure Wu Sangui’s (吳三桂; 1612–1678) use of *shiqing* azurite as a means to communicate with the divine. The mineral was applied onto a

³⁴ Schipper and Verellen, 229.

³⁵ Zhang Yuchu edited, Book 2 of *Zhengtong daoze* (Taipei: Xin wenfeng, 1985), 382.

³⁶ For the liturgical nature of these texts, see Schipper and Verellen, 1014, 1018, 1003, 872, 799, 943.

³⁷ Schipper and Verellen, 201.

³⁸ Zhang Yuchu edited, Book 11 of *Zhengtong daoze* (Taipei: Xin wenfeng, 1985), 332.

sandalwood tablet that was carved with a passage for worship (*siwen* 祀文) when Wu declared himself as a king in a ritual.³⁹ The combination of a worship passage and the mineral is reminiscent of the abovementioned Heavenly Worthy of Primordial Beginning, who with a purple brush wrote a scripture on an azurite grove. Judging from the tablet's function as the vessel of a passage of worship, it is likely that it was used for communicating with the heavens in the quest for a mandate.

In contrary to the above Taoist portrayal of *kongqing* azurite in visualization practices, the physician Li Shizhen provided a different explanation of the formation of the blue and green minerals. Li did not believe that the substances were found in mythical landscapes or a Taoist paradise, but that they were instead found in deep pits inside mountains and formed by vapor (*qi* 氣), the energy of the universe. Citing the pharmaceutical text *Guide to Formation and Transformation in the Universe* (*Zaohua zinan* 造化指南)⁴⁰, Li states:

Copper receives the *qi*-vapor of the Purple Yang, and thus [a layer of] green grows [on top of it]. The green [layer], after two hundred years, gives birth to *shilü* (stone green malachite). Only until then does copper begin to grow within it. *Cengqing* and *kongqing*, the two blue [minerals], are what *shilü* becomes after it attains the great principle (*dao* 道) [of the universe]. Both can be regarded as mineral resources.... Outsiders apply chemicals onto the surface of copper objects. Blue is then produced [through chemical reactions. They remove this layer of blue] and forge it as *kongqing* [azurite. This kind of azurite] is just copper-blue, not [the type of *kongqing* that evolves from] malachite and bears the *dao*.⁴¹

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Li (2010), 476.

⁴¹ Ibid.

銅得紫陽之氣而生綠，綠二百年而生石綠，銅始生其中焉。曾、空二青，則石綠之得道者，均謂之礦...方家以藥塗銅物生青，刮下偽作空青者，終是銅青，非石綠之得道者也。

“*Qi*-vapor of Purple Yang” refers to a purple vapor endowed with the power of the male force in the cosmos. With the interference of this particular kind of *qi*-vapor and the passage of time, copper goes through a metamorphosis from *shilü* malachite to *cengqing* and *kongqing* azurite. The chemical reactions between copper, malachite, and azurite are thus controlled by the vapor. Purple is an auspicious color and “Purple-Yang” often serves as the sobriquet of Taoist adepts, as in the term “the Perfected Being of Purple-Yang” (紫陽真人). Importantly, azurite is a temporary stage evolved from copper and malachite. In Li’s rendition, this transformation between minerals epitomizes the power of “the great principle.”

Similar to the above depiction of *qi*-vapor, Song Yingxing states in his *Heavenly Effort in Unpacking Things* (*Tiangong kaiwu* 天工開物; imprinted in 1637) that blue and green minerals absorb the *qi*-vapor of the sun and moon and belong to the category of “pearls and jade” (*zhuyu* 珠玉; i.e, precious stones).⁴² Under the entry titled “Auspicious Treasure” (*bao* 寶) in the section on pearls and jade, Song explains, “[auspicious treasures] in blue and green colors are *sese zhu* (瑟瑟珠; *sese* meaning pearl), *zumu lü* (祖母綠; green emerald), *yahu shi* (鴉鵲石; *yahu* meaning stone), and [all the things that belong to] the category of *kongqing* azurite.”⁴³ *Kongqing*,

⁴² Song Yingxing 宋應星, *Tiangong kaiwu* 天工開物 (Heavenly effort in unpacking things) (Shanghai: Shangwu yin shuguan, 1937), 292-3.

⁴³ Song (1933), 293. The original text reads as “屬青、綠種類者，為瑟瑟珠、祖母綠、鴉鵲石、空青之類。”

together with its variants such as *cengqing*, *pianqing*, and *biqing*, are all auspicious treasures.

Explaining the formation of these treasures, Song informs us that

all the gemstones come from the mine shaft... [and] their exteriors are wrapped by the Earth's crust. It is like jade that has a layer of ore.... These treasures are located at the bottom of the shaft without being blocked from the sky. They take advantage to absorb essential vapors from the sun and the moon, and therefore luminosity is trapped in their natural matters. They are like jade, which can give birth to high mountains and rapid streams [and like] pearls, which can give birth to water and land. The principle is the same.⁴⁴

凡寶石皆出井中...，皆有石床包其外，如玉之有璞... 從井底直透上空，取日精月華之氣而就，故生質有關明。如玉產峻湍，珠孕水地。其義一也。

Thus, *kongqing* azurite and its variants all possess the essential vapor of the sun and moon. He adds that, “Mine shafts... that produce treasures are filled with treasure vapor that is as dense as fog. People who consume such vapor for too long will die.”⁴⁵ In the illustration accompanying Song's explanation of this mining process, a miner who went down into the shaft and was exposed to treasure vapor is shown lying on the ground. Nevertheless, the miner is smiling as his four limbs are lightly lifted from the ground. He looks as if he is being suspended in midair by the treasure vapor (plate 1.1). Right next to him, there are words that read “stuffedly satiated with treasure vapor” (*baoqi baomen* 寶氣飽悶). Undoubtedly, this is meant to show that stone blue and stone green minerals possess intense treasure vapor that, in moderate consumption, can be positively imparted to the human body.

The *qi*-vapor trait present in *daqing*, *kongqing*, and *shilü* makes Song Yingxing separate them from other colorants. In the chapter “Cinnabar and Azurite” (*danqing* 丹青; i.e., painting

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid. The line reads as “其中寶氣如霧，氤氲井中，人久食其氣多致死。”

materials), Song Yingxing first describes the manufacturing processes of vermilion and ink in detail. At the end of the chapter, he lists another nine mineral pigments used in painting. These pigments are as follows: *hufen* (胡粉; lead white), *huangdan* (黃丹; litharge), *dianhua* (澱花; indigo), *zifen* (紫粉; purple powder), *daqing* (大青; cobalt ore and/or azurite⁴⁶), *tonglü* (銅綠; copper green), *shilü* (石綠; stone green, or malachite), *Dai zheshi* (代赭石; ochre from the Dai province), and *shihuang* (石黃; orpiment).⁴⁷ Song also refers his readers to other sections of his treatise for detailed explanations of some of these pigments. For example, *hufen* and *huangdan* are included in the section on *wujin* (the five metals). In contrast, *daqing* and *shilü* are included in the section on *zhuyu* (珠玉; pearls and jade), which attests to their unique quality.

Azurite and Malachite as Alchemical and Pharmaceutical Ingredients

Alchemists have long recognized the aforementioned body-lightening power and *qi*-containing nature of blue and green minerals. For example, Ge Hong (葛洪; 284–384 CE), in his work *The Master who Embraces Simplicity* (*Baopu zi* 抱朴子), recorded an elixir recipe involving copper, mercury, and *cengqing* azurite.⁴⁸ According to the recipe, the water solvent carrying these three minerals should be steamed together with red millet for eighty days. One

⁴⁶ Watt (1979), 76-77.

⁴⁷ Song (1933), 277. The translation of these substances (other than *daqing*) follows Song Yingxing, *T'ien-kung k'ai-wu: Chinese Technology in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. E-tu Zen Sun and Shiou-chuan Sun (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1966), 287.

⁴⁸ Ge Hong, fascicle 4 of *Baopu zi* (Master who embraces simplicity), annotated by Li Zhonghua 李中華 (Taipei: Sanmin shuju, 2001), 108. The text reads as “張子和丹法，用鉛汞曾青水合封之，蒸之於赤黍米中，八十日成，以棗膏和丸之，服如大豆，百日，壽五百歲。”

should then add jujube paste into the mixture and rub it into the size of soybeans. After consuming this elixir daily for one hundred days, a person can live for five hundred years.⁴⁹

The fifteen-century work *The Taoist Canon* (*Daozang* 道藏; imprint 1444) compiled a host of historical alchemical treatises, substantiating the connection between the process of making elixirs and associated theoretical frameworks.⁵⁰ Among them, *Canon and Instructions for the Divine Alchemy of the Nine Cauldrons of the Yellow Emperor* (*Huangdi jiuding shendan jingjue* 黃帝九鼎神丹經訣)⁵¹ presents an “extracting” method that refines *cengqing* and *kongqing* azurite into an elixir meant to halt aging (*bulao* 不老). It instructs adepts to beat *kongqing* into a powder with a jade pestle and then wrap the powder in a silk cloth. During the course of soaking the wrapped-up powder in a vinegar solvent inside a porcelain container for a hundred days, the adept should change the solvent every ten days.⁵² This repeated extraction is comparable to the refinement process of cinnabar in a crucible, during which the *yin* mercury component is extracted from the cinnabar, which contains both *yin* and *yang*.⁵³ The final product is thus devoid of *yin*, or the “female force,” and becomes the “pure male force” (*chunyang* 重陽), which is known as the stage before the emergence of time. In this final stage, the alchemical

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Schipper and Verellen, 387 and 396.

⁵¹ Ibid., 378

⁵² Zhang Yuchu edited, Book 31 of *Zhengtong daozaang* (Taipei: Xin wenfeng, 1985), 651.

⁵³ Fabrizio Pregadio, “Elixirs and Alchemy,” in *Daoism Handbook*, edited by Livia Kohn. (Leiden; Boston : Brill, 2000), 179-180; Nathan Sivin, “Chinese Alchemy and the Manipulation of Time,” *Isis*, Vol. 67, No. 4 (1976): 516, 522.

work symbolizes the condition in which “the cosmos is restored to its original, timeless state, and the adept gains access to the corresponding state of timelessness or immortality.”⁵⁴

Also preserved in *The Taoist Canon* is another Tang dynasty alchemical treatise, *Yin Zhenjun's Treatise on the Theory of Categories of Minerals and Metals* (*Yin zhen jun jinshi wuxianglei* 陰真君金石五相類)⁵⁵, which provides a nuanced theoretical framework for making elixirs that involves different kinds of azurite and malachite. The treatise explains that “*cengqing* azurite can subdue mercury and belong to the male force (*yang* 陽), whereas *kongqing* azurite belongs to the female force.... *Kongqing* can thus sense the primordial vapor (*qi* 炁) of *cengqing* and they work together as drugs.” This treatise points out that “no recipes use *shilü* [malachite] as an ingredient.... [But there is a recipe that] uses *shilü* coming from Kunlun Mountain to replace *cengqing*.”⁵⁶

The pharmacopeia tradition also provides an ample amount of evidence that supports the body-lightening and healing powers of various types of azurite, such as *kongqing*, *cengqing*, *pianqing*, and *bijing*; and malachite, including *shilü* and *lüqing*. The Northern Song dynasty text *Materia Medica* (*Tujing yanyi bencao* 圖經衍義本草)⁵⁷ mentions the efficacy of *kongqing* azurite in treating eye diseases. It also mentions that Emperor Renzong (仁宗; r. 1022–1063) awarded the finest *kongqing*, which was aqueous in the kernel and took a long time to find, to a

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Schipper and Verellen, 396.

⁵⁶ Zhang Yuchu edited, Book 31 of *Zhengtong daoze* (Taipei: Xin wenfeng, 1985), 832.

⁵⁷ *Tujing yanyi bencao* is also called *Xinbian zhenglei tuzhu bencao* 新編證類圖注本草 and *Xinbian leiyao tuzhu bencao* 新編類要圖注本草. See Paul Unschuld, *Medicine in China: A History of Pharmaceutics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 82.

close royal family member. In the Ming dynasty, Li Shizhen, who cited and corrected numerous pharmacological treatises prior to his publication of *Materia Medica*, provides the most encompassing record of the two minerals in this regard. He states that consuming these minerals for a long time can lighten one's body and halt aging.⁵⁸ According to Li, the minerals are time-honored for their therapeutic effects on blindness and eye pain, and for nourishing the liver.⁵⁹ In Chinese culture, eyes, livers, and the color blue all correspond to the *mu* (木; wood) element and the cardinal direction of east in the *wuxing* (五行; five-agent or systematic correspondence) theory. Such speculation is confirmed by Han Baosheng (韓保昇; active during the tenth century), author of *Materia Medica of the Shu Kingdom* (*Shu Bencao* 蜀本草).⁶⁰ Citing Han, Li states that “*kongqing* models on the *mu*; therefore its color is blue and it lords over the liver.”⁶¹ Li then explains in his own words that “it (*kongqing*) is a mighty drug for treating the eyes, only because of [the theory that things] respond to one another in the same category.”⁶²

Two records from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries suggest the above knowledge of *kongqing* azurite was known among Qiu Ying's community. In the first record, the infamous politician Yan Song (嚴嵩; 1480–1567) owned thirteen caskets of wine that contained *kongqing* azurite. They appear in a list of objects confiscated from his mansion after his political downfall. According to Wen Peng, an acquaintance of Qiu Ying, who compiled the list, the name of the

⁵⁸ Li (2010), 477-8, 490.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 6. *Shu Bencao* is the abbreviation of *Chongguang yingong bencao* 重廣英公本草. See Unschuld (1986), 52.

⁶¹ Ibid., 477. The original text reads as “空青法木，故色青而主肝。”

⁶² Ibid. The original text reads as “其为治目神药，盖亦以类相感应耳。”

wine was “rose wine with ancient boiled water, bear’s gall bladder, and *kongqing* azurite, [manufactured in] the Hongxi and Xuande [periods] (i.e., 1424–1435)” (*Hongxi Xuande gulashui xiongdan kongqing qiangwei lu* 洪熙宣德古瀾水熊胆空青薔薇露).⁶³ Also on the list, following the thirteen caskets of *kongqing* rose wine, are 385 *liang* (兩; roughly 12 kilograms) of cinnabar ore (*kuangsha* 礦砂) and 250 *jin* (斤; roughly 125 kilograms) of cinnabar. Since cinnabar is the most crucial substance for making elixirs, it is reasonable to suggest that the *kongqing* rose wine also had related efficacy.

In another record, the early seventeenth-century scholar Zhou Hui (周暉) in *Miscellaneous Anecdotes of Jinling* (*Jinling suoshi* 金陵瑣事; imprint 1610) noted that the fifteenth-century painter Shi Chi (史痴) inscribed a poem, which mentions azurite, on his own painting. Importantly, according to Zhou, Shi is a friend of Shen Zhou, the most revered painter in Qiu Ying’s time.⁶⁴ In this poem, Shi laments over his dull artistic career:

| | |
|---|---------|
| Famous paintings and model calligraphy have no informed audience | 名畫法書無識者 |
| [Instead,] gold and jade can sudden [invigorate one’s] spirit | 良金美玉恍精神 |
| In this world, although <i>kongqing</i> is available for purchase, | 世間縱有空青賣 |

⁶³ Tian Yiheng 田藝蘅 (fl. 1570), *Liu qing ri zha zhai chao* 留青日札摘抄 (Daily note of Liuqing, selection) (Taipei: Guangwen shuju, 1970), 219.

⁶⁴ The poem is also recorded in the seventeenth century royal member Zhu Mouyin 朱謀堉 in his *Compiled History of Painting* (*Huashi huiyao* 畫史會要; preface 1631). Zhu Mouyin (ca. the 17th century), *Huashi huiyao*, in *Siku quanshu* electronic version.

A hundred *hu* (斛; a measurement unit) is still unlikely 百斛難醫眼內塵
to heal the dust in [my] eyes.

The phrase “dust in [my] eyes” in the last stanza refers to Shi’s cynical view. While lamenting that no one understands his art and airing his thirst for money, Shi Chi admits that his view is cynical. And yet, such a view can hardly be cured, even by *kongqing*. Here, *kongqing* stands as a metaphor for the treatment of his cynical view because it is a potent ingredient used to treat eye disease. This poem thus implies that the medicinal function of *kongqing* azurite was so well recognized that an allusion would suffice to deliver the intended message.

Azurite Mining Sites and Methods

With their medicinal functions established, azurite and malachite have high use value, and many throughout the ages have sought them. However, similar to the limited references made in the above alchemical and pharmaceutical treatises, most records on this matter only mention the mining sites and mining methods used to obtain azurite.

Textual materials prior to the Ming dynasty reveal that azurite in general had been a mineral that could be found around the Yangtze River Basin. Sites of azurite pits in regions known as Anhui (安徽), Hubei (湖北), Hunan (湖南), Jiangsu (江苏), and Sichuan (四川) today, were mined no later than the Tang dynasty. The Song dynasty continued to discover new sites in these regions, namely in the Anhui, Hunan, and Jiangsu areas. The Ming dynasty *Materia Medica* (*Bencao gangmu*) mentions historical excavation sites that have not yet been found in any texts of the preceding periods. These locations, other than the one in Gansu (甘肅), are still

found around Sichuan and Jiangsu.⁶⁵ Yet, during the Ming dynasty, there was a tendency to find azurite outside of the Yangtze Basin. Furthermore, the Yangtze historical sites do not report excavating any azurite during that time. Among the various abovementioned regions, only Sichuan discovered a new mining site during the Ming dynasty. Most new azurite pits during this time were congregated in the Jiangxi (江西) region. One Ming text reports that the blue mineral could also be found in the Beijing area. From this inspection and analysis of the discovery and use of excavation sites over time, we may make a conjecture that the blue minerals of the Yangtze basin had been rapidly consumed until the Ming dynasty, which led to their decline in availability along with the simultaneous search and discovery of new sites outside the basin. A list of all azurite mine sites is as follows:

| Provinces | Sites | Sources |
|--------------|--|--|
| Anhui 安徽 | Xuanzhou 宣州 (Xuancheng 宣城) | <i>Tang liudian</i> 唐六典, <i>Bencao gangmu</i> 本草綱目 |
| | Sizhou 泗州 (Sixian 泗縣) | <i>Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu</i> 建炎以來繫年要錄 |
| Guangdong 廣東 | Shaoshou 韶州 (Shaoguan 韶關) | <i>Liangwai daida</i> 嶺外代答 |
| Henan 河南 | Jiyuan 濟源 | <i>Ming yitong zhi</i> 明一統志 |
| | Hongnong 弘農 (between Chang'an 長安 and Luoyang 洛陽) | <i>Yiwen leiju</i> 藝文類聚 |

Table 1.1. Azurite and malachite mining sites.

*Sites highlighted in grey indicate malachite mines.

⁶⁵ Dunhuang Mogao Caves in today Gansu are famous for their murals colored with azurite and malachite. The deposit of azurite in Gansu area seems to imply that the pigments used in Dunhuang came not from the Middle East but from local mine sites. Mine sites at Hunan and Hubei may also supply the pigment.

| | | |
|------------|----------------------------|---|
| | Xiping 西平 | <i>Yiwen leiju</i> 藝文類聚 |
| Jiangxi 江西 | Ruizhou fu 瑞州府 (Gao'an 高安) | <i>Jiangxi tongzhi</i> 江西通志 |
| | Nankang 南康 | <i>Jiangxi tongzhi</i> 江西通志 |
| | Shangrao 上饒 | <i>Bencao gangmu</i> 本草綱目 |
| | Yuzhang 豫章 (Nanchang 南昌) | <i>Yiwen leiju</i> 藝文類聚 |
| | Xingan 新淦 (Jizhou 吉洲) | <i>Yiwen leiju</i> 藝文類聚 |
| Gansu 甘肅 | Liangzhou Gaoping 涼州高平郡 | <i>Bencao gangmu</i> 本草綱目 |
| | Lanzhou 蘭州 | <i>Bencao gangmu</i> 本草綱目 |
| Hubei 湖北 | Ezhou 鄂州 | <i>Tang liudian</i> 唐六典 |
| | Wuchang 武昌 | <i>Lidai minghua ji</i> 歷代名畫記 |
| | Jingmen 荊門 | <i>Ming yitong zhi</i> 明一統志 |
| Hunan 湖南 | Chenzhou 郴州 | <i>Tang liudian</i> 唐六典 |
| | Hengzhou 衡州 (Hengyang 衡陽) | <i>Tang liudian</i> 唐六典 |
| | Hengyong 衡永 (?) | <i>Liangwai daida</i> 嶺外代答 |
| | Lizhou 澧州 (Li County 澧縣) | <i>Huguang tongzhi</i> 湖廣通志/卷十九 |
| Hebei 河北 | Shuntian 順天 (Beijing 北京) | <i>Ming shilu</i> 明實錄 |
| Jiangsu 江蘇 | Runzhou 潤州 | <i>Tang liudian</i> 唐六典 |
| | Xinzhou 信州 (Nanjing 南京) | <i>Yunlin shipu</i> 雲林石譜, <i>Bencao gangmu</i> 本草綱目 |
| Shanxi 山西 | Jinsha zhou 淨沙州 (?) | <i>Yongchuang xiaopin</i> 湧幢小品 |
| | Weizhou 蔚州 (Lingqiu 靈丘) | <i>Bencao gangmu</i> 本草綱目 |

Table 1.1. (Continued)

*Sites highlighted in grey indicate malachite mines.

| | | |
|------------|--|--|
| Sichuan 四川 | Jianzhou 簡州 (Jianyang 簡陽) | <i>Tang liudian</i> 唐六典 |
| | Yuegui 越嶲 (Xichang 西昌) | <i>Lidai minghua ji</i> 歷代名畫記, <i>Bencao gangmu</i> 本草綱目 |
| | Zizhou 梓州 (Santai 三台) | <i>Songchao shishi</i> 宋朝事實 |
| | Yandao 嚴道 Beidai Mountain 北代山 (Ya'an 雅安) | <i>Bencao gangmu</i> 本草綱目 |
| | Yizhou 益州 (Sichuang Basin 四川盆地) | <i>Yiwen leiju</i> 藝文類聚, <i>Bencao gangmu</i> 本草綱目 |
| | Bajun 巴郡 (Chongqing 重慶) | <i>Yiwen leiju</i> 藝文類聚 |
| Guangxi 廣西 | Yongzhou 邕州 (Nanning 南寧) | <i>Liangwai daida</i> 嶺外代答 |

Table 1.1. (Continued)

*Sites highlighted in grey indicate malachite mines.

Textual sources that inform us of the mining sites of azurite and malachite are diverse in their literary genres. Among them, official records are the most dominant. Compiled by court and local officials, texts of this kind includes gazetteers, the state-rule text *The Six Codices of the Tang Dynasty* (*Tang liudian* 唐六典), the geographical study *The Unification of the Ming Dynasty* (*Ming tongyi zhi* 明一統志), and the chronicle *The Vivid Records of the Ming Dynasty* (*Ming shilu* 明實錄). The second-most frequent genre of sources includes studies carried out by individual scholars and officials. This group of texts includes *Chronicle Since the Jianyan Period* (*Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 建炎以來繫年要錄), *Stone Catalog of Cloud Forest* (*Yunlin shipu* 雲林石譜), and *The Gushing Pillar* (*Yongchuang xiaopin* 湧幢小品). Mining sites of the two minerals are also mentioned in the pharmacopeia *Materia Medica* (*Bencao gangmu* 本草綱目)

and the art treatise *Record of Famous Painting through Generations* (*Lidai minghua ji* 歷代名畫記).

Textural sources that are contemporary with the discovery of new mining sites of azurite in the Ming dynasty show that the excavation of this mineral was an important mission. It was carried out by military personnel. The court also invested a large amount of money and quantity of labor force in completing the excavations. The process was thoroughly and seriously planned, with a map drawn and then presented to the throne. Such a scenario is recorded in the official document *True Record of the Ming Dynasty* (*Ming Shilu* 明實錄).⁶⁶ During the reign of Emperor Taizu (r. 1368–1398), the first emperor of the Ming, the discovery of a new site happened as follows:

At the beginning, the Inspector General of Shanxi excavated azurite at Jiutang, in Shajing Zhou. Resources invested were huge while the [azurite] excavated was little. All of a sudden, [the Inspector General] saw a green snake. After following it for about two hundred steps, it disappeared. However, right at that place was azurite in a multiplied amount. The color of the azurite here was brighter than that at Jiutang. And thus he summoned the captain, Li Qian, to draw a map and submit it to the emperor.⁶⁷

初山西行都司軍士採石青於沙淨州舊塘。用工多而所得甚少。忽見青蛇，隨所往二百余步失之，發其下得石青加倍。其色視舊塘產者益鮮明。至是，都指揮李謙繪圖來進。

⁶⁶ When a new Ming emperor ascended to the throne, he would then compile the history of his predecessor. It records the history from the Emperor Taizu to the Emperor Xizong (1368-1627). In less than two hundred years after the compilation of the above record, the scholar official Zhu Guozhen 朱國禎 (1557-1632) reiterated the very same scenario in his anthology of anecdotes. See Zhu Guozhen, *Yongchuang xiaopin* 湧幢小品 (Essay of the gushing scripture pillar) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 344.

⁶⁷ Anonymous author, fascicle 230 of *Ming shilu* 明實錄 (Accurate records of the Ming dynasty) (Nangang: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 1966), 2143.

While the procedure used to mine the minerals is not articulated in *True Record*, it can be inferred from the aforementioned Song Yingxing's explanation of mining precious minerals, which includes the mining of azurite and malachite. As seen in the illustrations in his treatise, first a man is suspended by a rope, descending into the mine shaft. The mine shaft is wide open, allowing the circular treasures at the bottom to absorb the essential vapor of the sun and moon. After collecting the treasures and putting them into bags, the miner is pulled back up to the ground. Finally, his coworkers delightfully unwrap the bags that contain the treasure rocks.⁶⁸

The Economic Value of Azurite and Malachite

With all of their uses, associated values, and production costs, azurite and malachite are far from being base materials. In particular, *kongqing* was utilized as a material for extravagant decorations. It was also given in exchange for a reprieve from taxation.

According to *History of Southern Dynasties* and *Book of Southern Qi*, the official Sun Huisu (孫惠素)⁶⁹, who was reputed for his virtue and filial piety, purchased one thousand two hundred *jin* (roughly 793.2 kilograms⁷⁰) of *bqing* azurite for the court to use to produce

⁶⁸ Song (1966), 301-2.

⁶⁹ Book of Southern Qi said "Mao Huisu 毛惠素". See, Xiao Zixian 蕭子顯, fascicle 53 of *Nan Qi shu* 南齊書 (the book of the Southern Qi dynasty) (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1936), folio 5a.

⁷⁰ The conversion is based on Qiu Guangming 丘光明, *Zhongguo lidai duliangheng kao* 中国歷代度量衡考 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 1992), 446. Qiu states that during the Tang dynasty, 1 *liang* equals to 41.4 grams whereas 1 *jin* equals to 661 grams. It is expected that the text followed the measuring system of the Tang dynasty.

paintings. It cost six hundred and fifty thousand maces (*qian* 錢; roughly 2,684 kilograms⁷¹) of silver. However, Sun was then undeservingly sentenced to death by the emperor, because someone accused him of profiting from this purchase by overcharging the court two hundred and eighty thousand maces of silver. Later, the emperor found that Zhang was wrongly convicted.⁷² While this record indicates that the price of *biqing* azurite was astronomical, it also reveals the large demand of the mineral in the imperial court. Likewise, during the Liang dynasty (502–557), the regime succeeding the Southern Qi, imperial palanquins were decorated with gold gadgets and azurite sculpted into dragon and phoenix shapes.⁷³

In the Song dynasty, azurite and malachite were valuable enough to serve as a substitute for tax. A civilian of the Xinzhou (信州) area submitted twenty-five thousand *liang* (兩; 100 kilograms) of *moqing* (末青; azurite of the lowest quality) and malachite for the construction of the Monastery of Protecting the Country (護國禪院) in the capital. The residence was then

⁷¹ 1 *liang* equals to 10 *qins*. The conversion between *liang* and gram is based on Qiu Guangming's study.

⁷² Li Yanshou 李延壽, fascicle 16 of *Nan shi* 南史 (The history of southern dynasties), in *Qinding ershisi shi* 欽訂二十四史 (Shanghai: Tongwen shuju, 1884), folio 8b-9a.

⁷³ Wei Zheng 魏徵 edited, fascicle 10 of *Sui shu*, *Siku quanshu* electronic version. Famous Tang dynasty politicians Wei Zheng (580-643) and Zhangsun Wuji 長孫無忌 tell that “the reason why there is a difference between *yu* 輿 (carriage) and *nian* 輦 (palanquin) is because the former emperor took it as a means to demonstrate hierarchy and mighty (輿輦之別，蓋先王之所以列等威也).” The record then goes into detail of palanquin's decoration through ages.

exempt from typical taxation and labor work. However, it is expected that other citizens followed his steps, and thus he was only exempted from two years of compulsory labor work.⁷⁴

Turning to the Ming dynasty, Li Shizhen (1518–1593), in his famous *Materia Medica*, quotes Tao Hongjing's (陶弘景; 456–536) *Annotated Anthology of Famous Recipes* (*Mingyi bielu*; 名醫別錄) and informs the sixteenth-century readers that

kongqing azurite is the most expensive among all the medicines in the stone category. Medical recipes thus rarely use it. But very often, it is appropriated as a color for painting. This is exceptionally pitiful!⁷⁵
空青... 諸石藥中，惟此最貴。醫方乃稀用之，而多充畫色，殊為可惜。

Specifically selecting the above sentence from Tao's treatise to introduce *kongqing* to his contemporary readers, Li Shizhen apparently shared Tao's sentiments of pity toward using the mineral in painting. Indeed, Li's pity for using the mineral as a pigment deepened when it took a civilian toll to satisfy the government's need of coloring materials. Recorded in the *yanliao* (顏料; coloring materials) section of *Daming huidian* (大明會典; *The Great Ming's Compilation of State Regulations*), an imperial edict issued in 1466 alleviated the requirement for citizens to give colorants such as cinnabar, lacquer, and *shiqing* azurite as a form of tax, in sympathy with the citizens' suffering in finding these rare materials that were not commonly available.⁷⁶ Azurite in Li's time must have been no less expensive than in Tao's time.

⁷⁴ Li Shou 李燾 (1115-1184), fascicle 106 of *Xu zizhi tongjian zhangbian* 續資治通鑑長編 (Sequel to the comprehensive mirror for aid in government, extended version), *Siku quanshu* electronic version.

⁷⁵ Li Shizhen (2010), 476.

⁷⁶ Li Dongyang 李東陽 edited, *Da Ming huidian* 大明會典 (The great Ming's compilation of state regulations) (Taibei shi: Xin wenfeng chubun gongsi, 1976), 2644.

The differences between azurite and malachite in terms of their monetary worth show that the former was of higher value. Compiled during the Kangxi (康熙) period (1661–1722), the *Gazetteer of Yunnan* (雲南縣誌) tells how the government taxed factories that excavated the two minerals. The government collected twenty-five *jin* (觔) for every one hundred and twenty-five *jin* of malachite excavated. Every hundred *jin* of this collected quantity was then changed into one *liang* (兩) and five *qian* (錢) of silver for the maintenance of the factory. Azurite, referred to as *shiqing* in the text, was subject to the same system of taxation. The government collected six *jin* for every one hundred *jin* of excavated azurite. Each *jin* of this collected amount was converted into three *qian* of silver for the same purpose of maintenance. A comparison of these two conversion rates shows that azurite was twenty times more valuable than malachite.⁷⁷

Azurite and Malachite as Colorants

Much of the above discussion has touched on the function of azurite and malachite as pigments used in painting and architecture. Throughout history, the two minerals colored temple murals and court architecture. Historical state records and architecture treatises explain the method of extracting pigments from ores. Painting manuals also enumerate the many pigments and dyes that were used together with azurite and malachite.

Compiled in the Tang dynasty, the Buddhist cannon Tripitaka (大藏經) records an incredible story about the miraculous act of the Jin dynasty (265–420 CE) monk Fa'an (法安)

⁷⁷ Since one *liang* is equal to ten *qian*, the taxation of malachite can be converted to each *jin* equals 0.15 *qian* (confer the case of azurite: each *jin* equals three *qian*).

and a scholar who intended to use azurite to represent Fa'an's deeds. Toward the end of the story, the narrative articulates that azurite was a pigment used for depiction and implies that the copper blue (*tongqing* 銅青) or patina that appeared on old bronze vessels could be used as pigment.

The story begins with tigers endangering the residences of Yangxin (陽新) County during the end of the Yixi (義熙) period (405–419 CE). Because the county was well populated, there were at least one or two people killed by tigers every night. When Fa'an arrived in the area, residents had all closed the doors of their homes in order to prevent the intrusion of tigers. Furthermore, since they did not know Fa'an, none of them opened their doors and allowed him to stay. Fa'an then sat under a tree and meditated all night. When dawn approached, a tiger carrying a corpse arrived. When it saw Fa'an, it became excited and perched in front of him. Fa'an then lectured the tiger and gave it a tonsure. Later, residents who sought for the person who was killed found Fa'an sitting under the tree. They were all stunned by Fa'an, who was not hurt. They believed he was sacred and thus the tigers did not harm him. Since that day, there were no longer any tigers in that area. The narrative then shifts to a scholar who wanted to paint the above scenario onto a cliff. However, the scholar did not have any azurite. He wanted to use copper green, but he could not find any copper either. At night, someone appeared in his dream and informed him of the presence of two bronze bells inside his bed. The next day, the scholar dug out two bells and used them to finish his mural.

The murals in the Dunhuang caves, together with the hanging scrolls collected from the site by R. A. Stein (now preserved in the British Museum), substantiate the use of azurite and malachite as crucial pigments in depicting Buddhist hagiography. The two minerals were utilized

to represent the hues of landscape elements, plants, the draperies of divine beings, and backgrounds. Mainland scholar Duan Xiuye (段修業), whose scholarship focuses largely on the restoration of the Mogao Cave, explains the use of the two minerals at the site. Prior to the advent of the Sui dynasty, azurite had been widely used, but there were also caves in which lapis lazuli was solely used, like in Cave 428.⁷⁸ During this period, tonal variations were achieved by mixing white pigment into any blue mineral pigment or by adding azurite into lapis lazuli.⁷⁹ Extant murals of this time show that in one single composition, all of the blue elements are either a mixture of the two blues or the sole deployment of one of them.⁸⁰ Duan highlights that there is no mural in which azurite or malachite exist in absence of the other, because the technology at that time could not separate the two.⁸¹ Turning to the Sui dynasty, we begin to see the use of finely ground azurite. In the Tang dynasty, a range of coarse and fine azurite was used to create tonal variations, as the finer the pigment, the lighter it will appear. While lapis lazuli continued to be mixed with azurite, Duan asserts that the lapis lazuli used on the murals in some Tang caves came from the Middle East and was finely ground.⁸² At the same time, azurite was also mixed with vegetal dye pigments, such as indigo.⁸³ In addition, Duan points out that the mountains in

⁷⁸ Dan Shūgō 段修業 (Duan Xiuye), “Tonkō bakkōkutsu hekiga no ganryō 敦煌莫高窟壁画の顔料 (The pigments on the murals at Mogao Cave, Dunhuang),” *Bukkyō Geijutsu* 仏教芸術11 (1987): 91.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 93

⁸⁰ Ibid..

⁸¹ Ibid..

⁸² Ibid., 96, 99.

⁸³ Ibid., 96.

the Dunhuang precinct have copper mines, which makes it likely that the azurite and malachite came from local excavations.⁸⁴

In contrast, the Tang dynasty art critic Zhang Yanyuan states in his *Lidai minghua ji* that “[painters of] ancient paintings, [in handscroll and hanging scroll formats], did not use coarse azurite and malachite. [Thus], one should use the finely ground and thus high-quality pigments.” Zhang’s opinion stems from his insistence that great paintings are made from fine materials. As a result, he also specifies the places where different kinds of azurite, like *kongqing*, *cengqing*, and *pianqing*, can be found in exceptional quality.

The procedure needed to create and use finely ground azurite and malachite pigments appears in *Methods and Standards in Architecture* (*Yingzao fashi* 營造法式), a Northern Song treatise written by Li Jie (李誡; 1065–1110).⁸⁵ According to the treatise, one should first beat the ore into small particles in a container and then pour in some hot water. The next step is to remove any impurities that float to the top and separate the sediment into a different container. Then one should further grind this sediment into a very fine powder and, again, pour some hot water into the container. The pigment of the finest grade will float to the top, whereas the coarsest sediment will sink to the bottom. The last steps are to carefully separate these pigments of different grades, sieve away the water, allow them to dry, and add some glue to the powders before using them.

A large fragment of a mural from the Ming dynasty *Monastery of Florescent Adornments* (Huayensi 華嚴寺), Shansi, now treasured in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, provides evidence

⁸⁴ Ibid., 93.

⁸⁵ Li Jie 李誡, fascicle 14 of *Yingzao fashi* 營造法式 (Laws and rules for architecture), *Siku quanshu* electronic version.

supporting the above technique. With microscopy and microchemistry technology, the Fogg Museum pigment specialist Rutherford J. Gettens states that the tonal variations of the green and blue on the mural were achieved by using malachite and azurite of different coarseness.⁸⁶

Evidence from the Ming dynasty reveals how pigments were processed in the court. In 1394, the Ming Empire established the Department of Coloring Materials (*yanliao ju* 顏料局). According to *The Great Ming's Compilation of State Regulations*, this department was primarily responsible for extracting and grinding *shiqing* azurite and *shilü* malachite from ores.⁸⁷ Workers were required to extract pigments according to the demands of that month and divide the pigments into different grades. These blue-green pigments, meticulously prepared by workers in the court, were used for renovating and building palaces and mansions for the officials.⁸⁸ Importantly, *The Compilation* describes the amount of different pigments that could be extracted from the ores: one *jin* (斤; 590 grams⁸⁹) of blue-green ore could yield 11.4 *liang* (两; 418.9 grams) of malachite, while one *jin* of dark green ore could yield 10.8 *liang* (398.25 grams) of malachite.⁹⁰

Two painting treatises of the Ming dynasty, Zou Dezong's (鄒德中; active during the fifteenth century) *Apprenticeship in the Painting Business* (*Huishi zhimeng* 繪事指蒙) and Tang

⁸⁶ Rutherford J. Gettens, "Pigments in a Wall Painting from Central China," *Technical Studies in the Field of Fine Arts* (1938): 104-5.

⁸⁷ Li Dongyang (1976), 2643.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Qiu Guangming (1992), 491. According to Qiu, 1 *jin* equals to 590 grams during the Ming dynasty.

⁹⁰ Li Dongyang (1976), 2643.

Yin's (唐寅; 1470–1523) *Painting Catalog of Mr. Liuru* (*Liuru huapu* 六如畫譜), unprecedentedly provide the names of a host of pigments and dyes, as well as the names of over one hundred shades of colors produced through mixing various pigments and dyes.⁹¹ Yet, despite the plethora of color terms, azurite and malachite remain the most prominent pigments, along with cinnabar and ink. *Apprenticeship in the Painting Business* lists azurite and malachite as two of the few primary colors (*zhengse* 正色). Primary colors are colors that can be used in their own right and are indispensable in mixing colors (*heyong yanse* 合用顏色).⁹² For example, purple (*zise* 紫色) is not listed as a primary color, and it is created via a mixture of azurite of the third grade (*sanqing* 三青) and a red dye made from a certain purple peduncle (*mian yanzhi* 綿胭脂).⁹³ A blue-green color (*lanqing se* 藍青色) is a mixture of malachite of the third grade (*sanlii* 三綠), azurite of the third grade (*sanqing* 三青), and a seashell blue color of unknown origins (*luoqing* 螺青).⁹⁴ Some of the primary colors are mysterious in terms of their composition. Along with azurite and malachite, the list of primary colors includes:

⁹¹ Zou Dezhong 鄒德中, *Huishi zhimeng* 繪事指蒙 (Apprenticeship in the painting business) (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1959), folio 5a; Tang Yin 唐寅, fascicle 3 of *Liuru huapu* 六如畫譜 (Mr. Liuru's compilation of painting treatises) in *Xi yin xuan congshu* 惜陰軒叢書, edited Li Xiling 李錫齡 (Hongdao shuyuan, 1846), folio 3b.

⁹² Zou (1959), folio 2a and 19a.

⁹³ Ibid., folio 4b-5a. "Purple peduncle" refers to *zigeng* 紫梗; see, *ibid.*, folio 18b-19a.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 19a. Although *luoqing* frequently appears in painting manuals, there is no information revealing what this color is made of. The prefix "luo" means "seashell". However, Li Shizhen's *Materia Medica* does not stage any seashell that can make colorant. *Luoqing* may refer to a deep blue that resembles to the color of seashell.

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| <i>fen</i> 粉 (white powder) | <i>huangdan</i> 黃丹粉 (orpiment powder) |
| <i>tuhuang fen</i> 土黃粉 (earthy yellow powder) | <i>fenhong</i> 粉紅 (powder red; pink) |
| <i>tuhuang</i> 土黃 (ochre) | <i>dan ruose</i> 淡肉色 (a color of light flesh) |
| <i>chong ruose</i> 重肉色 (a color of deep flesh) | <i>sanlü</i> 三綠 (malachite of the third grade) |
| <i>zilu</i> 枝綠 (a green of the color of tree branches) | <i>sanqing</i> 三青 (azurite of the third grade) |
| <i>shenzhong qing</i> 深中青 (a medium-dark azurite) | <i>yinzhu</i> 銀硃 (cinnabar extracted from mercury) |

Table 1.2. Primary colors mentioned in Zou Dezong's *Apprenticeship in the Painting Business* (*Huishi zhimeng*).

While *Huishi zhimeng* lists azurite and malachite as primary colors, Tang Ying's *Liuru huapu* lists azurite and malachite at the top of a list of colors for mixing with other colors. This seems to suggest that the two mineral pigments are indispensable in an artist's palette.

Information pertinent to pigments and dyes appears in fascicle 3 of Tang's treatise, which is, in fact, an anthology of painting treatises prior to his time. In that fascicle, all of the entries, other than the first one on painting dragons, were written by Wang Sishan (王思善) from the Yuan dynasty, who was otherwise unknown. After providing a detailed list of the names and mixing methods of the colors used in figure painting⁹⁵, Wang Sishan lists the essential colors needed for mixing other colors.⁹⁶ Like Zou Dezong, Wang does not provide substantial information about

⁹⁵ Tang Yin (1846), fascicle 3, folio 3a-4b.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, fascicle 3, folio 4b to 5a.

the provenance of these colors. Along with azurite and malachite, which are put at the top of the list, the essential base colors include:

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|--|--|
| <i>touqing</i> 頭青 (azurite of the first grade) | <i>erqing</i> 二青 (azurite of the second grade) |
| <i>sanqing</i> 三青 (azurite of the third grade) | <i>shenzhong qing</i> 深中青 (medium-deep azurite) |
| <i>qianzhong qing</i> 淺中青 (light-medium azurite) | <i>luoqing</i> 螺青 (seashell blue) |
| <i>suqing</i> 蘇青 (?) | <i>erlü</i> 二綠 (malachite of the second grade) |
| <i>sanlü</i> 三綠 (malachite of the third grade) | <i>huayelü</i> 花葉綠 (a green of the color of a flower's leaf) |
| <i>zhitiaolü</i> 枝條綠 (a green the color of tree branches) | <i>nanlü</i> 南綠 (?) |
| <i>youlü</i> 油綠 (?) | <i>qilü</i> 漆綠 (a dark green resembling the hue of lacquer) |
| <i>huangdan</i> 黃丹 (orpiment) | <i>feidan</i> 飛丹 (a deep cinnabar) |
| <i>sanzhu</i> 三硃 (cinnabar of the third grade) | <i>yinzhu</i> 銀硃 (cinnabar extracted from mercury) |
| <i>zhihong</i> 枝紅 (a red resembling the color of tree branches) | <i>zihua</i> 紫花 (purple flower) |
| <i>tenghuang</i> 藤黃 (the resin of the tree <i>Garcinia clusiaceae</i> or the color made by boiling the tree) | <i>huaihua</i> 槐花 (flower of <i>Sophora japonica</i>) |
| <i>xuefen</i> 削粉 (?) | <i>shiliuke</i> 石榴顆 (seeds of pomegranate) |
| <i>mian yanzhi</i> 緋胭脂 (a red dye made of a certain purple peduncle) | <i>tanzi</i> 檀子 (a color resembling the bark of sandalwood) |

Table 1.3. Essential colors needed for mixing other colors, mentioned in Tang Yin's *Painting Catalog of Mr. Liuru* (*Liuru huapu*).

Importantly, *Huishi zhimeng* mentions a method called *shase* (煞色), or “boiling colors.”⁹⁷ This method instructs the user to mix colors with glue in a container and then boil the mixture under a fire. Although not specified by the author of the treatise, this method seems to produce pre-prepared colors, implying the availability of ready-made colors for painters to purchase and use. The *shase* method begins with mixing pigment powder with glue of excellent quality. The viscosity of the glue should be medium. Rub the two into a paste that is not sticky. After a series of rubbing, one should affix the paste onto a plate for later use (却用). When using such a paste, one should rub the paste with some water until the paste is diluted. Then, the painter should test the hue of the color by rubbing the diluted color from the paste onto a piece of silk. The color should be light enough to allow ink brushwork to be seen through.⁹⁸

Azurite and Malachite as Tropes in the Literary Tradition

Azurite and malachite weave together a complex network of pharmacology, mining, and fundamental philosophical concepts. They are also colored by ancient mythical texts such as *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*. The Chinese literary tradition provides ample evidence to prove that poets and scholars since the fifth century perceived azurite and malachite as part of a complex milieu. They are tropes of precious and beautiful luxury, otherworldliness, and transcendence, cohering with the imagery of azurite in the practice of visualization in Taoism.

⁹⁷ Zou (1959), folio 4a and 17a-b.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

The Tang dynasty *Collection of Literature Arranged into Categories* (*Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚) records the medicinal function of *kongqing* azurite and presents a rhapsody that takes the mineral as its theme.⁹⁹ Composed by the scholar and official Jiang Yan (江淹; 444–505), *The Rhapsody of Kongqing Azurite* (*Kongqing fu* 空青賦) uses the mineral as an allegory of the virtue of an erudite gentleman and of Jiang himself.¹⁰⁰ Scholars Luo Liqian and Li Kaijin provide a detailed annotation and translation of the rhapsody into plain Chinese. They explain that Jiang's rhapsody begins with comparing *kongqing* azurite with other precious minerals. Jiang holds that since *kongqing* azurite is harder to find and more beautiful than other precious minerals, *kongqing* azurite is thus the most beautiful treasure (*libao* 麗寶) that is compatible with the radiant appearance (*guangyi* 光儀) of a gentleman. The second part of the rhapsody compares the places where *kongqing* azurite appears to a landscape painting composed of an array of images of iridescent landscape elements, smoke, and rare animals. The third part of the rhapsody shifts the focus to the function of *kongqing*. It has been used in paintings that render the remote past and for the adornments of great ancient beauties. Luo and Li hold that Jiang uses the beauty of ancient women and the scenery of the remote past to juxtapose with and thus emphasize the beauty of the mineral.

⁹⁹ Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢 et al., fascicle 81 of *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚 (Collection of literature arranged by categories) (Huayang Hongda tang, 1878), folio 6a-b.

¹⁰⁰ Luo Liqian 羅立乾 and Li Kaijin 李開金 annotated, *Xinyi Jiang Yan ji* 新譯江淹集 (New translation of Jiang Yan's anthology) (Taipei: Sanmin shuju, 2011), 172-6.

Since the twelfth century, *kongqing* azurite has been synonymous with extravagance and ornate rhetoric in literature. The philosopher Zhu Xi (朱熹; 1130–1200) commented on the topic of “encountering affection” (感遇 *ganyu*) in the poems of Chen Zhi’ang (陳子昂; ca. 661–702) and regards his poems as “cinnabar and *kongqing* azurite, golden paste and watery jade; although [they] almost [have] no utilitarian function, [they are] in fact, beyond [their] physical appearance (物外 *wuwai*)¹⁰¹, [exceptional treasures] in nature that [are] hard to find.”¹⁰² Here, Chen’s writing is being compared to the attractive appearance of gems and their rarity. Around two centuries later, the early Ming philosopher Xue Xuan (薛瑄; 1392–1464), like Zhu, compares embellished rhetoric to “cinnabar and *kongqing* azurite, golden paste and watery jade.”¹⁰³

A poem composed by the twelfth-century scholar Wang Anzhong (王安中; 1075–1134) reveals that azurite and malachite were capable of evoking imageries of stunning landscapes akin to immortal lands. Although Wang’s poem did not mention azurite and malachite, it was written in response to a painting that used the two minerals by the royal family member and painter Zhao Lingrang (趙令穰; ca. 1070–1100). The painting is titled *Picture of Glittering-Green Landscape*

¹⁰¹ For a discussion of the term “*wuwai* 物外”, see Jonathan Chaves, “‘Meaning beyond the Painting’: The Chinese Painter as Poet,” in *Words and Images: Chinese Poetry, Calligraphy, and Painting*, ed. Alfreda Murck and Wen C. Fong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 434.

¹⁰² Zhu Xi’s comment is recorded in Yue Ke 岳珂, fascicle 13 of *Tingshi* 程史 (The pillar histories), *Siku quanshu* electronic version. The text reads as “如丹砂空青，金膏水碧，雖近乏世用，而實物外難得自然之奇寶。”

¹⁰³ Xue Xuan 薛瑄, fascicle 4 of *Dushulu xulu* 讀書錄續錄 (Sequel to the record of reading books), *Siku quanshu* electronic version.

(*jinbi shanshui* 金碧山水). The imageries in Wang's poem are akin to the landscape scenery in the above rhapsody by Jiang Yan:

Writing a Poem for Zhao Danian's (i.e., Zhao Lingrang) Picture of a Glittering-Green Landscape 題趙大年金碧山水圖

The king's descendant has the seven swamps of the Chu state in his mind 王孫胸中楚七澤

Does not follow commonplace treatises which brags about ink-monochrome painting 不學庸史誇水墨

Try to unfold the red silk-fabric which wrapped [the painting] in layers and brushed away the cobwebs 試開緹襲拂蛛絲

Half of the painting with geese and river, radiating beams of gold-green 半幅鵝溪射金碧

I heard Nüwa smelted stones and patched the breach in the sky 余聞女媧煉石補天缺

The stones break and crush the sky; the pillar of the sky breaks 石破壓天天柱折

Five-color stones fall onto the ground, glazing high and steep mountains with gold 五色墮地金嵯峨

Six huge sea turtles strike across the sea; silver waves blow 六鰲跨海吹銀波

The mythical tree Fusang and the jade-rainbow descend to the middle of the sky 扶桑玉虹下天半

The shell palatial tower and the Palace of the Dragon King of the Sea are filled with purple clouds 貝闕珠宮紫雲滿

Peach blossoms [can be] taken as the parody of the spring in Ten Immortal Isles 桃花笑作十洲春

Mr. Liu has heard dogs bark and cocks crow at this place 劉郎此地聞雞犬

[This place] connects me not through the raft of the milky way 繫我不從天津槎

I myself read this marvelous painting, treading surprises and lamentations 自閱妙畫徒驚嗟

The confused soul flies like a butterfly the whole night

迷魂一夜飛蝴蝶

I wake up [and find] the moon at the window of my boat is half
broken

覺來半破篷窗月

The trance and the imagined excursion, as well as the swamp of the Chu, clearly allude to Qu Yuan's *Songs of the South* (*Chu ci* 楚詞). The term *jinbi shanshui* in the title resonates with the term *jinbi* in the fourth line of the poem and should thus refer to a visual and lyrical sensation of shimmering, glittering shininess that runs through the first half of the poem. While the painting that Wang Anzhong saw is no longer extant, *Summer Mist along the Lake Shore* (湖莊清夏圖), a relatively reliable work by Zhao Lingrang that is now at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, reveals a similar sensation. A light layering of malachite has been applied over the main body of the landscape slopes that are delineated by ink outlines and some ink brushwork. This thin layer of pigment, together with the silk, does bring forth a sense of iridescence.

The above literary works clearly indicate that multiple imageries were associated with azurite, and the name of the mineral continued to evolve into a complex and ambiguous term, whose appearances serve to evoke sundry connections, depending on the disparate knowledge of the readers. As seen in the two poems below, poets used the term *kongqing* azurite to evoke a specific color of the blue sky and use it to enrich the poems' contents with a distinct mineral imagery. The first poem comes from the fourteenth-century *Collected Works on the Return to the True* (*huanzhen ji* 還真集), written by Wang Jie (王玠).¹⁰⁴ It comes with a preface by Zhang Yuchu (張宇初), the compiler of *The Taoist Canon*, dated 1392. The poem comes from fascicle 3

¹⁰⁴ Zhang Yuchu edited, Book 40 of *Zhengtong daoze* (Taipei: Xin wenfeng, 1985), 587-2.

of the collection. As Catherine Despeux explains, the fascicle “contain[s] songs and poems often dedicated to disciples. Each is concerned with a particular alchemical issue.”¹⁰⁵ The poem is one of the nineteen hums of roaming immortals (*Youxian yin* 游仙吟), which render the sceneries and pleasures of finding medical ingredients in mountains. The positive and cheerful tone in the poems indicates that Master Wang Jie used these poems to support his disciples’ search for ingredients. The poem reads as follows:

| | |
|---|---------|
| Picking the herbs, [I] penetrate into the forest and pass through dangerous mountains. | 採藥穿林過險山 |
| The sound of the wind echoes the sound of gushing water; the stream gurgles. | 風聲合澗水潺潺 |
| The Immortal Mountain Penglai only exists in <i>kongqing</i> (i.e., azurite blue or the sky). | 蓬萊只在空青裡 |
| The layered door of the stone grotto does not close at night. | 石洞重門夜不關 |

In the third line of the poem, the term *kongqing* could mean the mineral azurite. Imagery such as herbs, the forest, the stone grotto, and the mountains are apparently meant to evoke places where the blue mineral exists in the human world. Given the nature of the environment, however, the term *kongqing* could also mean the sky. The potential dual meaning of the term is supported by other stanzas in the series. For example, in the stanza “the cinnabar cliffs, at [their] remote end, [are] connected to the home of the earthly immortals” (丹崖遠接地仙家), the word cinnabar could mean both a beautiful multicolored cliff and also the cinnabar used in elixirs.

¹⁰⁵ Schipper and Verellen (2004), 1148-9.

The above poem apparently influenced the Southern Song dynasty scholar Yu Ji (虞集; 1272–1348) in his response to a painting titled *Picture of a Blue-Green Mountain and White Cloud* (青山白雲圖).¹⁰⁶ Yu's poem is strikingly similar to Wang Jie's poem:

Alone, I approach the mountain and visit the gentleman of reclusion 獨向山中訪隱君

I walk pass a thousand streams; water billows. 行窮千澗水沄沄

Even the immortals exist beyond *kongqing* (i.e., azurite blue) 仙家更在空青外

They only allow [the folk] in the human realm to pay tribute to white clouds. 只許人間禮白雲

Yu's poem portrays a journey of visiting a recluse in the deep mountains. Like the immortals, the recluse is hard to find. Here, the term *kongqing* alludes to the sky. Not only does a blue sky in the hue of azurite cohere with the phrase "white cloud" in the last stanza, it also enhances the scenery of the journey. The sixteenth-century scholar Wang Shizhen (王世貞; 1526–1590), acquaintance of the physician Li Shizhen, also composed a poem using the term *kongqing* as a synonym for the sky.¹⁰⁷ His poem praises a pavilion named after the legendary immortal mountain Penglai:

The bell at a tall city gate evokes emergence and disappearance 高城鐘鼓喚蒼茫

¹⁰⁶ Su Tianjue 蘇天爵 edited, fascicle 8 of *Guochao wenlei* 國朝文類 (Classified documents of the present dynasty), in *Sibu congkan chubian* 四部叢刊初編 (Shanghai; Shanghai shudian, 1989), 13.

¹⁰⁷ Wang Shizhen 王世貞, fascicle 49 of *Yanzhou shanren sibugao* 弇州山人四部稿 (Draft of Wang Shizhen's works in four categories), *Siku quanshu* electronic version.

When the sun rises, the sea looks like boiling waves 海若鎔波浴太陽
soaked in sunlight.

Beautiful color emerges from the sky when the fog and 綺色中天徐散盡
mist dissipate

The tiny bit of sky amid the clouds is where the Fusang 空青一點是扶桑
lies!

Wang's poem begins with an architectural complex emerging from layers of smoke, roaring sea, and ample sunlight, evoking the imagery of immortal lands. The third stanza shifts the praise to a sky of beautiful colors, under which the immortal mountain emerges. Wang uses the term *kongqing* azurite, which is literally a color term, to enhance the color of the sky as well as the overall scenery of the immortal land.

Conclusion

This chapter presents a fuller picture of what azurite and malachite were in the mindset of premodern Chinese culture than what the existing scholarship provided. It also demonstrates many disparate fields of knowledge about the two minerals, and combines those fields to illustrate the synergized and unique experience of color that was present in sixteenth-century China. For example, Shi Chi's poem mentions the medicinal function of *kongqing* azurite. The community of scholars and poets, of which Shi Chi was a part, would have known that azurite was not merely a pigment but also a pharmaceutical drug. The fact that azurite and malachite were expensive and luxurious colorants would have affected how patrons and painters used

them. Viewers of paintings adorned with azurite and malachite thus saw not only colors, but also the multifarious connotations associated with them.

As will become apparent in subsequent chapters, the long history of azurite and malachite as colorants imbued the two minerals with profound art-historical significance. Using the two minerals in landscape painting connected Qiu Ying with great ancient painters who mastered the technique of using them. These two luxurious colorants led Qiu Ying and his patrons to become concerned with what grade they were and where they should be used in a composition, and they served as a sign of his patrons' desires and ambitions. The geographical origin and body-healing power of azurite, together with its relation to *qi*-vapor, bestows this mineral with a strong sense of otherworldliness and transcendence. Understanding this connotation of azurite, Qiu Ying used different grades and varied amounts of the mineral to nuance his depictions of immortal mountains.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SIXTEENTH-CENTURY UNDERSTANDING OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF AZURITE AND MALACHITE IN THE HISTORY OF CHINESE PAINTING

Introduction

Just as the use of color is subject to a wide range of conventions and theoretical discourse in the Western art tradition, the use of azurite and malachite was also subjected to prescriptive rules and high expectations in Qiu Ying's time.¹ As one of the greatest landscape painters of the seventeenth century, the late Ming painter Lan Ying (藍瑛; 1585–1664) stated that Qiu Ying mastered the method (*fa* 法) of painting in the blue-and-green-landscape tradition. In his sequel to the fourteenth-century art critic Xia Wenyan's (夏文彥; active during the fourteenth century) *Precious Reflections on Picturing and Painting* (*Tuhui baojian* 圖繪寶鑑), Lan Ying commented that

[Qiu Ying]... has quite mastered the method of applying thick colors in the tradition of blue-and-green landscape [paintings]. [He] sometimes imitates and copies works from the Northern Song dynasty (960–1127). [Despite the fact that his] figures are only an inch high and [his] horses are the size of a pea, [they all] have [facial features like] beards and eyebrows. The arrangement of pictorial

¹ James S. Ackerman, "On Early Renaissance Color Theory and Practice," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 35 (1980): 11-44; Linda Caron, "The Use of Color by Rosso Fiorentino," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 19.3 (1988): 355-378; Marcia B. Hall, *Color and Meaning: Practice and Theory in Renaissance Painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Janis C. Bell, "Zaccolini's Theory of Color Perspective," *The Art Bulletin* 75.1 (1993): 91-112; Janis C. Bell, "The Critical Reception of Raphael's Coloring in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries," *Text* 9 (1996): 199-215; Thomas McGrath, "Color and the Exchange of Ideas between Patron and Artist in Renaissance," *The Art Bulletin* 82.2 (2000): 298-308.

motifs and the application of colors are appropriate in terms of their lightness and darkness. [His] albums and handscrolls are the smaller the better.²

...頗得青綠山水重設色法。間有臨摹北宋，寸人豆馬，鬚眉畢具。佈置設色深淺得宜。冊頁手卷愈小愈佳。

Indeed, by Qiu Ying's time, azurite and malachite had been used as colorants in landscape painting for over a millennium. They were the indispensable pigments for painting in the blue-and-green-landscape tradition, a tradition whose roots can be traced to the Tang-dynasty painters Li Sixun and Li Zhaodao, as well as to the Song painter Zhao Boju. The great connoisseur Dong Qichang also compared Qiu Ying to these masters, saying that he was the reincarnation of Li and modeled on Zhao. The exaltation of Qiu Ying by comparison to these ancient artists and their stress on an appropriate method signal the existence of *fa*, or certain rules, conventions, and measurable benchmarks, for using the two minerals and evaluating artists.³ In other words, this raises an intriguing question: How did painters and viewers in the sixteenth century—and Qiu Ying and his social circles in particular—use, think about, and discuss colors, including azurite and malachite?

Studies of Song and Yuan paintings reveal that achieving the aesthetics of archaism was the ultimate goal. Song and Yuan landscape painters aimed to evoke the style of Tang and earlier

² Lan Ying 藍瑛 and Xie Bin 謝彬 edited, fascicle 1 of *Tuhui baojian xuzuan* 圖繪寶鑑續纂 (Sequel to precious reflections on picturing and painting), in *Huashi congshu* 畫史叢書, volume 2, edited Yu Anlan 于安瀾 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1963), 2.

³ For further discussion on the importance of *fa*, see Martin J. Powers, "Imitation and Reference in China's Pictorial Tradition," in *Reinventing the Past: Archaism and Antiquarianism in Chinese Art and Visual Culture*, edited by Wu Hung (Chicago: Art Media Resources, 2010), 103-126.

painters by using azurite and malachite in their paintings.⁴ The study of how Ming-dynasty painters viewed archaic aesthetics is very limited. Yet when it comes to how Qiu Ying used azurite and malachite, as well as how he confronted the long tradition of blue-and-green-landscape painting, the modern scholar Niu Kecheng holds that Qiu Ying adhered to using ink outlines and thick layering of azurite and malachite to render landscape elements—a mode of execution established by Li Sixun.⁵ Niu also mentions in passing that Qiu Ying painted in a style that combines light and thin color washes with ink brushwork.⁶ In the scholar Hsu Wenmei's study of Qiu Ying's work, his blue-and-green-landscape paintings included, she points out that Qiu modeled the composition of ancient paintings.⁷ Given that color is one of the least studied topics in both Chinese painting generally and the art of Qiu Ying specifically, it is necessary to expand this investigation beyond how Qiu fit into rigid modes and constructed his compositions.

In order to identify the guiding ideas and practical concerns of using and evaluating colors, and using the two minerals azurite and malachite in particular, in sixteenth-century landscape painting, this chapter begins with a discussion of Wen Zhengming's (文徵明; 1470–

⁴ Shih Shou-chien, "Eremitism in Landscape Painting by Ch'ien Hsuan" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1984), 279-291; Feng Youheng, "Fishing Society at Hsi-Sai Mountain by Li Chieh (1124-before 1197): a Study of Scholar-Official's Art in the Southern Sung period," (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1996), 281; Richard Vinograd, "Some Landscape Related to the Blue-and-Green Manner from the Early Yuan Period," *Artibus Asiae* 2/3 (1979): 101-131.

⁵ Niu Kecheng 牛克誠, *Se cai de Zhongguo hui hua: Zhongguo hui hua yang shi yu feng ge li shi de zhan kai* 色彩的中国绘画：中国绘画样式与风格历史的展开 (The coloured Chinese painting : the historic development of the manner and style of the Chinese painting) (Changsha Shi: Hunan mei shu chu ban she, 2002). 265-9.

⁶ Ibid., 310-311.

⁷ Hsu Wenmei 許文美, *Xilun Qiu Ying jifu qinglü shese zuopin de taoyuan yixiang* 析論仇英幾幅青綠設色作品的桃源意象, *Gugong xueshu jikan* 故宮學術季刊 30.2 (2012): 205-56.

1559) *Goddess of Xiang and Lady of Xiang* (*Xiangjun xiang furen tu* 湘君湘夫人圖; dated 1517), a work that Qiu Ying may have been involved in producing. Wen's inscription on this painting provides important information about a stylistic standard that the great master barely managed to emulate. It then discusses painting treatises and art criticism that circulated around the sixteenth century, which assert that using azurite and malachite as the major coloration in landscape painting is a time-honored tradition, maintained by artists, and also laden with technical challenge in actual applications. Given the growth of the printing industry and the wide readership of the Ming dynasty, these textual sources must have influenced Qiu Ying's elite contemporaries and his patrons.⁸ They can calibrate our eyes to the way that Qiu Ying and his contemporaries saw, thought about, and discussed the coloration of landscape elements. Finally, this chapter uses *Picture Album: Imitating Song and Yuan Models* to reveal Qiu Ying's varied approaches to the blue-and-green-landscape tradition. Not only is this album securely dated to 1547, it also contains paintings executed in different stylistic idioms within this tradition. The eclectic mix of techniques and idioms demonstrates Qiu Ying's own standing in the long history of the blue-and-green-landscape tradition. Qiu was far from a mere copyist, but struck to achieve an original, albeit highly synthesized, style of his own. More importantly, this album shows that Qiu was attentive to the application technique of azurite and malachite, providing a foundation for the discussion of his placement of colors in subsequent chapters.

Altogether, these sections demonstrate that Qiu Ying and his contemporaries engaged closely with the techniques and stylistic idioms associated with azurite and malachite. When

⁸ J.P. Park, *Art By the Book: Painting Manuals and the Leisure Life in Late Ming China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012), 8-9.

approaching an ancient blue-and-green-landscape painting, they also confronted a challenge that tested their connoisseurship—whether they could differentiate authentic from fake, copy from original, and acceptable techniques from tasteless doodling and the overuse of colors. It reasonably follows that the complex politics associated with using azurite and malachite drew Qiu Ying and his contemporaries to the deeper significance and many symbolic values that are embedded in the two pigments.

Using Color in the Early Sixteenth Century

Although Wen Zhengming's *Goddess of Xiang and Lady of Xiang* (plate 2.1.1) is not a landscape painting featuring azurite and malachite, it reveals a standard in using colors that the great master was barely able to emulate. The use of colors in this painting not only reveals Wen's ideas, which would have influenced Qiu Ying, but also embodies some of the larger concerns about applying colors held by the sixteenth-century elite. The story that Wen Zhengming recounted in his own inscription reveals that color was considered to be high stakes.

The final version of Wen's painting depicts the two ancient river goddesses with extremely fine and airy contour lines and a faint cinnabar red, delivering a sense of otherworldly lightness. Written in 1517, Wen Zhengming's own inscription on this painting describes his encounter with a painting with the same title by the Yuan-dynasty master Zhao Mengfu (趙孟頫; 1254–1322). Wen's inscription reads

When I was young, I saw the painting *Goddess of Xiang and Lady of Xiang* by Zhao Weigong [Mengfu]. The execution of ink and the application of color were supremely ancient. Mr. Shitian (i.e., Shen Zhou) ordered me to copy it. I thanked

[him] for the opportunity but failed to work up the courage to do it. Now, twenty years have passed. By accident, I saw paintings that depicted Erwang and Nüying. [The painters of these works] deliberately imitated the Tang style. Although their works are extremely fine, they do not have any sense of archaism. This painting is an imitation of Zhao Mengfu and the figures are modeled on Qian Xuan. Now, Shen Zhou is no longer with us and [I] cannot learn [from him]. Hengshan, Wen Zhengming, recorded.

余少時閱趙魏公所畫湘君湘夫人行墨設色皆極高古。石田先生命余臨之。余謝不敢。今二十年矣。偶見畫娥皇女英者，故作唐粧，雖極精工而古意略盡。因彷彿趙公為此而設色則師錢舜舉。惜石翁不存，無從請益也。衡山文徵明記。

In traditional Chinese painting, imitating and copying the works of ancient masters were the principle ways of learning how to paint.⁹ Joining with this learning mechanism was a literary aesthetic that championed a sense of archaism. The sense of archaism in Zhao's painting must have been extremely compelling for Shen Zhou to order Wen Zhengming, who was twenty-six years old at that time, to copy it. Moreover, from Wen's inscription, it seems that executing a strong sense of archaism via ink and color is technically challenging and is not easy to achieve without years of training. As a result, young Wen Zhengming did not have the courage to copy the painting. After twenty years of exploration, Wen found confidence in promoting a sense of archaism through colors in a way far better than other painters. Yet, Wen Zhengming shied away from his achievement and wished his deceased teacher Shen Zhou could give him some further instruction. Wen's inscription thus reveals that the ancient method of using color is both important and difficult to learn.

⁹ Wen Fong, "The Problem of Forgeries in Chinese Painting, Part One," *Artibus Asiae* 25.2/3 (1962): 95-140.

Famous for the dexterity of his brushwork, Wen masterfully used smooth and continuous ink lines to enliven the airy and hovering draperies drifting across the plain background of his work (plate 2.1.2). Fine ink lines were used to render the salient facial components of the two goddesses and their draperies. At the same time, various shades of red create a tonal symphony on the two goddesses' garments. A thin layer of light red was washed over the sleeves of the goddess on the left, the Goddess of Xiang. A noticeably redder color was applied onto her dress. However, the contrast between a light red upper garment and a darker red dress was reversed in the garment of the Lady of Xiang, the goddess on the right. Balancing the red that dominates the colors of their garments, their scarves and the trim of their sleeves were left uncolored, revealing the immaculate hue of blank paper. This meticulous tonal variation of light colors, as well as the fluidity of hair-thin ink lines, brings forth an uncluttered elegance that only goddesses can possess. Wen Zhengming's depiction of these two ancient goddesses demonstrates a principle in which the application of color interacts with ink. In his brief description of this painting, the Qing-dynasty collector Gao Shiqi (高士奇; 1645–1704) also singled out the work's applications of ink and color. Gao said, "the movement of the brush produced lines that look like silk thread. The bright cinnabar (*zhubi* 朱碧) is minimalistic and plain."¹⁰

For Qiu Ying, who was around twenty years old at the time of his work with Wen, the painting *Goddess of Xiang and Lady of Xiang* reveals a standard of archaism probably too challenging to emulate. As Wen Zhengming specifically acknowledged in his inscription, this

¹⁰ Gao Shiqi 高士奇, fascicle 2 of *Jiangcun xiaoxia lu* 江村銷夏錄 (Record of spending the summer by a stream and in a village), in *Siku quanshu* electronic version. The text reads as “運筆如絲, 朱碧簡淡.”

painting was modeled on the works of the great Yuan master Zhao Mengfu (趙孟頫; 1254–1322), whereas, in particular, the color was modeled after Zhao’s teacher Qian Xun (錢選; ca. 1235 – before 1307). Extant paintings by Qian and Zhao verify their works as stylistic models for this painting. For example, *Grooms and Horses* is a handscroll composed of three paintings by Zhao Mengfu, his son Zhao Yong (趙雍; ca. 1289 – ca. 1362), and his grandson Zhao Lin (趙麟; active during the fourteenth century), respectively (plate 2.2). In the section painted by Zhao Mengfu, a groom is shown standing next to a horse. A mixture of diluted ink and a minute amount of red assumes the color of the groom’s robe. This unique combination of ink and red, rarely seen in depictions of figures wearing official attire, seems to suggest that the groom has just finished his task: his red official robe has lost its brightness because it is covered in dust, dirt, and earth.¹¹ This careful adjustment of the tonality of red, with the help of ink and dilution, works to imply time, space, and action not explicitly depicted in the painting. The same attention to tonality can be seen in the different shades of faint cinnabar red in Wen Zhengming’s painting. Also, Wen’s claim of modeling his work on Qian Xun is attested by *Consort Yang Mounting a Horse* (*Yangfei shang ma tu* 楊妃上馬圖), a handscroll attributed to this Yuan master (plate 2.3). The last four figures in Qian’s handscroll were rendered with very fine and light ink lines—lines that almost diffuse into the colors that fill up their garments. Furthermore, the colors of the garments are also very faint, revealing the color of the paper underneath. We are thus reminded

¹¹ This view is inspired by a conversation with John McGregory.

of the otherworldly lightness of the two goddesses and their overall colorations in Wen Zhengming's painting.

Two other inscriptions were written in 1547 and 1579, by Wang Zhideng (王穉登; 1535–1612) and Wen Jia (文嘉; ca. 1501–1583), respectively. In particular, Wang's condescending comment propounds Qiu Ying's incompetence in applying colors. His inscription alleges that before *Goddess of Xiang and Lady of Xiang* arrived at its final coloration, Wen Zhengming requested that Qiu Ying apply colors for him. Despite Qiu Ying's two greatly different attempts, Wen Zhengming was still unsatisfied and eventually applied the colors himself.¹² Moreover, Wang Zhideng asserts, "The strength of his [i.e., Wen Zhengming's] brush is so strong that it can lift a tripod! This is not what Qiu Ying and the like can dream of!" However, Wang Zhideng's comment must be taken with a grain of salt. There is no evidence showing that Wen Zhengming indeed explored the coloration of the painting with Qiu. Although Wang's comment exudes a strong and problematic bias against "Qiu Ying and the like"—a bias that was certainly not shared by all scholars and patrons of the time—it reveals that color provided an excuse to dispense criticism and thus demonstrates the high stakes of color in Qiu's time. In order to understand the larger principles of applying azurite and malachite in the sixteenth century, we first turn to a wealth of printed materials about the two pigments that were circulated in the sixteenth century.

¹² Translated by Stephen Little, the original text reads as “少嘗侍文太史。談及此圖。云：使仇實夫設色。兩易鉅皆不滿意。乃自設之，以贈王履吉先生。” See, *idem.*, “The Demon Queller and the Art of Qiu Ying (Ch’iu Ying),” *Artibus Asiae*, vol. 46, no.1/2 (1985): 42.

Unfortunately, Wen Zhengming did not leave any textual records that articulate his views on colorations.¹³ In order to understand what he would have taught Qiu Ying, we must examine Wen's and Qiu's paintings together with the larger principles of applying colors in the sixteenth century. To do this, we will first turn to a wealth of printed materials about colors that circulated in the sixteenth century.

Ancient Views of Using Azurite Blue and Malachite Green in Circulation in the Sixteenth Century

Throughout the ages, literati, the educated class, has the strongest voice in defining the stylistic paradigm. But, in Qiu Ying's time, a lot of Song and Yuan painting treatises and connoisseur handbooks were reprinted. Even literati like Wen Zhengming and connoisseurs like Zhan Jingfeng would consult ancient texts. With the increased literacy in the Ming and the bloom of the printing industry, even Qiu Ying's patrons, who are not literati, would have read the ancient treatises. It is thus necessary to probe into these texts.

The Circulation of Ancient Art Criticism and Treatises in the Sixteenth Century

Evidence suggests that scholars since the fourteenth century more often than not read and trusted ancient painting treatises and art criticism. The late fourteenth-century art critic and

¹³ See footnote 40 of the introduction.

government official Xia Wenyan (夏文彥; active 14th century)¹⁴ mentions doing precisely that in the preface of his *Precious Reflections on Picturing and Painting* (*Tuhui baojian* 圖繪寶鑑; written in 1365). Xia studied and evaluated the art of his time and of the past with reference to the standards embodied in ancient art treatises.¹⁵ He specifically acknowledges his debt to Zhang Yanyuan's *Record of Famous Paintings of Successive Dynasties* (*Lidai minghua ji* 歷代名畫記) in fascicle 2, where he lists famous painters of the past. He also states that he took up the goal of expanding the twelfth-century imperial painting catalog *Painting Catalogue of the Xuanhe Era* (*Xuanhe huapu* 宣和畫譜; preface 1120) by including the paintings produced during the Southern Song (1127–1279), Liao (907–1125), and Jin (1115–1234) dynasties.¹⁶ Following this tradition, Wen Zhengming's 1552 colophon to Qiu Ying's *Tribute Bearer* (*Gong ma tu* 貢馬圖) tells that he saw paintings with the same subject matter in Zhang Yanyuan's treatise and Pei Xiaoyuan's (裴孝源) *Records of Painting from the Imperial and Private Collections During the Zhengguan Era* (*Zhengguan gongsi hua lu* 貞觀公私人畫錄; preface 639).¹⁷ Apparently, Wen Zhengming used ancient art criticism and treatises as references. Furthermore, Qiu Ying's friend

¹⁴ Xia is an assistant official of the affairs in Yuyao region (餘姚州同知; Yuyao is today Shaoxing 紹興). See, Wang Deyi 王德毅 et al., *Yuan ren zhuanji zhi liao suo yin* 元人傳記資料索引 (Index to biographical materials of Yuan figures) (Taipei: Xin wenfeng chuban gongsi, 1979-1982), 861.

¹⁵ Xia Wenyan (1930), 1.

¹⁶ Ibid., 7.

¹⁷ Stephen Little, "The Demon Queller and the Art of Qiu Ying (Ch'iu Ying)," *Artibus Asiae* Volume 46, 1/2 (1985), 62. According to Little, *Tribute Bearers's* current location is unknown. The colophon is reproduced in Oswald Siren's *Chinese Painting: Leading Masters and Principles*.

Tang Yin also compiled an anthology of ancient painting treatises, *The Painting Catalog of Mr. Liuru* (*Liuru huapu* 六如畫譜). Qiu Ying would have been familiar with these ancient texts through Wen Zhengming and Tang Yin, both of who greatly influenced the stylistic development of Qiu.¹⁸ More importantly, Lan Ying's comments on Qiu Ying, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter, uses composition (*buzhi* 佈置) as a criterion to evaluate Qiu's paintings. This criterion was previously adopted by the Southern Song connoisseur Zhao Xihu (趙希鵠; 1170–1242) in his discussion of blue-and-green-landscape painting. The shared vocabulary among textual sources produced before and after Qiu's time suggests the preservation of certain principles that must have held true during Qiu Ying's time as well.

Before moving to the contents of these texts, the table below lists art criticism and treatises that discuss using azurite blue and malachite green, along with information about how many editions were printed.

| Authors | Book Titles | Notable Publications during the Ming Dynasty | Anonymous Publications during the Ming Dynasty |
|------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Zhang Yanyuan (張彥遠; 847–874) | <i>Lidai minghua ji</i> (歷代名畫記; <i>Record of Famous Paintings of Successive Dynasties</i>) | Wang Shizhen's <i>Wangshi shuhuayuan</i> (王氏書畫苑; <i>Mr. Wang's Garden of Painting and Calligraphy</i>) | 2 |

Table 2.1. Art criticism and treatises in circulation that discuss using azurite blue and malachite green.

¹⁸ Stephen Little, "Demon Queller and the Art of Qiu Ying [Ch'iu Ying]," *Artibus Asiae* vol 46, no. ½ (1985): 62; Li Te'er 利特爾 (Stephen Little), "Qiu Ying he Wen Zhengming de guanxi 仇英和文徵明的關係," in *Wumen huapai yanjiu* 吳門畫派研究 (Beijing: Zhijincheng chubanshe, 1993), 132-227.

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| Liu Xu (劉詢; active 941) | <i>Jiu Tang Shu</i> (舊唐書; <i>The Older History of Tang Dynasty</i>) | Five versions between 1535 and 1538 | 0 |
| Zhu Jingxuan (朱景玄; active during the ninth century) | <i>Tangchao minghua ju</i> (唐朝名畫錄; <i>Famous Paintings of the Tang Dynasty</i>) | Wang Shizhen's <i>Wangshi shuhuayuan</i> | 4 |
| Anonymous | <i>Xuanhe huapu</i> (宣和畫譜; <i>Painting Catalog of the Xuanhe Era</i>) | Wang Shizhen's <i>Wangshi shuhuayuan</i> | 6 |
| Zhao Xihu (趙希鵠; 1170–1242) | <i>Dongtian qinglu ji</i> (洞天青錄集; <i>Record of the Pure Registers of the Cavern Heaven</i>) | Tao Zongyi's (陶宗儀) <i>Shuofu</i> (說郛; <i>Tales within a City Wall</i>); Zhu Quan's (朱權) edition; Wu Wenhuan's (胡文煥) edition | 1 |
| Deng Zhuang (鄧椿; active during the twelfth century) | <i>Huaji</i> (畫繼; <i>Painting Heritage</i>) | None | 1 |
| Xia Wenyan (夏文彥) | <i>Tuhui baojian</i> (圖繪寶鑑; <i>Precious Reflections on Picturing and Painting</i> ; preface in 1365) | Miao Zeng's (苗增) edition published in the fourteenth year of the Zhengde (正德) period (1519) | 1 |
| Tang Hou (湯垕; active during the fourteenth century) | <i>Huajian</i> (畫鑑; <i>Painting Connoisseurship</i>) | None | 1 |
| Rao Ziran (饒自然; active during the fourteenth century) | <i>Huizong shier ji</i> (繪宗十二忌; <i>The Twelve Taboos in Painting</i>) | Tang Zhiqi's (唐志契) <i>Huishi weiyan</i> (繪事微言; <i>Subtle Complaints about Issues in Painting</i>), printed in 1627 and 1639 | 0 |

Table 2.1. (Continued)

Some of the above art criticism and treatises were printed in the fourteenth century and became widely circulated in the sixteenth century. Zhang Yanyuan's *Lidai minghua ji*, the Northern Song *Xuanhe huapu*, Xia Wenyan's *Tuhui baojian*, and Tang Hou's *Huajian* were

already being printed during the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368).¹⁹ *Tangchao minghua lu*, *Lidai minghua ji*, and *Xuanhe huapu* were reprinted in the anthology *Mr. Wang's Garden of Painting and Calligraphy*, compiled by the scholar Wang Shizhen.²⁰ Xia Wenyan's *Tuhui Baojian* was first printed in 1365 and reprinted in 1520; then it was reprinted again one more time before the advent of Qing dynasty.²¹ These titles must have enjoyed a high demand and broad readership to substantiate such frequent reprinting during Qiu Ying's time.

The frequent reprinting of the Southern Song connoisseur and royal member Zhao Xihu's *Record of the Pure Registers of the Cavern Heaven*²² reveals just that. From such frequent reprinting, it can be inferred that Zhao's work held a revered status in the genre of connoisseur handbooks. It was reprinted in Tao Zongyi's *Tales within a City Wall*, an anthology that was reprinted several times in the Ming dynasty. Among these, three of the editions contain Zhao's treatise.²³ The reclusive royal family member Zhu Quan (1378–1448) also reprinted Zhao's

¹⁹ The circulation of these texts is mentioned in Xia Wenyan, *Tuhui baojian* (Shanghai: Shangwu yin shuguan, 1930), 1 and 7. This edition of *Tuhui baojian* is based on two Ming dynasty imprints preserved in the publishing house's Hanfen Building 涵芬樓. For the imprint date of *Xuanhe huapu*, see Pan Guoyuan 潘国允 edited, *Meng Yuanbanke zonglu* 蒙元版刻综录 (A comprehensive record of woodblock printed [books] in the Mongol Yuan dynasty) (Huhehaote: Nei Menggu daxue chubanshe, 1996), 92.

²⁰ Weng Lianxi 翁連溪, *Zhongguo guji xhanbenshu zongmu* 中國古籍善本書總目 (A complete catalog of ancient and rare books in China) (Beijing: Xianzhuang shuju, 2005), 931-2; Wang Shizhen 王世貞 edited, *Wangshi shuhua yuan* 王氏書畫苑 (Mr. Wang's Garden [filled with] painting and calligraphy) (Shanghai: Taidong tushuju, 1922).

²¹ *Ibid.*, 932.

²² Clunas's translation of the title. See *idem.*, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004 [c1991]), 9.

²³ Weng (2005), 1019, 1921, 1925, 1927. For the lifespan of Tao Zongyi, see Wang Deyi (1979-1982), 1346.

treatise in the Jiangxi region.²⁴ Later, two more reprints of the original text were made: one was recorded in *Compiled Volume of Literature that Leads to Enlightenment* (*Gezhi congshu* 格致叢書) by Wu Wenhuan (胡文煥; active during the late sixteenth century) and the other version was recorded in 1614.²⁵

During the Ming dynasty, Rao Ziran's *The Twelve Taboos in Painting* was included in Tang Yin's painting catalog. Rao's treatise was reprinted in 1627 and 1639.²⁶ Evidence shows that Rao's treatise was well known in the sixteenth century. The encyclopedia *Jingzhou baibian* (荊州稗編; *The Panicum Grass Volume of Jingzhou*), edited by Tang Shunzhi (唐順之; 1507–1560), mentions the book title *Twelve Taboos*.²⁷ The scholar-poet, historian, and official Wang Shizhen (王世貞; 1526–1590) also mentions the title of Rao's treatise in his *Yanzhou sibu gao* (弇州四部稿; *The Manuscript of the Four Types of Literature by Mr. Yanzhou*).²⁸

While the readership of painting treatises in traditional China remains an understudied topic, it is reasonable to believe that the above treatises interests a variety of art lovers,

²⁴ Yong Rong 永瑤 edited, *Siku quanshu zongmu* 四庫全書總目 (the complete index to *Siku quanshu*) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), 1057.

²⁵ Weng Lianxi (2005), 1019. Furthermore, another two Ming hand-copies of Zhao's treatise are still in existence.

²⁶ Weng, 933. In these two occasions, *Huizong shier ji* was included in Tang Zhiqi's 唐志契 (ca. 1578-1652) *Huishi weiyan* 繪事微言 (subtle complaints about issues on painting). For the lifespan and hometown of Tang Zhiqi, see Zhang Dongfeng 張東芳, "Guanyu Tang Zhiqi shengping yu liji de yanjiu 關於唐志契生平與里籍的研究 (a study concerning the life and native place of Tang Zhiqi)," *Meiyuan* 美苑 1 (2008): 15-16.

²⁷ Tang Shunzhi 唐順之, fascicle 85 of *Jingzhou baibian* 荊州稗編 (the panicum grass volume of Jingzhou), folio 2a (p.5635).

²⁸ Wang Shizhen 王世貞, fascicle 155 of *Yanzhou sibu gao* 弇州四部稿 (the manuscript of the four types of literature by Mr. Yanzhou) in *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 electronic version.

collectors, and the literate. As Anne E. McLaren has demonstrated, the reading public in the sixteenth century no longer restricted to the elite class, the official, and the collectors. Nouveaux riches, members of the laity, the relatively unlearned, and villagers are all constituents of the reading public.²⁹ In his preface to his compilation of past painting treatises, Tang Yin mentions that his treatise serves “people on earth who talk about painting (*shi zhi tan hua zhe* 世之談畫者),” explaining to them the variety of genres, protocols, and techniques in painting.³⁰ Given the broad readership of painting treatises, it is necessary to discuss what they say about using azurite and malachite in Chinese painting.

Ancient Painters and the Grand Tradition of Blue-and-Green Landscapes

In Chinese art, the practice of using azurite blue and malachite green as the major coloration of landscape elements is a time-honored practice, with one of the earliest examples coming from the sixth-century Cave 123 at Dunhuang. Such a practice existed long before the times of royal members and painters Li Sixun (651–716) and Li Zhaodao (ca. 675 – 741), who mastered the skills of depicting landscapes in color.³¹ Forming a long tradition, painters

²⁹ Anne E. McLaren, “Constructing New Reading Publics in Late Ming China,” in *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China*, Cynthia J. Brokaw and Kai-wing Chow edited (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 2005), 152, 158-161.

³⁰ Tang Yin, preface to *Liuru Tang xiansheng huapu* 六如唐先生畫譜 (Ming Wanli 明萬曆 imprint), The University of Chicago Rare Book Collection.

³¹ In the twelfth century painting catalogue *Xuanhe huapu* defines “landscape painting (*shanshui hua* 山水畫)” as a revered genre, as opposed to the works produced by craftsmen and sold in the market. According to the catalog, painters of this genre were all gentries and scholar officials who upheld high moral standards. See Yu Jianhua 俞劍華 edited, *Xuanhe huapu* 宣和畫譜 (Nanjing: Jiangsu meishu chubanshe, 2007), 217-9.

acknowledged as belonging to this tradition were mentioned in art criticism and treatises that circulated in the sixteenth century. These painters include:

| | |
|--|--|
| Li Sixun (李思訓; 651–716) | Zhao Daheng (趙大亨; ca. the twelfth century) |
| Li Zhaodao (李昭道; ca. 675 – 741) | Wu Tinghui (吳庭暉) |
| Wang Shen (王詵 ca. 1048 – ca. 1103) | Liu Siyi (劉思義; active 1131–1162) |
| Zhang Lingrang (趙令穰; active ca. 1070 – 1100) | Shi Xianzhu (史顯祖; active 1234–1236) |
| Dong Yuan (董源; d. 962) | Meng Yurun (孟玉潤) |
| Zhao Boju (趙伯駒; d. 1162) | Qian Xuan (錢選; ca. 1235 – before 1307) |

Not all of these artists received equal attention by historical art critics and art historians of the time. The artists in the right column appeared in *Tuhui baojian*, the late fourteenth-century work by Xia Wenyan, as painters of blue-and-green landscapes. Xia merely provides succinct evaluations of their achievements. In contrast, the artists in the left column received significantly more discussion, both in terms of length and wealth of details, in art criticism and treatises predating Xia’s treatise. In these works, the artists in the left column also received significantly more accolades.

Textual sources in circulation in the sixteenth century firmly attest that the Tang painter Li Sixun and his son Li Zhaodao were the two most celebrated artists. For example, in his *Evaluations of Painting*, the art critic Tang Hou specifically mentions that Li Sixun used a particular technique called “golden iridescence (*jinbi* 金碧; using the two pigments to bring forth

a beaming effect)” to “[achieve] colorful brilliance and radiance.”³² Zhao Xihu’s *Dongtian qinglu ji* identifies Li Zhaodao as the progenitor of this practice. Among all the sixteenth-century texts, Zhao Xihu’s view on using the two pigments was the most influential. First of all, it must be acknowledged that Zhao Xihu positioned Li Zhaodao—and *not* his father—as the progenitor of using the two pigments in landscape painting. This notion is affirmed in a poem by the early Ming scholar Cao Jie (曹介) that was recorded in *Ming shi zong* (明詩綜; *Anthology of Ming Poems*).³³ Furthermore, in his *Empty Words in the Realm of Arts: A Sequel* (*Xuxiu yiyuan zhiyan* 續修藝苑卮言), Wang Shizhen (王世貞; 1526–1590) states that “nowadays everyone knows *only* the Lesser General Li (i.e., Li Zhaodao).”³⁴ Because this notion of singling out the son and setting him as the progenitor of the tradition appears only in Zhao’s treatise, the fact that it is repeated in later works thus implies that his whole discussion on the two pigments greatly influenced sixteenth-century readers.

The fame of these two painters is also shown in earlier texts that circulated during the sixteenth century. The time-honored art historian Zhang Yanyuan’s *Record of Famous Paintings of Successive Dynasties* and the twelfth-century imperial-compiled *Painting Catalogue of the*

³² Tang Hou 湯垕, *Hua Jian* 畫鑒 (Shanghai: Shangwu yin shuguan, 1937), 3. The text reads as “李思訓畫著色山水, 用金碧暉映, 自為一家法.” Tang’s treatise is a record of his discussion with the renowned connoisseur Ke Jiusi 柯九思 (1290-1343). This technique uses azurite and malachite, as confirmed by extant paintings attributed to the two painters.

³³ Zhu Yizun 朱彝尊, fascicle 13 of *Ming shi zong* 明詩綜 (Compilation of Ming poetry), in *Siku quanshu* electronic version. The line reads as “唐朝以來畫金碧, 小李將軍稱絕奇.”

³⁴ Wang Shizhen 王世貞, fascicle 12 of *Xuxiu yiyuan zhiyan* 續修藝苑卮言 (empty words in the realm of arts, sequel), in *Xuxiu siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書 (the expanded volume of the encyclopedia of the four treasures) (Shanghai: Shangwu yin shuju, 1995), 576.

Xuanhe Era portray Li Sixun and Li Zhaodao as the earliest painters who mastered the depiction of landscape.³⁵ Laying the foundation for their legendary status, Zhu Jingxuan's *Famous Paintings of the Tang Dynasty* presents an incredible anecdote of Li Sixun: it is said that his painting ability was so wonderful that Emperor Xuanzong (玄宗; r. 712–756), who invited Li to paint, heard the sound of running water in his landscape painting.³⁶ Moreover, at least five different versions of the historian Liu Xu's official history *The Older Version of Tang History* were published between 1535 and 1538.³⁷ Liu Xu acknowledges Li Sixun's refinement in the art of painting and states that his landscape painting was the most laudable among all kinds of art up to that time.³⁸ It is this particular text that introduces the artistic excellence of Li Sixun to readers of official histories since Liu Xu's time. Thus, both official histories and painting treatises provide evidence to ascertain Li's unique status.

The tenth-century painter Dong Yuan and the twelfth-century painter Wang Shen received equal accolades from historical sources. Dong Yuan, according to *Xuanhe huapu*, followed in the style of Li Sixun. Wang Shen has a painting titled *Gold-Emerald of Slowly Flowing Water* (*Jinbi*

³⁵ Zhang Yanyuan's *Lidai minghua ji* prefers Li Zhaodao than the father Li Sixun. Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠, *Lidai minghua ji* 歷代名畫記 (record of famous paintings of consecutive eras), in fascicle 4 of *Wangshi shuhua yuan* 王氏書畫苑 (Mr. Wang's garden of painting and calligraphy), edited by Wang Shizhen 王世貞 (Shanghai: Taidong shuju, 1922), folio 18a; Fascicle 10 of *Xuanhe huapu* 宣和畫譜 (Shanghai: Shangwu yin shuguan, 1922), folio 2a-b. This *Xuanhe huapu* imprint is based on the version published by *Zhaokuang ge* 昭曠閣 (the Zhaokuang pavilion) during the Jiaqian period (1796-1820) kept in the publishing house's Hanfen Building 涵芬樓).

³⁶ Zhu Jingxuan 朱景玄, *Tangchao minghua lu* 唐朝名畫錄 (Records of famous paintings of the Tang dynasty), in fascicle 6 of Wang Shizhen, *op. cit.*, folio 6a.

³⁷ Weng (2005), 234.

³⁸ Liu Xu, 劉昫, *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 2346.

chanyuan tu 金碧潺湲圖) recorded in *Xuanhe huapu*.³⁹ Both Mi Fu and the court official Deng Zhuang (鄧椿; active during the late twelfth century) refer to a work titled *Colored Landscape* (*Zhese shanshui* 著色山水) by Wang Shen and they both state that his “landscape painting used the brush method of Li Cheng (李成) with the use of *jinlu* (金礪; literally, golden-emerald). It looks ancient.”⁴⁰ Both Dong Yuan and Wang Shen are mentioned in Rao Ziran’s *Huizong shier ji* as models using azurite and malachite in landscape painting.

The twelfth-century painter Zhao Boju was extolled by Zhao Xihu in *Dongtian qinglu ji*. According to Zhao Xihu, he was the best among the painters who followed the southward retreat of the political regime in 1127. Zhao Xihu states, “There is no *huashou* (畫手; great hand of painting, or great painter) in recent generations. After the southern retreat, there were still Zhao Qianli (i.e., Zhao Boju), Xiu Zhao (蕭昭), [and] Li Tang (李唐)... [And], nowadays, there is almost no renowned *huagong* (畫工; professional painter). The way that they depict shapes has no spirit at all....”⁴¹

A pedigree of great painters from the eighth century onward thus substantiates the use of azurite and malachite in landscape painting as a long tradition. During his lifetime, when these treatises were well circulated, Qiu Ying would have been aware of the art-historical significance associated with using these two minerals as well as the techniques of ancient painters.

³⁹ Fascicle 12 of *Xuanhe huapu* (1922), folio 7a.

⁴⁰ Mi Fu, *op. cit.*, fascicle 10, folio 15b-16a; Deng Zhuang 鄧椿, *Huaji* 畫繼 (painting heritage), in fascicle 7 of Wang Shizhen, *op. cit.*, folio 13a.

⁴¹ See, Tao Zongyi, *op. cit.*, fascicle 12, folio 42b.

The Technical Challenge of Applying Azurite Blue and Malachite Green as Presented in Ancient Art Criticism and Treatises

Similar to the use of ink, the uses of azurite blue and malachite green are subject to a set of expectations thoroughly discussed in art criticism and treatises. When appreciating landscape paintings that have an iridescent quality achieved by the two pigments (*jinbi* 金碧), the royal member and connoisseur Zhao Xihu reminds his contemporary readers that “mind's craft and composition layout” of colors and ink have been the key concerns of great masters and thus one should not consider collecting paintings that are tastelessly over-colored by pigments. Richard Vinograd explains, “A strict division of colored from monochrome styles was forgone in a formulation that subsumed both under the controlling mind of the superior artist.”⁴² Zhao Xihu states:

In general, landscape [painting], in its nascent stage, does not have the distinction between *jinbi* and ink-monochrome. The key lies in what the mind's craft and composition layout are like. If one overuses *jinbi*, like the appearance of today's colorful [and] decorative paintings that completely lack style and elegance, what is the use of it? [Although *jinbi shanshui*] is different from ink-monochrome painting, what makes it problematic is equal.⁴³

⁴² Richard Vinograd, “Some Landscapes Related to the Blue-and-Green Manner from the Early Yuan Period,” *Artibus Asiae* Vol 41. No. 2/3 (1979): 106.

⁴³ This translation is based on Richard Vinograd's with some moderations. See Vinograd (1979): 106.

大抵山水初無金碧水墨之分。要在心匠布置如何爾。若多用金碧，如今生色
罨畫之狀，而略無風韻，何取乎？與水墨異，其為病則均耳。⁴⁴

The term “craft” vividly embraces the aesthetic and period style of his time in which landscape painting are meticulously drawn, filled with fine brushwork. The same aesthetic appear in a Yuan treatise. The fourteenth-century art critic Rao Ziran details how to execute colors and the abovementioned *jinbi* or “golden iridescence” technique in his *The Twelve Taboos in Painting*.⁴⁵ In terms of the coloring methods used in painting, Rao explains that there are the *shese* (設色; application of color) and *jinbi* techniques. *Shese* is further divided into “light (*qing* 輕)” and “heavy (*chong* 重).” The first mode, *qing shese* (輕設色), or light application of color, does not involve the use of any azurite or malachite. However, to paint in the mode of *chong shese* (重設色), or heavy application of color, one should “use azurite and malachite for the

⁴⁴ Tao Zhongyi 陶宗儀 edited, fascicle 12 of *Shuo fu* 說郛 (*Ju Mingchaoben Hanfenlou cangban jiaozheng paiyin ben* 據明鈔本涵芬樓藏板校正排印本) (Shanghai: Shangwu yin shuguan, 1927), folio 43b. The full text begins with a sentence about a lineage of royal painters that forms this tradition. The sentence reads as “唐小李將軍始作金碧山水。後王晉卿、趙大年，近日趙千里皆為之。” This twentieth century edition, which aims to bring back to life the original *Shuofu* compiled by Tao Zongyi (active ca. 1360-1368), is comprised of six different hand copies from the Ming dynasty, with the earliest dated to the Hongwu period (1368-1398). See, idem., fascicle 1, folio 1a-1b.

⁴⁵ Rao Ziran 饒自然, *Huizong shier ji* 繪宗十二忌 (the twelve taboos in painting) in fascicle 4 of Tang Zhiqi 唐志契 edited, *Huishi weiyan* 繪事微言 (subtle complaints on painting issues), in Xia Quan 夏荃 edited, *Hailing congke* 海陵叢刻 (compiled carvings of Hailing) (unknown publisher, published after 1923), folio 13a. This 20th century carving of *Huishi weiyan* is based on an imprint preserved in Wenlan Pavilion 文瀾閣, built in 1783, as a storage of the Qing imperial *Siku Quanshu* 四庫全書. This edition of *Huishi weiyan* is basically identical to the Siku version. See the colophon at Tang Zhiqi’s treatise.

colorations of mountains, rocks, and trees, as well as... opaque mineral pigment powders for the garments of figures.”

With a pedantic overtone, Rao Ziran then describes his expectation of the technique *jinbi*. Rao says, “When executing the technique *jinbi*, there should already be *cun* (皴; texture strokes) over the rocks. Some façades [of the rocks] should be left unpainted. One should use indigo blue and plant-dye green to wash the rocks and then wash the rocks with azurite and malachite façade by façade.”⁴⁶ Next, one should “use azurite to apply texture strokes over the rocks.” Rao instructs painters to “outline... [and] fill [tree] leaves with plant-dye green and highlight [some parts] with blue-green mineral pigments.” Rao’s account of the technique then turns into a set of strict rules. He declares that the application of “golden powder is acceptable only when it is applied onto the bottom edge of a rock, a sandy shore, or when it used to represent the radiance of clouds. This method is only suitable for representing dawn or sunset—for it radiates exuberant brilliance, brightness, and flamboyance.” Rao continues, “While opaque mineral-pigment powders can be applied onto human figures and architecture, they should be thin and light. Under no circumstance could one use cinnabar, metallic pigments, or azurite and malachite, except [when] representing red leaves. [Only by abiding to these rules could a work] fit into the standard passed down [by old masters]! The methods of the father-and-son generals of the Tang dynasty (i.e., Li Sixun and Li Zhaodao) and Dong Yuan (董源; d. 962), Wang Shen, and Zhao Danian (趙大年; i.e., Zhao Lingrang 趙令穰; active ca. 1070–1100) from the Song [dynasty] are models.”⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Rao (1923), folio 13a.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

The late fourteenth-century art critic Xia Wenyan also mentions the tradition of blue-and-green landscape painting (*qinglü shanshui* 青綠山水), a type of landscape painting that uses ink brushwork with subtle azurite and malachite colorations on the landscape elements, as opposed to the more glittering *jinbi shanshui*.⁴⁸ This was a tradition maintained by court artists like Liu Siyi (劉思義), who was an attendant of imperial decrees during the Shaoxing (紹興) period (1131–1162), and artists who were active in the Wuxing area like Qian Xuan, Meng Yurun (孟玉潤) and Wu Tinghui (吳庭暉). Sophistication in composition (*buzhi* 布置) and the ability to achieve meticulous renditions (*jingmi* 精密) without artificiality (*gongqi* 工氣) are key criteria of laudable blue-and-green landscape paintings.

The Influence of Ancient Texts in the Sixteenth Century's View on Pigments

The protocol of using colors, as described in the above textual materials, influenced the literati in Qiu Ying's social circle. These scholars apparently read these treatises, as Wen Zhengming's colophon to Qiu Ying's *Tribute Horses* attests. Although we have no record of how they directly reacted to these treatises, evidence from their writing strongly suggests that they agreed with the ancients. The scholar, painter, and connoisseur Zhan Jingfeng (1532–1602) followed Rao Ziran's adherence to ancient methods:

[I] like to model... [the methods] of [Zhao] Qianli (i.e., Zhao Boju) and [Zhao] Zi'ang (趙子昂; i.e., Zhao Mengfu)—two schools—in [executing] *qinglü shanshui* (blue-and-

⁴⁸ As opposed to the more glittering tradition of *jinbi shanshui*. See, Claudia Brown, "Chen Ju-yen and Late Yuan Painting in Suchou" (Phd. Dissertation, University of Kansas, 1985), 155.

green landscapes). In those areas that are heavily pigmented by azurite and malachite, the two Zhaos will never [execute] just one layer [of pigments]. Even though their colors are indeed heavy, [they] will add colors layer by layer. Therefore, their colors, though intense, are not sick... [Concerning] the heavy application of color, [the use of] each color comes with [a method] handed down [from great teachers]. Without such guidance, [one] can never attain appealing freshness and refined brightness.⁴⁹

又喜做千里子昂二家青綠山水。蓋二趙用青綠，其重着處非一着即如是濃也，皆數重漸加。以故着色不痴。凡重着，色色各有傳授。若無傳授，終不鮮蓓潤瑩。”

The reason why Zhao Boju and Zhao Mengfu are excellent models, as Zhan explains, is because they used overlapping layers of thin pigments to achieve rich colorations, demonstrating a way to achieve rich coloration without being over the top. Zhan's attentiveness to the brushwork and coloring techniques in ancient landscape paintings featuring azurite and malachite becomes more conspicuous in his discussion of *Proud Villagers on the Outskirts of Dragon Abode* (*Longsu jiaomin tu* 龍宿驕民圖), a work attributed to the tenth-century painter Dong Yuan.⁵⁰ Zhan details the application method of azurite and malachite, as well as where they were applied. He also mentions that powder pigments were applied onto the garments of figures. In addition to carefully recording the techniques used to create ancient paintings, Zhan Jingfeng also reveals the meaning of the blue-and-green-landscape tradition from an art-historical perspective.

⁴⁹ Zhan Jingfeng, fascicle 41 of *Zhanshi xingli xiaobian* 詹氏性理小辨 (Mr. Zhan's explanation of humanities and the great principle) (Haikou shi: Hainan chubanshe, 2001), 117-8 (folio 10a and 10b). The original text reads as “又喜做千里子昂二家青綠山水。蓋二趙用青綠，其重着處非一着。即如是濃也，皆數重漸加。以故着色不痴。凡重着，色色各有傳授。若無傳授，終不鮮蓓潤瑩。”

⁵⁰ This painting, according to Zhan's descriptions, shows high a resemblance to the painting bearing the title *Residents on the Outskirts of Dragon Abode* (*Longsu jiaomin tu* 龍宿郊民圖), which is now kept in the National Palace Museum.

For example, in his discussion of Zhan Ziqian's (展子虔; active during the late sixth to early seventh century) *Traveling in Spring* (*Youchun tu* 游春圖), Zhan Jingfeng regards Zhan Ziqian as the progenitor of *qinglü shanshui* or the Blue-and-Green Landscape.⁵¹ However, no prior art critics considered Zhan Zhiqian this way. It implies that any painters, including Qiu Ying, who used azurite blue and malachite green in landscape painting, were automatically connected to the *qinglü shanshui* tradition. Continuing his discussion of Zhan Ziqian's painting, Zhan Jingfeng states that

[I] then see a copy of Li Sixun's *Radiance of a Setting Sun between Sky and Seas* (*Haitian luozhao tu* 海天落照圖), made by a Yuan painter. [It is] thus the full-fledged mode of *qinglü shanshui*. As a result, artfulness adorns artificiality, leading to the meticulous rendition of minute details. Various kinds of [interpretations] will come into being because painters of ensuing eras have different legs and hands. Because their works are artful but not shallow, meticulous but not overly fawning, and fine but not concerning the layers of sharp tree branches, [they] can fit into a universal elegance. It is like Tang poetry has a modern mode...⁵²

及見元人臨李思訓《海天落照》圖，則青綠山水之體大備矣。於是乎，巧以飾工，以致精細以表微。種種將漸開，後人腳手然而不同。于後人則以其巧而不纖薄，精而不濃媚，細而不尖杪重重，通于大雅。如唐詩之有近體...

In the above quotation, Zhan Jingfeng refers to *qinglü shanshui* as a “mode (*ti* 體).” While it was rather rare in painting treatises up until the Ming dynasty to see this term, “mode” is frequently

⁵¹ Zhan Jingfeng 詹景鳳, *Zhanshi xuanlan bian* 詹氏玄覽編 (An compilation of the thoughts and observations of Zhan) (Taipei: Guoli zhongyang tushuguan, 1970), 237. After stating the mountains and streams in Zhan Ziqian's painting are heavily layered with blue-green pigments and golden powder is applied over the foot of mountain ridges, Zhan Jingfeng said, this painting “probably establishes the tradition of *qinglü shanshui*. [It] looks meticulous but the brush method is, in fact, untrammelled. It treads into the realm of naiveté and did not fall into overt artfulness. It establishes a mode that is not fully-fledged at that time.”

⁵² Ibid., 237-8.

used in the art criticism of Chinese calligraphy. Terms like *Yan ti* (顏體; the mode of Yan Zhenqing's [顏真卿; 709–785] calligraphy) and *Zhao ti* (趙體 (the mode of Zhao Mengfu's [趙孟頫; 1254–1322] calligraphy) denote a flexible lineage initiated by a groundbreaking calligrapher and followed by ensuing artists who blend personal styles into the mode established by the progenitor. Thus, in Qiu Ying's time, the use of azurite and malachite belonged to a long tradition and, at the same time, painters enjoyed a freedom to incorporate new elements. This approach to the blue-and-green-landscape tradition is also apparent in Qiu Ying's *Picture Album: Imitating Song and Yuan Models*, which will be discussed in the next section.

The printing of painting treatises and art criticism also influenced art patrons and the art market. In his *Qinghe Cruise of Painting and Calligraphy* (*Qinghe shuhua fang* 清河書畫舫), Zhang Chou (張丑; active 1615) indicates that the frequent reprinting of *Xuanhe huapu* affected the production and consumption of paintings bearing the signature of Li Sixun since the fourteenth century. The Yuan-dynasty tea-lover Lu Tingbi (盧廷璧) owned Li Sixun's *Treading among Flowers* (*Tajing tu* 踏錦圖).⁵³ Also, the scholar-officials Liu Jiezhai (劉節齋; 1562

⁵³ Lu was ridiculed as a tea junkie in the Ming dynasty novelist Feng Menglong's 馮夢龍 (1574-1646) *Gujin taigai* 古今譚槩 (general tale of the past and present), an anthology of jokes through ages. According to Zhang Chou, the brush method of Lu Tingbi's picture is similar to that of *Spring Mountains*, owned by Chen Hulu 陳湖陸 in the Ming dynasty. Chen's life span is unknown but he is mentioned in the Ming playwright Xu Fuzuo's 徐復祚 (1560-1630) *Huadang ge cong'an* 花當閣叢談 as the owner of a precious stone once owned by Zhao Mengfu. Chen Hulu is also mentioned in a Qing dynasty medicinal anthology as having fever and Ecthyma because of his over consumption of alcohol and bedroom activities. See, fascicle 198 of *Gujin tushu jicheng* 古今圖書集成 (An anthology of books from the ancient to today) (Taipei: Wenxin shuju, 1964), 930.

jinshi)⁵⁴ and Liu Jue (劉珏; 1410–1472)⁵⁵ each once owned Li Sixun's *Fisherman's Joy in Mountains and Streams* (*Jiangshan yule tu* 江山漁樂圖), a work formerly owned by Qiao Zhongshan (喬仲山; Yuan dynasty). It is hard to gauge whether these Yuan-dynasty notables actually owned the paintings mentioned in Zhang's catalog. Yet it is hardly a coincidence that the Northern Song imperial painting catalog *Xuanhe huapu* lists all of these paintings—*Spring Mountains, Treading among Flowers, and Fishermen's Joy*—as works by Li Sixun. The frequent reprinting of *Xuanhe huapu* must have triggered reproduction and consumption of paintings by “Li Sixun.” A credible anecdote about Qiu Ying sheds light on the popularity of Li Sixun among Qiu's contemporary collectors and art buyers, as well as the anxiety and tension faced by his patrons.

Scholar Xu Xuemo (徐學謨; 1521–1593) records that Qiu Ying copied a Li Sixun painting called *Sky and Sea Reflecting the Radiance of the Setting Sun* (*Haitian luozhao tu* 海天落照圖) and that Qiu's copy was of exceptional quality, being far better than other available copies.⁵⁶ Xu says that he once mistook Qiu's copy as an authentic Li Sixun painting, back when he did not know much about painting. Possibly due to Qiu's talent, Xu exclaims that it was impossible to differentiate between the two. He continues by saying that people of his time

⁵⁴ Guoli zhongyang tushuguan 國立中央圖書館 edited, *Mingren zhuanji ziliao suoyin* 明人傳記資料索引 (index to the biographical material of Ming figures) (Taipei: Guoli zhongyang tushuguan, 1965), 859

⁵⁵ Ibid., 836.

⁵⁶ Xu Xuemo 徐學謨, *Haiyu ji* 海隅集 (An anthology of sea coigne), in fascicle 87 of *Peiwei zhai shuhua pu* 佩文齋書畫譜 (Painting and calligraphy catalogs of the Peiwen Studio), *Siku quanshu* electronic version.

“covet[ed] ancient works and denounce[d] the recent. Risking bankruptcy, they spen[t] a lot of money to buy forged ancient works. Those who refuse[d] [to make a purchase] sneer[ed] at and abhor[ed] one another as vulgar.”⁵⁷ Spurning such a view, Xu preferred Qiu Ying’s copy because it preserved the style of ancient masters, it was a genuine Qiu work, and its quality was exceptional. Concerning the larger culture of collecting and appreciating blue-and-green-landscape paintings, Xu’s anecdote reveals that distinction was made at the point where one could differentiate authentic from fake and gems from stones.⁵⁸ Given the fact that Li Sixun was often touted as the best painter in the blue-and-green-landscape tradition and that Qiu had mastered Li’s style, Qiu Ying would have experienced the phenomenon of his very own art facilitating the differentiation of his patrons from their peers. In chapter 4, we will see how Qiu’s works patronized by the Xiang family made manifest this culture through a creative use of azurite. In the meantime, an important picture album provides the central inquiry of this chapter with visual evidence, revealing how Qiu Ying and his patrons saw the blue-and-green-landscape tradition from a stylistic perspective.

Qiu Ying’s *Picture Album: Imitating Song and Yuan Models*

Qiu Ying’s 1547 *Picture Album: Imitating Song and Yuan Models* is one of his most celebrated works (plates 2.4–2.9). Commenting on this album in relation to his 1550 work *Towers and Pavilions in Immortal Mountains*, Ellen Laing states, “Qiu Ying was moving into a

⁵⁷ Ibid. The text reads as “世人貴遠而忽近。好事者往往破產以收畜朽楮敗墨。不者則相目為俗客。”

⁵⁸ Clunas (1991), 73-4.

phase of greater freedom of interpretation.”⁵⁹ Meanwhile, Hsu Wenmei puts forward that the album best attests to Qiu’s ability to render minute details.⁶⁰ Because of its undisputed authenticity and the fact that it stands as a collection of paintings reflecting the styles of different blue-and-green-landscape traditions, this album provides the material necessary for a rich study of Qiu Ying’s understanding of colors.

Bearing numerous collector seals, the album enjoys a provenance that can be traced back to 1547, right after the work left his hands. The secure dating and provenance of this album make it an important example for understanding Qiu Ying’s use of colors. Xiang Yuanbian (1525–1590), the patron of this album, stamped his seals on each of the six paintings, inscribed four of the paintings, and added a colophon to the album. Xiang states that this album contains “six landscapes painted in Song and Yuan styles. Qiu Ying modeled on famous ancient works.”⁶¹ According to the colophon, the album was remounted by Xiang’s grandson Xiang Shengbiao (項聲表; active during the second half of the sixteenth century). Before it entered into the Qing dynasty’s imperial collection, it was owned by the merchant and official Song Luo (宋輦; active during the late sixteenth century), the collector An Qi (安岐; ca. 1683 – 1745), and the official Li Zhongwan (勵宗萬; active during the early eighteenth century). The album then became the property of the Qing-dynasty emperor Qianlong (r. 1735–1796), for it bears his seals and was

⁵⁹ Ellen J. Laing, “Qiu Ying’s Late Landscape Painting,” *Oriental Art* 43 (1987): 35.

⁶⁰ Hsu Wenmei 許文美, “*Huanhua haoduan wucan guren: Qiu Ying tezhan xuanjian jieshao* 幻化毫端 無慚古人: 仇英特展選件介紹,” *Gugong wenwu yuekan* 故宮文物月刊 10 (2014): 25.

⁶¹ The inscription reads as “宋元六景。仇英十洲臨古名筆。”

recorded in the imperial painting catalogue.⁶² Emperor Jiaqing (r. 1796–1820), and Emperor Xuantong (r. 1908–1912) also stamped their seals on this album.

The first painting, *High Peaks amid Distant Lakes* (*Gaofeng yuanhu* 高峰遠湖; plate 2.4), features a landscape composed of rocky and towering mountain cliffs on both sides of a vast river. The second painting, *Towers and Pavilions amid Mountains and Clouds* (*Yuanshan louge* 雲山樓閣; plate 2.5), depicts architectural complexes emerging from a host of mountain peaks. The mountains have been configured by undulating calligraphic brushwork that evokes the style of the Yuan-dynasty painter Sheng Mao.⁶³ The third painting, *Farm Houses in a Mountain Valley* (*Shanao tianshe* 山坳田舍; plate 2.6), details fields and dwellings by a river, with mountain cliffs in the background. The fourth painting, *Fishermen's Dwellings in a Mountain Pass* (*Guanshan yushe* 關山漁舍; plate 2.7), illustrates fishermen and their boats by a mountain valley, while the fifth painting, *Village Joy in a Pine Forest* (*Songlin cunle* 松林村樂; plate 2.8), depicts a village amid a grove of pine trees surrounded by dense fog. The sixth painting, *Bamboo Hedge Under Snow* (*Zhuli yaxue* 竹籬壓雪; plate 2.9), presents a shoreline scene thickly covered with snow. While these six paintings depict the suburban landscape ideal for a scholar's retreat, they are painted in drastically different styles.

The first three paintings are colored mostly with azurite and malachite. The fourth and fifth paintings are colored primarily with plant dyes. Representing a snow scene, the sixth work

⁶² All the seals, inscriptions, and colophon mentioned by the imperial painting catalog cohere with what appears on the painting. See Gugong bowuyuan 故宮博物院 edited, *Qinding shiqu baoji xubian* 欽定石渠寶笈續編 (Haikou: Hainan chubanshe, 2001), 409.

⁶³ Ellen J. Laing also pointed out the similarity. Idem., (1997), 35.

is an ink-monochromatic painting with blank, unpainted areas and a light touch of sienna.

Unifying the colors of this album, Qiu greatly diluted all of his colors, employing a technique called *qianfeng* (淺絳; light color washes). Yet among the first three paintings that feature azurite and malachite, Qiu shifts his style to evoke different idioms within the blue-and-green-landscape tradition. Given that the album is modeled on ancient paintings, the stylistic idioms that Qiu Ying, and even Xiang, decided to put into this album reveal their understanding of the blue-and-green-landscape tradition.

High Peaks amid Distant Lakes

This painting depicts a river cutting diagonally across the composition (plate 2.4). At both sides of the river, there are erupting rocky mountain cliffs with triangular peaks. These vertical cliffs emerge from diagonal slopes, bringing forth a strong sense of contrast and dynamism. The mountain cliffs are rendered with modulating ink lines and washes of azurite, malachite, and sienna. The painting is also adorned with smaller motifs. Standing at the top of the mountain cliffs, some trees flank outward. A cluster of triangular trees, possibly pine, appear on a distant slope. A separate terrain of distant mountains sits perched on the horizon, while small erupting rocks decorate the shores. A red-robed scholar, together with his attendants and boatman, is shown sailing across the vast stream in the landscape.

The varied contours of the mountain cliff—with straight, vertical, and angular dimensions—with little rendition of foliage and a coloration that combines azurite, malachite, and sienna, speaks to the idioms of Li Sixun, Li Zhaodao, and Zhao Boju in the blue-and-green-landscape

tradition. The modern scholar Niu Kecheng and the late-Ming art historian Dong Qichang also note Qiu Ying's imitation of Li and Zhao.⁶⁴ The distant mountains, vast river, and landscape in Qiu Ying's painting echoes the subject matter of sea and shoreline (*hai'an tu* 海岸圖), which Li Sixun, according to the frequently reprinted Xuanhe catalog, also painted.⁶⁵ Li Sixun's *Emperor Minghuang's Journey to the Shu Region* (*Minghuang xing Shu tu* 明皇幸蜀圖), which was attributed to Li Zhaodao, depicts landscape elements with robust ink lines resembling iron wires and a thick application of azurite, malachite, and sienna. Landscape elements preserved in Tang-dynasty tombs contemporary to Li Sixun and Li Zhaodao also demonstrate a similar treatment.⁶⁶ *Streams and Mountains in Autumn Color*, a work attributed to Zhao Boju, shares the angular mountain cliffs and rocky landscape of Qiu Ying's *High Peaks*. The cluster of triangular trees seems to come from *Golden Pavilion amid a Myriad of Pines* (*Wansong jinque tu* 萬松金闕圖), a work also attributed to Zhao Bosu. However, where Qiu Ying departs from the idiom used by Li and Zhao is in his use of color washes and the way he modulates ink lines. These similarities and differences prove that Qiu could distill the stylistic traits of the ancient masters and renew them with the technique of *qianfeng*—a technique that frequently appears in the works of his contemporary painters, including Shen Zhou and Wen Zhengming.

⁶⁴ Niu Kecheng (2002), 265-6.

⁶⁵ *Xuanhe huapu* 宣和畫譜 (Painting catalog of the Xuanhe Period), Yu Jianhua 俞劍華 annotated (Nanjing: Jiangsu meishu chubanshe, 2007), 221.

⁶⁶ Vinograd (1979): 101-131.

Towers and Pavilions amid Mountains and Clouds

The second painting, *Towers and Pavilions amid Mountains and Clouds*, is arguably the finest painting in the album (plate 2.5). Unlike the mountains painted in the Li and Zhao idiom, this landscape has significantly more foliage, which is represented by long and undulating texture strokes and areas of ink-dot mosses. Azurite appears mostly at the top of the mountain cliff and then gradually transforms into malachite. Also painted using the *qianfeng* technique, Qiu allows his brushwork to show through by diluting his colors and applying them thinly. Indigo-blue washes were used to create the silhouettes of distant mountains.

Qiu Ying also carefully used a red dye to capture the morning glow of the sun. At the upper right corner of the painting, a small red circle represents the sun; its immediate area and the skyline below it are washed with red. However, the remaining area of the sky is washed with an uneven layer of indigo, creating a tonal contrast that accords well with the moment when a beam of sunlight breaks through the sky, turning the cold blue firmament to warm red. To enhance the morning glow in *Mountains and Clouds*, Qiu Ying touched a faint amount of red onto some of the mountain cliffs. The placement of red in this landscape reflects his careful consideration and arrangement of colors. In all of these landscape elements, red has been applied according to the direction of the sunlight, representing the warm morning glow cast onto the scene. For example, red was applied over the landmass of a projecting landmass that appears at the top of the architectural complex. On the left side of the painting, below a dense layer of clouds, the edges of two mountain ridges have also been touched by red. Above the clouds, diagonal ridges appear washed with red.

The application of *cun*, or texture strokes, in blue-and-green-landscape paintings can be seen as early as Wang Ximeng's *Thousand Miles of Streams and Mountains* (*Qianli Jianshan tu* 千里江山圖; Beijing Palace Museum) and *Residents on the Outskirts of a Dragon Abode* (*Longsu jiaomin tu* 龍宿郊民圖; National Palace Museum, Taipei), a work attributed to Dong Yuan, but more likely painted in the fourteenth century. This tradition was also maintained in Zhao Mengfu's *The East Mountain at Lake Dongting* (*Dongting dongshan tu* 洞庭東山圖; Shanghai Museum). Yet the style portrayed in Qiu Ying's painting is most similar to Sheng Mao's (盛懋; active during the fourteenth century) treatment of this idiom.⁶⁷ Qiu's painting shares stylistic traits with the works of the Yuan painter Sheng Mao, specifically in the way that both artists combine long undulating brushwork, landscapes with lush foliage, ink dots of moss, and light washes of azurite, malachite, and a red plant dye. Sheng's *Enjoying Fresh Air in a Mountain Retreat* (*Shanju naliang tu* 山居納涼圖), currently in the Nelson-Atkins Museum, depicts a scholar resting in a pavilion built under a mountain valley and over a water stream (plates 2.10.1–2). Thick layers of malachite were applied on the mountain and the slope in the foreground. Like Qiu's approach to landscape elements, some ridges in Sheng's painting have significantly less color, allowing the long and undulating brushwork to show through. Some rock forms at the peaks and cliffs are absent of mineral pigments but have been slightly washed with a red dye.

⁶⁷ Ellen Laing has mentioned in passing that this album contains a work that evokes the style of Sheng Mao. See, idem., "Qiu Ying's Late Landscape," *Oriental Art* 43.1 (1997): 35.

In the album, Qiu juxtaposes a painting in the Li and Zhao idiom, representing the Tang and Song period, with a painting in the Sheng Mao idiom, representing the Yuan dynasty. Within this juxtaposition, Qiu Ying and his patron Xiang Yuanbian pursue not just one single archaic idiom of coloration, but strike for a diversity of idioms that mirror the long history of blue-and-green-landscape painting. Their understanding of the history of the blue-and-green-landscape tradition also covers the idiom of the Southern Song painters, as seen in the next painting.

Farm Houses in a Mountain Valley

In the third painting of the album, Qiu Ying depicts a farmer wearing a raincoat walking on a path by a cliff and vast river (plate 2.6). The farmer is probably walking toward the field on the other side of the river. Across the river, farmers are working on the fields with their cows. Two scholars are shown conversing in a tile-roofed mansion, indicating that this suburban landscape is an ideal place for reclusion. At the right corner of the painting, Qiu arranged towering and erupting mountain cliffs that pile up diagonally and form formidable slopes. Such intense landforms at the right side contrast drastically with the farm fields and the terrain of distant mountains that lies horizontally in the composition. This landscape looks drastically darker and greener than the previous two paintings in the album, because the coloration is dominated by a deep green formed from a mixture of malachite and ink. Azurite blue faintly appears on some rocks scattered across the river and mountains. At the upper part of the composition, a dense layer of mist looms over the distant mountains.

The dark-green palette of this painting evokes the idiom of Northern and Southern Song painters in the tradition of blue-and-green-landscape painting. Although they used different types of brushwork and texture strokes to represent landscape elements, painters like Wang Shen, Li Tang, and Li's followers used mostly malachite and ink to color the landscape elements. Showing some similarity Qiu Ying's painting in terms of color palette, Wang Shen's *Serried Hills over a Misty River* (*Yanjiang diezhang tu* 煙江疊嶂圖; Shanghai Museum) renders a misty and cloud-laden landscape washed with a mixture of ink and malachite. Likewise, *Intimate Scenes of Mountains and Streams* (*Jiangshan xiaojing tu* 江山小景圖; Shanghai Museum), a work attributed to the Song painter Li Tang, and *A Diplomatic Mission to the Jin* (*Pin Jin tu* 聘金圖; Metropolitan Museum of Art), a Jin-dynasty painting attributed to Yang Bangji (楊邦基), share the same palette of ink and green used in Qiu Ying's painting. While this coloration can be traced back to the Song dynasty, Tang Yin, a contemporary of Qiu, also painted in the same palette. In Tang Yin's *Fishing in Reclusion Among Mountains and Streams* (*Xishan yuyin tu* 溪山漁隱圖), the entire landscape is rendered in ax-cut brushwork—the brush idioms of Li Tang, Ma Yuan (馬遠; 1160–1225), and Xia Gui (夏圭; 1195–1224)—while its coloration is formed by ink and malachite green.

With the inclusion of *Farm Houses in a Mountain Valley*, this album demonstrates Qiu Ying's and Xiang Yuanbian's understanding of the Tang, Song, and Yuan idioms within the blue-and-green-landscape tradition. Yet, Qiu Ying did not rigidly reproduce both the coloration and brush method of these idioms, but reinterpreted them with *qianfeng* color washes and his own

brushwork. This album thus challenges the late-Ming literati Li Rihua (李日華; 1565-1635), who once criticized Qiu Ying for knowing only imitation of old models and lacking creativity. In fact, Hsu Wenmei provides a similar challenge through her observation of the compositions and subject matters of Qiu's paintings, reaching a conclusion in agreement with the textual and stylistic evidence presented in this chapter.⁶⁸ Indeed, as will be made apparent in subsequent chapters, Qiu Ying's blue-and-green-landscape paintings are hardly mere imitations of ancient models.

Conclusion

This chapter scrutinizes painting treatises and art criticism, as well as Qiu Ying's *Picture Album: Imitating Song and Yuan Models*, a securely dated and authentic work. It demonstrates that coloring landforms with azurite blue and malachite green was a practice congenitally loaded with profound art-historical associations. In Qiu Ying's time, the practice was considered noble, because it had been maintained by celebrated painters since the ninth century onward, but it also required arduous training. Aspiring painters needed to learn how to avoid overusing colors and to achieve the laudable aesthetics of archaism. Judging from the textual records of Zhan Jingfeng and other circulated texts, the expectation of maintaining the grandeur of this tradition among literati and art critics seemed so high that painters were doomed to criticism when they fell short

⁶⁸ Martie W. Young, "The Paintings of Ch'iu Ying: A Preliminary Survey," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1961), 124; Hsu Wenmei et al., *Ming si dajia tezhan: Qiu Ying* 明四大家特展：仇英 (Four great masters of the Ming: Qiu Ying) (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 2014), 280-88.

in emulating the ancient standards. Such anxiety about the practice impelled a mounting concern among Qiu Ying and his contemporaries about what, where, and how azurite and malachite should be applied, along with the minerals' recommended interaction with ink. This concern not only occupied Qiu Ying's creative processes, but also influenced how educated viewers, patrons, and art critics evaluated paintings featuring the two minerals.

One major factor that triggered this situation during Qiu Ying's lifetime appears to be the printing and reprinting of many painting treatises and works of art criticism from the Tang, Song, and Yuan dynasties. These textual materials, which enjoyed a broad readership, lambasted painters' overuse of azurite and malachite in landscape paintings, citing their negligence of ancient methods. The Yuan art critic Rao Ziran's treatise even provided a step-by-step guide to applying the two pigments. Judging from his *Picture Album*, Qiu Ying and his contemporaries obviously considered where and how the two pigments should be applied, so as to reveal their dexterity and understanding of the principles upheld by different ancient painters, as well as the different stylistic idioms within the blue-and-green-landscape tradition. In the subsequent three chapters, we will see how this awareness of azurite and malachite intertwines with Qiu's practice of using the minerals to enrich the depth of meaning of both subject matter and pictorial motif.

CHAPTER THREE

THE RELATION BETWEEN POETRY, PICTORIAL CONTENTS, AND COLORATION IN QIU YING'S STUDY STUDIO AMID WUTONG TREES AND BAMBOO

Introduction

Study Studio amid Wutong Trees and Bamboo (*Wuzhu shutang tu* 梧竹書堂圖; plate 3.1.1), which depicts a scholar sleeping in a thatched hut in a landscape scattered with light azurite and malachite rocks, started a new chapter in Qiu Ying's artistic career. Arguably painted in 1527, the painting bears the inscription of three contemporary elites—Wen Zhengming, Peng Nian (彭年; 1505–1566), and Wang Chong (王寵; 1471–1533)—and is colored with azurite and malachite, two minerals embedded with profound art-historical significance and technical challenge. Scholar Shan Guolin mentioned in passing that the inscribed poems praise Wen Zhengming's scholarly achievement and short-lived career in the capital, while Stephen Little suggests that *Study Studio* was painted for Wen.¹ Given such possible production context, the application of color on this painting seems to represent the approval and recognition of these elites and invites an investigation of the relationships between poetry, pictorial contents, and coloration. Given the low number of securely dated works in his oeuvre, Qiu Ying's *Study Studio* serves as an important case study for his use of color in his middle period, while simultaneously giving evidence to how the coloration of the painting relates to the three poems.

¹ Shan Guolin 单国霖, *Qiu Ying* 仇英 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1998), 4; Stephen Little (1985): 46.

Exploring the above issues, this chapter investigates the relationships between poetry, pictorial contents, and coloration in Chinese painting. Scholars like Chu-tsing Li, Joseph Chang, and Jonathan Hay have demonstrated that seventeenth-century painters such as Xiang Shengmo (項聖謨; 1597–1658; plate 3.2) and Bada Shenren (八大山人; active during the eighteenth century) used red coloration and pictorial motifs to express their lament of the fall of the Ming dynasty.² This interpretation is supported by the two painters' own poems and the poems of their contemporaries inscribed on their paintings. The discussions of Li, Chang, and Hay indicate that colors can reinforce poetic lament and infuse landscapes with profound political messages and sentiments. By focusing on Qiu's *Study Studio*, this chapter continues the discussion of the interdependent relationships between poetry, pictorial contents, and coloration and argues that Qiu understood and utilized the communicative power of azurite and malachite as early as 1527.

In order to contextualize *Study Studio*, this chapter first examines the proposed dating of this painting and then deciphers the literary tropes and rhetoric used in the three inscribed poems. It then comments on the relationship between the theme that runs through the poems and the

² Jonathan Hay, "Posttraumatic Art: Painting by Remnant Subjects of the Ming," in *The Artful Recluse: Painting, Poetry, and Politics in Seventeenth-Century China*, Peter C. Sturman et al. (Prestel, 2012), 79; Li Chu-tsing 李鑄晉, "Xiang Shengmo zhi zhaoyin shihua 項聖謨之招隱詩畫 (Paintings and poems by Xiang Shengmo that promote seclusion)," *Zhongwen daxue Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo xuebao* 8.2 (1976): 547. In Xiang's self-portrait, he draws himself entirely with ink, but situates himself in a landscape completely painted red, thus creating an unusual visual contrast. Citing the poems inscribed on the painting, which comment on the fall of the Ming dynasty, scholars point out that the overwhelming red landscape is a visual pun. Red, or *zhu* (朱) in Chinese, refers to the Zhu imperial family. Scholars hold that by situating himself in a red landscape, Xiang is revealing his loyalty to the Zhu family regime. The same sentiment clearly runs through Xiang's own poems and the other two poems inscribed on the portrait by his contemporaries. For the use of red as a visual pun lamenting the fall of the Ming dynasty in Bada Shanren's paintings, see Sturman (2012), 226-8.

symbolic meaning of azurite and malachite. As will become apparent in subsequent pages, the motif of azurite and malachite rocks in *Study Studio* was meant to evoke Jiang Yan's *Rhapsody of Kongqing Azurite* (*Kongqing fu* 空青賦), in which the poet parallels the rarity and appearance of azurite to that of an erudite scholar.³ As a reliable work reflecting Qiu's achievement, *Study Studio* invites an investigation into whether he was familiar with other symbolic values of azurite and malachite and whether he incorporated these meanings into other paintings.

Qiu Ying's *Study Studio amid Wutong Trees and Bamboo*

In *Study Studio amid Wutong Trees and Bamboo*, Qiu Ying depicts a gentleman in a tranquil environment imbued with sentiment (plate 3.1.1). The painting shows a gentleman sitting on a reclining chair in a studio. In front of him, there is a desk adorned with various stationery and books. A plain screen stands behind him. The gentleman's collar is half open, indicating a hot season. The studio is near a stream and surrounded by a bamboo grove, rocks colored with azurite and malachite, wutong trees, and a waterfall. This seemingly generic subject—a sedentary, relaxing scholar—also appears in Qiu Ying's early work *Fine Delight at a Forest Kiosk* (*Linting jiaqu tu* 林亭佳趣圖).⁴ However, *Study Studio* enjoys a much more variegated palette and bears poems composed and inscribed by Wen Zhengming, Wang Chong, and Peng Nian. A careful inspection of the relationships among the three scholars as well as the

³ See chapter 1 for the detail of Jiang's rhapsody.

⁴ I have elsewhere discussed the style and stylistic period of this painting. See, "Secai tanwei – Tan Qiu Ying de shese jifa 色彩探微—談仇英的設色技法 (To see big things in small – On the application of colors in Qiu Ying paintings)," *National Palace Museum Monthly* 379 (2014): 40-51.

relationship between words and images deduces a possible dating of this painting and reveals the significance of azurite and malachite in the painting.

Knowing the death date of Wang Chong, *Study Studio* has a *terminus ante quem* of 1533.⁵ According to *The Chronicle of Wen Zhengming*, Wen and Wang met in 1512 and their friendship developed in the following years.⁶ In 1522, Peng Nian's daughter was married to Wen Zhengming's grandson.⁷ After that date, Wen and Peng would have become familiar with each other if they were not already. Records show that the three scholars attended social gatherings together in 1530 and 1532, further establishing their friendship and the possibility of collaboration.⁸ Judging from the sequence in which the three scholars became familiar with each other, *Study Studio* could have been painted between the years 1522 and 1533. Estimating a more specific date from the contents of the three poems, modern scholars suggest this painting might have been painted in 1526, when Wen Zhengming returned to the Suzhou area after resigning from his position in Beijing.⁹ In fact, Wen Zhengming only came back to Suzhou in the spring of 1527.¹⁰ Interestingly, *The Chronicle of Wen Zhengming* records that Wen planted two small wutong trees with his own hands after he returned home in 1527.¹¹ However, Qiu Ying depicts

⁵ Guoli zhongyan tushuguan 國立中央圖書館 and Wang Deyi 王德毅 edited, *Mingren zhuanji ziliao suoyin* 明人傳記資料索引 (An index to biographical materials of Ming figures) (Taipei: Guoli zhongyan tushuguan, 1978), 79.

⁶ Zhao Daozhen 周道振 and Zhang Yuezun 張月尊, *Wen Zhengming nianpu* 文徵明年譜 (Chronicle of Wen Zhengming) (Shanghai: Baijia chubanshe, 1998), 223.

⁷ Ibid., 326.

⁸ Ibid., 432 and 444.

⁹ Hsu Wenmei et al (2014), 285.

¹⁰ Zhao and Zhang (1998), 398.

¹¹ Ibid., 399.

two towering wutong trees right next to the studio in the painting. Their incredible size make them more apparent in the composition.

Although Stephen Little has provided an invaluable preliminary translation of two of the three poems inscribed on *Study Studio*,¹² their intense rhetorics have never been deciphered. Wang Chong's poem is loaded with political comments on corruption and his praise of Wen Zhengming's literary achievement. Wen Zhengming's poem expresses his appreciation of friendship and reflects on his career. Meanwhile, Peng Nian's poem further confirms and echoes the contents of the first two poems. Written on the upper right region of *Study Studio*, Wang Chong's poem reads:¹³

| | |
|---|---------|
| The changshi official's romantic spirit lingers at Yexia | 常侍風流鄴下遺 |
| Glorious literary achievements glitter like Changli | 英英文采曜長離 |
| Know also that "the variegated brush flower" grows in the evening | 也知彩筆花生夕 |
| It is the time when his spirit travels the garden of art | 應是神遊藝苑時 |

The first line of Wang's poem is loaded with references to ancient historical figures and events, which appear to echo the political situation in the sixteenth century. In the first line, "changshi (常侍) official" refers broadly to the ten notorious eunuchs who dominated and controlled the government during the reign of Emperor Lingdi (漢靈帝; r. 169–189) of the Eastern Han dynasty (25–220). "Romantic spirit" is thus apparently a sarcastic comment on their

¹² Stephen Little (1985), 46-7

¹³ The translation is based on Stephen Little with modification.

rampages. “Yexia (鄴下)” refers to a city where the fief lord Yuan Shao (袁紹; active during the early second century) based his power. Yuan had once slaughtered a large number of eunuchs during his rebel campaign.¹⁴ Yexia is also the capital of the fief of Wei. As the Duke of Wei, the controversial militant Cao Cao (曹操; 155–220) was a powerful government official who once served for Emperor Lingdi and had repeatedly attempted to usurp the throne. In addition, Yexia was also the capital of a few short-lived kingdoms during the Sixteen Kingdoms period (304–439). Yexia is thus a place that evokes different political coups, rebels, and dynastic periods, all of which denote unfavorable turmoil. “The changshi official’s romantic spirit lingers at Yexia” apparently suggests that the adverse impacts of notorious eunuchs and politicians would linger at a place regardless of dynastic changes. During the time of the Ming dynasty, the capital of Beijing was apparently comparable to Yexia, as both governments were controlled by eunuchs and politicians.¹⁵ When Wen Zhengming was in the capital, the newly enthroned Emperor Jiajing (嘉靖; r. 1521–1567) was promoting a series of bureaucratic reforms and trying to eliminate the

¹⁴ Chen Qiyuan 陳啟源, fascicle 22 of *Mao shi jigs bian* 毛詩稽古編 (The book of songs, a compilation of studying the ancient), *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 electronic version; Lü Benzhong 呂本中, fascicle 23 of *Lü shi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋集解 (A variorum of the history of the Spring and Autumn Period compiled by Lü Buwei), *Siku quanshu* electronic version. Pan Xiaolong 潘嘯龍, *Yexia fengliu: Yingxiong, wenshi, caizi yu wenxue geming* 鄴下風流：英雄、文士、才子與文學革命 (The culture of Yexia: heroes, men of belles-lettres, talented men, and the revolution in literature) (Taiyuan: Shanxi jiaoyu chubanshe, 1994), 18.

¹⁵ Denis C. Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote, *The Cambridge History of China Volume 7: The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644, Part 1* (Cambridge University Press, 1988), 443-453.

powerful official Yang Tinghe (楊廷和; 1459–1529) and his party.¹⁶ Wen Zhengming might not have been able to withstand the conflicts between different political parties.

In the second line of Wang's poem, "Changli (長離)" refers to the mythical phoenix; the term is then used as an allusion to gentlemen with exceptional literary talents and moral standards.¹⁷ The second line is thus high praise to a gentleman. Given the fact that Wen Zhengming refused to cooperate with corrupt officials and opted to resign his position, Wang is likely addressing Wen. As will be made apparent further below, the same trope of a phoenix standing in for a gentlemen with literary talents is also contained in Tang Yin's painting, which inspired Qiu Ying's *Study Studio*.

In the third line of Wang's poem, "the variegated brush flowers (彩筆花)" refers to two literary tropes. The first trope comes from an anecdote of Jiang Yan, who composed the *Rhapsody of Kongqing Azurite*.¹⁸ In various historical records composed during the Six Dynasties period, Jiang Yan is said to have dreamed of the classist Guo Pu (郭璞; 276–324). In the dream, Jiang returns a five-color brush back to Guo. These records explain that Jiang was able to compose great literary works when he possessed the five-color brush and thus, after he returned the brush to Guo, Jiang woke up from his dream and found his ability to compose literature greatly reduced.¹⁹ The second meaning of the trope "the variegated brush flowers"

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ He Wenhuan 何文煥, fascicle 30 of *Lidai shihua* 歷代詩話 (Poetry through the ages), *Siku quanshu* electronic version.

¹⁸ See chapter 1.

¹⁹ Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀, fascicle 79a of *Shuo fu* 說郛 (Tales within a city wall), *Siku quanshu* electronic version.

comes from the anecdote of the poet Li Bai (李白; 701–762). In his poem, Wang Renyu (王仁裕; 880–956) from the Five Dynasties period said that a young Li Bai had dreamed of a flower growing from the top of his brush. Wang continues that “and later, Li Bai became one of the most celebrated poets.”²⁰ “Know also that ‘the variegated brush flowers’ grow in the evening” thus seems to suggest that one’s literary achievement, no matter how celebrated, is also indebted to other people. Transposing this meaning onto Wang Chong’s life, the third line of his poem seems to mean that Wang’s literary achievement is also indebted to Wen Zhengming. In fact, in his poem on *Study Studio*, Wen also alludes to Jiang Yan and the trope of “flower growing on top of a brush,” which thus resonates with Wang’s poem.

The last line of Wang Chong’s poem seems to have a more open meaning and is difficult to pinpoint. The spirit mentioned may refer to either Wang’s or Wen’s spirit, or possibly a combination of the two. Judging from the previous lines and the relationship between Wang and Wen, the last line seems to say that the poetic exchanges between Wen and Wang are favorable events akin to traveling amid the garden of art, a figurative garden. The close friendship between Wen and Wang, as expressed in this poem, is also supported by other paintings. For example, Wen’s *Lady of Xiang and Goddess of Xiang*, discussed in the previous chapter, is dedicated to Wang. Also, Wen’s *Heavy Snow at Mountain Passes*, which will be discussed in the next chapter, records a travel and artistic exchange between Wen and Wang (plate 4.5.1). Both *Lady of Xiang* and *Heavy Snow* put forth ways of using colors that apparently guided Qiu Ying in forming his

²⁰ Ibid., fascicle 119b.

own way of using azurite and malachite. Sharing some of the literary tropes in Wang's poem, Wen Zhengming's poem on Qiu's *Study Studio* reads:²¹

| | |
|--|---------|
| Have not dreamed of entering the capital for many years | 年來無夢入京華 |
| [I] exhausted [my] ability—daring Mr. Wentong boasts about these in vain? | 才盡文通敢漫誇 |
| As long as you can obtain the grass that [not only] grows by the pond, [but also] frequently [helps you] compose literature, | 但得池頭頻賦草 |
| There is no need for any more flowers to grow on the brush. | 不須筆上更生花 |

The idea expressed in the first line of the poem accords well with the proposed dating of Qiu's *Study Studio* and the events in Wen Zhengming's life. In 1526, Wen Zhengming was fed up with the reforms and partisan conflicts in the government and resigned from his position in the capital Beijing, returning to Suzhou the following year. The first line seems to reveal his frustration, casting the government position as sour grapes. In the second line, "[I] exhausted [my] ability" refers to an anecdote about the aforementioned scholar Jiang Yan, whose sobriquet is Wentong (文通), and his previously referenced dream. As seen in various historical anthologies and annotations of Jiang Yan's literary works, Jiang had a dream in which he returned a five-color brush back to the revered scholar Guo Pu and later his ability to compose poetry was greatly reduced.²² Writers of these anthologies and annotations use this anecdote as an innuendo to express the exhaustion of one's ability. Evoking Jiang Yan's anecdote in the

²¹ The translation is based on Stephan Little's with modifications. Little (1985), 46-7.

²² Tao Zongyi, fascicle 119b of *Shuo fu*.

second line, Wen Zhengming seems to admit his inability to handle the government position, which would have required him to sacrifice his morality and integrity.

In the third line, “the grass that grows by the pond” refers to an anecdote by the literary scholar Xie Weilian (謝惠連; 407–433). According to *Tales from the Outer Walls of the City* (*Shuo fu* 說郛), Xie Weilian’s elder brother Xie Lingyun (謝靈運) could compose excellent literature whenever Xie Weilian was present. In one instance, Xie Lingyun was trying in vain to compose poetry for several consecutive days. All of sudden, he dreamed of his younger brother and came up with the line, “Pond gives birth to springtime grass.” Xie Lingyun found this line exceptional and thanked his brother.²³ “The grass that [not only] grows by the pond, [but also] frequently [helps you] compose literature,” thus delivers a sense of gratitude and fraternity. Judging from the shared trope of Jiang Yan in both Wen’s and Wang Chong’s poems on Qiu’s *Study Studio*, it seems that this gratitude and fraternity must be with reference to Wang. In fact, Wen’s *Lady of Xiang and Goddess of Xiang* and *Heavy Snow in Mountain Passes* were both painted for Wang. Given that Wang is younger than Wen, their close friendship may position Wang as a pseudo-brother to Wen. In the last line of his poem, Wen echoes the trope of “flowers growing on the top of a brush” used in Wang Chong’s poem. Together, the third and the fourth lines of Wen’s poem imply that Wen values his friendship more than the advancement of his own literary skill. Wen’s poem means to say that as long as he has a truthful friend (i.e., Wang Chong) who composes poetry with him, there is no need for further advancing his literary achievement. This notion thus mirrors Wang Chong’s poem, in which he praises the literary achievement of

²³ *ibid.*, fascicles 33b and 79a.

Wen. Bringing all of these ideas together, the last poem, written by Peng Nian, the youngest of the three poets, reads:

| | |
|--|---------|
| Who can champion the art and literature in the Wu area? | 吳中文藝屬君家 |
| Lapidary words and proses praised by the world | 錦繡辭章世共誇 |
| At the outset, there has been grass by the pond of the brothers | 兄弟池塘原有草 |
| There is no need for any more dreaming of flowers growing on the brush | 何須更夢筆生花 |

Peng Nian's poem clearly echoes Wang and Wen's poems, using a similar set of tropes. The first two lines of Peng's poem echo the praise of literary achievement in Wen and Wang's poems. Likewise, the third and fourth lines of Peng's poem recycle the tropes of "grass by the pond" and "flowers growing on a brush" in the other two poems. Peng's poem is thus a response and recognition of Wang's and Wen's literary exchanges, corresponding well with the notion of having a true friend with whom to compose poetry. Fraternity, literary achievement, and frustration with one's career clearly run through the three poems. Echoing the image of a resigned scholar-official as portrayed in the poems, Qiu Ying's *Study Studio* depicts a scholar lying on a reclining chair with eyes closed, as if sleeping. The relaxed demeanor of the scholar thus speaks to Wen Zhengming's reassignment to a government position and his newly acquired leisure time. This dynamic interaction among Qiu Ying, Wen Zhengming, Wen Peng, and Wang Chong seems to suggest that the painting was produced on the occasion of an elegant gathering (*yaji* 雅集), in which men of belles-lettres and leading painters would spend time together

enjoying wine, antiques, painting, poetry, and calligraphy.²⁴ When these three scholars and Qiu Ying collaborated on *Study Studio* in 1527, it is likely that they would have reminisced about their friend Tang Yin, who passed away in 1523 when Wen Zhengming was in Beijing.

Tang Yin composed poetry with the abovementioned scholars—they formed a community sharing similar social status and interests. Tang Yin, like Wen Zhengming, also experienced a tragic failure in his career. Moreover, Wang Chong's son married Tang Yin's daughter.²⁵ More importantly, the combination of the motif of wutong trees, the motif of a scholar lying on a reclining chair in a relaxed manner, and the poems expressing literary achievement and frustration with one's career as present in *Study Studio* also appear in Tang Yin's *Pure Dream under the Shade of a Wutong Tree* (*Tongying qingmeng tu* 桐蔭清夢圖; plate 3.3). Considering the close relationship between Tang Yin, Wen Zhengming, Wang Chong, and Qiu Ying, Qiu's *Study Studio* likely borrowed compositional elements from Tang's painting. Furthermore, the poem on Tang's *Pure Dream* also contains literary tropes that appear in the three poems on Qiu's *Study Studio*. In particular, Tang Yin's and Wen Zhengming's poems, although they are inscribed on different paintings, share a frustration with their scholarly careers. It is thus reasonable to conclude that Qiu Ying modeled *Study Studio* on the composition and arrangement of motifs in Tang's painting, whose larger sentiment was similar to what Qiu Ying visualized in *Study Studio*. By looking into the poem on Tang Yin's painting, we can further confirm the reading of the

²⁴ For a detail study of elegant gathering in the fourteenth century, see Christina Yu, "Building a Community through Painting: Fourteenth-Century Chinese Scholars," (Ph.D. dissertation, the University of Chicago, 2011).

²⁵ Zhao and Zhang (1998), 233

above literary tropes. The trope of the Changli phoenix in Wang Chong's poem, which was used as a metaphor for scholarly and literary achievement, also appears in Tang Yin's poem.

Tang Yin's *Pure Dream* utilizes a similar arrangement of pictorial contents as Qiu Ying's painting. It depicts a scholar sitting on a reclining chair; indeed, the entire motif is strikingly similar to that of Qiu's work. Completely absorbed in his own thoughts with his eyes closed, the humble scholar depicted is probably having a siesta under the shade of a wutong tree, a breed that is very common in Suzhou city today and appears in Qiu's *Study Studio*. Tang's poem reveals a sense of reclusion and resolution. With the last two lines translated by Yang Xin,²⁶ the poem on Tang's painting reads as

| | |
|---|---------|
| Ten miles of wutong trees are covered with purple lichen | 十里桐陰覆紫苔 |
| When the gentleman is free from the exam, his ebrious sleep comes. | 先生閒試醉眠來 |
| Gone for life all thoughts of fame, | 此生已謝功名念 |
| Not even my dreams under the old locust tree. | 清夢應無到古槐 |

The first line of Tang Yin's poem express a strong sense of frustration. "Ten miles of wutong trees" evokes a poem dedicated to Han Wo (韓偓; 844–923) from the Tang-dynasty poet Li Shangyin (李商隱; 813–858). Praising the literary talent and precocity of Han Wo, who composed poetry at ten years old, Li's line reads, "Flowers from the wutong trees cover ten

²⁶ Yang Xin et al., *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting* (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1997), 223.

thousand miles of road on Cinnabar Mountain. The caw of a fledging phoenix is clearer than an old phoenix.”²⁷ The first stanza sets up a scene for the phoenixes in the second stanza. Legend has it that phoenixes come from Cinnabar Mountain (*dan shan* 丹山), which is full of wutong trees.²⁸ In the second stanza, the fledging and old phoenixes are paralleled to Han Wo and his father. Li Shangyin meant to express that Han Wo’s literary achievement outshined his father, praising the precocity of Han Wo. By evoking Han Wo’s anecdote, Tang Yin was obviously boasting of his literary achievement, for Tang Yin rose from his humble background and achieved a social status higher than his wine-selling father.²⁹ But this boast of his own achievement was immediately negated by his use of the trope “purple lichen,” leading to a strong sense of frustration.

“Purple lichen” in the first line of Tang’s poem denotes a sense of abandonment. The trope comes from a poem by the Liang-dynasty historian and man of belles-lettres Shen Yue (沈約; 441–513). In his poem composed after his visit to the Duke of Lian, the son of the prince Xiao Ni (蕭嶷; 444–492), Shen described that purple lichen grows on the chairs for the guests, while green moss grows on the stairs where guests once passed through.³⁰ According to commentary on this poem, purple lichen and green moss grew in Duke of Lian’s mansion

²⁷ Li Shangyin 李商隐, fascicle 2 of 李義山詩集 (A anthology of the poems of Li Yishan), *Siku quanshu* electronic version. The poem reads as “十歲裁詩走馬成，冷灰殘燭動離情。桐花萬里丹山路，雛鳳清於老鳳聲。”

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Anne de Coursey Clapp, *The Painting of Tang Yin* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 1-2.

³⁰ Xiao Tong, fascicle 30 of *Wen xuan* 文選 (Selections of refined literature), *Siku quanshu* electronic version.

because his place was empty; there were no guests visiting the Duke of Lian after his loss of political power.³¹ Situating this trope in Tang Yin's life, "Ten miles of wutong trees are covered with purple lichen" apparently refers to his undeserving involvement in a scandal, which resulted in the loss of his regional academic degree and all future career prospects. In 1498, Tang Yin came first in the regional exam and attempted to take the national exam the following year. However, his prospect of taking the national exam disappeared due to his involvement in a cheating scandal surrounding Cheng Minzheng (陳敏政; active during the sixteenth century), an examiner who, under torture, involuntarily admitted selling the national exam questions.³² Tang had visited Cheng just before the scandal exploded. Seemingly involved in the scandal despite his innocence, Tang Yin went through a trial and his regional degree was rescinded.³³

In the second line of his poem, Tang Yin acknowledges that he is free from preparing for future exams. Passing the exams had been the ultimate goal of all scholars in traditional China. Not completing the exams meant that Tang abandoned the path of becoming a scholar-official and gaining recognition from the state, a reality that coheres well with the abandonment and frustration written in the first line of his poem. "Ebrious sleep (*zui mian* 醉眠)" is also the title of a poem by the Song-dynasty poet Tang Geng (唐庚; 1070–1120). In his poem, Tang Geng laments on the indefinite amount of leisure time, expressing that a day is as long as a year.³⁴ The

³¹ Ibid.

³² de Coursey Clapp (1991), 5-7.

³³ Ibid., 7.

³⁴ The line reads as "日長如小年".

trope of “ebrious sleep” thus accords well with “free from exam” in the second line of Tang Yin’s poem.

In the third and forth lines of the poem, Tang expresses his frustration and thus further laments on his failure and the exam scandal evoked in the first two lines of his poem. However, the trope of “locust tree” in the last line requires further explanation. First of all, “locust tree” may refer to “thorn and locust tree (*jihuai* 棘槐),” which is a synonym of a court trial and reflects back on Tang Yin’s examination scandal and the consequential trial in 1499.³⁵ Scholar Zhu Liangzhi holds that the locust tree refers to the fable *The Biography of the Local Governor of Nanke* (*Nanke taishou chuan* 南柯太守傳).³⁶ Written by the Tang-dynasty official Li Gongzuo (李公佐; active during the late eighth to early ninth centuries), the fable features Chun Yufen (淳于棼), a wealthy man who got drunk and fell asleep under an ancient locust tree—similar to how Tang Yin depicts himself in the painting. In the dream, he sees a city gate with a sign that reads, “the great country Huainan (*da huainan guo* 大淮南國).” Chun was then summoned by the king of Huainan, who married a princess to him. Chun then became a local governor in Huainan for thirty years, enjoying wealth and fame as the son-in-law of the king. Later, when Chun woke up from his dream, all of the luxuries that he temporarily enjoyed had disappeared.³⁷ “Gone for life all thoughts of fame, not even my dreams under the old locust tree” thus implies multiple layers

³⁵ Tao Zongyi, fascicle 13b of *Shuo fu*.

³⁶ Zhu Liangzhi 朱良志, *Shingling qingong: Guohua beihou de shijie* 生命清供: 国画背后的世界 (The curios for life: the world behind national paintings) (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2005), 84.

³⁷ Tao Zongyi, fascicle 28 of *Shuo fu*.

of frustration. Tang Yin, due to his examination scandal, watched his prospect of climbing up the governmental social ladder disappear. To him, there was no hope for fame, not even in a dream like Chun's. The sense of frustration, intertwined with the recognition of one's scholarly achievement, clearly parallels the three poems inscribed on Qiu Ying's *Study Studio*.

The dates, poems, and pictorial contents of *Pure Dream* and *Study Studio* denote a predicament shared by Tang Yin and Wen Zhengming. From 1527 to 1531, Wen Zhengming painted the meticulous work *Flying Cascades in a Pine-Filled Ravine* (*Songhe feiquan tu* 松壑飛泉圖). As pointed out by Shi Shou-chien, Wen Zhengming expressed in this painting his frustration with the politics in Beijing and his resolution to become a recluse in his hometown of Suzhou.³⁸ Painted almost simultaneously with Qiu Ying's *Study Studio*, the two works express very similar ideas. This idea is not only presented in Wen Zhengming's *Flying Cascades* and Qiu Ying's *Study Studio*, but also in Tang Yin's *Pure Dream*. When Wen, Wang, and Peng inscribed their poems on Qiu Ying's *Study Studio*, Tang had already passed away. Qiu Ying's *Study Studio* is thus a complex painting, weaving together an intricate web of fraternity, frustration, yearning, and mutual support among scholars. It should be acknowledged that it is unclear whether Qiu Ying designed the painting first or whether the three scholars composed their poems first, nor do we know if Qiu Ying designed the painting at the same time the three scholars composed their poems. However, given the serious sentiment imbued in this painting, it is safe to assume there is a certain relationship between the coloration, the overall meaning of the painting, and the poems.

³⁸ Shih Shou-chien 石守謙, *Fengge yu shibian* 風格與世變：中國繪畫史論集 (Styles and the changes of the world: an anthology of the history of Chinese painting) (Taipei: Yunchen wenhua, 1996), 290.

It is now crucial for the present study to inquire how the coloration of *Study Studio* interacts with the poems. Indeed, Qiu Ying could have chosen to paint in ink monochrome like in Tang Yin's *Pure Dream*.

The Use of Color in *Study Studio*

In *Study Studio*, Qiu deploys an interesting combination of plant dyes and mineral pigments. Boulders in azurite and malachite appear scattered across a landscape colored with ink and plant-dye washes. The azurite and malachite boulders look like extraneous motifs embedded onto the ink, plant-dye, and sienna landscape (plates 3.1.1 and 3.1.2).

Half of the pictorial motifs and landscape elements are painted with ink and plant dyes. Colored moss appears on the ink lines delineating the landform in the lower left corner and the mountain cliff on the left. Meanwhile, the ink lines of the branches enjoy a thickening and thinning of width. Broken brushwork represents the rough textures of stones and bark. The bamboo grove was painted using both the outlining and “boneless (*meigu* 沒骨)” styles, the combination of which serves to create a sense of overlapping and depth. Thousands of minute green lines represent the grasses growing around the studio. Small boulders, rendered with ink lines, were placed amid these finely painted grasses. A visual orchestra of ink, sienna, ochre, ink green, and indigo color the landscape elements. Patches of indigo have been dabbed onto a sea of wutong tree leaves, creating a mottled pattern. On the ground, ink green, indigo, and sienna run into each other, creating a variegated field of colors. Ink silhouettes represent distant mountains, a technique once used by Wen Zhengming in an ink-monochromatic painting, proving that the

boundary between ink and colored landscape paintings is blurred.³⁹ However, Qiu did not apply any azurite or malachite onto these elements. Azurite and malachite appear primarily on the two huge rocks in front of the scholar's studio. Small amounts of the two minerals were also applied locationally onto some small rocks and the tips of mountain cliffs.

With their strong, chisel-like brushwork and angular forms, the azurite and malachite rocks scattered across the landscape contrast greatly with the rest of the ground and mountain cliffs, which were painted with curvilinear and sinuous lines. Dark and angular ink lines come together diagonally to build multifaceted and compartmentalized rock forms. Light and broken curvilinear ink strokes add a ragged texture. Azurite, malachite, and sienna run into each other without covering the brushwork. Despite the fact that the colors of the two pigments are prominent on each rock, they do not cover the ink brushwork. Moreover, Qiu Ying successfully created craggy rock forms with subtle color variations and applied azurite and malachite thinly, allowing the color of blank silk to show through. Yet, Qiu's rendition of craggy rock forms is also calligraphic. His ink lines have variation in width and feature breakages. Each overall rock form looks squashed and enjoys the angularity of a rhombus, standing out from the river shores and the silhouette of distant mountains, both of which were executed with curved lines.

Correlating the pictorial contents and inscriptions on *Study Studio*, the placement of the azurite and malachite rocks seems to reverberate the meaning of the three poems. The azurite and

³⁹ For example, see Wen Zhengming's *Rambler with a Staff on the Bridge across a Stream* (*Xiqiao cezhang tu* 溪橋策杖圖). In Gugong bowuyuan 故宮博物院 edited, *Gugong bowuyuan cang wenwu zhenpin daxi: Wumen huihua* 故宮博物院藏文物珍品大系: 吳門繪畫 (The great anthology of treasures in the collection of the Palace Museum, the painting of the Wu school) (Hong Kong: Shanwu yin shuguan, 2007), 72.

malachite rocks evoke Jiang Yan's *Rhapsody of Kongqing Azurite*, in which the poet compares the appearance and erudition of a scholar to the rarity and sparkling appearance of azurite.⁴⁰ This meaning of azurite rock absolutely accords with the three *Study Studio* poems and reinforces Wen Zhengming's scholarly achievement and sentiments on the painting. We are thus reminded that the poems on the painting appropriated Jiang Yan's trope of "colored brush" as well. It is thus possible that Qiu Ying was familiar with Jiang's rhapsody through collaborating with Wen, Wang, and Peng. However, in this painting, Qiu Ying did not solely use azurite; he used malachite as well. Given the congenital and congenial coexistence of the two minerals, it seems that using the two colors together would serve to strengthen the idea of fraternity.

We can see just what Qiu Ying achieved by comparing *Study Studio* to *Resting at Day in the Shade of a Wutong Tree* (*Tongyin zhoujing tu* 桐蔭畫靜圖; plate 3.4).⁴¹ Being an almost verbatim copy of the composition *Study Studio*, *Resting at Day* reveals a completely different approach to the application of azurite and malachite. In this copy that was possibly painted by a later artist, the subtle placement of azurite and malachite rocks as a way of evoking Jiang Yan's trope and reinforcing Wen Zhengming's literary achievement is completely lost. With their almost identical compositions, *Resting at Day* also depicts a scholar resting on a reclining chair in a thatched hut in a mountain valley. His hut is almost identical to the one in the Shanghai Museum version, as the hut is also accompanied by wutong trees, rocks, and a stream. However, the entire landscape has been generously covered with azurite and malachite. The painting does not have any inscription. At the same time, its composition is less sophisticated and complex

⁴⁰ See chapter 1 of this dissertation.

⁴¹ Kept in National Palace Museum.

than its Shanghai counterpart, specifically in terms of the placement and organization of tree branches, the foreground, and the background.⁴² It would seem that the Shanghai version demonstrates a higher quality and reveals a more composed and calculated placement of azurite and malachite. Indeed, to the copyist who was not familiar with the subtle meaning embedded in this painting, Qiu Ying's placement of azurite and malachite green rocks was merely a random manifestation of blue-and-green landscape painting.

Azurite: An Iconography?

In *Study Studio*, the azurite and malachite rocks were placed to stand out from the rest of the composition in terms of coloration and brushwork. From this, one can infer that azurite and malachite connote special meaning when applied in a way that stands out from the composition and overall palette of a work. Indeed, there are many paintings that demonstrate such interesting placement of azurite blue. For example:

| | |
|---|--|
| <i>Spring Dawn in Han Palace</i> (<i>Hangong chunxiao tu</i> 漢宮春曉圖) | Two rocks, colored with thick layers of azurite, are shown flanking both sides of the roofed patio of a palace (plate 3.5). |
| <i>Thatched Hall in a Peach Blossom Village</i> (<i>Taocun caotang tu</i> 桃村草堂圖) | Azurite-blue rocks surround the central figure in the foreground of this painting. There are also thrusting ridges, colored in a fine grade of azurite, erupting from the malachite-green central mountain (plates 3.6.1–2). |

Table 3.1. Paintings that demonstrate such interesting placements of azurite blue in Qiu Ying's oeuvre.

⁴² I have elsewhere compared the composition of the two paintings. See *National Palace Museum Monthly* 379 (2014): 40-51.

| | |
|---|---|
| <i>Catching Willow Floss</i> (<i>Zhuoliu huatu tu</i> 捉柳花圖) | A gentleman and three little boys appear on a flat landform covered with a fine, even layer of azurite blue (plate 3.7). |
| <i>Towers and Pavilions in Immortal Mountains</i> (<i>Xianshan louge tu</i> 仙山樓閣圖) | Azurite and malachite were usually used together in paintings depicting immortal mountains. Yet in this painting, Qiu Ying used only azurite (plate 3.8.1–2). |
| <i>The Transcendent Woman of the Sweet Olive Grove</i> (<i>Guilin xianzi tu</i> 桂林仙子圖) | A large azurite-blue rock appears next to a woman dressed in court-lady attire (plate 3.9). |

Table 3.1. (Continued)

In these paintings, some landscape elements and motifs are significantly bluer than the sum of the composition, or are covered with a shade of blue that stands out from the other blues in the composition. Moreover, these landscape elements and motifs are located either at the center of or in a prominent position within their given painting. For example, in the center of *Catching Willow Floss*, a gentleman is shown standing on a large area that is covered with a lighter, finely ground, and thus higher-quality mineral blue. This large area of blue is so flat and even, it lacks any of the tonal variation that was so cherished by ancient masters. In *Spring Dawn in a Han Palace*, two entirely blue decorative rocks are located on either side of the roofed patio attached to the palace. The blue of these two rocks is so highly saturated that any viewer who concurs with the art criticism discussed in chapter 2 would find the coloration unacceptable. Meanwhile, *Towers and Pavilions in Immortal Mountains* and *Thatched Hall in a Peach*

Blossom Village are well accepted as authentic works that represent Qiu's achievement.⁴³

Importantly, the use of azurite blue in the above paintings differs markedly from Qiu Ying's securely dated work *Picture Album: Imitating Song and Yuan Models*, which illustrates his understanding of different stylistic idioms within the blue-and-green landscape tradition. Among the paintings in this album, one shared characteristic is the use of complex washes made of azurite, malachite, and other plant dyes. Streaks and other remnants of the blending of colors and water are everywhere, imparting a sense of improvisation to this album. Unlike the paintings listed above, azurite is never singled out in this album, but dissolves and intermingles with other colors. Such peculiar use of azurite blue becomes more apparent when we consider a few authentic but undated Qiu Ying works painted in the Southern Song style. In this stylistic idiom, malachite is mixed with ink and does not stand out from the composition. Qiu's *Trying Spring Water in a Pine Kiosk* (*Songting shiquan tu* 松亭試泉圖), *Eastern Garden* (*Donglin tu* 東林圖), and *Waiting for the Ferry by an Autumn Stream* (*Qiujiang daidu tu* 秋江待渡圖) best illustrate how his use of malachite never departs from conventional stylistic protocols. Compared with these paintings, the works listed in the above table seem to reveal Qiu's special treatment of azurite blue.

⁴³ Hsu Wenmei 許文美, *Xilun Qiu Ying jifu qingliu shese zuopin de taoyuan yixiang* 析論仇英幾幅青綠設色作品的桃源意象, *Gugong xueshu jikan* 故宮學術季刊 30.2 (2012): 208-17; idem., "Xianqi piaopiao changleweiyang - Ming Qiu Ying Xianshan louge 仙氣飄飄長樂未央—明仇英仙山樓閣 (Wafting vapor of immortality; eternal music has yet to end – Ming Qiu Ying's building and pavilions in immortal mountains)," *Gugong wenwu yuekan* 故宮文物月刊 282 (2006): 71-80; Ellen J. Laing, "Qiu Ying's Late Landscape," *Oriental Art* 43.1 (1997): 28-36.

For example, *Trying Spring Water* depicts a scholar reclining at the fence of a pavilion as a houseboy collects water from a stream (plate 3.10).⁴⁴ The landscape features three tall pine trees by the pavilion. A formidable mountain and a waterfall are located at the upper right of the scroll. Layers of dense fog, trees, and rocks comprise an elegant environment for the scholar. *Trying Spring Water* synthesizes the Zhe School's ink-monochromatic brushwork technique with the use of a touch of malachite.⁴⁵ Many landscape elements in *Trying Spring Water* demonstrate the stylistic traits of Zhe School painters. Qiu washed the left side of the central mountain with a layer of dark ink, contrasting sharply with the light-colored rock forms surrounding the waterfall. A signature of the Zhe School, this contrast of dark and light also appears on the mountain cliffs above the pines, the rock forms below the pines, and the piece of land in the lower right corner. Experimenting with his execution of the Zhe School style, Qiu personalizes his work by adding a touch of malachite to the landscape elements.

Using different tones of malachite together with ink and indigo washes, Qiu creates a subtle tonal symphony over the landforms in *Eastern Garden*—an approach obviously different from the conspicuous use of azurite blue in the paintings listed in the table above (plate 3.11).⁴⁶ The landform at the right of the scroll begins with an angular thrusting rock washed in ink. Next to the rock, the slope appears to be washed with a faint layer of malachite, providing a contrast. The triangular rock on the slope marks another alteration in tone, as it possesses a definite

⁴⁴ Hsu Wenmei et al., *Ming si dajia tezhan: Qiu Ying* 明四大家特展：仇英 (Four great masters of the Ming: Qiu Ying) (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 2014), 320; Ellen J. Laing, "Qiu Ying's Late Landscape," *Oriental Art* 43.1 (1997): 31.

⁴⁵ Hsu (2014), 283-285; Laing (1997): 31.

⁴⁶ Hsu (2014), 316.

brownish-yellow overtone. Likewise, while the slope to left of the wooden bridge exudes a visible but thin layer of malachite, the small triangular hill right next to it remains majorly ink-monochromatic. Although the ground from which the plum-blossom trees grow is ink-monochromatic, a faint layer of indigo washes the distant mountain, creating another subtle tonal alternation of different colors. In both *Eastern Garden* and *Trying Spring Water*, malachite was highly diluted and mixed into ink. Such subtle tonal variations in malachite and ink, which are even more apparent in *Waiting for the Ferry by an Autumn Stream*, prompt an investigation into the overt placement of azurite in the paintings listed in the table.

Waiting for the Ferry by an Autumn Stream is a relatively large painting on silk that speaks to Qiu Ying's interpretation of the Southern Song tradition of using ink and malachite green as the major coloring agents for landscape elements (plates 3.12.1–2).⁴⁷ Qiu Ying used a mixture of ink and malachite to wash the mountain and landforms, and ax-cut texture strokes to impart craginess. This mode of coloration and representing landforms was typical of the Southern Song court tradition, revealing the influence of Qiu's mentor Zhou Chen and his friend Tang Yin.⁴⁸ The rocks and mountain were first colored with malachite mixed with ink (plate 3.12.2). Over the top of this greenish layer, oblique brushwork was applied in diagonal piles, giving a sense of rockiness over vernal foliage. An important quality in the coloration of *Waiting for the Ferry* is the tonal variation obtained by the multifold ink and malachite green mixtures. Qiu Ying did not color the entire landscape with just one monotone. There are areas in which a

⁴⁷ Ibid., 321.

⁴⁸ James Cahill, *Parting at the Shore: Chinese Painting of the Early and Middle-Ming Dynasty* (New York: Weatherhill, 1978), 220.

mixture was only thinly applied, with no brushwork covering it at all. There are also areas in which the applied mixture is opaque. Some of the edges over the towering mountain were left unpainted, revealing the color of blank silk. Rigorously implementing both light and heavy applications of the ink and malachite mixtures in *Waiting for the Ferry*, Qiu Ying once again created a symphony of tonal variation in which malachite does not stand out from the greater color scheme.

In the three Southern Song-style paintings and Qiu's *Picture Album: Imitating Song and Yuan Models*, azurite and malachite run into each other. The amounts of azurite and malachite used are well balanced. During Qiu's middle and late periods, two fundamentally different usages of azurite have surfaced among his paintings that have been accepted as authentic. As will be discussed in detail in chapters 4 and 5, these pictorial motifs were intentionally colored to augment Qiu's art-historical knowledge and the desires of his patrons, as well as to impart the connotation of immortality.

Conclusion

In Qiu Ying's *Study Studio amid Wutong Trees and Bamboo*, a few rocks colored with azurite and malachite appear in a landscape painted primarily with ink and sienna. Two large rocks in these mineral colors were placed conspicuously in front of a study studio in which a gentleman sits on a reclining chair. The overtness of the azurite and malachite rocks, amid ink and sienna washes, seems to evoke Jiang Yan's *Rhapsody of Kongqing Azurite*, in which the rarity and appearance of azurite and malachite rocks is compared to the erudition of a scholar.

This message was particularly important to Wen Zhengming and Qiu Ying in 1527, when Wen resigned from his position in Beijing. By 1527, Qiu was no longer the junior painter who failed to satisfy Wen Zhengming's fastidious expectations of applying color to the latter's *Lady of Xiang and Goddess of Xiang* (dated 1517) and would have instead been inspired by Wen's tastes and expectations around the use of color. This painting shows that the symbolic values and literary tropes associated with azurite stand as conduits between pictorial contents, poems, and the memories and lives of the members of a community, demonstrating the communicative power of pigments. With all of this significance and its undisputed authenticity, *Study Studio* prompts us to unearth the unexplored meanings of azurite and malachite in other undated works. To this, in subsequent chapters we turn to Qiu's paintings produced for wealthy patrons and his works with the theme of immortality.

CHAPTER FOUR

TO FRAME AND HIGHLIGHT PICTORIAL MOTIFS: THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC POWER OF AZURITE AND MALACHITE IN QIU YING'S PAINTINGS

Introduction

Mineral blue pigments, like azurite, lapis lazuli, and atacamite, have been used to demonstrate wealth and religious devotion across cultures. In the Mogao Caves in Gansu Province, China, conservators and scholars observe the extravagant use of those three minerals as colorants in murals depicting Buddhist deities and hagiography.¹ During the Xixia period, atacamite was generously used as the background color for larger areas of mural paintings.² Likewise, as scholars Michael Baxandall and Michael Pastoureau have shown, lapis lazuli was often used to color the robe of the Virgin Mary in artwork from the late medieval to the High Renaissance periods.³ The highest grade of this expensive pigment was consistently reserved for the most important motif in a pictorial composition. Meanwhile, given their generous use of azurite, Qiu Ying and his patrons, including Xiang Yuanbian in particular, would have undoubtedly realized the high cost of the blue mineral. Also, as demonstrated in the previous two

¹ *Zhongguo Dunhuang xue banian wenku bianweihui* 《中國敦煌學百年文庫》編委會, *Zhongguo Dunhuang xue banian wenku: Shike baohu juan* 中國敦煌學百年文庫: 石窟保護卷 (A volume of articles concerning Dunhuang in the past century: conservations of caves) (Gansu wenhua chubanshe, 1999), 223-5.

² Neville Agnew, *Conservation of Ancient Sites on the Silk Road* (Getty Conservation Institute, 2010), 46-55.

³ Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (Oxford Paperbacks, 1988): 11; Michel Pastoureau, *Blue: The History of a Color* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001).

chapters, Qiu Ying was well aware of the art-historical meaning and varied symbolism of azurite. The questions remain: How did Qiu Ying and his patrons react to the economic cost of azurite? How did economic values condition their use of the pigment?

This chapter shows that toward Qiu Ying's late period of working with Xiang Yuanbian, he often reserved the highest grade of azurite or applied azurite generously for pictorial motifs bearing reference to the ancient paintings in Xiang's collection. In analyzing which ancient paintings were alluded to and how they related to the lives of Qiu Ying and his patrons, this chapter establishes that azurite blue pigment was imbued with the ambitions and desires of the painter and his patrons. The blue pigment provides a road map to pictorial motifs that are encoded with the artistic exchanges held between Qiu Ying and his elite contemporaries, as well as the fraternity between the three brothers of the Xiang family—Qiu Ying's patrons—and their aspirations of becoming erudite scholars.

The sophistication and subtlety in the paintings produced by Qiu Ying and patronized by the Xiang family mirror the well-documented material culture of the Ming dynasty, in which a distinction is made at the point of consuming and handling cultural artifacts.⁴ Qiu's paintings display encoded information with subtlety and sophistication, and such information remains hidden or indecipherable to some viewers. First of all, without broad understanding of ancient

⁴ Kathlyn Maureen Liscomb, "Social Status and Art Collecting: The Collections of Shen Zhou and Wang Zhen," *The Art Bulletin* 78.1 (1996): 111-136; Craig Clunas, "All in the Best Possible Taste: the Novel *Jin Ping Mei* as a Source for the Study of Ming Material Culture," *Bulletin of the Oriental Ceramic Society of Hong Kong* 11 (1994-7): 9-19; idem., *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Statue in Early Modern China* (University of Hawaii Press, 2004): 73-4; J.P. Park, *Art by the Book: Painting Manuals and the Leisure Life in Late Ming China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012), 16-7.

painting styles, the art-historical references in Qiu's paintings are hardly recognizable. Second, unlike the aforementioned Dunhuang and European counterparts that boast mineral blue as the most prominent color in their respective compositions, Qiu Ying used azurite together with other colors. To those who have little understanding of ancient painting styles, the importance of what is highlighted by azurite blue is lost in a sea of other beautiful colors. To uninitiated viewers, azurite blue in Qiu Ying's paintings could be seen as merely decoration. In this regard, azurite blue also holds the power of distinction.

For example, art critics throughout the ages—such as Zhao Xigu (趙希鵠; active during the late twelfth century), Rao Ziran (饒自然; active during the fourteenth century), and Tang Zhiqi (唐志契; 1576–1651)—decried the tasteless overuse of azurite blue and malachite pigments among painters who showed little respect for the methods laid out by ancient masters. Tang Zhiqi, a contemporary of the Xiang brothers, lamented that there were patrons who spent lavishly on landscape paintings covered with azurite and malachite as a way of gaining recognition for their tastes. In contrast, Qiu Ying's and the Xiang family's emphasis on a sophisticated use of the blue pigment represents their self-conscious efforts to differentiate themselves from their contemporary philistine sybarites. These paintings thus speak to and function within the larger politics of connoisseurship in sixteenth-century China, when how one handled cultural objects and artifacts was a marker of one's social standing.

In order to situate the works of Qiu Ying in the long tradition of using color to create a focal point and enrich the depth of meaning in pictorial motifs, this chapter will first discuss five paintings produced before and contemporary to Qiu Ying's time. Representing the predecessors

and prototypes of Qiu Ying's practices, these paintings can be divided into two groups. The first group contains two paintings that used a variety of different colors, including azurite blue, to draw viewers' attention to a pictorial motif. They are *Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara in Water-Moon Manifestation* (ca. the fourteenth century) and *Noble Scholar in an Autumn Grove*. The second group contains three paintings whose painters carefully coordinated the location of azurite blue and malachite green as a way of strengthening the narrative of a painting. They are Zhao Mengu's *Self-Portrait*, Wen Zhengming's *Heavy Snow in Mountain Passes*, and Tang Yin's *Tao Gu Presenting a Poem*. After discussing paintings that coordinate the locations of different colors in a composition in order to create a focal point, this chapter will then discuss *Portrait of Emperor Yongle* (ca. the twelfth century). This painting demonstrates how simply using mineral pigments can subtly distinguish the social status of a figure, serving as a prime example of how pigments can denote social status.

In the second section, this chapter will consider five paintings by Qiu Ying, showing how he interpreted the above practices. The first painting, *Spring Dawn in a Han Palace*, deploys azurite blue to frame motifs bearing reference to paintings by masters who were celebrated for their depictions of court ladies. Dedicated to members of the Xiang family, the remaining four Qiu Ying paintings use the color blue to highlight motifs that reference actual ancient paintings in the Xiang family collection. Also, the use of blue expresses the patrons' fraternity and interest in reclusion and literature. These four Qiu Ying paintings are *Thatched Hall in a Peach Blossom Village*, *Catching Willow Floss*, *Zi Lu Asking the Way*, and *Pipa Songs at Xuanyang River*.

The last section argues that the idea of *qingwan* (清玩), or pure pleasure, in traditional Chinese connoisseurship can help us analyze and deepen our understanding of the use of blue in the paintings discussed in this chapter. It also uses Qiu Ying's *Admiring Antiques in a Bamboo Courtyard* to confirm the close relationship among the uses of mineral blue, the idea of *qingwan*, and the three brothers of the Xiang family.

The Grand Tradition of Coordinating the Location of Colors

In the tradition of Chinese painting, there was a convention in which painters carefully coordinated the location of colors in a composition to strengthen the meaning of a motif or add a focal point. This practice, which will be discussed below, apparently grew out of the careful arrangement of colors, ink, and the blank silk surface, as a way of enhancing the overall visual appeal of a painting. As seen in chapter 2, what, where, and how colors were applied had long been an integral part of art criticism in China, and a central part of an artist's concern. This enduring awareness of colors in a composition possibly gave birth to the practice of coordinating colors, including azurite blue, to strengthen the meaning of a motif or add a focal point.

Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara in Water-Moon Manifestation

Through a careful coordination of ink, azurite blue, gold, red dye, and malachite green, the fourteenth-century painting *Water-Moon Guanyin*, kept in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, culminates a focal point that emphasizes the healing power of the deity (plate 4.1.1). The deity is immediately recognizable because of its iconographic components. The painting depicts the

bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara in the water-moon manifestation, sitting on a rock or Mount Potalaka that is emerging from a roaring wave. A large circle, formed by leaving the silk surface relatively unpainted, serves as a halo for the deity. A crooked, towering pine tree and a waterfall join the mist in the background to surround the deity. A vase containing a willow branch is placed at her side. Existing scholarship shows that all these motifs are commonly associated with the compassionate Water-Moon Guanyin who possesses healing power.⁵

In this almost ink-monochromatic painting, red dye and malachite green are used faintly in minute amounts, which accords with the aesthetic ideals of Chan or Zen Buddhism.⁶ Red dye was slightly tinted onto the garment over the deity's waist—although this red could have instead been applied onto the back of the silk, a common practice in religious painting that allows a deity to radiate with a subtle glow. Some circles in malachite were also carefully drawn on the rock to depict vegetation, although they appear as inconspicuous details. Golden pigment outlines the willow twig, the vase, and the plate carrying the bowl. It also assumes the color of the deity's hair ornament, necklace, and bracelet. Because of its metallic and reflective nature, the visibility of golden pigment varies in different lighting, and thus coheres with the ever-changing abilities of the deity. As Helmut Brinker has pointed out, “to a great extent, color is discarded... The basis

⁵ Beverly Chan, “Shuiqyue Gyanyin in China: The Way of Compassion” (Ph.D. Dissertation, California Institute of Integral Studies, 1996), 182.

⁶ Lawrence Sickman suggests that “the iconography - with rocks, trees, and a waterfall in ink, with only slight or no color - could well have originated...” at the turn of the ninth century. See Wai-kam Ho et al., *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1981), 85. Denise Patry Leidy associates the light ink palette of this painting with Chan Buddhism. See, idem., “Buddhism and Other ‘Foreign’ Practices in Yuan China,” in *World of Khubilai Khan: Chinese Art in the Yuan Dynasty* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2010), 93.

of Zen art... is the monochrome ink-painting.”⁷ While the Nelson-Atkins painting is predominately ink-monochromatic, corroborating Brinker’s claim, in this painting azurite blue stands out strikingly from its many subtler colors.

This conspicuous azurite blue draws viewers’ attention to the healing power of the deity. Compared with the faint ink and color washes on the painting, it appears thickly applied on the glass bowl that holds a slender vase with a willow branch (plate 4.1.2). According to Buddhist belief, Guanyin’s willow has divine healing power.⁸ Textual materials also support the importance of the willow. According to a sutra recorded in the authoritative Buddhist canon *Taishō Tripiṭaka*, worshipers with diseases should chant in front of an image of Avalokiteśvara, or Guanyin, who holds a willow branch.⁹ A paper painting from Dunhuang, now in the British Museum, illustrates this interaction between the deity and devotees. In this work, a devotee in the attire of a government official is holding an incense burner, approaching an elaborated altar placed in front of Water-Moon Guanyin.¹⁰ In the Nelson-Atkins painting, the blue can apparently draw the viewer’s attention into look at, and contemplate, the healing power of the sacred willow branch. The opacity of azurite blue makes it the most conspicuous color in the painting, standing out from the composition. As Beverly Chan has commented on the function of the iconography associated with the deity, “the object which Guanyin holds in her hands such as the vase and

⁷ Helmut Brinker, *Zen in the Art of Painting* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987). 149.

⁸ Chan (1996), 188-191.

⁹ Stephen F. Teiser, *The Scripture on the Ten Kings: And the Making of Purgatory in Medieval Chinese Buddhism* (University of Hawaii Press, 2003), 110. See also, Cornelius Chang, “A Study of the Paintings of the Water-Moon Kuan-yin” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 1971), 69-70.

¹⁰ For a discussion of this work, see Chang (1971), 39-42, 51-80.

willow serve as mudra in the sense of a sign. They help to identify the deity and to mark their symbolic character.”¹¹

While the practice of using expensive pigments like gold and azurite in religious paintings belongs to a tradition of venerating and offering costly gifts to the deity,¹² the specific placement of gold, mineral blue, and ink in this composition clearly invites other explanations that address the visual quality of pigments and the subject matter. Gold and blue apparently enhance the otherworldliness, super-naturalness, and healing power of the deity, through drawing viewers to contemplate the vase and reflect on the ever-changing shades of gold. In particular, the use of blue seems to reinforce the identity and healing power of the deity. This practice of reinforcing the iconography also coheres with the above mentioned Dunhuang painting in which the size of the willow branch is exaggerated. In fact, such practice of using color to emphasize pictorial motif also appears in the works by professional painter like Sheng Mou (盛懋; fourteenth century).

Sheng Mou's Noble Scholar in an Autumn Grove

The Yuan-dynasty painter Sheng Mou's *Noble Scholar in an Autumn Grove* (*Qiulin gaoshi tu* 秋林高士圖; plate 4.2) depicts a gentleman sitting by a river and gazing toward a cloud that is looming over towering mountains. This painting likely illustrates a famous couplet

¹¹ Chan (1996), 190, citing E. Dale Saunders, *Mudra: A Study of Symbolic Gestures in Japanese Buddhist Sculpture* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 194).

¹² Robert Linrothe, *Paradise and Plumage: Chinese Connections in Tibetan Arhat Painting* (New York: Rubin Museum of Art, 2004), 25.

by Wang Wei (王維; 700-761): “I walk to where the water ends and watch as clouds rise.”¹³ In this painting, the scholar is the only pictorial element that is colored, standing out from the ink-monochromatic landscape. Although the color has been applied only thinly, the eye-catching quality of red inescapably emphasizes the scholar, who is the only figure in the composition.

Holding a walking staff to his right, the scholar is wearing a red robe. The scholar’s robe is half open, exposing his chest. He is shown putting his right hand over his right foot, while his left arm supports his sitting posture. His shoes and hat are also slightly colored, in this case by indigo. At the same time, a warm beige color suffuses his complexion. While the scholar is merely a small element in this 135.3-centimeter-high hanging scroll, he enjoys a variety of colors of which the rest of the autumn landscape is deprived.

The landscape is an orchestra of ink washes and texture strokes in different tones. The root of a tree was left bare, posing a sharp contrast to the mountains in darker ink washes. Similarly, the leaves of the seven trees were all executed in different styles of ink strokes. Across the thick formation of clouds in the middle, the mountains have a strong sense of physicality due to the juxtaposition of dense and sparse texture strokes. All of this meticulous consideration given to the interaction of ink, washes, and brushwork indicates that the landscape is no less important than the figure.

While contemplating the relationship between the somewhat emphasized figure and the rest of the painting, viewers synchronize their vision with that of the scholar, who is looking at,

¹³ Maxwell K. Hearn, “Reunification and Revival,” in Wen C. Fong et al., *Repossessing the Past: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1996), 293.

and admiring, the landscape. The careful placement of the red-robed scholar amid an ink-monochromatic landscape thus calibrates the viewer's vision to the climax of poem, which occurs when the man catches sight of the cloud. In subsequent pages, we will see how artists throughout the ages invested in the interdependent relationship between pictorial motifs and coloration, producing paintings in which the location of a color plays an indispensable role in defining both a motif and a work's overall meaning.

Zhao Mengfu's Self-Portrait

In his *Self-Portrait*, which is treasured in the Palace Museum, the great literati-painter and calligrapher Zhao Mengfu apparently designed the placements of different colors to more fully bring out his reflections on his ambivalent situation in the government (plate 4.3.1). In the eyes of his contemporaries, Zhao was most likely a controversial figure. He belonged to the royal family of the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279). However, when the Southern Song regime fell, Zhao Mengfu first chose reclusion but later served in the Mongol Yuan regime. In his *Self-Portrait*, Zhao portrays himself wearing a white robe, walking through a dense bamboo grove by a meandering river. There are a few boulders, in varied sizes scattered on the river and on the other side of the river. There is a seal of his on the top left corner, while his own inscription appears on the right corner dated 1299, which reads, “[I], Zi’ang, brushed a small portrait of myself.”¹⁴

¹⁴ Shane McCausland, *Zhao Mengfu: Calligraphy and Painting for Khubilai's China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011), 285.

As explained by Shane McCausland, this painting was painted in 1299 after Zhao Mengfu rejoined the bureaucracy as director of Confucian education in the southern Jiang-Zhe region. He retired from a court advisor position in Beijing in 1295, but returned to serve the Mongol regime in 1299. The appointment of his second term in the government was highly political—as a regional administrator he was not only connected to the government in Beijing and the southern region, but he also had to stand between the government and the literati in the South, some of whom were leftover citizens of the Southern Song regime.¹⁵ Carefully deciphering the allusions in this portrait, McCausland suggests that the landscape in the painting represents the Tiao River (Tiao *xi* 苕溪) in the Deqing (德清) area, where Zhao pursued his retreat.¹⁶ Other motifs refer to various celebrated historical figures. The bamboo evokes the statesman and calligrapher Wang Xizhi, who enjoyed this plant. The orchid motif resonates back to Qu Yuan, the slandered minister of the Warring States period, as it is a symbol of an individual's loyalty and protest against injustice. With all these allusions in the painting, McCausland holds that this painting seems to demonstrate a certain desire of Zhao's immediate audiences, intimate associates, and posterity, who might have questioned whether Zhao could assume the symbolic quality of bamboo that surrounded him—specifically, bamboo's "ability to bend under pressure but not snap (steadfast in adversity), their evergreen leaves (constancy), and so on."¹⁷

¹⁵ Ibid., 284.

¹⁶ Ibid., 285-6.

¹⁷ Ibid., 287-88.

A careful observation of what kind of colors and where they are applied in the painting can strengthen McCausland's argument by supporting his argument with visual evidence depicted in the painting. Zhao Mengfu painted his self-portrait using azurite blue to draw attention to the motif of orchid—a motif that has long been a symbol of refined, erudite, and humble scholar. In this painting, the entire landform is colored by a green mineral, possibly malachite. However, a dark and intense blue color was applied onto the larger boulder at the lower left corner (plate 4.3.2). It should be acknowledged that the boulders on the river are only slightly touched by blue, while the rock with the deepest coloration in the composition is the one by the orchid at the lower left corner. The tonal intensity of this conspicuous blue rock makes it stand out from the entire composition, as well as from the other lighter and smaller blue rocks on the river. Reinforcing the chromatic uniqueness of the boulder, Zhao Mengfu's posture shows him standing at a three-quarter angle with him looking as if he is gazing at and contemplating the dark blue boulder. Following the careful planning of Zhao's application of colors, we find a blossoming orchid swinging toward Zhao. With this emphasis, there is a strong oscillation between Zhao himself and the figure of himself and the fragrant plant in the painting. Here, focusing on what and where pigments are applied can deepen our understanding of Zhao Mengfu's psychological state as he resumed serving the Mongol regime; he shows himself as a refined, erudite, and humble statesman, an analogy to the qualities that the orchid possesses.¹⁸ In

¹⁸ For a succinct discussion of the symbolism of orchid in Chinese culture, see Chu-tsing Li, "The Oberlin Orchid and the Problem of Pu'ming," *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America* 16 (1962): 52-53. Citing a Yuan dynasty poem from Ye Jingzhai's 葉靜齋 *Caomu zi* 草木子, Li explains that orchid is "a symbol of the princely men who maintained a sense of loyalty in the face of difficult times... reflects the high breeding and education of the literati, symbolizes a sense of moral superiority."

fact, other than Zhao Mengfu, Tang Yin, a friend of Qiu Ying, also used the location and careful arrangement of colors to magnify the message of a painting.

Tang Yin's Tao Gu Presenting a Poem

In his famous *Tao Gu Presenting a Poem* (*Tao Gu zengci tu* 陶穀贈詞圖), Tang uses bright mineral pigments to emphasize not only the two protagonists in the story, but also a seemingly unimportant houseboy (plates 4.4.1–3). In fact, emphasizing this houseboy allows Tang Yin to bring out the narrative of the story more fully.

Tao Gu Presenting a Poem illustrates a scene from the story of Tao Gu (903–970) on an official mission to the state of Southern Tang.¹⁹ Because of Tao's arrogance, the officials in Southern Tang disliked him. When one official, the famous Han Xizai (韓熙載), discovered that Tao Gu had fallen in love with a girl, he sent a courtesan to impersonate the girl. One night, Tao met the courtesan and mistook her for the girl that he loved. Tao then presented a poem to the courtesan. The next day, when Tao went to a banquet, Han summoned the courtesan and asked her to sing the poem that Tao gave her. Tao was deeply humiliated.²⁰

In this painting, Tang Yin depicts the meeting between Tao Gu and the courtesan. In a garden filled with trees and rocks, Tao Gu is shown sitting on a dais in front of a landscape screen. On his left side, there is an ink cake, paper, and a brush. The paper is blank, meaning that

¹⁹ Wen C. Fong, "The Literati Artists of the Ming Dynasty," in *Possessing the Past: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei*, idem. et al (New York: Abrams, Inc., 1996), 383.

²⁰ The record of the story comes from Peng Cheng 彭乘, *Xu moke huixi* 續墨客揮犀 (Sequel to the pure talk of a poet), Kong Fanli 孔凡禮 edited (Beijing: Zhonghua shuji, 2002), 466. *Xu moke huixi* was original published between 1128–1136.

Tao has yet to write the poem to the courtesan. Following Tao Gu's steady gaze, we see the courtesan playing a pipa. Her light complexion echoes the exquisite embroidered white garment she is wearing, and she completely captures the attention of Tao.

In the lower left corner, a houseboy watches a stove behind a huge decorative rock that is occupying almost one-fourth of the composition. His body, including his face, is partly concealed by the stove. He is shown bending his upper body toward the stove, while using his left hand to support himself. The hidden location of the houseboy and his somewhat awkward posture adds a sense of voyeurism that accords well with the story—he may have even been sent by Han Xizai to spy on and carry out the whole plot.

A careful coordination of colors allows Tao Gu, the courtesan, and the houseboy to stand out. Ink and other dark colors assume the coloration of most pictorial elements, posing a great contrast to the three figures whose garments are covered with bright mineral pigments. Sharing the same level of attention as the other two figures in the painting, the houseboy reminds viewers that this seemingly romantic moment is in fact a humiliation in disguise. While the picture screen behind the courtesan implies romanticism, the houseboy denotes voyeurism, as in the original story. This practice of using color to create a focal point is also apparent in a painting by the most influential artist in Qiu Ying's time—Wen Zhengming.

Wen Zhengming's Heavy Snow in Mountain Passes

In the following example, *Heavy Snow in Mountain Passes* (*Guanshan jixue tu* 關山積雪圖; plate 4.5.1), the coloration interacts with the unique format of Chinese handscroll and

strengthens the story of a narrative painting. Here, narrative painting refers to the type of pictorial art in which a figure or protagonist is depicted more than once in a work of art that tells a story. The format of Chinese handscroll, a long horizontal piece of silk or paper that is mounted with a backing paper and goes through the process of being rolled up, requires an intermittent viewing process. Traditionally, viewers unroll a handscroll section by section, with each section being about the length of the viewer's arm. In Wen's *Heavy Snow*, color becomes an interlocutor for the audience to understand how the story unfolds and serves to emphasize the appearance of the protagonist.

Painted in 1532, Wen Zhengming's *Heavy Snow in Mountain Passes* depicts a journey that he took together with his friend Wang Chong in 1527 (plate 4.5.1). According to his inscription, which appears at the end of the scroll, Wen painted this magnificent work at intervals over the span of five years.²¹ As noted by Shih Shou-chien, Wen also lists many snow landscape paintings by ancient great masters that he had seen, connecting himself to the great tradition in which snow painting serves as a means for scholar-painter to lament about their incorruptibly.²² Importantly, Wen mentions that Wang Chong and he sojourned in a Buddhist temple. At that time, snow settled and grew several inches. Wen said "at that time, a myriad of mountain cliffs lost their verdant foliage while ten thousand trees petrified and fell." At this particular moment, his friend Wang Chong presented to him some paper of excellent quality and asked Wen to paint.

²¹ This duration of production has led Craig Clunas to suggest that the work stands for the prolonged friendship between Wen and Wang. Idem., *Elegant Debts: The Social Art of Wen Zhengming* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), 145-7.

²² Shih Shou-chien 石守謙, *Cong fengge dao huayi: Fansi Zhongguo meishu shi* 從風格到畫意：反思中國美術史 (From style to the idea of a painting; rethinking the history of Chinese painting) (Taipei: Shitzu cuban gufen youxian gongsi, 2010), 318-321.

Cheered by the moment, Wen Zhengming began to paint this snowy landscape. As will become apparent below, Wen successfully captured the memory of how “a myriad of mountain cliffs lost their verdant foliage.” In five out of the six appearances of the red-robed scholar, who is also the painter himself, there are mountain ridges slightly touched by malachite green. These few areas of malachite green follow the scholar as he travels, marking his appearances. And yet, the appearances of malachite green are so sparse and faint that they strongly imply “the lost of verdant foliage”.

Other than using malachite green, Wen Zhengming’s *Heavy Snow in Mountain Passes* carefully coordinated ink, colors, and the natural color of blank paper. Representing the snow, Wen Zhengming leaves much of the paper surface unpainted. He juxtaposes ragged and craggy mountain ridges in the foreground with the silhouette of distant mountains at the background. Fine and light ink lines outline mountain ridges whereas short and broken brushwork enhances their texture and physicality. A faint sienna is mixed into this ink brushwork. In addition, a myriad of pine trees scatter across the landscape; their needles carefully rendered by ink mixed with blue and green dyes. Some trees are merely ink silhouettes. A few trees with red autumnal leaves also appear in the scroll. A thin layer of ink washes the entire sky, adding solitude to the already freezing snowy winter.

In this painting, the red-robed figure of Wen Zhengming appears six times; and, there are mountain ridges touched by malachite green that appear together with him in five of these appearances. In his first appearance, the red-robed figure is riding on a black horse — or a donkey —, crossing mountain valleys by a wooden bridge (plate 4.5.2). Of the snowy mountains

behind him, one is slightly touched by malachite green. The triangular shape of this mountain form looks to be pointing to the scholar. Following his direction, our gaze travels through a meandering path, passing through groves of bamboo and pine trees, traversing a frozen river and deep valley, and seeing him again. In his second appearance, the red-robed figure is still riding on a black horse amid a grove of pine trees (plate 4.5.3). Right above the red-robed scholar, two mountain ridges are touched with malachite green, again marking the location of the scholar in this snowy landscape. He and his friends are approaching a small village at the shore of a vast frozen river. Following the scholar and his friends, we see them crossing the frozen river. As the entourage crosses, the thin layer of ice begins to break. At the other shore of the river, we see the red-robed scholar safely landed. A pine tree bends over him, congratulating his arrival. Right above the pine tree and the scholar, several ridges of the downward sloping mountain are touched with malachite green (plate 4.5.4). In each of these three appearances of the scholar, a thin layer of malachite is applied onto a mountain ridge that is close to him, tracking the progress of his journey.

Among the six appearances of the red-robed scholar, only the fourth time is not marked with malachite green ridges (plate 4.5.5). In this fourth scenario, we see the scholar riding on a black horse on a path again. He has passed through a terrain of steep mountains and gone by a village hidden in deep valley. In front of him, the path turns narrower and the mountains become steeper. On the path, vertical cliffs emerge from the right, whereas a frozen river appears on the left. Several snow-covered outcrops scatter along the river. Only connected by two bridges, these

outcrops increase the toll of traveling across the hillside. Obviously, the lack of malachite green and bright colors in this section imparts a strong sense of barrenness.

Next to this terrain of formidable mountain ranges, we see the red-robed scholar reappears in a thatched hut surrounded by a dense grove of pine trees (plate 4.5.6). Sitting by the window, the scholar is contemplating the landscape in front. Here, two mountain ridges bending toward him are touched by malachite green. Again, malachite marks the fifth appearance of the scholar. As we further unroll the scroll, the scholar's journey continues. He has passed through a ragged towering mountain and a series of red-walled buildings. Among oblique thrusting plateaus that erupt from the ground, we see the red-robed scholar appear for the sixth time (plate 4.5.7). He is at the end of a zigzag path leading to the gate that demarcates the country's border. The tininess of his size in this section enhances the remoteness of this scene. Not unexpectedly, two mountains, both of which have ridges touched by malachite green, flank the scholar. Again, malachite green coexists with the appearance of the scholar in this long snowy journey.

Toward the end of the scroll, any trace of the scholar vanishes – he is nowhere to be found (plate 4.5.8). Instead, we see a range of towering, snow-covered, mountains and a line of geese flying across the border. At the end, the craggy and ragged landscape turns into a vast slope of completely white landscape. The snow is so thick that it covers all the landscape's features. It is on this vast area of snow that Wen Zhengming wrote the inscriptions, recalling his journey with Wang Chong that took place five years' before. Regretfully, Wang Chong died a year after Wen painted this scroll.

Through a careful coordination of colors, painters of the above works successfully channeled viewers' gazes and comprehension. This practice drew viewers' attention to a specific motif in a composition, as in Sheng Mou's painting. This practice can also strengthen the power of an icon, as in the Guanyin painting. Furthermore, this practice helps the painter to bring out the narrative more fully, as in Tang Ying's and Wen Zhengming's paintings. In addition, azurite and malachite are very expensive colors. They are more expensive than indigo, their plant alternative. They are meticulously mined from the earth's crust and it is time-consuming to separate azurite from malachite.²³ Evidence from the early Ming dynasty shows that the high cost of the two minerals and their rarity also affected state regulation.²⁴ There is no evidence proving that Wen Zhengming and Zhao Mengfu's strategic placements of colors were inspired by the price of the colors. Nevertheless, there are painters from different social classes in the Ming dynasty who subtly enhanced the meaning of their pictorial motifs by appropriating the economic values of azurite and malachite, which in turn bestowed financial might and social status to the patrons and/or recipients of the works.

²³ Tao Hongjing's (456–536) *Annotated Anthology of Famous Recipes (Mingyi bielu)* said, “*kongqing* azurite is the most expensive among all the medicines in the stone category. Medical recipes thus rarely use it. But very often, it is appropriated as a color for painting. This is exceptionally pitiful!” Specifically selecting the above sentence from Tao's treatise to introduce *kongqing* to his contemporary readers, Li Shizhen apparently shared Tao's sentiments of pity toward using the mineral in painting.

²⁴ Recorded in the coloring materials (*yanliao*) section of *The Great Ming's Compilation of State Regulations (Daming huidian)*, an imperial edict issued in 1466 alleviated the requirement for citizens to give colorants such as cinnabar, lacquer, and *shiqing* azurite as a form of tax, in sympathy with the citizens' suffering in finding these rare materials that were not commonly available. See, Li Dongyang 李東陽 edited, *Da Ming huidian* 大明會典 (the great Ming's compilation of state regulations) (Taipei shi: Xin wenfeng chuban gongsi, 1976), 2644.

Portrait of Emperor Yongle

Measuring 270 centimeters high and 163.6 centimeters wide, *Portrait of Emperor Yongle* imparts a strong sense of regality and distinction to its viewers (plate 4.6). The pale blue-green coloration of the throne and the meticulous depictions of other pictorial elements reveal how court painters entrenched the economic value of mineral pigments into the overall meaning of their paintings, showing that pigments can convey meaning beyond their simple colorations and in some cases could enhance the regal status of the emperor.

Emperor Yongle (永樂; 1360–1424) is a legendary political figure. He was the fourth son of the empire's founding father Emperor Hongwu (洪武; 1328–1398). He was originally a prince with a fief in the present-day Beijing area. Emperor Hongwu passed the throne to Jianwen (建文; 1398–1402), the cousin of Yongle, but then Yongle usurped Emperor Jianwen. After usurping the position, Emperor Yongle moved the capital from Nanjing to Beijing, where he was originally based. An emperor with such controversial records and accomplishments must have needed a magnificent portrait to impart his solemnity and legitimacy to all of his current subjects and ensuing successors.

The portrait thus depicts Emperor Yongle in a quarter view, sitting and occupying the center of the compositional space. A carpet lies on the ground, cutting the background into two halves. Sitting comfortably on his throne, the Emperor's right hand is holding his brownish red belt decorated with golden pendants and different-colored gemstones. His left hand rests on the lap of his left leg. Instead of confronting the audience's gaze, he faces toward his left, apparently completely absorbed in his own thoughts, as conveyed by his faraway gaze. He smiles slightly

through a shut mouth. His skin is tan, echoing his military background, and his black tapering moustache flares out, hovering and undulating in midair. His goatee, which is also black, is divided into three tendrils; the central tendril, pointing downward, is the widest and longest, while the other two tendrils flare out, are wavy, and are significantly thinner. His beard and sideburns are tamed but brushy. This elaborated and complex arrangement of facial hair recalls the whiskers of a dragon in Chinese folklore, which is a symbol of emperorship. In addition to this complexity, the emperor is wearing at least four layers of clothes. A white undergarment is seen around his sleeves and collar. Small sections of a red undergarment appear at his collar and underneath his robe, under a deep blue garment with embroidery that can be seen through the gap between the front and back sides of the robe and around his sleeves. The outermost layer is an intense yellow robe. The drapery has tonal variations that create a sense of curvature of the body and impart volume to the garment, whereas the embroideries on his undergarment and the front of his yellow robe are all clearly depicted. Even Yongle's fingernails, from his cuticles to his nail plates, are all realistically colored and rendered. The carpet also enjoys a meticulous pattern filled with roundel, floral, and bird motifs. In contrast to this rich complexity, Yongle's throne radiates a pale blue-green color, resembling the natural coloration of mutton jade. It stands out from the overall deeper and more saturated color palette in the composition.

Dora Ching, who has provided one of the most in-depth studies of Ming dynasty imperial portraits and who discussed the above portrait from historical and art-historical perspectives, also noted the uniqueness of Yongle's throne.²⁵ She has provided careful descriptions of the imperial

²⁵ Dora C. Y. Ching, "Icons of Rulership: Imperial Portraiture During the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644)" (PhD. Dissertation, Princeton University, 2011).

portraits in the Ming dynasty, situated their visual properties in the tradition of imperial Chinese portraiture, highlighted the similarity between Yongle and Hongwu, pointed out the possible Tibetan influence on their compositional designs, and demonstrated how Emperor Yongle's portrait served as a lasting model for ensuing Ming emperors.²⁶ Concerning the throne in Yongle's portrait, Ching observes that Emperor Yongle's portrait was apparently modeled on the portrait of Emperor Song Taizu (太祖; 927–976), the founding emperor of the Song dynasty (960–1279), which depicts the emperor sitting on an wooden chair.²⁷ In Yongle's portrait, the emperor is sitting on no humble piece of furniture—he sits instead on an elaborated throne. Unlike the Song model, in which the wooden chair is adorned with a gold leaf or golden components, Emperor Yongle's throne is densely covered with a great variety of blue and green pigments. Six dragon sculptures with pendants in their mounts assume positions on the armrest and back. The base and footrest are colored with golden pigments. However, neither Yongle's father Emperor Hongwu or Emperor Song Taizu chose blue and green mineral pigments as the major colorants for their throne. And yet, this coloration of the throne recurs in all ensuing portraits of Ming emperors, suggesting that the design bestowed a favorable quality.²⁸

The blue-green color of the throne was most likely achieved through a finely ground malachite or the pale white pigment atacamite, which was also regarded as a type of azurite or malachite in the traditional Chinese worldview. With all of their uses, associated values, legacy, and production costs, azurite and malachite are far from being base materials. In particular, they

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., 127.

²⁸ Ibid.

were utilized as materials for extravagant decorations. There is also evidence showing that the mining of azurite and malachite were very costly. The cost of using azurite and malachite were so high that being able to use them immediately delivered a strong message of one's financial power. Apparently, only the most luxurious color was considered felicitous for the throne of an emperor who seized power via usurpation and thus needed to emphasize his legitimacy. Although there is no direct evidence supporting this claim, it is certain that the court painters and ensuing Ming emperors all favored this coloration of the throne, suggesting its subtle but effective approach in magnifying regality and wealth. In the following section, we will see how Qiu Ying developed this practice of carefully coordinating colors as a way to create a focal point and demonstrate wealth in a composition.

Qiu Ying's Azurite Blue and Coordination of Colors

The practice of coordinating the colors in a composition allows the painter to invite viewers to reflect upon certain motifs that enrich the overall meaning and sophistication of a painting. Because of his rigorous standard in applying colors, Qiu Ying extended this practice in new directions. Though he continued to occasionally highlight motifs with azurite blue in the traditional way, he concurrently developed a skill in which he emphasized non-blue motifs, such as figures, by framing, flanking, or surrounding them with blue objects.

Spring Dawn in a Han Palace

Qiu Ying's *Spring Dawn in a Han Palace* is one of the most celebrated works in his oeuvre (plate 4.7).²⁹ Judging from the Xiang Yuanbian's seals on the scrolls, the National Palace Museum holds that the work was patronized by Xiang.³⁰ However, Martie W. Young asserts that it is hard to determine the painting's provenance, because Xiang could have purchased the painting from its original recipient. Indeed, a painting bearing a similar title was recorded in the list of objects confiscated from the notorious politician Yan Song after his political downfall.³¹ Thus, the work may as well be patronized Yan.

Despite the somewhat clouded production context of this painting, this work reveals a masterful coordination of colors that draws the viewer's attention to Qiu's incorporation of motifs painted by ancient masters. However, this sophisticated coordination of colors is not apparent to all audiences, because motifs encoded with meaning are hidden in a sea of beautiful colors. Qiu Ying also uses colors to cast a contrast between the inside and outside of the palace.

The Pictorial Contents of Spring Dawn in a Han Palace

Bearing references to the works of Qiu's teacher Zhou Chen and the figure painter Du Jin 杜堇 (active 15th century), *Spring Dawn in a Han Palace* can be described in terms of its

²⁹ Ellen J. Laing, "Qiu Ying's Delicate Style," *Ars Orientalis* 27 (1997): 51-53.

³⁰ Hsu (2014), 298.

³¹ Martie W. Young, "The Paintings of Ch'iu Ying: A Preliminary Survey," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1961), 195.

depiction of architectural motifs, vegetation, animals, insects, and court ladies.³² In terms of architectural elements, a tiled roof and a swing are shown emerging from dense fog at the beginning of the scroll. A wall with an elaborate gate and a river mark the boundaries of the palace. The palace is composed of interconnected rooms, corridors, courtyards, and pavilions, all of which have vestibules constructed of tiles, timber, and bracketing systems. At the foot of these buildings, there are white stairs and carved reliefs, possibly made of marble. Some pillars even bear vegetation patterns in a light golden color. Sliding doors and window blinds have been accurately drawn, adding resolute detail to the palace. At the end of the scroll, there is a roofed wall guarded by two eunuchs gesturing toward the other side of the wall, closing both the scroll and the boundary of the place.

There is also a great variety of vegetation depicted in the painting. It begins with a grove of willow trees immersed in dense fog. At the end of the scroll, there are two more willow trees. Among the seven trees inside the palace, four have blossoming white flowers and two are pine trees. Some shrubs with white flowers, bamboo, and three bonsai containers filled with strange rocks and plum blossoms are also present.

In addition to the vegetation, animals and insects also appear in *Spring Dawn in a Han Palace*. Birds and peacocks are depicted at the beginning of the palace scene. A child is shown climbing up a fence by the river in an attempt to catch a bird about to leave the palace.

Meanwhile, a cat rests calmly on a chair inside a pavilion. Two peacocks wander by a well-

³² Laing (1997): 51-3; Zhang Hongxing ed., *Masterpieces of Chinese Painting 700-1900* (Victoria & Albert Museum, 2013), 242-245; Stephen Little, "Du Jin's Enjoying Antiquities: A Problem in Connoisseurship," in *Issues of Authenticity in Chinese Painting*, edited by Judith G. Smith and Wen C. Fong (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999), 189-219.

decorated room. At the end of the scroll, a court lady, holding a small fan, is portrayed in the act of catching butterflies. Although no butterflies are depicted, it is easy to imagine that butterflies are flying toward the outside of the palace, in the direction the lady is facing. Interestingly, animals and insects at both ends of the palace are shown attempting to leave the gated area, whereas those inside appear to be calmly enjoying themselves.

Undoubtedly, the court ladies in meticulously drawn garments are the main protagonists of this painting. They are shown engaging in a great variety of actions: looking at birds and animals, in conversation, walking, carrying utensils, watering plants and admiring flowers, adorning themselves, dancing, working on a stove, fixing and carrying musical instruments, reading, lamenting a broken vase, playing chess, looking at portraits, playing with infants, resting, sewing, preparing silk, and holding one another. There is even a court lady sitting for a portrait while accompanied by her attendants. Among these ladies, there are also eunuchs and adolescents, who are recognizable by their immaculate white complexions.

In fact, many of the various pictorial elements above are also mentioned in the colophon to Qiu Ying's *A Beauty Lost in Spring Thought* (plate 4.8). This painting is likely to have been painted after 1517—after Qiu began demonstrating the influence of Wen Zhengming in his works. In this painting, Qiu Ying used fine and light brushwork together with light color tints, to depict a beautifully dressed woman hovering above a slowly flowing stream. With such iconography, the woman is likely the Nymph of the Luo River, as featured in Cao Zhi's famous rhapsody bearing the same title. However, scholars point out that the contents of the colophon do not cohere with this theme, and the painting and colophon may have originally been two separate

works.³³ The colophon to this painting contains poems written by thirteen people. Among them, the most renowned are written by Wen Peng (文彭; 1498–1573) and Wen Jia (文嘉; 1501–1583), the eldest and second sons of the revered scholar and painter Wen Zhengming (文徵明; 1470–1559). Wen Zhengming’s nephew Wen Boren (文伯仁; 1502–1575) and the scholar-painter Lu Zhi (陸治; 1496–1576) also inscribed poems in the colophon. The rest of the poems were written by people who left few traces in history, implying that they were likely at the periphery of the elite community.³⁴ At any rate, even though the colophon and the painting may have been two separate works, the poems reveal admiration for a type of woman similar to the woman with otherworldly beauty that Qiu Ying painted in his work.³⁵

Juxtaposing the poems written by the above scholars and the painting *Spring Dawn in a Han Palace*, the connection between the two is evident. Architectural elements mentioned in the poems include, “Shangyan (上陽; i.e., the legendary Shangyang Palace of the Tang dynasty),” “crafted pillars (*diaoliang* 雕梁),” “river and pillars (*heliang* 河梁),” “swing frame (*qiuqianjia*

³³ Hsu et al. (2014), 322.

³⁴ These figures are: Mountain Man Fuyu 浮玉山人 (i.e.: Sheng Ruwen 沈禹文), Shi Yue 石岳, Mountain Man Jinfeng 錦峰山人 (i.e.: Zhang Zhu 張祝), Jingzhao Jinyong 京兆金用, Yu Zhang 俞章, Huang Shouzhen 黃守曾, Liu Yin 劉寅, Peng Zhang 劉璋, and Lu Zhi 魯治. The names “Sheng Ruwen” and “Zhang Zhu” are retrieved from the database, National Palace Museum Painting and Calligraphy Catalogue (書畫典藏資料檢索系統).

³⁵ Full transcription of these poems can be found in Guoli gugong bowuyuan 國立故宮博物院 et al., fascicle 4 of *Gugong shuhua lu* 故宮書畫錄 (Records of the paintings and calligraphies in the National Palace Museum) (Taipei: Zhonghua congshu weiyuanhui, 1956), 182–3. Hsu Wenmei et al., *Ming si dajia tezhan: Qiu Ying* 明四大家特展：仇英 (Four great master of the Ming dynasty: Qiu Ying) (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 2014), 322.

鞦韆架),” “courtyard (*tingyuan* 庭院),” “pavilion for painters (*hua ge* 畫閣),” and “the shadow of a swing (*qiuqian ying* 鞦韆影).” In response, Qiu Ying arranges a swing frame amid a sea of willow branches at the beginning of his scroll. Willow is also frequently mentioned in the poems. Echoing the poetic phrase “pavilion for painters,” Qiu Ying depicts a painter drawing a portrait in a pavilion toward the end of his painting. Moreover, phrases like “family of embroidery (*xiu hu* 繡戶)” and “tuning the string of a musical instrument (*diao xian* 調絃)” are transformed pictorially into women who are sewing, preparing silk, and playing music. Other shared elements between the colophons and *Spring Dawn* include *Pollio japonica* (*duruo* 杜若), peonies (*shaoyao* 芍藥), and red almond flowers (*hong xinghua* 紅杏花; all of which have petals in colors ranging from red to white), as well as women catching butterflies and looking at flowers.

However, Qiu Ying’s painting was not only inspired by poems of his contemporaries; it was also inspired by paintings of ancient masters. Qiu Ying carefully incorporated motifs borrowed from paintings produced in the ninth and tenth centuries, synthesizing contemporary imagination and archaic depictions of beautiful court ladies in his *Spring Dawn in a Han Palace*. In the middle of the painting, there is a partially open and raised pavilion filled with court ladies engaged in activities that evoke the pictorial content of paintings produced by ninth- and tenth-century court painters.³⁶ Two court ladies playing chess, with an audience of two watching, are reminiscent of *Palace Ladies Playing Double Sixes* (*Neiren shuanglu tu* 內人雙陸圖; plate 4.9.1), a work attributed to the Tang painter Zhou Fang (周昉; ca. 730–800). The image of four

³⁶ These stylistic references are also noted by Wen Fong, see *idem.*, (1996), 400.

ladies preparing silk in Qiu's painting reminds us of a section of Emperor Huizong's *After Zhang Xuan's Court Ladies Weaving Silk* (*Daolian tu* 搗練圖; plate 4.9.2). In both paintings, two ladies are shown holding the two ends of a long silk bolt, while two other figures stand alongside the two long edges. The depiction of court ladies playing with infants reminds us of *Palace Ladies Bathing Infants* (*Yuying shinu tu* 浴嬰仕女圖; plate 4.9.3), attributed to Zhou Wenju (周文矩; ca. the tenth century). Finally, a group of court ladies playing musical instruments reminds us of *United by Music* (*He le tu* 合樂圖; plate 4.9.4), also attributed to Zhou Wenju. All these motifs bearing reference to ancient masters appear within raised stage-like pavilions, indicating their importance.

In addition to the above figure motifs, the trim of window blinds, which appears several times in the scroll, is also a stylistic reference (plate 4.9.5). The trim features a mineral blue background with yellowish circle patterns. It appears in *Infants under a Banana Tree* (*Bajiao tangzi tu* 芭蕉唐子圖), a fifteenth-century painting with the spurious signature of Qian Xuan (錢選; plate 4.9.6). Qiu Ying closely copied this painting with only the addition of a decorative rock in his version (Shanghai Museum; plate 4.9.7). In both paintings, the floor mat on which three infants are playing has a trim filled with circle patterns. In *Spring Dawn in a Han Palace*, Qiu Ying turned the background color of the trim blue and reused the trim design.

Much of Qiu's incorporation of ancient motifs is recognized by the scholar and prolific writer Hu Yinglin (胡應麟; 1551–1602). In his *Collected Works of Mr. Shaoshi at the Mountain Lodge* (*Shaoshi shanfang ji* 少室山房集), Hu articulates that Qiu Ying's *Spring Dawn* features

many motifs previously used in certain Zhou Feng paintings Hu had seen at the houses of his contemporaries.³⁷ According to Hu, Wen Peng, the eldest son of Wen Zhengming and thus an acquaintance of Qiu, owned one such painting. More importantly, Hu's text implies that people like him were able to identify the references of the pictorial motifs in Qiu Ying's paintings. Echoing Hu, the renowned scholar and official Wang Shizhen (王世貞; 1526–1590) explains how Qiu Ying managed to incorporate such a wide range of motifs from ancient paintings and points out that Qiu produced yet another painting, like *Spring Dawn*, that combines pictorial motifs from a great variety of ancient works. Wang states

Qiu Ying... whenever he encounters a work by a famous painter from the Tang or Song dynasty, he makes a copy and includes it in his copybook. His imitations could be disguised as the originals... He once produced *The Heavenly Forest* for Zhou Liuguan. The figures, birds and animals, mountains and groves, terraces and towers, flags and transport carriages, and the appearances of the soldiers and their paraphernalia were all modeled on the ancient works that he remembered. He synthesizes and incorporates their motifs into one work. This is arguably an unsurpassable stage in the practice of art...³⁸
仇英... 於唐宋名人畫無所不摹寫，皆有稿本。其臨筆能奪真... 嘗為周六觀作《上林圖》，人物、鳥獸、山林、臺觀、旗輦、軍容，皆臆寫古賢名筆，斟酌而成，可謂繪事之絕境...

Like Hu, Wang Shizhen is aware of Qiu Ying's incorporation of various pictorial motifs from ancient paintings into his own works. It is likely that the motifs bearing reference to ancient paintings were recognizable to the elite community, as Wang articulates that Qiu "synthesizes

³⁷ Hu Yinglin 胡應麟, fascicle 109 of *Shaoshi shanfang ji* 少室山房集 (The anthology of the Shaoshi mountain-chamber), *Siku quanshu* electronic version.

³⁸ Wang Shizhen 王世貞, fascicle 155 of *Shibugao* 四部稿, *Siku quanshu* electronic version.

and incorporates their motifs into one work.” Intriguingly, in *Spring Dawn*, Qiu applied azurite blue in close proximity to the ancient references mentioned above.

The Coordination of Colors in Spring Dawn in a Han Palace

In this painting, sections containing references to earlier paintings are “bluer” than other sections. For example, at the opening section of the scroll, the amount of mineral blue is scant (plate 4.10.1). It was only applied to the tiles of the gate. In the second section of the scroll, when viewers begin to explore the palace, the amount of mineral blue increases. Some mineral blue was applied to figures and their accessories, as well as to some parts of the bracketing system of the architecture (plate 4.10.1). However, in sections 3 and 4, where the architectural complex turns into a series of joined pavilions, mineral blue appears more often—more figures and objects that bear mineral blue exist together with those pictorial references to earlier masters (plate 4.10.2). In contrast, mineral blue was used less generously in the sections between the beginning of the scroll and these joined pavilions.

The bluer overtones of sections 3 and 4 were achieved by placing objects, figures, and architectural elements in blue. Over the pavilion in which a group of court ladies are shown playing musical instruments, there are six figures wearing garments colored by mineral blue (plate 4.10.3). There is also a table covered by a mineral blue surface. The trim of the window blinds is adorned with yellowish circle patterns on top of a mineral blue background. Even the decorations over the beams have been touched by mineral blue. Likewise, the pavilion in which references to Zhang Xuan, Zhou Feng, and Zhou Wenju appear is also overtly filled with and

flanked by mineral blue (plate 4.10.4). Two huge decorative rocks surround this pavilion. On both sides of the pavilion there are rooms in which court ladies are shown sitting and lying on floor mats of mineral blue. The decorations of the architectural elements at the top are again colored in blue. Additionally, almost every figure in this pavilion is wearing some form of mineral blue.

Toward the end of the scroll, there are fewer figures dressed in blue shown in the third pavilion of the series, but azurite assumes the color of the trim and edge of many pictorial elements (plate 4.10.5). For example, the edges of the screen in the background are blue. The pattern of the screen behind the court lady sitting for a portraitist also contains blue. The trims of the window blinds are all blue. We are thus reminded that the trim is a stylistic reference to a fifteenth-century painting that Qiu Ying copied. Therefore, in this section, the blue was applied onto the most square or geometric elements as a way of amplifying the trims of the window blinds, which allude to an earlier master.

Among the four huge decorative rocks in *Spring Dawn in a Han Palace*, only the rock located outside of the palace bears a relatively naturalistic coloration. It was colored using light blue dye, sienna, and ink. The rendering technique Qiu used is very similar to the one he used to paint decorative rocks in his *Admiring Antiques in a Bamboo Courtyard* (竹苑品古圖; plate 4.11, top left). These two decorative rocks reveal a concern with representing the uneven, bumpy surfaces of the rocks from Lake Tai that are used for decoration in Chinese gardens. This concern with surface likeness greatly diminishes in Qiu Ying's rendition of the three decorative rocks *inside* the palatial complex. A large decorative rock delineated with ink lines and filled in

completely with a diluted grayish color is located in the middle of a courtyard (plate 4.11, bottom left). The lack of brush traces and the subtle tonal variation of the gray probably meant to represent a meticulously polished rock with a lustrous surface. Moreover, the two large decorative rocks, mentioned above, located on each side of a luxurious palatial hall, are completely blue. Their deep and rich hue resembles the color of azurite ore (plate 4.11, bottom right).

Apparently, colors serve not only as a means to emphasize or call attention to references of earlier paintings. The three decorative rocks inside the palace likely evince Qiu Ying's careful consideration of how a generous use of luxurious coloring materials can bring out aspects of the subject matter of a magnificent palace. Evidently, all three decorative rocks *inside* the palatial complex have intense coloration (plates 4.11.1–2). They add a sense of strangeness and otherworldly beauty to the architectural environment, while serving to distinguish the interior of the palace from the exterior. This claim is supported by the fact that the palatial space depicted in this scroll is demarcated by a wall, guarded by eunuchs, and filled with a host of palace ladies. This confined palatial space contains rarity and beauty that the outside world does not possess. Unrolling *Spring Dawn in a Hall Palace*, one will realize that the amount of azurite and malachite increases progressively—the number of motifs colored with these two pigments increases as the viewer comes closer to the end of the handscroll, or the innermost part of the palace, where the hall of the empress is located. Apparently, Qiu Ying carefully planned the

amount and placement of azurite and malachite in the composition so as to accentuate the unique status of the empress's hall.³⁹

In summary, Qiu Ying's *Spring Dawn in a Han Palace* reveals a sophisticated use of blue. Mineral blue in this painting is first and foremost the color of many objects, architectural elements, and garments. However, this luxurious color is also reserved for flanking and highlighting pictorial elements that suggest references to earlier paintings. Because the blue is also applied elsewhere in the painting, the importance of what is highlighted is sometimes camouflaged—and some viewers in the sixteenth century, with little art-historical knowledge, may have been liable to miss those references.

The above discussion expands existing scholarship on the politics of colors. As revealed in chapter 2, art criticism throughout the ages has taken the handling of colors as one means of evaluating painters. In addition, some collectors in the sixteenth century lavishly purchased pigmented landscape paintings by early painters as a way of expressing good taste. Qiu Ying's sophisticated use of azurite blue pigment thus effectively distinguished his patrons and him from their contemporaries who aimed only at conspicuous consumption and unskillful production of heavily pigmented paintings.

Beyond this, the above discussion reveals a yet-to-be-recognized aspect of the complex politics of colors. Azurite blue can in fact polarize painters, patrons, and audiences with different levels of art-historical knowledge. This is because the blue in Qiu Ying's paintings is reserved for motifs bearing stylistic references to ancient masters; thus, viewers who have little understanding

³⁹ A point that I owe Professor Wu Hung.

of ancient painting styles cannot recognize those art-historical references. When other colors are also used—which is the case in Qiu’s paintings—those who are uninitiated find themselves lost in a sea of colors. In other words, Qiu Ying’s sophisticated use of blue, specifically, and colors in general, both highlights and camouflages pictorial motifs that encode the desires and ambitions of his patrons. The true meanings of his pictorial motifs are accessible only to the initiated. The above-mentioned Hu Yinglin was likely one of the initiated. Yet, it is not clear why he did not mention the use of blue in *Spring Dawn*. Nevertheless, this dual function of blue, both as a color and a subtle emphasis, was recognized and used repeatedly by members of the Xiang family. Many paintings patronized by the Xiang family used this dual function of blue to celebrate the family’s art collection and the fraternity among the three Xiang brothers.

Thatched Hall in a Peach Blossom Village

This section argues that azurite blue in *Thatched Hall in a Peach Blossom Village* (plate 4.13) is reserved for highlighting and flanking motifs that bear reference to the celebrated tenth-century landscape painter Li Cheng (李成) and to the revered Yuan-dynasty scholar-painter Ni Zan (倪瓚; 1301–1374). A discussion of the ambitions and desires encoded in pigments allows us to probe into the anxiety and power struggles among social classes and delve into the politics of color in the sixteenth-century elite community that propelled its participants to invest in color.

Many factors confirm that the scholar-gentleman at the center of *Thatched Hall in a Peach Blossom Village* is Xiang Yuanqi. First of all, this painting is dedicated to him.⁴⁰ The inscription on the middle of the left edge reads, “Qiu Shifu (i.e., Qiu Ying) produced [this painting] for Mr. Shaoyue (仇實父為少岳先生製).” Shaoyue is the alias of Xiang Yuanqi.⁴¹ This painting also bears the seal of “*tianlai ge* (天籟閣; Studio of Heavenly Melody),” a seal belonging to Xiang Yuanqi’s younger brother Xiang Yuanbian (項元汴; 1525–1590). At the lower right corner of the painting, there is also the Chinese character *nian* (念), an inventory number which corresponds to the 206th character of *Classic of Ten Thousand Words* (*qianzi wen* 千字文), which Xiang Yuanbian used for numbering the items in his collection.⁴² The thatched hut surrounded by peach blossoms may also indicate the family estate of the Xiang family, because Xiang Yuanbian had a seal that reads, “the family in Peach Blossom (*Taohua yuan li renjia* 桃花源裏人家).”⁴³ Furthermore, the *qin* zither depicted inside the thatched hut may also refer to the Studio of Heavenly Melody, for the studio is named after this type of musical

⁴⁰ Ellen J. Laing has also made the same suggestion. See idem., “Sixteenth-Century Patterns of Art Patronage: Qiu Ying and the Xiang Family,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* Vol. 111.1 (1991): 4. Laing states that “My conclusion that this is a portrait of Xiang Yuanqi is confirmed by Xu Zonghao (1880-1957), the modern artist and collector, whose comments, dated 1948, are inscribed on the mounting below the picture.”

⁴¹ Gugong bowuyuan 故宮博物院 edited, *Gugong bowuyuan cang wewu zhengpin quanji* 故宮博物院藏文物珍品全集 (Catalog of fine artworks from the Palace Museum Collection), *Wumen huapai* 吳門畫派 (the painting school of the Wu) (Hong Kong: Shangwu yin shuguan, 2007), 126.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ According to Laing, Xu Zonghao also mentions that “the peach-blossom background is that area on the Xiang estate referred to in one of Xiang Yuanbian’s seal legends...” See Laing (1991), 4.

instrument. These traces of Xiang Yuanbian, and motifs that refer to the family estate, further indicate that this painting was painted for Xiang Yuanqi.

It can be inferred that Xiang Yuanbian patronized this painting and used it as a gift to celebrate the birthday of his brother Xiang Yuanqi. At the lower part of this painting, Xiang Yuanqi, or the gentleman, is shown looking toward the left. The drapery of his robe also drifts toward the left. He gazes steadily at a vine that intertwines with the pine tree. The vine twists into a form resembling the Chinese character *shou* (壽; longevity) in cursive script (plate 3.7.2).

The form of the character is elongated, alluding to *changshou* (長壽; long life).⁴⁴ Scholar Maggie Wan explains this motif in detail with evidence from imperial porcelain wares produced in the sixteenth century. This motif, “a single character, felicitous in meaning, written in cursive script in one continuous stroke and appearing to be an extension of some natural form,” was popular during the Jiajing period (嘉靖; r. 1522–1666).⁴⁵ It appears on “many official porcelains and lacquer wares, and even on some textiles and porcelains made for commoners' use.”⁴⁶ Being an extension of the pine tree, which is a symbol of longevity in Chinese culture, the character looks as if it is occurring spontaneously, and thus signifies an auspicious omen designated by Heaven.⁴⁷ It thus seems unlikely that Xiang Yuanqi patronized this painting himself. Rather, it seems more likely that the work was patronized by Xiang Yuanbian, who intended to present it as an auspicious omen to his older brother.

⁴⁴ Maggie C. K. Wan, “Jiajing Emperor and His Auspicious Words,” *Archives of Asian Art*, vol. 57 (2007): 110.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 110.

Much about Xiang Yuanqi's life coheres with how he is portrayed in this painting. Existing scholarship holds that the father of the three Xiang brothers died in 1544.⁴⁸ Existing scholarship also shows that *Thatched Hall in a Peach Blossom Village* was painted around 1547.⁴⁹ With the death of his father in the mid-1540s, Xiang Yuanqi became the pillar of the family: he was responsible for the family business and his two younger brothers who were more than twenty years younger than him. According to existing scholarship, Xiang Yuanqi had many guests who visited his house, and he himself participated in many social gatherings.⁵⁰ It is easy to imagine the psychology of Xiang Yuanqi, as well as how he was perceived in the family, at the time when *Thatched Hall* was produced. He was a man stepping into his late forties, becoming the head of household, and enjoying a place in the elite community. In the painting, he is walking out gracefully from a beautifully pigmented landscape that represents his family villa—this compositional setting denotes his duty and status within the family.

In the landscape elements of this painting, Qiu Ying meticulously coordinated the placement of azurite blue and other colors to create intriguing tonal variations that emphasize

⁴⁸ Chǒng Ŭn-suk 鄭銀淑, *Xiang Yuanbian zhi shuhua shoucang yu yanjiu* 項元汴之書畫收藏與藝術 (The study of the art and art collection of Xiang Yuanbian) (Taipei: Wen shi zhe chubanshe, 1984), 11, 30. According to Chǒng, Xiang Quan 項詮 had already passed away in 1544. Her evidence comes from Xiang Yuanqi's epitaph, which mentions that when Xiang Yuanqi reached 20 years old (1544), his father – Xiang Quan – had already passed away. Written by Dong Qichang, the phrase in the epitaph that states the year is “*yi nian* (已念; reached twenty)”. This dating is different from other mainland scholars' postulations. To the best of my knowledge, other than Chǒng, no scholar explained how they came to the lifespan of Xiang Quan. Judging from Chǒng's careful reading of the epitaph and frankness of her evidence, I follow her dating.

⁴⁹ Hsu Wenmei 許文美, *Xilun Qiu Ying jifu qingliu shesezuopin de taoyuan yixiang* 析論仇英幾幅青綠設色作品的桃源意像, *Gugong xueshu jikan* 故宮學術季刊 30.2 (2012): 211.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 209-211.

Xiang Yuanqi's unique status in the family. Although different blue, green, and brownish pigments and plant dyes were used, the towering central mountain and the shorter mountain on the right both possess a bluish overtone thanks to azurite (plate 3.7.1). In the middle part of the painting, the amount of azurite used drastically diminishes. The cloud embraces the color of blank silk. Triangular pine trees with sharp tips are predominately ink and indigo. The thatched hut in the middle, and the peach blossoms surrounding it, are largely the result of ink work, despite the petals' pinkish hue. There was only a small amount of azurite applied to the leftward thrusting rock located above the thatched hut (plate 3.7.1). Toward the lower part of the mountain, the amount of azurite increases. The rocks lying between the thatched hut and the pine trees have more blue coloration than the leftward thrusting rock above. Rocks at the sides of the pine trees are also noticeably bluer (plate 3.7.2). It is true that the white-robed scholarly figure standing between the two pines is standing on a ground composed of ink monochrome and the color of the silk surface. However, there are many rocks covered generously with azurite blue scattered around him. Thus, in the lower part of the painting, the scholarly figure is encircled by azurite blue. Intriguingly, the amount of blue diminishes again toward the lower edge of the painting. Even though there are blue rocks, their color is not as blue as the rocks surrounding the figure above and the thrusting ridges at the top. Since Qiu Ying has been using blue intentionally, it is thus reasonable to seek meaning in these emphasized areas.

At the top of the scroll, azurite blue is overtly concentrated on the thrusting ridges, with square edges protruding from the right and lower-middle parts of the mountain (plate 3.7.1). These ridges stand out from the upper part of the painting because they are bluer. Moreover, the

volume of the ridges is defined by oblique parallel lines and square edges, whereas other mountain forms at the upper part of the painting are defined by very different brushwork, including vertical and curvilinear lines and more calligraphic brushstrokes. These thrusting ridges that were rendered in a different shape and manner are meant to catch viewers' attention. In the tradition of Chinese painting, a composition with a towering central mountain reached its maturity in the tenth century and maintained its popularity in ensuing eras.⁵¹ A towering mountain is thus an important motif that signifies which particular compositional tradition a painter chose to follow—it is meant to draw attention. The location and the overt blue coloration of those thrusting ridges with square edges was clearly planned and intended.

The above peculiarity in coloration is hardly a coincidence. First of all, those protruding ridges over the central mountain are stylistic references to the time-celebrated Northern Song painter Li Cheng's (李成; ca. 919–967) *Luxuriant Landscape and Distant Mountains* (*Maolin yuanyou tu* 茂林遠岫圖). This work bears Xiang Yuanbian's seals, and thus was once in the Xiang family collection (plate 4.14.1).⁵² In this Li Cheng painting, the central mountain, which appears on the left half of the scroll, is also formed by oblique thrusting ridges (plates 4.14.2–3). Like in Qiu Ying's interpretation, these ridges were configured by parallel lines with one ragged square edge. Judging from the stylistic similarity between Li Cheng's painting and Qiu Ying's

⁵¹ Recent discovery of the tomb of Empress Wu Weifei, where landscape-screen murals are found, suggests that the monumental landscape tradition already existed in the Tang dynasty (618–907).

⁵² This kind of ragged ridge also appears in *Tranquil Valley* 幽谷圖 a painting attributed to Guo Xi, a follower of Li Cheng. This painting is now kept in Shanghai Museum. The authenticity of this painting may need in-depth study.

Thatched Hall in a Peach Blossom Village, the former had already entered the Xiang family's collection when the latter was painted. Azurite blue is used as a marker—or highlighter—of Qiu Ying's reference to the style of Li Cheng's prized painting in the Xiang family collection.

The inclusion of mountain ridges in Li Cheng's style was apparently inspired by Ni Zan. Li Cheng's *Luxuriant Landscape* comes with a colophon written by Ni Zan dated 1365 (plate 4.14.4). Ni states that Li Cheng rarely painted for others, and thus there are very few of his paintings. Ni Zan continues on to suggest that the twelfth-century calligrapher and connoisseur Mi Fu even stated that there were no more of Li Cheng's paintings available. Ni Zan then praises the form of the landscape elements in the scroll and states that Li Cheng often followed the style of the tenth-century painter Jing Hao. Xiang Yuanbian's seals are stamped on both sides of Ni Zan's colophon, indicating his awareness of Ni's comment.⁵³

At the bottom of *Thatched Hall*, the appearance of Xiang Yuanqi is a motif that belongs to the time-honored scholar Ni Zan. Xiang wears a fluffy jacket and a white robe with a rope tied around the waist, leaving both of the ends at the front. This attire is characteristic of the fourteenth century and does not belong to the time of Xiang Yuanqi.⁵⁴ In particular, Xiang's appearance is strikingly similar to how the aloof and wealthy scholar Ni Zan (倪瓚; 1301–1374) was portrayed in Qiu Ying's *Copy of the Portrait of Ni Zan* (*Lin Ni Zan xiang* 臨倪瓚像),

⁵³ Xiang has also stamped his seals next to the colophon written in the Southern Song dynasty.

⁵⁴ James C. Y. Watt edited, *The World of Khubalai Khan: Chinese Art in the Yuan Dynasty* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2010), 138-43.

painted in 1542 (plate 4.15.1).⁵⁵ Both Xiang Yuanqi and Ni Zan are wearing white robes with ribbons tied around their waists, leaving both of the ends at the front, although the former's jacket is browner. Both figures are depicted with wide foreheads, moustaches, and goatee beards. Both of them have their hair pulled onto the top of their heads and tied into a bun, although Ni Zan's is covered with a hat (plate 4.15.2). There are also armrests at the side of Ni Zan, and inside the thatched hut in *Peach Blossom Village*. Moreover, *Copy of the Portrait of Ni Zan* was likely painted before the undated *Thatched Hall in a Peach Blossom Village*. Because all dated paintings patronized by the Xiang family are dated to 1547, it would imply the date of *Thatched Hut*⁵⁶ is also around that time. The fact that Qiu Ying painted both paintings, with only five years of separation, further supports the notion that the formal similarities between the two figures are not coincidental.

Evidence shows that Ni Zan was a cultural figure whose paintings and scholarly achievements were admired by scholar-painters among Qiu Ying's contemporaries. In 1530, Wen Zhengming composed a poem and painted a painting in response to one of Ni Zan's poems.⁵⁷ In the colophon of Qiu Ying's *Copy of Portrait of Ni Zan*, the seminal scholar and painter Wen

⁵⁵ The date 1542 is provided by the Wen Peng 文彭 who wrote the inscription on the painting. Qiu Ying's *Copy of the Portrait of Ni Zan*, now in Shanghai Museum, is itself a copy of a portrait of Ni Zan painted in the 14th century, now in National Palace Museum, at Taipei. In the 14th century version, the painting is inscribed by the poet and Taoist devotee Zhang Yu 張雨. Since Zhang Yu is a contemporary of Ni Zan, the Taipei version is painted during Ni Zan's life time and may reveal how Ni Zan really looked.

⁵⁶ These paintings are *Narcissus and Wintersweet* 水仙蠟梅圖 and the six paintings of *Album of Imitating Song-Yuan Models* 臨宋元六景圖冊, both in National Palace Museum.

⁵⁷ Zhao Daozhen 周道振 and Zhang Yuezun 張月尊, *Wen Zhengming nianpu* 文徵明年譜 (Chronicle of Wen Zhengming) (Shanghai: Baijia chubanshe, 1998), 430.

Zhengming copied the inscription written by Ni Zan's contemporary Zhang Yu in the original version of *Portrait of Ni Zan*. Wen Zhengming's transcription may reflect his admiration of both the original painting and Ni Zan.⁵⁸ Furthermore, Wen Peng (文彭; 1498–1573), the eldest son of Wen Zhengming, inscribed an epitaph of Ni Zan written by Wang Bin (王賓) on Qiu Ying's *Copy of the Portrait of Ni Zan*.⁵⁹ This epitaph was printed in an anthology of the full literary works of Ni Zan and circulated during the fifteenth century.⁶⁰

Qiu Ying and his patrons in the Xiang family had apparently established a fashion for later painters and art buyers by producing landscape paintings with heavy blue-green pigments. However, not all painters and art patrons could use blue in such subtle and sophisticated ways. The late-sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century art critic Tang Zhiqi lambastes painters for adding golden outlines onto their blue-green mineral landscape paintings.⁶¹ Their choice of color

⁵⁸ Wen Zhengming's colophon is written on a separate sheet of paper and, the authenticity of this colophon should not be taken for granted. However, a close inspection of the style of Wen Zhengming's calligraphy is a subject too large to be treated here.

⁵⁹ The epitaph of Ni Zan recorded in *Qingbige quanji* 清閼閣全集 (the complete anthology of the Studio of Qingmi; i.e.: the writing of Ni Zan) is almost identical to the version inscribed onto Qiu Ying's *Copy of the Portrait of Ni Zan* – other than a few words different. See Ni Zan, *Qingbige quanji* (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2012), 123. The inscription on Qiu Ying's painting informs us that Ni Zan came from a rich family. He sold the family estate before the Mongol invasion. People thus laughed at him. However, later, after the invasion, everyone's family estate was confiscated – People began to know his wisdom. Ni Zan also liked cleanliness. He only wore his hat and robe a couple of times. He also cleaned his studio. He avoided seeing vulgar people. He was generous to his friends; for example he paid the fee for other people's burial. Later in his life, he focused on poetry and followed the Tang style.

⁶⁰ See Yong Rong 永瑢 et al, *Siku quanshu chongmu tiyao* 四庫全書總目提要 (Shanghai: Shangwu yin shuguan, 1933): 3557. It mentions that the anthology is circulated during the Tianshun 天順 reign period (1457-1464).

⁶¹ A careful reading of Tang's whole treatise reveals that he does not appreciate paintings that are meticulously-drawn with minute details. This is apparently why he dismisses blue-and-green painting with golden outlines.

“is intended to deceive; aimed only at selling the painting.”⁶² Tang continues, “Viewers, without close examination, once they hear that a work is painted by the general Li [i.e., the aforementioned Tang-dynasty painter-general Li Sixun (李思訓; 657–716), master of the blue-and-green-landscape style], willingly spend one thousand dollars to acquire the painting.” Tang then questions the true intention of these buyers: “Do they themselves have a heart capable of responding? Or are they posing in front of other people [in order to] obtain the admiration of those who know [about the landscape painting tradition]?”⁶³ Clearly, to such people, expensive materials and the high price of paintings is more important than where and to what the expensive pigments are applied. In contrast, the emphasis on the sophisticated use of the blue pigment represents a self-conscious effort on the part of Qiu Ying and his patron to differentiate themselves from painters and buyers who produced and purchased heavily pigmented paintings to satisfy a conscious wish to indulge in lavish consumption. Strengthening this notion, the following discussion of *Picture Album of Figures and Stories* reveals that the Xiang family used mineral blue not to express their wealth and tastes, but to celebrate fraternity and their love of literature and art.

⁶² Tang Zhiqi 唐志契, *Hui shi wei yen* 繪事微言 (humble complaints on the practice of painting), in vol. 2 of *Zhongguo lidai hualun xuan* 中國歷代畫論選 (Selected articles on painting of Chinese past dynasties), ed. Pan Yungao 潘運告 (Changsha: Hunan meishu chubanshe, 2007), 139.

⁶³ Ibid.

Picture Album of Figures and Stories

Three paintings from *Picture Album of Figures and Stories*, now in the Beijing Palace Museum, use mineral blue to surround scholarly figures, to mark stylistic references derived from paintings in the Xiang family collection, and as a means of expressing their interest in poetry, literature, and reclusion. This section will first provide an introduction to this album. It will then discuss the three paintings one by one.

The subject matter of these ten paintings can be roughly divided into three interrelated groups. The first group depicts the stories of historical figures. For example, *Zi Lu Asking the Way* (*Zi Lu wen jin tu* 子路問津圖) is an illustration to a chapter in *The Analects* (*Lun yu* 論語), which records the teachings of the great philosopher and educator Confucius (孔子; ca. 6–5 century BCE) and his disciples. *Mingfei Leaving the Border* (*Ming fei chu sai tu* 明妃出塞圖) depicts the story of Wang Zhaojun (王昭君), a lady of the court of Emperor Yuan (元; 76–33 BCE), who was sent to marry the leader of a nomadic tribe.

The second group represents stories derived from well-known literature and mythology. *Playing the Flute to Attract Phoenixes* (*Chui xiao yin feng tu* 吹簫引鳳圖) is an illustration to the myth of Xiao Shi (蕭史) and Nong Yu (弄玉), the son-in-law and daughter of Duke Mu of Qin (秦穆公; ca. the seventh century BCE), who are shown riding phoenixes while ascending to heaven. *Autumn Water of Southern Florescence* (*Nan hua qiu shui tu* 南華秋水圖) is an illustration to a piece of philosophical writing by the philosopher Zhuangzi (莊子; ca. 369–284 BCE). *Catching Willow Floss* (*Zhuo liu hua tu* 捉柳花圖) is an illustration to *Bidding Farewell*

to a Branch of Willow Trees (*bie liu zhi* 別柳枝), a poem by the time-honored poet Bai Juyi (白居易; 772–846). *Pipa Song of Xunyang River* (*Xunyang pipa tu* 潯陽琵琶圖) is an illustration to the famous song-poem *Pipa xing* (琵琶行), which is also by Bai Juyi.

The third group covers the remaining four paintings, which do not represent any specific story or historical figure. Rather, they represent subject matter that often appears in Chinese painting. *Six Idlers of the Pine Grove* (*Songlin liuyi tu* 松林六逸圖) depicts the gathering of six scholarly-looking figures.⁶⁴ *Guifei Working on Her Morning Makeup* (*Guifei xiao zhuang tu* 貴妃曉妝圖) depicts a slender concubine and her attendants within lavishly decorated architecture.⁶⁵ *High Mountains and Flowing Streams* (*Gaoshan liushui tu* 高山流水圖) depicts a scholarly figure sitting in a thatched hut accompanied by books and a *qin* zither.⁶⁶ And lastly, *Admiring Antiques in a Bamboo Courtyard* depicts three scholars studying paintings in a bamboo courtyard.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Wen Zhengming has painted *Flying Cascades in a Pine-Filled Ravine* (*Songhe feiquan tu* 松壑飛泉圖; National Palace Museum), a work with a subject matter and a composition that resembles Qiu Ying's *Six Idlers*.

⁶⁵ "Court lady" is an enduring subject matter in traditional Chinese painting. Prior to the Qing Dynasty, notable painters include Zhang Xuan (active 714-742), Zhou Fang (ca. 730 - ca. 800), Tang Yin (1470-1523), and Qiu Ying.

⁶⁶ Existing scholarship remains divided when deciphering the content of this painting. Mainland scholarship mostly contends that it represents a woodcutter bringing wine to the time-honored scholar and recluse Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 (365-427). However, Ellen J. Laing states that the painting illustrates the story of Bo Ya 伯牙, a musician from the Spring and Autumn Period (771-476 BCE).

⁶⁷ A common subject matter in Ming dynasty painting that demands a more in-depth study; notable examples include Du Jin's 杜堇 *Enjoying Antiques* (*Wang gu tu* 玩古圖; National Palace Museum) and paintings under the title of *Eighteen Scholars* (*Shiba xueshi* 十八學士).

Catching Willow Floss

In *Catching Willow Floss*, the scholarly figure is quite similar to the prototype introduced in Qiu Ying's *Thatched Hall in a Peach Blossom Village* and *Copy of Portrait of Ni Zan* (plate 3.8). Judging from this similarity, it is reasonable to surmise that the gentleman standing by the willow is also meant to be one of the three Xiang brothers. By 1547, when this painting was likely produced, Xiang Yuanbian was only twenty-two years old. It is thus unlikely that the middle-aged gentleman portrayed in the painting was intended to depict him, but more likely meant to be Xiang Yuanqi, who, by that time, was forty-seven years old. As will become apparent below, the blue area on which the figure is standing represents a reference to a Song painting in the Xiang family collection.

In this painting, two large willow trees occupy almost a quarter of the composition. A scholar is standing by one willow tree with his left hand resting on the trunk. He is holding a willow branch with his right hand. He appears to be looking at three children, who are picking up willow floss that has fallen from the trees. This painting perfectly depicts the simple life of a scholar, as portrayed in a Bai Juyi poem that deploys the same phrase “willow floss” used in the painting's title.

Intriguingly, the area on which the figures appear is entirely covered in blue. This blue is significantly lighter than any other blue in the composition; hence it is a blue of more finely ground pigment of a higher grade. This blue stands out from the more saturated blue applied to the garments of the houseboy on the right, and to one of the two children lying on the ground.

Even the blue applied onto the window blind of the thatched hut is more saturated than the pale blue area at the center. The blue of this central area was also applied evenly, with little tonal variation. In contrast, the hill at the top of composition and the rocks below the houseboy are colored by a mixture of blue and sienna pigments and indigo.

In fact, many pictorial elements found in *Angler-Recluse by a Willow Pond* (*Liu tang diao yin tu* 柳塘釣隱圖), yet another painting that was once in the Xiang family collection, have been transferred into Qiu Ying's *Catching Willow Floss*, forming part of the central blue area (plates 4.16.1–2). Datable to the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279), this painting bears a seal that once belonged to Xiang Yuabian stamped on the upper left corner.⁶⁸ This painting depicts the simple life of a recluse who has confined his life to a pond and thatched hut.⁶⁹ It depicts a scholar riding on a boat, who can be seen through the bush in the lower right corner. He is looking at the scenic thatched hut surrounded by a variety of vegetation on the right. As in Qiu Ying's painting, the thatched hut in the Song painting is also accompanied by willow trees. At the center, there is also a piece of triangular land protruding from the hut. This feature becomes the central blue area in Qiu Ying's painting. The lozenge pattern on the fence in this Southern Song painting is exactly the same as the pattern on the fence behind the scholar in Qiu Ying's painting.

⁶⁸ The seal reads as “The seal of the secret booklet of Xiang Molin (i.e.: Yuanbian) at his adulthood 項墨林父祕笈之印”

⁶⁹ For a study of the relationship between the subject matter of fishing and reclusion, see You-heng Feng, “‘Fishing Society at Hsi-sai Mountain’ by Li Chieh (1124-before 1197): A Study of Scholar-Official's Art in the Southern Song Period,” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 1996), 97-159.

Through these references, the sense of reclusion is manifested in Qiu Ying's *Catching Willow Floss*. First, many of its pictorial elements are borrowed from *Fishing Recluse at a Willow Pond*, which also embodies a strong sense of reclusion. Second, Qiu Ying's painting is an illustration of Bai Juyi's poem, which depicts a recluse with free time for watching children catching willow floss. Obviously, Qiu made a conscious choice in determining which painting to borrow pictorial motifs from, a choice that led to the sophistication of this painting.

Zi Lu Asking the Way

In this painting, mineral blue is concentrated in the foreground, where the figures mentioned in the story appear (plates 4.17.1). This placement of the color is encoded with Xiang Yuanbian's interest in reclusion and literature, and it provides a reference to a Southern Song painting in his collection.

Selected from *The Analects*, the chapter *Zi Lu Asking the Way* is a story about Confucius sending his disciple Zi Lu to ask the way during one of their travels. The story also includes two recluses, Zhang Ju (長沮) and Jie Ni (桀溺), who discuss political views with Zi Lu and Confucius. In Qiu Ying's illustration, Confucius is riding in a carriage pulled by a horse. The carriage is surrounded by rocks, trees, and other landscape elements. One of his disciples is shown walking at his side, while Zi Lu converses with only one, and not both, of the recluses mentioned. Clearly, Qiu Ying's illustration does not closely follow the story.

Mineral blue was applied to the ribbons affixing the canopy to Confucius's carriage, the collars of most figures, the immediate area of the carriage, the ground on which the recluse

stands, and the tree leaves around the carriage (4.17.2). The rest of the painting is largely colored by ink and plant dyes. For example, the huge rock at the lower edge of the painting was configured via ink outlines and patches of ink wash. The farm fields and distant mountains at the back are completely free of mineral blue. This identification of what and where colors were applied reveals that azurite blue was reserved for the immediate area of the four figures, prominently located at the foreground of the composition.

Mineral blue again functions as a means of identifying motifs containing art-historical references to a painting once in the Xiang family collection. In this painting, the ribbons, the canopy, and the posture of Confucius were all borrowed from a section in the twelfth-century hand scroll *Custom of Tang* (*Tang feng tu* 唐風圖), which includes more than one seal belonging to Xiang Yuanbian (plate 4.17.3).⁷⁰ In Qiu Ying's painting, the ribbon tied to the canopy, including the way in which its ends flow and dangle in midair, are strikingly similar to the twelfth-century hand scroll. However, the scroll *Custom of Tang* is not an illustration of *The Analects*, but rather a reference to *Mao's Version of the Book of Songs* (*Mao shi* 毛詩), a Western Han-dynasty (209 BCE – 9 CE) recompilation of the Western Zhou-dynasty (ca. the eleventh to seventh centuries BCE) work *Book of Songs* (*Shi jing* 詩經).⁷¹ The section from which Qiu Ying

⁷⁰ There are two versions of *Custom of Tang* extant today. One in the Liaoning Provincial Museum, and the other in the National Palace Museum at Taipei. The sections *Fur Coat* in these two scrolls are almost identical. Furthermore, both scrolls bear the seals that belonged to Xiang Yuanbian, and thus both were once in his family collection.

⁷¹ *The Book of Song* is an anthology that gathers stories from all over the country. "Custom of Tang" refers to the songs gathered from the Jin era.

derived *Zi Lu Asking the Way* is “Fur Coat (*Gao qiu* 羔裘),” the seventh section of *Custom of Tang*.

Furthermore, Qiu Ying’s *Zi Lu Asking the Way* is rather sophisticated in terms of the way in which it provides references to the literary interests of Xiang Yuanbian. The story of *Zi Lu Asking the Way* is connected to a seal of Xiang Yuanbian’s. In that story, the names of the two recluses are Zhang Ju (長沮) and Jie Ni (桀溺). Significantly, Xiang Yuanbian had a seal that reads “the comparable of Ju and Ni (*Ju Ni zhi chou* 沮溺之儔),” which is clearly a reference to the names of the two recluses, “Ju (沮)” in “Zhang Ju” and “Ni (溺)” in “Jie Ni.” Moreover, Xiang Yuanbian used the seal “the comparable of Ju and Ni” as early as 1547; it was stamped on *Album of Imitating Song-Yuan Models* dated to that year. Because *Zi Lu Asking the Way* bears strong stylistic similarities to that album, it is safe to say that Xiang Yuanbian was already using the seal when Qiu Ying depicted *Zi Lu Asking the Way*. In this regard, the recluse in the lower left corner of Qiu Ying’s painting stands for the seal, which literally means the combination of Zhang Ju and Jie Ni, and, of course, Xiang Yuanbian as well. That could explain why Qiu Ying depicts only one and not two recluses, because the recluse stands for Xiang Yuanbian, who declared himself as “the comparable” of the two recluses.

The above discussion thus shows that the use of blue in *Zi Lu Asking the Way* not only serves as a marker of motifs borrowed from older paintings in the Xiang family collection, but also highlights the principle pictorial elements that encode Xiang Yuanbian’s interest in classical Chinese literature. The resulting painting is a highly tailored, personal, and sophisticated work, whose true meaning was only open to Qiu Ying and Xiang Yuanbian.

Pipa Songs at Xuanyang River

Qiu Ying's *Pipa Songs at Xuanyang River* is an illustration of a time-honored song-poem, *Pipa Xing*, composed by the Tang poet Bai Juyi (773–846; plate 4.18). The song-poem is about Bai Juyi, who bid farewell to his guest at Xuanyang River. During the conversation with his guest, Bai met a courtesan who was famous when she was young, but was abandoned when she grew old. This song-poem was so popular that the painter Guo Xu (郭翹; 1456–1532), a contemporary of Qiu, also painted an illustration of it, but Guo's work is quite different from Qiu Ying's composition (plate 4.19).⁷² In Guo's hanging-scroll painting, the entire song-poem is inscribed at the top of the scroll. Below, Guo depicts a scholarly figure listening to a courtesan playing a pipa.

Without a close examination of Qiu Ying's narration of Bai Juyi's song-poem, his painting would merely be a heavily pigmented landscape featuring figures. In fact, mineral blue pigment functions as a means of leading viewers to pay closer attention to pictorial elements inspired by minor details in the song-poem. Although azurite blue does not highlight any pictorial motif bearing stylistic reference to the field of ancient painting, the pigment is still reserved for important pictorial motifs. This painting thus stands as an example showing that Qiu Ying deployed the abovementioned emphasizing strategy in a different context—one in which

⁷² Howard Rogers and Sherman E. Lee, *Masterworks of Ming and Qing Painting from the Forbidden City*, (International Art Council, 1988), 125-7.

there were other motifs that needed to be highlighted. Written almost 1,250 years ago, the first part of the song-poem, as translated by Burton Watson reads:⁷³

| | | |
|----|---|---------|
| 1 | Xuanyang in the Yangzi River, seeing off a guest at night; | 潯陽江頭夜送客 |
| 2 | Maple leaves, reed flowers, autumn somber and sad: | 楓葉荻花秋瑟瑟 |
| 3 | The host had dismounted, the guest already aboard the boat, | 主人下馬客在船 |
| 4 | We raised our wine, prepared to drink, though we lacked flutes and strings. | 舉酒欲飲無管弦 |
| 5 | But drunkenness brought no pleasure, we grieved at the imminent parting; | 醉不成歡慘將別 |
| 6 | At parting time, vague and vast, the river lay drenched in moonlight. | 別時茫茫江浸月 |
| 7 | Suddenly we heard the sound of a lute out on the water; | 忽聞水上琵琶聲 |
| 8 | The host forgot about going home, the guest failed to start on his way. | 主人忘歸客不發 |
| 9 | We traced the sound, discreetly inquired who the player might be. | 循聲暗問彈者誰 |
| 10 | The lute sounds ceased, but words were slow in coming. | 琵琶聲停欲語遲 |
| 11 | We edged our boat closer, inviting the player to join us, | 移船相近邀相見 |
| 12 | Poured more wine, turned the lamps around, began our revels again. | 添酒回燈重開宴 |
| 13 | A thousand pleas, ten thousand calls, and at last she appeared, | 千呼萬喚始出來 |
| 14 | But even then she held the lute so it half hid her face | 猶抱琵琶半遮面 |

The first fourteen lines of the song-poem are crystallized in Qiu Ying's painting in one single scene. Firstly, the time, season, and location of the story are implied by the lit candle, the red maple leaves dangling on barren trees, and the shoreline where a groom is standing by a horse, respectively.⁷⁴ Secondly, the scholarly figure, or the master, is situated inside the boat with

⁷³ Burton Watson, *Po Chü-i: Selected Poems* (Columbia University Press, 2000), 78-9.

⁷⁴ A lit candle is often an indicator of nighttime in traditional Chinese painting. Painters rarely darken the overall chromatic tonality to represent nighttime.

his guest. His facial expression looks neutral, perhaps suggesting that he is engaging in a conversation or listening to music. Since there is a houseboy preparing wine in the boat, the master and his guest might be planning to drink and hold a banquet after the courtesan joins them. Thirdly, the two boats—one carrying the master and his guest and one carrying the courtesan—are closely positioned next to each other by the shoreline. Their positions mirror the interaction between the courtesan and the master in the song. The position of the smaller boat, which is with most of it hidden behind the rock, accords well with the shyness and hesitation of the courtesan. In fact, as mentioned in the fourteenth line of the song-poem, half of the courtesan's face is concealed. Unlike Guo Xu's illustration of the same story, Qiu Ying creates a scene that encompasses the mood, moment, interactions between the figures, and overall narrative of the story, without needing to include a single word inscribed in the painting.

Not unexpectedly, azurite blue in Qiu Ying's painting is concentrated in the foreground of the composition. It was applied on the saddle of the horse, the shoreline, the curtains and architectural decorations of the boat, the rocks above the larger boat, and the leaves that cover the boat of the courtesan—all of which represent critical elements in Qiu Ying's pictorial narration of the story. In contrast, the amount of mineral blue used drastically diminishes in the middle and upper parts of the composition. Mineral blue is only used to slightly color the small mount and boats in the middle of the painting's right side. It is completely absent from the objects and landscape elements depicted at the top of the painting. Clearly, mineral blue was reserved for the pictorial elements that actively narrate the story, drawing the eyes of the viewers

to look at those elements, while channeling viewers' thoughts to the storyline of the song-poem.⁷⁵

Qingwan (Pure Pleasure) and Admiring Antiques in Bamboo Courtyard

A strong sense of contradiction pervades all of the Qiu Ying paintings discussed so far in this chapter. On the one hand, mineral blue provides a roadmap to motifs encoded with a variety of specific messages. At the same time, these motifs are always hidden in a sea of beautiful colors. Mineral blue is at the center of this contradiction, both withholding and unveiling messages. This section argues that the idea *qingwan*, or pure pleasure, in traditional Chinese connoisseurship can help us analyze and deepen our understanding of the use of blue in these paintings. In the following discussion, this section will first explain the idea of *qingwan* and how this idea shares conceptual affiliations with Qiu Ying's paintings. It will then use Qiu Ying's *Admiring Antiques in Bamboo Courtyard* to confirm the close relationship among the uses of mineral blue, the idea of *qingwan*, and the three brothers of the Xiang family.

The Idea of Qingwan in Traditional Chinese Connoisseurship

A host of scholars have explained the definition and complex set of values of “*qingwan* pure pleasure.” First, *qingwan* promotes engaging with both contemporary and antique objects,

⁷⁵ There is no evidence showing that this painting was dedicated to any Xiang family member. However, the abovementioned *Catching Willow Floss* was also inspired by a line in a poem by the Tang poet Bai Juyi, and clearly reveals the involvement of the Xiang family. *Pipa Songs at Xuanyang River* was likely dedicated to Xiang Yuanqi, who is known for his love of literature and poetry.

separating itself from pure antiquarianism. It demands both knowledge and financial might. Second, the idea of *qing*, or pure, in “*qingwan* pure pleasure” signifies engaging with cultural objects and activities *in moderation*. One can take pleasure from these objects and activities, but should not become addicted. It requires an attitude that refrains from dwelling on cultural objects and activities: “Taking them too seriously was risky.”⁷⁶ Thirdly and importantly, the Ming dynasty experienced “increased population, rapid urbanization, and economic growth [that] provided the foundation for a fluid and flexible status system, free of legal barriers to status mobility.”⁷⁷ This rapid change in social structure catalyzed an “attempt to situate difference at the point of consumption” and handling of cultural objects.⁷⁸ The ability to take pleasure in cultural objects and activities with an unstudied and nonchalant grace both qualified and valorized one’s standing in Ming elite society.⁷⁹

The notion of *qingwan* existed both before and after the time of Qiu Ying and the Xiang brothers, proving its importance and endurance in traditional Chinese connoisseurship. Prefaced in 1629 and written by Li Yu (李璣) from Suzhou, the treatise *Catalogue of Pure Pleasure Par*

⁷⁶ Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2004), 85; Li Waiyee, “The Collector, the Connoisseur, and Late Ming Sensibility,” *T’oung Pao*, vol. 81, 4.5 (1995): 271-4.

⁷⁷ J. P. Park, *Art by the Book: Painting Manuals and Leisure Life in Late Ming China* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2012), 9. Park explains “many traditional local elites moved from rural villages to towns and cities... These new urban dwellers began living more luxuriously than before, some adding to their incomes through investments... (p. 8).”

⁷⁸ Clunas (2004), 72. For a historical precedence, see Martin J. Powers’s study which focuses on the “competing systems of social value, contrary notions of right and wrong” between provincial scholars and the court manifested in tomb decorations (p.67). Idem., “Royal Politics and Royal Tastes in Late Han China,” *Studies in the History of Art* Vol. 27, Symposium Papers XII: Cultural Differentiation and Cultural Identity in the Visual Arts, edited by Susan J. Barnes and Walter S. Melion (Washing Gallery of Art, 1989), 62-79.

⁷⁹ Clunas (2004), 85; Li (1995), 279.

Excellence (*Qunfang qingwan pu* 羣芳清玩譜) covers twelve guidelines for *qingwan*, or pure pleasure.⁸⁰ Each of these guidelines instructs readers on how to derive pleasure from cultural objects and activities with discernment, through providing fundamental facts and instructions about the artifact or activity in question. These guides include: records of *ting* vessels, a history of ink cakes, a connoisseurship of painting, an illustrated catalogue of the scholar rock, a history of the vase, the rules of chess, a catalogue of orchids, a secret treatise of tea, a realm of fragrances, poems about picking chrysanthemums, and, lastly, a catalogue of daises.⁸¹ Despite the late date of this treatise, much of Li Yu's ideas about deriving pleasure and separating such a style of living from that of the vulgar plebeian originates from the thirteenth-century treatise *Record of the Pure Registers of the Cavern Heaven* (*Dongtian qinglü ji* 洞天清錄集), written by Zhao Xihu (趙希鵠; 1170–1242).⁸² As scholars Van Gulik and Craig Clunas explain, Zhao's treatise sets "much of the pattern for the much larger number of the texts of this type."⁸³ Highly resembling the content of Li Yu's treatise, Zhao's *Pure Registers* covers "antique *qin* zithers, antique inkstones, antique bronze vessels, curious rocks, table screens, brush rests, a reservoir [that] contains water for making ink, antique manuscripts and calligraphy, antique and modern rubbings of stone inscriptions, and antique paintings."⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Yong Rong 永瑤 edited., *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 四庫全書總目提要 (Shanghai: Shangwu yin shuguan, 1933), 2776.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Clunas (2004), 9. The English title is Clunas's translation.

⁸³ Ibid., 9.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

All of Qiu Ying's paintings discussed in this chapter so far share conceptual affiliations with the idea of *qingwan*. First of all, the differentiating power of these paintings coheres with the valorizing and qualifying mechanisms within *qingwan*. Using azurite blue to highlight pictorial motifs bearing art-historical references differentiated viewers with different degrees of knowledge about ancient painting. Only a handful of viewers, limited to the members of the Xiang family and those within their circle, were privy to the messages encoded in blue. Only those who could recognize the references were connoisseurs, for they looked at art with educated, discerning eyes. Moreover, by encoding messages in blue, Qiu Ying and his patrons edified and entertained themselves with the ancient painting styles. They were in fact learning, and thus eschewed the unrestrained indulgence prohibited in *qingwan*, legitimizing their production and consumption of heavily pigmented paintings. In addition, evidence shows that Qiu Ying's paintings were also regarded as *qingwan* per se. Xiang Yuanbian wrote a colophon to Qiu's *Picture Albums of Six Scenes of Imitating Song and Yuan Models* (*Song Yuan jiu jing tu* 宋元六景圖冊). Written in 1547, Xiang confirms that the six paintings in the album are Qiu Ying's imitation of ancient models and he takes the album as *qingwan*.⁸⁵ Likewise, Qiu Ying's *Excellent Pleasure amid a Forest and Pavilion* (*linting jiaqu tu* 林亭佳趣圖) bears a seal that belonged to the Qing-dynasty collector A'er Xipu (阿爾喜普) that reads, "*Huaiting qingqan* (懷庭清玩; pure pleasure of Mr. Huaiting)." Both Xiang Yuanbian's inscription and A'er's seal indicate that Qiu Ying's paintings are legitimate objects in *qingwan*.

⁸⁵ The colophon reads as “宋元六景。仇英十洲臨古名筆。墨林項元汴清玩。嘉靖二十六年（1547）春。摹於博雅堂。隆慶庚午仲春裝襲。”

Much about the lives of the two younger brothers in the Xiang family further verify their intense concern with self-valorization and self-qualification in the Xiang family. In the 1540s, when Qiu Ying worked for the Xiang family, the two younger brothers were only in their early twenties. At that time, the middle brother, Xiang Dushou (項篤壽; 1521–1586), had no academic degree—he did not get his first academic degree until 1558. The youngest brother, Xiang Yuanbian (1525–1590), was only in his late teens and early twenties. Because of the wealth of their eldest brother and family, these two young men had many opportunities to meet scholars and social elites. They were stepping into their adulthood and assimilating themselves into the elite community. Their interest in scholarly activities, like antiquarianism, paintings, and literature, as well as their awareness of the politics involved in *qingwan*, is clearly manifested in their patronage of Qiu Ying’s paintings.

Admiring Antiques in a Bamboo Courtyard

A close inspection of Qiu Ying’s *Admiring Antiques in a Bamboo Courtyard* (*Zhuyuan pingu tu* 竹苑品古圖) reveals that the three figures at the center of the painting are the three brothers of the Xiang family (plate 4.20). This painting thus portrays the three brothers engaging in cultural activities while surrounded by cultural objects; it is a picture of the three brothers taking pleasure in *qingwan*. Moreover, almost all of the objects in the composition are adorned with some mineral blue, showing the close connection among the mineral, *qingwan*, and the three brothers.

Surrounded by blue pigments and cultural objects, the three scholars at the center of this painting are meant to be the three brothers of the Xiang family: Xiang Yuanqi, Xiang Dushou (項篤壽; 1521–1586), and Xiang Yuanbian. This claim is supported by many clues in the painting. First of all, Xiang Yuanbian is known as a lover of antiques. According to Xiang Mu's (項穆; the second half of the sixteenth century) preface to *Elegant Comments on Chinese Calligraphy* (書法雅言), Xiang Yuanbian was interested in studying bronze vessels and steles.⁸⁶

The practice of surrounding the members of the Xiang family with blue accords with Qiu Ying's *Thatched Hall in a Peach Blossom Village*, thus confirming the identity of the three central figures. Most importantly, the scholarly figure in a black robe is shown wearing a style of hat invented by the great poet and politician Su Shi (蘇軾; 1037–1101) (plates 4.21.1–2). This figure is apparently intended to be Xiang Yuanqi, because his sobriquet Zizhan (子瞻) is the same as Su Shi's.

Most of the pictorial elements in this painting are enhanced with blue (plate 4.22). Blue appears on the surface of most of the bronze vessels, indicating their antiquity. Among the antiques depicted in this painting, there are porcelain wares, some of which were also colored with azurite blue. Blue adorns the small bowl in the hands of a maid or courtesan on the left, the vessel carried by the houseboy in the center, and the vase and three cups on the right. Other cultural objects were also touched with blue. For example, the decorative rock at the back, the

⁸⁶ Xiang Mu 項穆, *Shufa yayan xu* 書法雅言序 (Preface to elegant comments on calligraphy), in *Chen xueshi xiansheng chuji* 陳學士先生初集 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2000), 673. Xiang Mu is the son of Xiang Yuanbian.

two chess containers, the rocks and cliffs on the two standing screens, the frame of the screen, the surface of the table at the center, and the exterior wrappings of some scrolls behind the women on the left. Moreover, blue was also applied to the immediate area of the chairs that the three gentlemen are sitting on. Garments in blue are worn by the two women on the left and the two houseboys at the center standing in front of the screen. There are also three blue cups behind the brown kettle on the right edge of the painting. Even the collar of the houseboy carrying four scrolls on his back is blue.

These objects, all of which contain some blue, are loaded with cultural significance. On the three tables standing between the birds-and-flowers screen and the three scholarly figures, there are some ancient bronze vessels, characteristic of ritual vessels used during the Shang and Zhou dynasties. Although the patterns on these vessels are not quite correct, their overall shape serves the purpose of signifying what they are. On the right of the painting, there is a houseboy readying the stove and preparing tea—an activity also favored by the leading scholar Wen Zhengming. The brown kettle on the stove can be identified as a *Yixing Zisha* (宜興紫砂) teapot (a teapot made with purple-brown clay from the Yixing area). At the top of the painting, there is a huge decorative rock, a bamboo grove, and a chess table, which can also be found in the painting *Elegant Gathering at the Apricot Garden* (*Xing yuan yaji tu* 杏園雅集圖), an early fifteenth-century work depicting a gathering of high-level government officials.⁸⁷ Bamboo is one of the favorite subjects of literati painting, for it symbolizes integrity. The rock is an

⁸⁷ This painting is kept in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

indispensable element in a Chinese garden. The chess game is symbolic of immortality and reclusion.

Judging from the great variety of paintings in the Xiang family collection, the few paintings depicted here were carefully selected.⁸⁸ The paintings included as elements of this composition all reflect the Tang-Song (618–1127) court art tradition. The two circular paintings resting on the table are obviously fan-shaped paintings produced in the Southern Song court. The standing screen, behind the two gentlemanly figures and the houseboy in blue, depicts a deep mountain valley bisected by a river stream. On both sides of the valley are architectural complexes and a pavilion. The valley also includes the use of azurite blue pigments. This screen therefore suggests the landscape tradition of the late Tang dynasty (the eighth to ninth centuries) and specifically the painters Li Sixun and Li Zhaodao, who often depicted architectural complexes amid far away mountains and valley scenery, using azurite blue and malachite green pigments. The standing screen next to this landscape screen depicts two birds perching on a branch with blue-green leaves and red flowers. On the right, there is a rock from which the branch is growing. On the left, there is a moon visible through dense fog. This standing screen belongs to birds-and-flower painting tradition. The composition of this standing screen is very similar to *Finches and Bamboo*, painted in the Northern Song dynasty in the court of Emperor Huizong. In both paintings, there is a rock on the right and a branch growing out of the rock,

⁸⁸ Previous studies believe that Xiang Yuanbian began his art business at a very young age. However, recent studies reveal that Xiang Yuanbian and his elder brothers actually inherited the treasures. The family collection reached its peak during the time of the three brothers. See Feng Zhiguo 封治國, “*Xiang Yuanbian jiaxi ruogan wenti xinkao* 項元汴家系若干問題新考 (New studies on several issues of Xiang Yuanbian and his family),” *Xuedeng* 學燈 20 (2011). This article is found online and thus has no page number. I am still unable to locate a printed version.

with two birds resting on the respective branches. Not unexpectedly, *Finches and Bamboo* was also in Xiang Yuanbian's collection.⁸⁹ The paintings represented in *Admiring Antiques in a Bamboo Courtyard* thus imply a taste for court art.

The standing landscape screen and the two figures are located at the most structurally significant point of the composition and are conspicuously emphasized by mineral blue, serving to suggest their superior status. In this painting full of art and cultural objects, only the landscape-motif standing screen is conspicuously framed by a thick layer of mineral blue. In front of it, there is a houseboy whose garment is densely covered in blue. The blue of this garment is denser and brighter than the blue of the garment worn by the houseboy standing on the other side of the table. Landscape painting, the subject of this standing screen, was regarded as the most prestigious subject by the aforementioned art critic Tang Zhiqi.⁹⁰ The mountain valley motif of this screen evokes the arts of Li Sixun and Li Zhaodao, two of the most celebrated painters in the history of traditional landscape painting. In this regard, blue is yet again used consciously to emphasize the landscape screen, distinguishing it from the other paintings in the composition. The blue frame is a marker of this time-honored landscape tradition and, at the same time, a frame for the two brothers sitting in front of it. The scholarly figure on the left is apparently Xiang Yuanbian, because his facial features are quite similar to his representation in the abovementioned *Zi Lu Asking the Way*. The two scholarly figures on the

⁸⁹ *Finches and Bamboo* does not bear the inventory number of Ten Thousand Words. It is thus very difficult, if not impossible, to surmise when it entered the Xiang family collection.

⁹⁰ Tang Zhiqi, fascicle 1 of *Huishi weiyán* 繪事微言 (humble complaints on the practices of painting) (Hailing congke, 1910s), 1a.

right are his two older brothers. This hierarchy between the three brothers may explain why the two figures on the right are framed in blue, while the one on the left is not.

Conclusion

This chapter shows that there is a conventional practice of coordinating the colors in a composition as a way of creating focal points. This practice allows the painter to invite viewers to reflect upon certain motifs that enrich the overall meaning and sophistication of a painting. Because of his rigorous standard in applying colors, Qiu Ying extended this practice in new directions. Though he sometimes continued to highlight motifs with azurite blue in the traditional way, he developed a skill in which he emphasized non-blue motifs by framing, flanking, or surrounding them with blue objects. Having interpreted these six paintings, it can be said that he subtly referenced many dimensions of his patrons. This analysis demonstrates that Qiu Ying, toward the late period of his career, used azurite to convert the inward desires of his patrons into outward signs by reserving the prized pigment for pictorial motifs that were important to his patrons. With his use of azurite blue, Qiu Ying allowed his patrons to subtly state their admiration for the renowned scholar, poet, and painter Ni Zan, the fraternity between the three brothers, and their accumulation of a formidable collection of art. He satisfied the self-valorization of his patrons in a sophisticated way, proving his sensitivity to the communicative power of the pigment blue.

All these actions that a pigment can perform must be understood in terms of the concept of materiality, in which a material can enhance the functions and meanings of an artwork and

denote a complex swathe of messages important to the artist and his patrons. In the next chapter, we will continue to discuss this power of azurite blue in Qiu Ying's paintings that use azurite blue to denote a complex sense of otherworldliness and transcendence. To this objective, we turn to Qiu's paintings that depict immortal mountains and transcendent beings.

CHAPTER FIVE

RETHINKING THE CONNOTATION OF IMMORTALITY IN AZURITE AND MALACHITE IN QIU YING'S OEUVRE

Introduction

During Qiu Ying's time, azurite was a potent ingredient used in alchemical elixirs and pharmaceutical drugs. This blue mineral was believed to be miraculously formed by the vapor of the universe, absorbing the essences of the sun and moon. As seen in *Taoist Canon*, collated in the fifteenth century, Taoist liturgical scriptures often used the color of this substance to describe the appearance of paradise. Additionally, many Taoist rituals and inner-alchemical practices adopted azurite blue as a medium for communicating with the divine.¹ Previous chapters revealed that Qiu Ying appropriated the economic value and literary tropes of azurite to enhance the depth of meaning in his pictorial motifs and subject matters. The question that follows is now: Did Qiu Ying also know about and appropriate the multiple connotations of immortality and transcendence associated with azurite? His *Towers and Pavilions in Immortal Mountains* (*Xianshan louge tu* 仙山樓閣圖; National Palace Museum; plate 3.9.1) and *The Transcendent Woman of the Sweet Olive Grove* (*Guilin xianzi tu* 桂林仙子圖; Asian Art Museum; plate 3.10) provide the answer. In the former painting, Qiu Ying used only azurite blue to color the cliffs of the immortal mountains (*xian shan* 仙山), where age-defying elixirs and immortals, or

¹ See chapter 1 of this dissertation.

transcendent beings with indefinite lifespans, can be found (plates 5.1.1–2).² However, in the blue-and-green landscape tradition, azurite blue and malachite green are more often than not used together to color landforms. Even in the Southern Song style of this tradition, it is malachite, instead of azurite, that is used alone or mixed into ink and plant-dye green. Strongly suggesting an iconographic use of the color, Qiu Ying's *The Transcendent Woman of the Sweet Olive Grove* features a blue rock as a prominent pictorial motif, positioned next to the transcendent woman (*xian zi* 仙子) in the composition. Given that these two paintings demonstrate subject matter related to the ideas of *xian* (仙; transcendence or immortality) in Chinese culture,³ they seem to evince Qiu's understanding and appropriation of the corresponding connotations of azurite.

Art historians have long been interested in the connotation of immortality associated with

² Hsu Wenmei 許文美, “*Xianqi piaopiao changleweiyang — Ming Qiu Ying Xianshan louge* 仙氣飄飄長樂未央—明仇英仙山樓閣 (Wafting vapor of immortality; eternal music has yet to end – Ming Qiu Ying's building and pavilions in immortal mountains),” *Gugong wenwu yuekan* 故宮文物月刊 282 (2006): 71-80; Yeung Chun Yi 楊晉宜, *Qiu Ying xianjing tu yanjiu* 仇英仙境圖研究 (A study of “realm of the immortals” paintings by Qiu Ying) (M.A. Thesis, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2012), 34-35.

³ In Robert Campany's studies, *xian* transcendence refers to individuals who enjoyed extraordinarily long lives, but were not deathless. The idea of *xian* transcendence emerged as late as the fourth century CE. It refers to people in the current world “who would later come to have the status of *xian*-hood attributed to them.” By comparison, “*xian* immortals” refers to people who have already *left* this world and *attained* immortality; they were believed to reside in immortal mountains. Likewise, “*xian* immortality” refers to this stage or concept of being. In contrast, “*xian* transcendents” refers to people who “are on their way toward being deemed a *xian*.” For Campany's discussion of the differences between the two translations, see his works *Making Transcendents: Ascetics and Social Memory in Early Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 33-4 and *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth: A Translation and Study of Ge Hong's Tradition of Divine Transcendents* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 4-5.

azurite and its native counterpart malachite. In an attempt to explain why azurite blue and malachite green were often used to depict the theme of immortal lands in traditional Chinese painting, scholars suggest that the two minerals were once ingredients used in elixirs and pharmaceutical recipes, and that their appearance in paintings thus evokes ideas of immortality.⁴ Also, because the two mineral pigments were two of the oldest colorants used in traditional Chinese painting, they denote a sense of archaism and remoteness that coheres well with the age-old theme of faraway immortal lands.⁵ Literati painters in the Yuan dynasty also appropriated the archaism and remoteness embedded within this color scheme, so as to express a penchant for reclusion.⁶ Claudia Brown revisits these ideas in her 1997 article, in which she illuminates the cultural significance of Scholars' Rock, a three-dimensional decorative rock, with the help of Chinese painting.⁷ With a meticulous array of examples, Brown shows that the rock, colored in azurite and malachite or ink-monochromatic, is an omnipresent motif that appears in Qin and Han representations of immortal mountains, paintings of the literati's travels to sacred sites,

⁴ John Hay, *Kernels of Energy, Bones of Earth: the Rock in Chinese Art* (New York: China House Gallery: China Institute in America, 1985), 48; Susan E. Nelson, "Imitation of Immortality in Chinese Landscape Painting of the Fourteenth Century," *Oriental Art* (1987.3): 279-280; Stephen Little, *Realm of the Immortals: Daoism in the Arts of China* (Cleveland, Ohio: Cleveland Museum of Art in cooperation with Indiana University Press; Bloomington, Ind.: Distributed by Indiana University Press, 1988), 31-32; Shih Shou-chien, "Eremitism in Landscape Painting by Ch'ien Hsuan" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1984), 279-291; Yeung Chun Yi (2012), 34-35.

⁵ Amy McNair, "On the Meaning of the 'Blue-and-Green Manner' in Chinese Landscape Painting," in *Perspectives on the Heritage of the Brush: Papers Presented at a Symposium on the Heritage of the Brush*, ed. Marsha Weidner (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1997), 65-77; Nelson, "Imitation of Immortality," 279-280.

⁶ Claudia Brown, "Chinese Scholar's Rocks and the Land of Immortals: Some Insights from Painting," in *Worlds within Worlds: The Richard Rosenbaum Collection of Chinese Scholars' Rocks* (Cambridge: Harvard University Art Museum, 1997), 68-70.

⁷ *Ibid.*

Buddhist figure paintings, and literati paintings denoting the scholars' penchant for reclusion.⁸

Brown's study also shows that a piece of rock, even without azurite or malachite, would be enough to evoke the idea of imaginary retreats to the immortal lands. All of these scholarly discussions reveal that the connotation of immortality in azurite and malachite cannot be assumed or taken for granted. More importantly, what is revealed in Tang, Song, and Yuan paintings does not necessarily apply to Qiu Ying's use of azurite in *Towers and Pavilions in Immortal Mountains* and *The Transcendent Woman of the Sweet Olive Grove*.

To illuminate the use of blue in the above two Qiu Ying paintings, we must—as existing scholarship on the symbolic meanings of pigments has demonstrated—contextualize the production of these works. In particular, *The Transcendent Woman of the Sweet Olive Grove*, with its inscriptions and inscribed poem, provides us with the necessary information to contextualize the meaning of the color scheme and motif of a blue rock in the composition. Also, it is important to note that the work is a sobriquet painting—a unique genre in Chinese painting that uses pictorial elements to evoke the sobriquet of the recipient. This context provides important insight into the meaning of the azurite rock motif. It is apparent that Qiu Ying chose azurite to denote the meaning of immortality in the recipient's sobriquet, which is eponymous with the title of the painting. Like Qiu Ying, there are other painters from the blue-and-green tradition who singled out azurite blue from malachite green and other colorants to impart a sense of transcendence in their paintings. A close observation of these paintings can situate Qiu Ying's use of azurite blue in a long tradition of painters who were aware of the multiple and nuanced

⁸ Ibid., 75.

relationships between azurite and immortality.

To support the above argument, this chapter also considers *Playing the Flute to Attract Phoenixes* (*Chuixiao yinfeng tu* 吹簫引鳳圖; plate 5.2) and *Jade Grotto in Transcendental Spring* (*Yudongxian yuan tu* 玉洞仙源圖; plate 5.3). Although Qiu Ying used both azurite and malachite to color the respective landscapes of these paintings, they do not negate the meaning of azurite in *Towers and Pavilions* and *The Transcendent Woman*. This is because *Playing the Flute* and *Jade Grotto* convey completely different ideas about immortality. Differing from the Song and Yuan scholar-painters who appropriated the theme of immortal lands and tradition of blue-and-green landscape painting for expressing their penchant for reclusion, Qiu Ying used *Playing the Flute* and *Jade Grotto* to represent a Ming-dynasty manifestation of immortality in which affluence, antiquarianism, and immortality commingled into one complex lifestyle philosophy.

Qiu's Use of Azurite Blue in *Towers and Pavilions in Immortal Mountains*

As the most meticulous work in Qiu Ying's oeuvre, *Towers and Pavilions in Immortal Mountains* has an abundance of details to consider. Stylistically speaking, it combines the brushwork technique contemporaneously favored by the literati with a painstaking depiction of architectural complexes. Through a close observation of the inscription, pictorial motifs, and extant textual materials, this painting was most likely intended as a birthday gift. However, its color scheme, with the choice of azurite alone as the color of all landscape elements, makes it stand out from preceding and contemporary approaches to the subject matter.

Qiu Ying's magnum opus *Towers and Pavilions* carries a carefully executed inscription

written by the scholar-official Lu Shidao (陸師道; 1511–1574; *jinshi* 1538). A tour de force of Lu's calligraphy in small regular script, the inscription is a rhapsody titled *Immortal Mountains*, originally composed by the Suzhou literary classicist Cai Yu (蔡羽; d. 1541).⁹ The rhapsody conveys an incredible landscape of deathless birds, evergreen grasses, and multistory platinum monasteries among a screen of protruding mountain ridges. Furthermore, the rhapsody promotes architectural grandeur in the landscape. Revolving corridors, clam chambers, and luminous palaces adorn the mountain range, while looming white clouds, smoke, and fog cover suspended roads, corridors, and pavilions. All of these literary descriptions given to the immortal mountains apparently evolved from the enduring belief of *xian* (transcendence or immortality) in Chinese culture.

The desire “not to live permanently on earth as a man, but rather to leave this world as a *xian* (仙), or immortal” emerged toward the end of the Warring States period (ca. the late fourth to early third century BCE).¹⁰ Those who had become a *xian* resided in immortal mountains and possessed the “drugs of no death.”¹¹ The princes and kings during the Warring States period did not seek to become immortal in the sense of *xian*, giving up their worldly pleasures; they merely coveted the “drugs of no death.”¹² By the sixth century CE, the once-distinct notions of “immortal mountains” and “worldly pleasures” completely coalesced into one complex idea. The emphasis on architectural grandeur in *Record of the Ten Islands* (*Hainei shizhou ji* 海內十洲記),

⁹ Hsu Wenmei (2006): 69.

¹⁰ Ying-Shih Yu, “Life and Immortality in the Mind of Han China,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* vol. 25 (1964-5): 88-9.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 90.

¹² *Ibid.*, 91.

a text believed to have been compiled in the sixth century CE, is a clear illustration of this transformation and speaks to the architectural complex in Qiu Ying's *Towers and Pavilions*.¹³ The ten immortal isles depicted in the text are all extremely outlying and almost inaccessible, with dangerous roaring waves and submerging water surrounding them. As repeatedly mentioned in the text, these isles produce never-withering grasses, fragrances, and wines that could bring the dead back to life and impart immortality. In addition, the isles are filled with a great variety of palatial halls and towers inhabited by the immortals, and with strange animals that also have life-resuscitating powers. All of these motifs also appear in Lu Shidao's inscription and Qiu Ying's painting.¹⁴

Positioned in the middle of the painting, a screen of steep and ragged mountain cliffs forms the main structure in Qiu's *Towers and Pavilions*. A formidable towering mountain occupies the center, with its staggering summit a juxtaposition of contrasting rock forms.

¹³ For the date of this treatise, see Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen, *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang* (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 2004): 115.

¹⁴ It should be acknowledged that, by Qiu Ying's time, the idea of immortal mountains had become very complex. The belief in immortal mountains became an integral part of larger beliefs, including the veneration of mountains as earthly paradises and sacred places. Immortal mountains also become a crucial part of inner alchemy, Taoist cosmology, and ritual paraphernalia. Many remote places, such as the isles between China's continents and Japan, also became known as immortal mountains in literary lamentations of farewell. Other ideas about prolonging life, like the notion that "material wealth is crucial to physical health," also cross-fertilized with the previously held ideas of immortality noted above. In order to understand the place of color in embodying this subject matter, it is important to observe closely the idea of immortality expressed in Qiu Ying's *Towers and Pavilions* and its pictorial contents. See, Lothar Ledderose, "The Earthly Paradise: Religious Elements in Chinese Landscape Art," in *Theories of the Arts in China*, edited by Susan Bush and Christian F. Murck (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983): 165-183; Shih-shan Susan Huang, *Picturing the True Form: Daoist Visual Culture in Traditional China* (Harvard: Harvard University Asia Center, 2012), 105-119; Edward Schafer, "Fusang and Beyond: The Haunted Seas to Japan," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 109.3 (1989): 379-400.

Angular rocks meet circular rocks, while large and small rocks mingle amongst the ink foliage that has been rhythmically dabbed in. At the two sides of this central mountain, there are craggy summits formed by vertical and slanted contour lines, and some distant hills suggested only by silhouettes. In addition, some overlapping and piled plateaus cut across a few summits, bringing with them flat tops to break up the terrain.¹⁵ These craggy rock forms remind the viewer of the appearance of azurite and malachite minerals in nature.

Clouds that look as if they are revolving within their own formation move across the mountain. In one region, thick clouds hover above and traverse the pavilion and multistory building. Separately, another mass of clouds enters the composition from the left and lingers between the central mountain and the plateaus. The movement of this second mass of clouds is suggested by Qiu Ling's brushwork. Soft, light, and meandering ink lines define the contours of the clouds. Inside the contours, airy and spiral brushwork suggests internal momentum that contrasts sharply with the magnificent stationary architectural complex in the painting.

Constructed via intricate brushwork executed with a ruler, the architectural complex occupying the lower part of the scroll echoes the improbable immortal land described in Lu Shidao's inscription. Entering the composition from the lower right corner, a corridor with a tile roof and fence attaches to a steep foothill nearby. The corridor was designed in congruence with the curvature of the cliff's surface, leading both the external viewers of the painting and the

¹⁵ As aptly pointed out by Hsu Wenmei, this agglomeration of vertical and steep mountain cliff evokes the Southern Song painting *Strange Peaks and Myriad Trees* (*Qifeng wanmu tu* 奇峰萬木圖; National Palace Museum). Yet, other than the similarity of motifs, the landscape elements in these two paintings have been painted in different ways and arranged in different locations. See Hsu (2006): 71–80.

internal intended travelers within to the magnificent multistory building. Rising from the water, the building has a tall and vast terrace base, on which a phoenix and crane are positioned to welcome guests. The building appears to be a three-level structure, with eaves, hip-and-gable roofs, ridge-end ornaments, and a bracketed timber system. All of the pillars, roofs, and ridges have been tinted with varying concentrations of ink, and some of the architectural components even appear to have had washes of a light indigo. At the top of the building, the viewer sees a scholar facing outward. On the second level of the building, a figure in scholarly attire gazes outward, possibly looking toward the pavilion or the myriad cliffs amidst the dense clouds.¹⁶ The elegance of the lifestyle of this immortal scholar is assured by the presence of a houseboy, who is patiently waiting in the next compartment. At any moment, they may wander to a rocky isle nearby.

Indeed, the terrace opens up to a set of stairs that leads to one such rocky isle. Partly blocked by the tall, slender pine trees in the foreground, this craggy isle is almost barren, with only a dozen white-pigmented plum-blossom trees surrounding the pavilion at the center. Built on a rock-formed base with steep steps, the pavilion is covered by a complex roof structure composed of one pyramid at the center with a gable on each side. The bracketing system and ornaments on the ridges have been rendered with laconic brushwork. Two scholars occupy the front area of the pavilion. One scholar reclines on a dais while conversing with a second scholar who is sitting in front of him. Their gleaming white clothes resonate with the white curtain hanging down from the roof. The scholars are accompanied by a houseboy as they sit amidst a

¹⁶ Yeung Chun-yi has demonstrated that the figures in the painting are wearing scholarly attire. *Idem.*, 81-83.

dozen plum-blossom trees.

The architectural complex in this painting may have been inspired by a fascination with the immediate precinct of Taiye Pond (*Taiye chi* 太液池), an area contemporary with Qiu Ying's work. Taiye Pond, today the *Zhongnan Hai* (中南海) area, was once an imperial park constructed as early as the Yuan dynasty, and it continued to be maintained throughout subsequent dynasties. Emperor Jiajing (嘉靖) even converted the pond into the Western Garden (*Xi yuan* 西苑), a place with dual functions, serving both as an administration arena and a paradise-garden for his Taoist cultivations.¹⁷ The Qing-dynasty *Studies of Old Anecdotes about the Capital, Made under Imperial Order* (*Qinding rixia jiuwen kao* 欽定日下舊聞考) repeatedly mentions that palatial halls were paired with pavilions in this area.¹⁸ There is also an entry that describes how the complex looked during the Yuan dynasty. At that time, it was composed of a pavilion and a high-rise palace. This pairing is quite similar to the architectural complex depicted in Qiu Ying's painting. Furthermore, Qiu Ying's contemporaries Wang Shizhen (王世貞), Cai Yu (蔡羽), Yan Song (嚴嵩), Wen Zhengming (文徵明), Dai Xun (戴洵), and Feng Ruji (馮汝驥) all commented on the magnificence of the architectural constructions and other scenes at Taiye Pond.¹⁹ Wen Zhengming, who travelled to the Western Garden in person more than once²⁰, may

¹⁷ Maggie C.K. Wan, "Building an Immortal Land: The Ming Emperor Jiajing's West Park," *Asia Major* vol xxii, part 2 (2009): 65-99.

¹⁸ Yu Minzhong 于敏中 ed., *Qinding rixia jiuwen kao* 欽定日下舊聞考 (Studies of old anecdotes about the capital, made under imperial order) (Taipei: Guangwen shuju, 1986), fascicle 35, folio 13a, 18a-b, 19a-b, 25b and fascicle 36, folio 1a, 5b,

¹⁹ Ibid., fascicle 35, folio 22b, 23a and fascicle 36, folio 3a-b, 7b, 11b, 12a-b.

²⁰ Ibid., fascicle 35, folio 23a.

have told Qiu Ying about the scenery of this park.

Closing the *Towers and Pavilions* composition, Qiu Ying arranged elongated pine trees and grasses to appear in the foreground. Seven slender trees, with angular and zigzagging trunks, are shown growing from a ground slightly adorned with grasses represented by swift and curving indigo strokes. Light tints of indigo covered with short ink strokes arranged in asterisk patterns form a bevy of pine needles. The pine tree is recognized for its never-withering and evergreen qualities in Chinese culture. With this painstaking depiction of a wide range of auspicious iconography and grandeur pictorial elements, *Towers and Pavilions in Immortal Mountains* would seem to have a celebratory function.

This meticulous painting was most likely a birthday gift, because it shares a similar set of pictorial elements with Wen Zhengming's and Tang Yin's works painted for this purpose. According to two textual sources, Wen and Tang painted in the theme of "towers and pavilions in immortal mountains" and composed lengthy works of literature in celebration of the birthdays of respected members of the elite community. The first piece of text comes from the Qing-dynasty *Catalog of Painting and Calligraphy in the Peiwen Studio* (*Peiwen zhai shuhua pu* 佩文齋書畫譜).²¹ It reveals that Tang Yin painted a work measuring 65 inches high by 90 inches wide in celebration of the birthday of Wang Chong's mother.²² Not unexpectedly, Tang Yin's painting is also called *Towers and Pavilions in Immortal Mountains*, as it shares many thematic elements

²¹ This piece of textual material is also used by Ellen J. Laing and Hsu Wenmei. Ellen J. Laing, "Suzhou Pian and Other Dubious Painting in the Received Oeuvre of Qiu Ying," *Artibus Asiae* 59.3/4 (2000), 278; Hsu Wenmei (2006), 80.

²² Sun Yueban 孫岳頒 edited, fascicle 87 of *Peiwen zhai shuhua pu* 佩文齋書畫譜 (Painting and calligraphy catalogs of the Peiwen Studio) (Shanghai: Tongwen tushuguan, 1920), folio 35a.

with Qiu Ying's work of the same name.²³ The second text comes from the mid-sixteenth-century *Anthology of Clarity and Kindness* (*Qinghui ji* 清惠集). It informs us that the scholar-official Chen Yinghe (陳應和), together with Wen Zhengming, participated in a gathering to celebrate the birthday of the government minister Liu Lin (劉麟; 1474–1561).²⁴ In celebration of Liu's birthday, Wen Zhengming painted "a multistory building." Wen also added a representation of Liu Lin inside the building, thus bringing a further resemblance to Qiu Ying's *Towers and Pavilions* to our attention, as Qiu Ying's painting features a multistory building occupied by figures. For the same occasion, Chen Yinghe composed a long poem oriented around the beautiful scenery of the towers and pavilions.²⁵ Although the text does not specify whether the poem was inscribed onto the painting, it is nevertheless clear that Liu Lin's birthday was commemorated with a painting of great architectural complexes and a long literary work, both of which are prominent features of Qiu Ying's painting. Qiu Ying's painting thus shares many traits with known birthday-gift paintings of the time.

Wen Zhengming's and Tang Yin's paintings are no longer extant. However, judging from their oeuvres, they likely used azurite together with malachite. Textual descriptions of Wen Zhengming's and Tang Yin's birthday paintings both indicate their color palettes as consistent

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Liu Lin 劉麟, fascicle 12 of *Qing hui ji* 清惠集 (The Qinghui anthology) (Taipei: Shangwu yin shuguan, 1973), folio 32a. This version is a photocopy of the Qing dynasty version in *Silku quanshu*.

²⁵ Ibid.

with blue-and-green landscape (*qinglu shanshui*) paintings.²⁶ Prior to Qiu Ying, the Yuan dynasty painter Chen Ruyan also depicted an immortal mountain with azurite and malachite. The same color scheme was also adopted by Wen Zhengming's nephew, the painter and seal carver Wen Boren (文伯仁; 1502–1575), in his *Picture of Mountain Fanghu* (*Fanghu tu* 方壺圖) painted in 1567.

In his *Mountains of the Immortals* (*Xianshan tu* 仙山圖; The Cleveland Museum of Art; plate 5.4.1-2), Chen Ruyan stuns his viewers with an elegant array of one architectural complex, two bridges, three cranes, ten people, over forty-five pine trees, and countless shrubs within a myriad of winding and thrusting blue-green mountain peaks. All these landscape elements and man-made structures form an immortal isle sustained on a sea and wrapped in whirling clouds. Based on textual records produced around 1500, modern scholars suggest that the work was painted in celebration of the birthday of Pan Yuanming (潘原明; d. 1382), the brother-in-law of the rebel leader Zhang Shicheng (張士誠; 1321–1367).²⁷

In Chen's painting, landscape elements are colored in different tones of blue and green. A relatively lighter blue-green mineral, which appears to be atacamite, assumes the color of the plateaus. A duller blue mineral, which is most likely azurite, adorns the cliffs on the left along with the outcrops and boulders emerging from the sea. This subtle contrast of relatively lighter and darker pigments draws viewers' eyes toward the plateau, the brighter area. Yet another blue-

²⁶ The text in *Peiwenzhai shuhua pu* reads as “橫披青綠大幅”; the text in *Qing wei ji* reads as “絹本高七寸餘長三尺青綠界畫。”

²⁷ Wai-kam Ho, edited, *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting* (Cleveland Museum of Art, 1981), 140; Chou and Chung (2015), 201.

green pigment, whose hue stands between the previous two pigments, was carefully applied over the ridges, which have ink brushwork underneath. In addition, a highly reflective golden pigment appears over most of the mountain foothills, forming a chromatic symphony with the equally iridescent blue-green pigments, and representing a colorful palette in strong opposition to Qiu Ying's subtle coloration in *Towers and Pavilions*.

Painted in 1567, Wen Boren's *Picture of Fanghu* (plates 5.5.1–2) draws on the stylistic traditions of both meticulous brushwork and blue-and-green color palette to depict immortal mountains. According to the inscription in the lower left corner, this otherworldly mountain was dedicated to Gu Ruxiu.²⁸ It depicts one of the three mythical immortal isles located in the East Sea and shares many pictorial motifs with Chen Ruyan and Qiu Ying's paintings.²⁹ Unrolling this hanging scroll, viewers first see a sun, a semicircle in red, rising above the horizon.³⁰ Thick layers of white clouds and rich rosy morning glow, colored with both pigment and dye, congregate and dissipate around the sun. Further unrolling of the scroll reveals two outcrops in mineral blue rising from the sea. On the left, a thick layer of beige mist interspersed with touches of white clouds cuts diagonally across the sea, reaching the isle below.

A visionary isle formed by sharp triangular hills occupies the center of Wen Boren's scroll. Ragged and craggy, each of these hills is covered with azurite and malachite, as well as with a yellow-beige color. The coastline of this isle is filled with blue-green pebbles, boulders,

²⁸ Chou Fang-mei, "The Life and Art of Wen Boren (1502-1575)" (Ph.D. Dissertation, New York University, 1997), 140-9. As pointed out by Fang-mei Chou, Wen's painting is "sobriquet painting 別號圖" that illustrate the sobriquet of Gu Ruxiu 顧汝修 (active 16th century).

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ I have inspected this painting in summer 2012.

outcrops, and a wide variety of trees. Its coastline is also adorned with architectural structures. For instance, there is a red zigzagging corridor and a gate-tower near the bottom edge. Two pavilions decorate the right side of the isle, while a red building is located at the upper left of the coastline. At the center of the isle, towering pine trees encircle a red building complex with golden tiles. Behind this red architecture, there is a white terrace conspicuously circumscribed by a dense layer of coiled clouds. This trail of revolving white clouds also interlocks most of the blue and green summits on this immortal isle. By contrast, Qiu Ying's *Towers and Pavilions* greatly departs from the convention present in Boren's scroll that many painters before, during, and after Qiu's time adopted. The unusual coloration of Qiu's *Towers and Pavilions* has also been observed by scholar Martie W. Young. Young remarks, "The most striking impression of [*Towers and Pavilions*] is one of calculated understatement considering the grandeur of the theme expressed."³¹

Improvising a color palette that departs from the azurite and malachite convention, Qiu Ying adopts a meticulous approach of interweaving azurite, sienna, and ink brushwork and washes. Among these colors and media, it is interesting to note that azurite was only applied to the mountain cliff and nowhere else. Yet, many pictorial elements in this painting assume the colors of other materials, like sienna and indigo. This exclusive application of the blue mineral pigment makes the bulbous and angular mountain forms look as if they are themselves azurite ores. Secondly, mineral blue was carefully applied and works in harmony with the other coloring agents. It appears sparsely and thinly brushed onto some of the ink-outlined summits and

³¹ Martie W. Young, "The Paintings of Ch'iu Ying: A Preliminary Survey" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1961), 152.

protruding edges. Thus, it does not cover the thin layer of diluted ink and subtle ink texture strokes. Making the layering of colors more complex, mineral blue has been touched up with undulating angular brushwork that suggests crags, and indigo and ink dots representing moss.

Interacting with the blue color are ink washes and brushwork. While ink serves to outline all of the pictorial elements, there is a great variety of ink brushwork that imparts diverse texture and volume to land masses, mountain cliffs, and clouds. Indigo has been diluted and suffused over the ink silhouettes of distant cliffs, and applied lightly over elements in the timber structure. Thick white pigment assumes the color of plum blossoms, curtains, and the garments worn by the immortals. Even if the description of this painting were to stop here, Qiu Ying's *Towers and Pavilions* would still be recognized as the most meticulous work in his oeuvre.

Nevertheless, the uniqueness and meticulousness of this painting rest largely in Qiu's use of sienna. A discernable amount of sienna has been mixed into the ink that gives color to most of the towering cliffs and the land at the foreground. Sienna is also the color that marks groups of extremely fine and feathery brushwork scattered irregularly across the upper part of the painting. These clusters of minute sienna lines are hardly visible in reproduction. When looking at the painting two feet away, these fine sienna brushwork lines give the impression that a subtle layer of yellow-beige fog is looming over the landscape. This use of sienna seems to represent a technique that Qiu Ying deployed in a now lost painting. According to Yu Yunwen's description of Qiu Ying's copy of Li Sixun's *Sky and Sea Reflecting the Radiance of the Setting Sun* (*Haitian luozhao tu* 海天落照圖), there is a refined layer of strange yellow vapor (*guaiqi xunhuang* 怪氣

薰黃) looming over the landscape, looking as if it is changing its own color, in Qiu's version.³²

The subtle nuance created by the sienna brush lines in *Towers and Pavilions* seems to be the same technique.

The combination of azurite and a chorus of ink washes and brushwork reminds us of Qiu's contemporary Shen Zhou. Shen Zhou's *Album of the East Villa* (*Dongzhuang Tu* 東莊圖冊) is a painting album that includes twelve works depicting the various views of a private garden villa. In this work, most of the landscape elements are, like in Qiu's *Towers and Pavilions*, executed in ink brushwork and with azurite reserved for adding blue to some boulders. Thus, it is also a landscape of ink brushwork with some small addition of azurite blue. In this regard, Qiu Ying may have been inspired by Shen Zhou's technique, although Shen used long hemp-fiber-like brushwork (*pima cun* 披麻皴) to render the landscape. But this passing technical reference does not fully explain why Qiu Ying singled out azurite blue. In fact, with all of the otherworldly connotation associated with azurite blue, and given the production context of this painting, how could the use of the mineral not intend to denote immortality and transcendence?

The Motif of Azurite Blue Rocks as Iconography of Transcendence

While the coloration of *Towers and Pavilions* is elusive, it is certain that Qiu Ying was familiar with the unique power of azurite blue and used the mineral in an iconographic way similar to his painting *Study Studio amid Wutong Trees and Bamboo*, as discussed in chapter 3.³³

³² The text is cited in the introduction of this dissertation.

³³ See chapter 3 of this dissertation

This notion is made apparent in his *Transcendent Woman of the Sweet Olive Grove* (*Guilin xianzi tu* 桂林仙子圖; plate 3.10). In this painting that is currently at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Qiu Ying depicts a huge decorative rock covered by a thin layer of azurite blue next to a court lady representing the intended recipient, the Transcendent [Woman] of the Sweet Olive Grove (*Guilin xianzi* 桂林仙子). Over the decorative rock, Qiu Ying applied a thin and uneven layer of azurite, revealing a similar application technique of the mineral in his *Towers and Pavilions*. The prominent position of this rock seems to be an integral part of the work's overall message and conveys the desired identity of the recipient.

At the right, Qiu Ying depicts a court lady, a sweet olive tree, and the aforementioned decorative rock over a rocky shoreline. The court lady holds a fan and a twig of sweet olive, gazing toward the grove of sweet olive trees at the far left. The olive trees are faintly colored, casting a strong tonal contrast with the right side of the painting. The court lady is standing under an olive tree, which is growing behind the rock and bending toward her. Like the opaque colors that have been applied to the lady and the tree, azurite blue helps the decorative rock stand out from the ground and the landscape over the river, both of which are colored with highly diluted hues.

In fact, this painting carries allusions that evoke the name of the recipient. According to his own inscription, Qiu Ying created this fan painting for “the transcendent woman of the Grove of Sweet Olive.” The name of the recipient thus coheres with the pictorial contents of the painting, implying that this work belongs to the sobriquet genre that was popular in the Ming

dynasty.³⁴ When painting in the sobriquet genre, painters must use pictorial motifs to evoke or illustrate the sobriquet of the recipient. A “grove of sweet olive” is literally illustrated in the painting. The gender of the recipient and her distinguished social status are represented by the court lady, her exquisite garment, and the architectural element on the other side of the river. Also, the content of the poem inscribed in the center of the painting establishes an allusion to the myth of Cheng’e (嫦娥), who is said to have ascended to the moon to become a transcendent being. “The spring of the Guanghan Palace (*Guanghan chun* 廣寒春)” mentioned in the poem implies that the Guanghan Palace is where Cheng’e resides on the moon. Olive trees also grow in close proximity to Cheng’e’s palace. The sense of transcendence in the recipient’s sobriquet is thus manifested in these motifs in both the poem and the painting.

The largest pictorial element in the composition is the huge decorative rock that appears next to the lady and partly overlaps her sweet olive tree. The rock, with its prominent size and location in the composition, is apparently intended as a visual device to reinforce “the transcendence” of the sobriquet. This evidence that Qiu Ying used rocks painted in azurite to reinforce transcendence proves his understanding of the otherworldly connotations of the mineral. In fact, a few traditional Chinese painters recognized this specific meaning of mineral blue and used it to achieve a sense of transcendence in their works. Among these paintings, which will be discussed below, the seventeenth-century *Rabbit Under the Moon* also uses azurite to evoke the Chang’e legend, although it instead emphasizes the elixir kept in the moon.

³⁴ Chou Fang-mei, 132. Neglecting the inscription on the poem, Jean-Pierre Dubosc has misinterpreted the theme of the painting as the filial daughter Cao E 曹娥. See idem., “A Letter and Fan Painting by Ch’iu Ying,” *Archives of Asian Art* 28 (1974/1975): 108-112.

Taoist Immortal Crossing the River on a Lotus Raft

The earliest example of a painting that recognizes the otherworldly connotations of azurite is the Song dynasty (907–1279) work *Taoist Immortal Crossing the River on a Lotus Raft* (*Lianzhou xiandu tu* 蓮舟仙渡圖; plate 5.6.1). In this painting, azurite blue appears only on two key elements, both of which are connected to the Taoist immortal: the flying raft on which he is riding and the book of secret recipes that he is reading. The inclusion of these pictorial motifs in azurite blue seems to appropriate the otherworldly connotation of the mineral.

In *Taoist Immortal Crossing the River on a Lotus Raft*, the chosen composition signifies a strong sense of departure (plates 13a-b). An immortal is shown sitting and reading on a blue lotus raft hovering in the sky. The entire sky is dyed with ink and indigo, while the clouds that cut horizontally across the sky have been deliberately left unpainted. As the raft moves away from the mountain valley and sails across the sky, it leaves a conspicuous meandering trail that is slightly tinted red. The movement in this painting presents a strong sense of departure.

The passenger inside the lotus raft is apparently an earthly immortal (*dixian* 地仙). His appearance is very similar to how the King of Jin (sixth century CE) described the appearance and immortal attainment of the adept Xu Ze (徐則), who died and became an earthly immortal.

In the obituary of Xu Ze, the King of Jin states:

For fifty years, [Mr. Xu] wore rough clothing made of grass and vine. He ate pine [seeds] and atractylodes (i.e., roots). He resided and pursued hermitage in spirited mountains. [He] was lofty and possessed the gift of immortality. [He] had a wafting and surpassing temperament.... [He] was tired of the material world and so became an immortal. [He] returned to the perfected spiritual hall. His corpse remained soft and never changed its colors. Isn't this what the recipe of

occult practice regards as [the practices of] *shijie*³⁵ (屍解) and earthly immortals?³⁶

...草褐蒲衣，餐松餌朮，棲隱靈岳，五十餘年。卓矣仙才，飄然勝氣...厭塵羽化，反真靈府。身體柔軟，顏色不變，經方所謂屍解地仙者哉！

Unlike celestial immortals who have duties in the heavenly court, earthly immortals do not have such duties and spend their time traveling around distant and remote regions. The lotus raft, which has long been a symbol of pleasurable excursion in Chinese poetry, thus embodies the leisurely lifestyle of an earthly immortal.³⁷ But the significance of the lotus raft goes deeper, as it also serves to bring the earthly immortal away from the mountain. Moreover, the book that the immortal is reading may as well be a compilation of secret recipes for achieving immortality. Not unexpectedly, azurite was applied over the lotus raft and book. The lotus raft and the book are the most important pictorial elements, as they are the objects that allow the immortal to leave this world. This meaning is especially poignant, because the painter chose blue instead of the more rationalistic use of green for the lotus leaf (plate 5.6.2). Nevertheless, it is hard to pinpoint in this case, owing to the lack of direct evidence showing that the meaning of blue in this composition was consciously planned and deployed. Yet, in the next painting, there seems to be a stronger reasoning behind the choice of azurite blue.

³⁵ Leaving one's body and become an immortal.

³⁶ Li Yanshou 李延壽 ed., *Bei shi* 北史 (The history of northern dynasties) (Taipei: Tingwen shuju, 1980), 2915.

³⁷ For a list of poems revealing this idea, see *Hanyu dazidian bianji weiyuanhui* 漢語大字典編輯委員會 ed., Volume 9.1 of *Hanyu da zidian* 漢語大字典 (The complete dictionary of Chinese language) (Wuhan: Hubei cishu chubanshe, 1986), 499.

The Taoist Immortal Magu with a Crane

The Taoist Immortal Magu with a Crane (*Magu xianhe tu* 麻姑仙鶴圖; plate 5.7.1), kept in the Boston Museum of Fine Art, uses mineral blue to achieve a sense of strangeness and otherworldliness in the space that the immortal uses to cultivate her practice of immortality. Analyzing the pictorial contents of the painting in relation to the textual description of the ambiance of the place Magu carries out her cultivations, the connection between the use of blue pigment and Magu's saga is made apparent.

Many similarities between various texts and images reveal that the painter of *The Taoist Immortal* was aware of the appearance of the immortal Magu as described in texts. According to one of the earliest records of Magu, written by Yan Zhenqing (顏真卿; 709–785), Magu appears as “around eighteen or nineteen years old. She has a bun on her head. She lets the rest of her hair hang down and reach her waist.”³⁸ In this painting, Magu is depicted styling her hair, affixing her ponytail onto the bun on her head. The length of the ponytail, if untied, would reach her waist. Yan Zhenqing further states that the immortal Magu wears a multicolored, patterned, and iridescent garment, which is not made of silk. Echoing this description, the scarf and sash tied around the painted figure's neck and waist are indeed decorated with patterns. The featherlike element of her upper garment has been colored with white pigments, bringing forth a sense of iridescence. Furthermore, the half-withered tree leaves that form her garment still possess traces of sparkling golden pigment.

³⁸ Yao Jianhang 姚建杭, *Yan Zhenqing shufa quanji* 顏真卿書法全集 (The complete anthology of the calligraphy of Yan Zhenqing) (Beijing: Qunyan chubanshe, 1993), 300-301. The original text read as “季十八九許，頂中作髻，餘發垂之至要(腰).”

The environment in this painting may also have been constructed with reference to textual materials. A white crane with a red crown turns its head toward the right side of the background, drawing the viewer's eyes toward the architectural complex. A pine tree occupies the left side of the painting. Its crooked but robust trunk is adorned with half-withered branches and only a few clusters of pine needles. On the left, there is a towering mountain, while a small waterfall runs down from the valley. On the right, a multistory architectural complex reveals its luminosity, as golden iridescent lines highlight the ridges of the tile roofs. These pictorial elements also appear in a Northern Song work titled *Compiled Writings of Mr. Yuanfeng* (*Yuanfeng leigao* 元豐類藁). A farewell poem by Zeng Gong (曾巩; 1019–1083), the work mentions that there are pine trees, waterfalls gushing from cliffs, and a palatial hall in the Mountain of Magu (*Magu shan* 麻姑山), the place where Zeng Gong believed immortals could cultivate immortality.³⁹ Promoting a sense of purity, Zeng Gong states, “[I] see dust vanishes and a realm of tranquility.... Arriving here by coincidence, my mind and eyes awaken. And thus, [I] desire to purify my ears and reject the clamor.”⁴⁰ The Yuan dynasty compilation *Categorized Anthology of Anecdotes and Literature from Ancient to Contemporary [Times]* (*Gujin shiwen leiji* 古今事文類聚) includes a rhapsody that also describes the Mountain of Magu. According to the author Li Taibo (李泰伯), the mountain has a spring that is linked to a gushing waterfall.

³⁹ Zeng Gong 曾巩, fascicle 4 of *Nanfeng xiansheng uanfeng leigao* 南豐先生元豐類藁 (Compiled writings of Mr. Yuanfeng) (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1927-36), folio 10a. This version is based on a Ming dynasty imprint.

⁴⁰ Ibid., folio 10a-b. The original text reads as “但見塵消境靜... 偶來到此醒心目便欲洗耳辭囂喧。”

There are also clouds, grottoes, towering spruces, halls, and terraces, all of which simultaneously exist in the painting.⁴¹ Although these two texts mention dragons, apes, and deer that do not appear in *The Taoist Immortal*, there remain noticeable resonances between the painting and the texts, leading to an investigation of its color palette in relation to the texts.

In the painting, a visible layer of mineral blue pigment draws abreast the ink line delineating the contours of the suspended clouds (plate 5.7.2). Further blue pigments were sparingly applied over the contour lines that demarcate the clouds from the valley on the left. The same shade of blue pigment appears within the area between Magu and the declining tree branches. Blue pigment is also conspicuous around the clouds that covers the architectural complex. Apparently, mineral blue does not assume the color of any representational object in this painting, but instead takes the ephemeral stance of hovering in midair.

Unfortunately, there is no textual description of Magu's saga that mentions mineral blue pigment. Still, we can discern from the aforementioned resonances between the available textual materials and *The Taoist Immortal* that the blue pigment represents not one particular object or element, but instead something meaningfully and essentially abstract within the texts. Indeed, both texts emphasize the pure, enigmatic, and elusive atmosphere of the mountain. Zeng Gong articulates that "thousands of marvels and ten-thousands of curiosities can be attained through the senses. Exhausting all the ink and brush, who can actually transmit [these marvels and peculiarities]?"⁴² Zeng Gong's denial of the possibility of transmitting the ambiance of the environment clearly suggests a sense of enigma and elusion. These senses are only enhanced in

⁴¹ The text retrieved from the electronic database *Wenyuange siku quanshu*.

⁴² Ibid.. The original text reads as "千奇萬異可意得. 墨筆盡禿誰能傳."

Li Taibo's rhapsody. In Li's rendition, the place where Magu cultivates immortality engenders "luminous and uncanny trances." He states, "These trances emerge, transform, and disappear relentlessly. What [my] ears and eyes can hear and see cannot even reach one ten-thousandth!"⁴³ The fact that the mineral blue pigment in *The Taoist Immortal Magu with a Crane* was applied not onto any tangible object, but was instead used as an abstraction floating in midair, reveals that the pigment may have been deployed for the purpose of conveying an enigmatic and elusive impression.

Interestingly, the painter seems to have designed the composition with regard to the unrolling process of the scroll. All of the elements that define the atmosphere and space where Magu carries out her cultivations are located in the upper part of the scroll. When viewers unroll the scroll, they first see the towering pine tree, the hovering cloud, the enigmatic blue, and the architectural complexes. These elements thus prepare the viewer for entering into the pure realm of the immortal, who only reveals herself at the very end of the scroll.

Rabbit under the Moon

While the above painting seems to suggest an incredible atmosphere that is conflated with the formation and function of azurite, *Rabbit under the Moon* (*Yuexia tu tu* 月下兔圖) by Zhou Lun (周綸) singles out the use of blue coloration to bring attention to the medicinal function of the drug (plate 5.8.1). In this painting, a rabbit occupies the center of the composition, situated amid a landscape filled with thin layers of azurite-blue and malachite-

⁴³ Ibid.. The original text reads as “靈奇恍惚. 變見出沒匱. 耳目之觀聽. 曾不究夫萬一.”

green rocks. Resting on a blue rock, the rabbit looks attentively to the moon. Above the rabbit, flowers and a sweet olive tree branch cut across the composition.⁴⁴ All of these pictorial elements allude to the traditional belief of an immortal rabbit making an elixir or magic potion of immortality on the moon.

In the traditional Chinese belief system, rabbits are associated with the moon and making elixirs. Archaeological materials best illustrate these enduring beliefs. In the famous second-century BCE Mawangdui (馬王堆) name-banner that was used in a burial ritual, a rabbit-like animal, possibly a hare, is depicted next to a new moon together with a toad.⁴⁵ In a second-century CE clay brick stamped with a picture from Chengdu (成都), a rabbit is shown holding auspicious plants, worshiping the deity Queen Mother of the West (*Xiwang mu* 西王母).⁴⁶ Additionally, in a stone carving found in a tomb in Jiexiang (嘉祥), Shandong Province (山東), a rabbit appears in the court of Queen of Mother of the West, pounding the ingredients for an elixir with a mortar.⁴⁷

In *Rabbit under the Moon*, it is clear that azurite blue and malachite green were selected to bring out the subject matter more fully. That is because the two mineral pigments are

⁴⁴ Hiromitsu Kobayashi 小林宏光 has also identified the same symbolic meaning of the rabbit and sweet olive motifs. Seikadō Bunko Bijutsukan 静嘉堂文庫美術館 edited, *Appreciating the Painting and Calligraphy in the Collection of Seikadō* (Seikadō min shin shoji seishō 静嘉堂明清書畫清賞) (Seikadō Bunko Bijutsukan, 2005), 115.

⁴⁵ Wu Hung, “Art in Its Ritual Context: Rethinking Mawangdui,” *Early China* 17 (1992), 123.

⁴⁶ Wu Hung and Ning Qiang, “Paradise Images in Early Chinese Art,” in J. Baker, ed., *The Flowering of a Foreign Faith: New Studies in Chinese Buddhist Art* (Mumbai: Marg Publications, 1998), 59.

⁴⁷ Wu Hung, “Xiwang Mu, the Queen Mother of the West,” *Orientations* 4 (1987): 28.

conceptually associated with medicine, drugs, and elixirs. Not only are the pigments pictorial coloring agents, they are also well known as key ingredients in many elixir and medicinal recipes.⁴⁸ The appearance of these two minerals in this painting thus reminds viewers of the duty of the rabbit. Furthermore, the rock on which the rabbit is standing was rendered with azurite blue, but not with malachite green (plate 5.8.2). Like in other paintings, azurite blue was again singled out, playing a stronger role than all other coloring agents. The reason why Zhou Lun choose to emphasize azurite blue over malachite green is likely because azurite blue is a more potent and frequently used ingredient in making medicines and elixirs.⁴⁹

Interestingly, the rabbit in this painting does not appear to be on the moon, but is instead depicted in the mortal world. Her attentive gaze invites viewers to imagine traveling to the moon to obtain the famed elixir. Azurite blue and malachite green work in conjunction with the other pictorial elements to bring forth a resonant desire to seek the elixir, journeying toward transcendence and otherworldliness. While this painting demonstrates the evocative power of azurite, indicating the medicinal functions and otherworldliness of the mineral, there are paintings from Qiu Ying's time that nevertheless manifest a much more ambiguous message.

In sum, there are painters who arguably singled out azurite from other colors, like Qiu Ying did, and used it—whether intentionally or inadvertently—to evoke meanings related to immortality and transcendence. The earliest example is *Taoist Immortal Crossing the River on a Lotus Raft*. In this painting, azurite blue appears only on two key elements, both connected to the Taoist immortal: the flying raft on which he is riding and the book of secret recipes that he is

⁴⁸ See chapter 1.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

reading. The second known painting to use azurite in a significant way is *The Taoist Immortal Magu with a Crane*, in which the blue mineral hovers in midair amongst the clouds, bringing forth a sense of enigma. The third painting, *Rabbit under the Moon*, which has been dated to the early seventeenth century, reveals the hierarchy between azurite blue and malachite green in evoking the sense of a journey seeking immortal elixirs. The relatively late date of this painting confirms that such ideas about azurite blue continued to exist even after Qiu Ying's time.

These paintings do not seem to have any connection; they are not referencing one another in terms of their usage of blue. Each of them apparently used azurite for different reasons. There are no obvious connections between the painters, who come from different time periods. The lack of connection seems to suggest that there were painters across many ages who were aware of the communicative power of azurite. Just like the other painters, Qiu Ying was sensitive enough to recognize this power. But his awareness was not limited to azurite. He also understood the power of combining azurite and malachite together within a palette, to deliver a landscape that expertly weaves together the ideas of the blue-and-green landscape tradition, affluence, and immortality.

Synthesis of the Art-Historical, Socioeconomic, and Transcendental Powers of Azurite Blue

Qiu Ying's *Jade Grotto in Transcendental Spring* and *Playing the Flute to Attract Phoenixes* both use the blue-and-green color palette to depict landscapes enjoyed by figures from Chinese folklore. And yet, the figures in these two paintings are accompanied by antiques and other cultural artifacts. There are many other paintings that depict scholarly gentlemen engaged

in scholarly activities, such as drinking tea or admiring paintings, calligraphy, and antiques. Some of these paintings were even painted in the blue-and-green-landscape tradition. But, as will become apparent below, what makes Qiu Ying's two paintings unique is his use of pictorial content that combines the blue-and-green landscape tradition, scholarly activities, and immortality. This amalgam of ideas speaks to a specific philosophy of lifestyle prevalent in Qiu Ying's time and made manifest by blue-and-green-landscape paintings. In this regard, these two paintings do not negate the discussion of the previous section, because they depict a completely different subject matter.

Jade Grotto in Transcendental Spring

In the painting, Qiu depicts an affluent male figure engaging with scholarly objects and in elegant activities, such as drinking tea, admiring antiques, playing a zither (*qin* 琴), and looking at paintings (plate 5.3).⁵⁰ In the painting, a dense formation of clouds, delineated by smooth brushwork and colored with thick white pigment, separates this hanging scroll into two halves. In the upper half of the painting, above the band of clouds, a wooden dwelling rests among a blue and green valley, leading to a path marked by wooden fences. Behind the dwelling is yet another multistory architectural complex, positioned between formidable cliffs. The focal point of the lower half of the painting is a stalactite grotto, from which a stream is flowing. Over the stream, a houseboy crosses a bipartite wooden bridge, about to join his companions in preparing tea for

⁵⁰ Ellen Johnston Liang, in her article which studies forgeries manufactured in the late Ming Suzhou area, implies that this painting is a genuine work by Qiu Ying. Idem., “*Suzhou Pian* and other Dubious Paintings in the Received Oeuvre of Qiu Ying,” *Artibus Asiae* (2000):278-9.

their master, who is sitting by the stream with a *qin* zither. There are also several painting scrolls next to the master. Between the master and his houseboy, a huge blue and green rock adorned with blossoming flowers lies prominently. Thus, Qiu Ying's *Jade Grotto* depicts an affluent male figure engaging in a host of activities highly valued in the material culture of the Ming dynasty.

The overt mortality of the space is juxtaposed with the presence of a stalactite grotto, hidden in remote and distant mountains, in a landscape colored with azurite blue and malachite green. In Chinese culture, the grotto motif has been imbued with the motif of “transcendental passage, of revelation, and interconnectedness with other supernatural realms.”⁵¹ For instance, the famous fable *Peach Blossom Spring* (*Taohua yuan* 桃花源) tells a story about a scholar losing his way and entering into a grotto, where he finds a self-sustaining world inside. According to the story, the residents of the grotto were all political refugees enjoying indefinite lifespans and an abundance of food. Given this context, it is obvious that transcendence is a key idea in the painting. Further confirming the theme of immortality in this painting, the Qing-dynasty government official and connoisseur Bian Yongyu (卞永譽; 1645–1712) recorded this painting in his treatise and identified the male figure in the work as an immortal (*xianlao* 仙老).⁵²

This affluent and transcendental landscape is glossed over with and completed by a sense

⁵¹ Franciscus Verellen, “The Beyond Within: Grotto-Heavens in Taoist Ritual and Cosmology,” *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* Vol. 8 (1995): 271. See also, Huang (2012), 116-7.

⁵² Bian Yongyu 卞永譽, fascicle 57 of *Shigu tang shuhua huikao* 式古堂書畫彙考, Siku quanshu electronic version. The text reads as “實父《玉洞仙源》圖。絹本中挂幅，青綠。雲山松澗一仙老，琴書趺坐。童子四烹茶設果。只尺花源，遂通毫素。對之欲鼓枻褰裳矣。款書 仇英實父製。款書隸書樹隙。”

of archaism, due to the time-honored blue-and-green-landscape palette that has been deployed. It was painted in the Li Sixun-Zhao Boju tradition, with angular rock forms and strong outlines, as well as an intense and heavy use of azurite and malachite. Altogether, the pictorial motifs and color scheme of Qiu Ying's *Jade Grotto* represent cohesion of art-historical, socioeconomic, and transcendental messages. Importantly, Dorothy Chen-Courtin observes, "Painters [of the theme of *Peach Blossom Spring*] would ignore the actual narrative and take great liberties in adding extraneous elements to this setting. Gentlemanly figures engaged in conversation, playing the lute (i.e., *qin* zither), admiring the view or drinking tea were favorite animations... It seems reasonable to accept the Peach Blossom Spring as still another scenic place."⁵³ Chen-Courtin's revealing note suggests that it is necessary for present study to focus on the amalgam of different motifs. In fact, the same conflation of various connections also exists in another one of Qiu Ying's paintings layered with azurite and malachite.

Playing the Flute to Attract Phoenixes

In *Playing the Flute to Attract Phoenixes*, which illustrates a story of the same title, Qiu Ying uses azurite blue to strengthen the extravagant, otherworldly, and archaic tone of the story (plate 5.2). The ancient tale of a gentleman named Xiao Shi (蕭史) playing the flute to attract phoenixes has gone through many iterations and retellings, yet at the end he is often said to leave the world on the back of a phoenix. According to *Arrayed Biographies of the Immortals* (*Liexian*

⁵³ Dorothy Chen-Courtin, "The Literary Theme of the "Peach Blossom Spring" in Pre-Ming and Ming Painting" (Ph.D dissertation, Columbia University, 1979); for the origin of this fable, see Stephen Bokenkamp, "The Peach Flower Font and the Grotto Passage," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 106 (1986): 65-77, 243.

zhuan 列仙傳), a text compiled in the sixth century CE⁵⁴, Xiao Shi was good at playing the flute and lived in the time of the Duke Mu of Qin (Qin Mu Gong 秦穆公; ca. the seventh century BCE). Xiao married Nong Yu (弄玉), the daughter of Duke Mu, and taught her to play a flute melody resembling the caw of a phoenix. After a few years of practice, their melodies were so close to the actual caw that phoenixes came and perched on their mansion ledges. Duke Mu then constructed a phoenix pavilion for the couple. After a few years, the couple left together with the phoenixes.⁵⁵ This subject matter thus has an archaic and ancient origin and is closely associated with Taoist hagiography.

By the time of the Ming dynasty, this well-known story had developed into a complex trope of erotica, worldly pleasure, and architectural grandeur in literature and poetry, which further complicates the meaning of Qiu Ying's painting. For example, Zhang Ning (張寧; *jinsi* 1454) in his *The Anthology of Mr. Fangzhou* (*Fangzhou ji* 方洲集) recorded a poem responding to a painting that depicts beautiful women. The poem extols the beauty of the well-dressed women and also makes reference to the ornate beauty of their surroundings.⁵⁶ Zhang uses the

⁵⁴ Yong Rong 永瑢 et al edited, *Siku quanshu zongme tiyao* 四庫全書總目提要 (Shanghai: Shangwu yin shuguan, 1933), 3045.

⁵⁵ See, Liu Xiang 劉向, fascicle 1 of *Lie xian zhuan* 列仙傳 (Arrayed biographies of the immortals), in fascicle 49 of the compiled anthology *Gujin yishi* 古今遺史 (forgotten history of the past and present) (Shanghai: Shangwu yin shuguan, 1937), folio 15a-16b. This edition of *Lie xian zhuan* is a photocopy of a Ming dynasty imprint kept in *the Building of Containing Fragrance* 涵芬樓.

⁵⁶ The whole poem reads as “少女風微栢子香，夜深吹透紫霓裳。餽山月落春回首，應悔吹簫引鳳凰。” See Zhang Ning, fascicle 11 of *Fangzhou ji* (The anthology of Fangzhou) (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yin shuguan, 1972), folio 21a.

phrase “playing the flute to attract phoenixes” to end his poem as a way to emphasize the celestial beauty of women. On the other hand, in a poem recorded in *The Anthology of Mr. Xicun* (*Xicun ii* 西村集), Shi Jian (史鑑; 1434–1496) uses the phrase “playing the flute to attract phoenixes” to evoke the archaic and architectural grandeur associated with the term, intending to praise a pavilion belonging to the Song dynasty official Xu Defu (徐德夫; 1189–1250).⁵⁷

The connotation of this phrase in Chinese literary tradition, Taoist hagiography, and folklore coheres with Qiu Ying’s illustration of the story. Qiu positions Xiao Shi at the center of the composition, surrounded by beautiful court ladies on a magnificent terrace. On the table next to Xiao Shi, there are ancient bronze vessels, adding a sense of archaism that accords well with the time of the original telling of the story. The motif of bronze vessels also caters to the craze of antiquarianism that was popular at that time.⁵⁸ Portraying Xiao Shi at the center, Qiu’s painting—as Wu Hung pointed out—“alludes to a contemporary gentleman who is imaging himself as the hero in the romance,”⁵⁹ thus signifying and mirroring back to the viewer a strong sense of

⁵⁷ For the lifespan of Xu Defu, see Chang Bide 昌彼得, *Songren zhuanji ziliao suoyin* 宋人傳記資料索引 (Index to biographical materials of Song figures) (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 2001), 2032. Shi Jian’s poem reads as “臨川開第宅，闢土作陂塘。葺宇荷為蓋，規芳荔植牆。大觀天盡際，小憫水中央。白日尋常過，浮雲聚散忙。林霏滋鳥道，柳浪泛虹梁。曳履來鳴玉，投竿出釣璜。游魚聞瑟起，歸鶴遡風翔。下女收遺珮，清童拾墮璫。露香敷菡萏，雨漲浴鴛鴦。向夕尤宜月，吹簫引鳳凰。” Shi Jian, fascicle 4 of *Xichun ji* (The anthology of Mr. Xichun) (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yin shuguan, 1972), folio 3a.

⁵⁸ Craig Clunas, *The Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), 91–115; idem., “Antiquarian Politics and the Politics of Antiquarianism in Ming Regional Courts,” in Wu Hung edited, *Reinventing the Past: Archaism and Antiquarianism in Chinese Art and Visual Culture* (Chicago: Art Media Resources, Inc., 2010), 229–254.

⁵⁹ Wu Hung, *The Double Screen: Medium and Representation in Chinese Painting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 18.

worldly pleasure embodied in the two poems above.

The most prominent feature of this work, however, is the azurite blue that dominates the palette. For instance, a coarse blue pigment that yields an intense hue colors the roofs of the corridors and halls that surround the central terrace. The same coarse blue pigment has also been applied onto the phoenix that is about to land on the white terrace. The use of blue pigments in the rest of the composition demonstrates a greater variety in tonality. The clothing and accessories of the courtiers and court ladies are all in different shades of blue, red, pink, and orange. The craggy, thrusting landforms that have agglomerated around the central architectural complexes are colored with both bright and dull blue pigments, as well as with a beige color that appears to be sienna or ochre. Furthermore, the central towering peak shown emerging above the terrace enjoys a chromatic symphony of blue, green, and yellow-brown pigments and dyes.

Altogether, the colorful palette of this painting in general and the intense blue in particular thus serve to enhance the worldly pleasure and grandeur associated with this tale, while the intense blue color tempered by a touch of malachite bestows art-historical significance and transcendence to the painting. In this painting, Qiu Ying generously applied azurite blue, leading to an intense blue color palette and demonstrating the financial might of the patron. Yet this blue palette is also meant to be transcendental, as demonstrated in the previous section through the works of painters who used the pigment to enhance this specific significance. This overtly blue palette, on the one hand, aptly enhances the otherworldliness of the tale depicted; on the other hand, it also brings out the strong connotation of worldly pleasure that pervades the tale. The addition of malachite green in the palette, though trivial when compared with the use of

azurite blue, alludes to the Chinese tradition of painting landscapes in blue and green, thus bestowing the overall work with an art-historical reference.

Jade Grotto and *Playing the Flute* must not be confused with paintings that simply depict scholarly figures engaging in cultural activities. One such painting reveals the differences.

Embracing a Qin in a Pavilion by Pine Trees (*Songting fuqin tu* 松亭撫琴圖) was reattributed from a Song date to the Ming dynasty by the National Palace Museum (plate 5.10.1).⁶⁰ As indicated by the title, a well-built thatched hut rests at the top of a blue-green cliff in the painting. Servants in the lower left corner arrive from afar. On the right, there are two decent houses surrounded by a path of wooden fences that leads to the thatched hut (plate 5.10.2). Inside the hut, we see a gentlemanly figure holding a *qin* zither, sitting in the center of the room. The figure is accompanied by another gentleman on his right, while another gentleman approaches them. To the right of the hut is a houseboy who is preparing tea. This seemingly elegant atmosphere extends to the mid-ground of the painting. A well-drawn wooden arch bridge leads to a meandering road, which draws the viewers' attention to some architectural complexes on the right. These houses, as well as the attire of the figures residing there, are all neat and tidy. Furthermore, the landform of this painting was configured with angular brushstrokes, creating a sense of revolving momentum, and with long vertical lines used to define the main segments of the mountain ridge. Azurite and malachite were applied all over the landscape.

But what makes Qiu Ying's *Playing the Flute* and *Jade Grotto* so unique is that they have

⁶⁰ *Zhonghua congshu weiyuanhui* 中華叢書委員會 edited, volume 5 of *Gugong shuhua lu* 故宮書畫錄 (Records of the paintings in the collection of the National Palace Museum) (Taipei: Guoli gugong bowuyuan, 1956), 109.

a complicated and conflated theme—one that is loaded with scholarly, immortal, and economic messages. These two paintings are partly related to a larger trend of engaging in scholarly activities and they speak to a cultural phenomenon in Qiu Ying's time. Looking back, chapter 2 of this dissertation addressed the art-historical value of azurite blue together with other colors. Chapter 4 positioned the mineral in the complex network of self-valorization in the elite community of the Ming dynasty. Chapter 5 has, so far, explored the transcendental connotations of this mineral. While these meanings of azurite blue may seem unrelated or even contradictory to one another, the above two paintings, *Playing the Flute* and *Jade Grotto*, exemplify how the art-historical significance, socioeconomic value, and transcendental power of azurite blue can coexist in a composition and work together to complete the function of a painting. This combination does not just exist in Qiu Ying's two paintings, but also seems to be a larger idea that existed in the Ming dynasty.

A woodblock print reveals that this idea was widespread and shows how engaging in cultural artifacts and immortality can be woven together into one complex lifestyle philosophy. Printed in 1609, *A Shortcut Manual to Chess, Meticulously Compiled by Mr. Zuoyin* (*Zuoyin xiansheng jingtind jiejing qipu* 坐隱先生精訂捷徑棋譜) was written by Wang Tingna (汪廷訥; 1573–1619). Wang Geng (汪耕) and Huang Yingzu (黃應祖) drew the illustrations and carved the blocks, respectively.⁶¹ “*Zuoyin* (坐隱; literally, sitting seclusion)” in the title has four levels

⁶¹ Zhou Wu 周蕪 et al., *Riben cang zhongguo gu banhua zhenpin* 日本藏中國古版畫珍品 (Japanese treasures of ancient Chinese woodblock prints) (Nanjing: Jiangsu meishu chubanshe, 1999), 269-273; Li Hua, *Chinese Woodcuts* (Beijing Foreign Languages Press, 1995); Wang Tingna 汪廷訥, *Zuoyin yipu* 坐隱弈譜 (Chess Manual of Mr. Zuoyin) (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2001).

of meaning. First, it is Wang Tingna's sobriquet. Secondly, it is the name of his garden.⁶² Thirdly, it is a synonym of playing chess. And fourthly, the game of chess has long been associated with immortality and the timelessness of the immortal lands in Chinese culture.⁶³

In the illustrations accompanying Mr. Zuoyin's treatise, several houseboys, scholarly figures, and other figures, including a monk and a Taoist adept, are situated in a rocky landscape in close proximity to a cave. Walls of cliffs, erupting landmasses, and protruding ridges, together with gushing streams and trees, forge the incredible interior of the cave, not unlike the formidable landscapes in the above two Qiu Ying paintings (plate 5.11.1). Inside the cave, as depicted in the illustrations, houseboys are preparing teas and carrying objects and utensils for their masters who are playing chess. In the first illustration, four houseboys are carrying a chessboard, a *qin* zither, a teapot, and a food container amid a gushing stream, two cranes, and a wide variety of trees. In the second illustration, four houseboys are preparing teas; they are working on a stove and holding a teapot along with a stack of tea cups. Another three houseboys in this illustration are also engaging with objects of cultural significance. One houseboy is carrying an incense burner, one is washing an inkstone by the stream, and one is placing a box of books onto a desk inside a tile-roofed lodge built above a stream. All of these objects and built architectural structures demonstrate a strong sense of wealth and elegance, with their surfaces

⁶² Ji Yun 紀昀 et al., fascicle 180 of *Siku quanshu congmu tiyao* 四庫全書總目提要, *jibu* 集部 33 (electronic version).

⁶³ Li Qingquan 李清泉, *Xuanhua Liao mu: Muzang yishu yu Liao dai shehui* 宣化遼墓：墓葬藝術與遼代社會 (The Liao-dynasty tomb at Xuanhua: funeral art and Liao-dynasty society) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2008), 200-229; Peter C. Sturman and Susan S. Tai, *The Artful Recluse: Painting, Poetry, and Politics in 17th-Century China* (Prestel, 2012), 199.

covered in patterns and decorations. At the lodge, the window blinds appear embroidered, while books and an incense burner rest on the table. Not surprisingly, all of these cultural objects, like those in Qiu Ying's *Jade Grotto* and *Playing the Flute*, also appear in connoisseur handbooks.

In the last illustration accompanying Mr. Zuoyin's treatise, five figures and four houseboys are shown occupying a garden environment surrounded by fences and filled with decorative rocks, trees, protruding boulders, and bamboo (plate 5.11.2). On the right side of the illustration, three figures are playing chess. Their respective attires indicate that they are a scholar, a Taoist adept, and a monk. This triad represents the synthesis of the three teachings in Chinese culture. A gentleman, who is also dressed in scholarly attire, stands next to the three figures. With his back slightly bowed, he is looking at the chess game. Another figure, also dressed in scholarly attire, enters the garden scene from the left. He is accompanied by a houseboy who is carrying several scrolls of painting or calligraphy. Like the above two Qiu Ying paintings, these illustrations demonstrate a commingling of cultural objects, affluence, and immortality in terms of their motifs and subject matters. In particular, the nature of the treatise—a guidebook for playing chess—is also meant to instruct its readers to participate in a cultural scholarly activity, an instruction that also appears in other connoisseur handbooks written in the late Ming dynasty. This combination of ideas parallels the affluent male figures in Qiu Ying's *Jade Grotto* and *Playing the Flute* and prompts us to locate the larger significance of such fusion along with the varied functions of Qiu's paintings.

Eight Discourses on Enriching Life

The pictorial arrangement of an affluent male engaging in a host of cultural activities among motifs and color schemes that evoke wealth, immortality, and the long history of Chinese painting must be understood with regard to Gao Lian's *Eight Discourses on Enriching Life*, published in 1591. Gao Lian puts forward that one can—by engaging with cultural artifacts—lengthen one's lifespan and improve one's health through a series of activities that regulate both the body and spirit.⁶⁴ In the introduction of the chapter “Discourse on the Pure Enjoyment of Cultured Idleness (*Yanxian qingshang jian* 燕閒清賞箋),”⁶⁵ Gao explains that looking at paintings, admiring antiques, and other such activities can “purge away the mundane (that which harms one's temperament), purify one's spirit, and nurture one's ambition.”⁶⁶ As explained by Jiang Menghui, all of these benefits can eventually lead to a better body and spirit, which are crucial for extending one's lifespan.⁶⁷ Through studying the content of a painting or other cultural objects, one is refining his or her own spirit, allowing it to return to the state of the great void (*lianshen huanxu* 練神還虛), where it is free of corruptions in a sense that is similar to catharsis. It is this purified spirit that leads to a longer lifespan.⁶⁸ Other cultural objects and activities that aid in this transformation include playing the *qin* zither, drinking tea, planting

⁶⁴ Chen Hsiu-fen 陳秀芬, “Nourishing Life, Cultivation and Material Culture in the Late Ming: Some Thoughts on *Zunsheng bajian* 遵生八箋 (Eight Discourses on Respecting Life, 1591),” *Asian Medicine* 4 (2008): 29.

⁶⁵ Translation of the title is Clunas's. Idem. (c2004), 18.

⁶⁶ The original text reads as “一洗人間氛垢矣，清心樂志。”

⁶⁷ Jiang Menghui 姜孟慧, *Zunsheng Bajian yanjiu* 遵生八箋研究 (Studies on *Eight Discourse on Enriching Life*) (Taipei: Huamulan wenhua chubanshe, 2010): 159.

⁶⁸ Jiang, 53-60.

flowers, burning incense, and using scholarly stationeries,⁶⁹ all of which appear in the above two Qiu Ying paintings.

In the introduction of “Discourse on the Pure Enjoyment of Cultured Idleness,” Gao uses his own handling of leisure time as an example of carrying out the above theory, which helps situate Qiu Ying’s pictorial motif and subject matter in a larger societal atmosphere and culture. Gao explains that he “conducted extensive research and meticulous studies on ancient tripods, ancient wine containers, paintings and calligraphy, porcelains and ancient jade carvings, antiques and curios, and scholarly stationeries.” He “juxtaposed his research findings with ancient and contemporary scholarship in order to make references and tell what was right and wrong in [his] own findings.” He even “based [his] understanding on objects that [he] could actually see.” On the other hand, he acknowledges, “There are many practices that have yet to be recognized by the great masters. These include the use of incense, playing the drums and *qin* zither, and planting flowers and bamboo.” For these activities, Gao “compiled the principles and rules for the sake of pure pleasure.” He thus “often displayed ancient clocks and antiques, placed books and *qin* zithers on his table, and put stele rubbings under pine trees and windows.” He engaged with these cultural objects “in a room filled with orchids, curtained cages, fragrant mists, carved pillars, flowers, and ink cakes.” Engaging with these objects in such an environment made him “forget about hunger and turned his study studio into ice and jade.” Concluding the introduction, Gao asks rhetorically, “If one wants to purge away the mundane, purify one’s spirit, and nurture

⁶⁹ Jiang, 159, 284-292.

one's ambition, what could do it better than this?"⁷⁰ The gentleman depicted in *Jade Grotto* along with the work's patron and intended recipient may as well share Gao's reflection.

Concluding this section, it can be said that the above two Qiu Ying's paintings and Gao Lian's treatise—which embodies a larger cultural belief—share dual levels of affiliation. On a pictorial level, Qiu Ying paintings depict cultural artifacts and activities treasured in Gao's theory. On a physical level, the color palettes of the works belong to the time-honored tradition of the blue-and-green-landscape paintings in Chinese history, making the painting itself a cultural artifact that can improve one's spirit. These two paintings thus weave together the multiple meanings of azurite blue discussed in this dissertation and reveal an unexplored relation between a work's palette and the theme of transcendence.

Conclusion

This chapter began by explaining why Qiu Ying's *Towers and Pavilions* used only azurite blue to color the mountain cliffs. Through revealing the important place of color in differentiating certain types of immortal mountains and ideas, this chapter argued that Qiu Ying deliberately used azurite blue to impart a sense of otherworldliness and transcendence to his audience. The sole use of blue in this painting was not a random happenstance of color, but was motivated by the materiality of the pigment. Qiu's careful consideration in selecting the right pigment to enrich the transcendental connotation of his immortal mountains is supported by a history of painters who lived before, contemporaneously with, and after him. All of these

⁷⁰ Gao Lian, *Zunsheng bajian* 遵生八箋 (Eight discourses on enriching life) (Lanzhou: Gansu wenhua chubanshe, 2004), 502-3.

painters used azurite blue to achieve a complex sense of escape and transcendence, allowing their informed audiences to experience or envision a space or moment existing beyond the tactile surface of their painting. This chapter also revealed how the three major connotations of the mineral blue were concomitant. In Qiu Ying's *Jade Grotto in Transcendental Spring*, azurite blue's art-historical significance, high monetary cost, and otherworldly association synthesized into a powerful mechanism with the power to purify and strengthen one's spirit and body. Qiu Ying adjusted his colorations for different subject matters within Taoist-inspired themes in Chinese painting.

This chapter expands the understanding of the relationship between the theme of immortal mountains and the use of blue and green pigments in traditional Chinese painting. Existing scholarship asserts that blue and green pigments were chosen to color the landscapes of immortal lands because of their medicinal and body-healing potencies. Adding an extra layer to this conventional wisdom presents a variegated history of immortal-mountain paintings and demonstrates how the color palette can tease out conceptual nuances within the immortal-mountain theme. As seen in the paintings discussed in this dissertation, the relationship between blue and green mineral pigments and the subject matter of immortal mountains is thus never fixed. In addition, through identifying paintings that use azurite blue to enhance a complex sense of escape and transcendence, this chapter demonstrates that color is an important topic of inquiry. Reexamining the use of color can bring together paintings that have long been studied separately and provide refreshing new interpretations.

However, despite its unique status in Qiu Ying's oeuvre, azurite blue began to lose its

charm to lapis lazuli toward the late Qing dynasty in the nineteenth century. Explicating this, the coda turns to the birthday gift for the Empress Dowager Cixi (慈禧; 1835–1908): an immortal mountain made of a stunning array of precious gemstones.

CODA

Focusing on the sixteenth century, this dissertation began with tracing how azurite blue and malachite green transformed into costly and functional commodities purchased and used by artists, physicians, alchemists, and emperors; and how, as time went on, these two minerals were enveloped in complex networks of supernatural, economic, and art-historical meanings. Embarking on the discussion, this dissertation explored how azurite and malachite were used to enhance the function and meaning of Qiu Ying's subject matters and motifs, as well as each painting as a whole. Taking this research question as a thread, the dissertation explained and demonstrated how Qiu Ying sophisticatedly applied the two pigments in ways that complied with the principles of applying colors put forward by ancient masters, as well as how his contemporary viewers would have seen and thought about the colors on his paintings. This dissertation also revealed how Qiu used his pigments, through a careful arrangement of their locations in a composition, to help his various patrons express their tastes in connoisseurship and to gain access to a type of immortality centered on material wealth and worldly pleasure. By unpacking Qiu Ying's uses of azurite blue and malachite green, my dissertation captured several interrelated snapshots of the conceptual properties of two historically significant Chinese pigments—pigments whose versatile functions and luxuriousness open up a wide swath of questions that continue to concern art history at large and intersect other fields such as sociology, cultural studies, and the history of science.

First, this dissertation provides a missing piece in the field of Chinese painting, taking into account the originality, development, and other socioeconomic issues in Qiu Ying's uses of color. Art critics since the twelfth century frequently condemned the overuse of azurite blue and other mineral pigments as tasteless. At the same time, because of the high cost of the pigments, art patrons who lived in the time of Qiu Ying often invested in expensive colored paintings as a means of expressing their social status and economic might. Qiu Ying's inapt application of colors in Wen Zhengming's *Goddess of Xiang and Lady of Xiang* and its consequence would have impelled him to confront the art-historical and socioeconomic meanings of color, motivating him to find creative uses for the expensive pigment azurite blue. Toward the end of his career, Qiu Ying often reserved azurite blue for the pictorial motifs important to his wealthy patrons. This discussion of the ambitions and desires encoded in pigments confirms the well-studied anxieties and power struggles among the late Ming-dynasty social classes, and further probes into the politics of the sixteenth-century elite community that propelled its participants to invest in color. In this regard, azurite blue is a thread that weaves together different moments in Qiu Ying's artistic development. It also provides a road map of pictorial motifs that encode the desires and anxieties of his patrons.

More broadly, my dissertation offers a fresh perspective on cultural understandings and expressions of the relationship between affluence and immortality. Chapters 3 and 4 reveal that Qiu Ying's generous uses of azurite blue were initiated by his patrons' social statuses and desires for immortality. This natural substance thus embodied the idea that "material wealth is crucial to physical health"—a common belief that has been well attested by textual sources and even

adopted by modern American society.¹ A host of connoisseur handbooks, most prominently the late sixteenth-century Gao Lian's *Eight Discourses on Nourishing Life*, states that leading a refined and opulent lifestyle, including admiring and collecting fine works of art, is the key to an indefinite lifespan. The powers of azurite blue in Qiu Ying's paintings speak to and function within this belief. The complex relationship between azurite blue, affluence, and immortality evince the excitement and gratification that color can bring, and investigating this relationship can enhance our understanding of color perception in Chinese culture before Western influence began to weigh in in the seventeenth century.

On a methodological level, this dissertation reveals that painters' decisions on colors cannot be attributed to triviality and happenstance. Many Qiu Ying's paintings, with colors that encode and unfurl meaning beyond simple coloration, testify to the communicative power of color in traditional China. Indeed, examining the color of a painting solicits close observation of a broad realm of much-neglected pictorial elements such as technique, composition, and pictorial motifs in traditional Chinese painting, thus prompting a broader investigation of the use of pigments in architecture, cave temples, and tombs. And yet, no two painters use the same color to deliver exactly identical messages. The various contexts in which pigments convey significance beyond their colorations reveal that the meaning of a pigment is historical, bound to the moment in question, and conditioned by the economic production, cultural and cosmological beliefs, and aesthetics of that time. Even artists from the same time period would have defined the meaning of a colorant in different ways for different works. There is thus no universal meaning of a

¹ Elizabeth C. Hirschman, "Secular Immortality and the American Ideology of Affluence," *Journal of Consumer Research* 17.1 (1990): 31-42.

pigment; the interpretation of its significance in a work of art—and more precisely, the method of studying the significance of a pigment—must be contextual.

Much of the findings discovered in this discussion are applicable to the time after Qiu Ying's premature death in the early 1550s. For example, the field of blue-and-green landscape painting and use of the two minerals continued to carry profound art-historical significance. Well known to the field, notable painters from the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, namely Dong Qichang, Wang Shimin (王時敏; 1592–1680), Wang Jian (王鑑; 1598–1677), and Wang Hui (王翬; 1632–1717), continued to see landscape painting in a blue-and-green palette as a time-honored tradition maintained by a pedigree of time-celebrated painters. This palette was deployed in their paintings, aiming to emulate the style of ancient painters. Furthermore, their applications of the two minerals, as in Qiu Ying's paintings, create subtle variations in thickness and intensity, and also leave blank space so as to allow the ink brushwork and blank silk surface to show through. These ideas about the two minerals are apparent in three different sets of album paintings by Wang Shimin,² Wang Jian,³ and Wang Hui.⁴ Importantly, in his colophon to a painting imitating the style of Zhao Mengfu in Wang Hui's album, the painter Yun Shouping (惲

² This album is also attributed to Chen Lian. Kept in the National Palace Museum, the album is called *To See Large Within Small*. See Wen Fong, "The Orthodox School of Painting," in *Possessing the Past: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei*, Wen Fong and James C. Y. Watt (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1996), 474-6.

³ Now kept in Shanghai Museum, Wang Jian's album calls *Copies of a Song and Yuan Landscape Album in the Family Collection of Wang Shimin*, dated 1663.

⁴ Kept in Shanghai Museum, Wang Hui's album calls *Large Emerging from Small*, dated 1672. In the colophon to a painting imitating the style of Zhao Boju in this album, Wang Hui acknowledges that Qiu Ying belongs to this grand tradition of colored landscape. See, Wai-kam Ho, *The Century of Tung Ch'i-ch'ang 1555-1636* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1992), 441 in volume 1 and 183 in volume 2.

壽平; 1633–1690) acknowledges that using azurite and malachite, whether to apply them lightly or heavily, is extremely challenging.⁵ Like Qiu Ying, these early Qing-dynasty masters also experienced the burden and anxiety of using the two art-historically important minerals.

The economic significance of azurite as a luxurious commodity continued into the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. In a pair of portrait paintings produced at that time, the two sitters, possibly a couple, wear robes that are thickly and generously colored with azurite blue (plates 6.1-2).⁶ The painter of these two portraits rendered their robes with a robust ink line. A monotone of azurite was heavily applied onto the entirety of the two robes with little variation in thickness. Under this dense layer of azurite, there are patterns of cloud outlined with thin ink lines. The skin of the two sitters was left unpainted, revealing the color of blank silk. Other pictorial motifs, like chairs and shoes, are all partly concealed by the sitters' elaborate blue robes that dominate more than two-thirds of each composition.

The pattern design and color of the robes were largely based on the daily attire (*zhongjing fu* 忠靜服) of high-ranking government officials in the Ming dynasty.⁷ According to *The State Law of the Ming Dynasty* (*Da Ming Huidian* 大明會典), the robe in an official's daily attire

⁵ See, Wai-kam Ho (1992), 442 in volume 1 and 184 in volume 2.

⁶ According to the inscription, on the male portrait, the painting is gift for sitter's eight-fifth birthday. The otherworldly connotation of azurite, because of its mythical origin and its functions as an alchemical ingredient, alludes and bestows immortality to the sitters, making it a convenient color for the occasion. Also, the high price of azurite makes the pair of paintings high-end cultural artifacts. In Gao Lian's theoretical framework in which looking at painting can purify one's spirit and leads to a longer lifespan, the two sitters when they received their birthday gifts, they would have been engaging with the cultural activities of looking at painting and thus gained access to longer lifespan. However, direct evidence is lacking.

⁷ Li Dongyang 李東陽 edited, fascicle 61 of *Da Ming hui dian* 大明會典 (the great Ming's compilation of state regulations) (Taipei shi: Xin wen feng chu ban gongsi, 1976), 1064-5.

should be deep blue-green (*shenqing* 深青) and made of silk and satin. Moreover, according to the state law, the robes of those who were between the top and third ranks should have cloud patterns, while the robes of other officials should have no pattern at all. Both the front and back of each robe were embroidered with animal motifs indicating the specific rank of the officer. In particular, the crane motif indicated the first rank. While the robe of the female sitter bears the crane motif, the robe of the male sitter has no animal motif at all. Even if a female could wear the daily attire of the highest rank of a government official, the robe of the male sitter does not match the attire of any official rank described in the state law. These discrepancies and similarities probably indicate that the appearances of the two sitters mean to satisfy an aspiration to high social status. In these two portrait paintings, the generous use of azurite, instead of the significantly cheaper plant-dye indigo, thus implies and demonstrates economic might, which also symbolizes high social status and reinforces the discriminating function and symbolism of high social status that the official robe held at that time.

Possibly painted by the Qing-dynasty painter Gu Jianlong (顧見龍; active during the seventeenth century), a painting in an album illustrating the novel *The Plum in the Golden Vase* (*Jin Ping Mei* 金瓶梅) reveals that the use of blue-and-green landscape painting as a parameter of taste continued into seventeenth-century China (plate 6.3.1). The painting that illustrates chapter 20 of the novel depicts a room with a blue-and-green landscape painting hanging on the wall (plate 6.3.2). While the painting is not mentioned in the chapter, other pictorial motifs are largely derived from the contents of the chapter. In fact, the painting's composition and motifs largely come from the woodblock print illustration accompanying the novel that was printed

during the Wanli period (萬曆; 1563–1620).⁸ By comparing and contrasting the illustration painting and contents of chapter 20, it becomes apparent that the painter deliberately added the blue-and-green landscape painting to allude to the eroticism pervasive in the chapter and to signify the squandering and unrefined taste of the protagonist Ximen Qing (西門慶).

The illustration painting apparently depicts a room in Ximen's mansion where the protagonist is holding a wedding party after marrying his sixth wife Li Ping'er (李瓶兒). In the chapter, a group of male guests attending the party urges Ximeng to show Li Ping'er to them. Despite Li's refusal to reveal herself, the guests persist. Li eventually leaves her room and meets the male guests.⁹ In the painting, Li Ping'er is shown wearing a bright red robe decorated with cloud patterns rendered by a golden pigment. Escorted by a maid in a pale blue robe, Li is walking toward the center of the painting. Four females play different musical instruments as they flank Li and her maid. Following the gazes of Li, her maid, and one of the female musicians, we see a group of male guests staring at and walking toward Li. Two male guests point to Li while talking to other male guests. Obviously, this group of men is stunned by Li Ping'er's beauty. The blue-and-green landscape on the wall depicts a spring scene with trees blossoming pink flowers and vernal foliage. Springtime is a well-known trope representing

⁸ Lanling Xiaoxiao Sheng 蘭陵笑笑生, volume 2 of *Jin ping mei cihua* 金瓶梅 (The plum in the golden vase) (Hong Kong: Xianggang Taiping shuju, 1982), the first page of chapter 20. This edition is a photocopy of an imprint of the Wanli period.

⁹ Ibid.. See also, David T. Roy trans., *The Plum in the Golden Vase or, Chin P'ing Mei, Volume One: The Gathering* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997): 401-419.

eroticism in Chinese literary tradition.¹⁰ In the seventeenth century, erotic paintings depicting men and women engaged in sexual intercourse were often set in gardens filled with blossoming flowers and decorative rocks colored in azurite blue and malachite green.¹¹ The erotic overtones of the spring scene in the blue-and-green landscape painting thus coheres well with the lewd behaviors of Ximen's guests and the overall eroticism in the chapter, which begins with Ximen having an affair with Li before their marriage.

In addition, the blue-and-green landscape painting on the wall might be meant to convey Ximen Qing's unrefined taste by demonstrating his rampant consumption of cultural objects and luxuries. On the left side of the painting, there is a huge bookshelf that is twice the height of Li Ping'er. The shelf itself is made of bamboo. On the shelf, there is a handsome array of painting scrolls and books in cases. All of the bookcases are wrapped in colorful embroidered silk. A big bookcase at the bottom of the shelf has a bright red exterior with a bat pattern embroidered in pink and green. Two small bookcases at the top of the shelf have celadon green exteriors and are each filled allover with a repeated hexagon pattern. On the floor, there is a bright red embroidered rug with floral patterns in white, green, and blue. The luxurious interior of this illustration is quite similar to the reception hall where Ximen meets Wang the Third (*Wang*

¹⁰ Robert Hans van Gulik, *Sexual Life in Ancient China: A Preliminary Survey of Chinese Sex and Society from Ca. 1500 BC till 1644 AD* (Brill, 1974), 327; Sin-Wai Chan, *The Routledge Encyclopedia of the Chinese Language* (Routledge, 2016), 384.

¹¹ As Maggie Keswick has pointed out, "Rich men also often housed their lesser wives and concubines in garden pavilions, as in the erotic novel *Golden Lotus*, whose heroine, momentarily neglected by her lord, has a romance with one of the young gardeners." See *idem.*, *Chinese Garden: History, Art and Architecture* (Harvard University Press, 2003), 130.

sanguan 王三官) in chapter 69 of the novel.¹² According to this later chapter, the reception hall is decorated with an array of brocade standing screens, chairs with inlaid patterns and sable cushions, rugs covering the entire floor, a plaque with calligraphy written in the style of the time-celebrated calligrapher Mi Fu (米芾; 1051–1107), and, most importantly, four hanging scrolls of blue-and-green landscape paintings with golden pigments.¹³ In his study of the material culture revealed in the novel, Craig Clunas convincingly demonstrates that, “the descriptions of interiors in *Jin Ping Mei* are... not mere corroborative detail. They are a crucial part of the author’s strategies for conveying important information about [Ximen’s] characters.”¹⁴ To make this argument, Clunas points out that Ximen is practically an illiterate and the display of books and other luxurious objects is the author’s deliberate strategy to cast Ximen as wealthy and powerful, but also vulgar and ignorant. For example, the interior setting and decoration of Ximen’s mansion is identical to that of a brothel mentioned in the novel.¹⁵ Ximen even found the interior of the brothel elegant.¹⁶ Moreover, the overt extravagance of the interior of Ximen’s mansion goes against the principle of simplicity put forward by leading elites and connoisseurs of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.¹⁷ All of these descriptions of Ximen’s selection,

¹² Lanling Xiaoxiao sheng (1982), volume 5, chapter 69, folio 14b. See also, David T. Roy trans., *The Plum in the Golden Vase or Chin P’ing Mei, Volume Four: The Climax* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2011), 268-9.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Craig Clunas, “‘All in the Best Possible Taste’: Ming Dynasty Material Culture in the Light of the Novel *Jin Ping Mei*,” *Bulletin of the Oriental Ceramic Society of Hong Kong* 11 (1994-97): 14.

¹⁵ Ibid., 13.

¹⁶ Ibid., 12-13.

¹⁷ Ibid.,

handling, and perceptions of objects are intended to reveal Ximen's base, boorish, and distasteful character.

While members of the Xiang family patronized Qiu Ying's blue-and-green landscape paintings in a way that distinguished themselves from other buyers of conspicuous consumption, the blue-and-green landscape painting in the illustration of chapter 20 establishes a much more complex allusion. The extravagant ambience in the illustration, including the blue-and-green landscape on the wall—an object with profound art-historical connections—would have reminded seventeenth-century viewers of the novel's portrayal of Ximen Qing. The addition of the blue-and-green landscape painting, which hints at Ximen's base character, thus reinforces the overall lewd and erotic contents of chapter 20. This function of the blue-and-green landscape painting as a marker of social status and as a mirror of one's upbringing coheres with the findings in chapter 3 of this dissertation.

However, this painting enjoys a color palette that is significantly more variegated than Qiu Ying's figure paintings and possibly reflects an influx of colorants in the seventeenth century. Bright red and mineral blue were used more generously and frequently. For example, an intense mineral blue was applied onto the books, the robe of a woman peeping through the walls, and the garments of several male guests. There are many different colors in the illustrations and a greater variety of palette. There are more pale and pastel colors, like pink and celadon. The entire wall at the back of the painting is colored in pink, a color rarely seen in Qiu Ying's paintings. The increased number of colorants in this seventeenth-century painting is hardly a personal artistic choice, but more likely a phenomenon of the period. Contemporary to this illustration, the

famous set of twelve hanging scrolls, depicting twelve women in interior settings engaged in cultural objects and activities, also enjoys a colorful palette that is unprecedented.¹⁸ Almost every inch of each scroll is covered with pigments, a drastically different approach from the convention in which the background is left unpainted. By the late eighteenth century, mineral blue, whether azurite or lapis lazuli, no longer bore the same unique status as it had previously in Qiu Ying's paintings. In the paintings produced by court painters at that time, depicting the Emperor Qianlong's tours to the southern regions of China, more than two-thirds of the figures were colored with an intense bright mineral blue. Apparently, court painters could freely apply mineral blue onto any pictorial motif. By that time, the mineral blue was no longer a hard to find and rare pigment that prohibited painters and patrons from using it freely.

Indeed, the meaning and status of azurite blue underwent profound changes toward the late nineteenth century. On her sixtieth birthday (1894), the Empress Dowager Cixi (1835–1908) received a magnificent immortal mountain—an assemblage sculpture made of wood and a stunning array of over one hundred pieces of semi-precious stones (plate 6.4.1). The overall shape of this assemblage resembles a pyramid with a square base and an apex at the top. Measuring 130 centimeters in height, 96 centimeters in width, and 117 centimeters in depth, this a century-old assemblage can still stun any viewer or visitor to The Hall of Happiness and Longevity (*Le shou tang* 樂壽堂) in the Palace Museum, where it is on display. With its stunning

¹⁸ For a detail discussion of these twelve paintings, see Wu Hung, “Beyond Stereotypes: The Twelves Beauties in Qing Court Art and The Dream of the Red Chamber,” in *Ming Qing Women an Literature*, E. Widmer and K. I. S. Chang, edited (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 306-365.

array of semi-precious stones, we can thus reconstruct the significance of azurite and malachite in relation to other semi-precious stones in the context of late nineteenth-century China.

This immortal mountain assemblage sculpture delivers a strong sense of diversity, abundance, and complexity in its choices of materials and compositional arrangement (plates 6.4.1-2). According to the textual explanation displayed together with the assemblage, it was composed of a large piece of carved rosewood and different hues and sizes of nephrite, jadeite, crystal, amber, emerald, coral, turquoise, malachite, lapis lazuli, dyed ivory, aventurine glass, and so on. Some of these gemstones were polished while others remain in their natural craggy textures. Without any sense of gaudiness, their natural colors range from peach-pink to amethyst, orange to sienna, ochre to gold, celadon to verdigris, aquamarine to deep indigo, and milky white to ink black. These colorful stones were carved into a great variety of objects and figures adorning the shiny rosewood base that was carved into the shape of a mountain form emerging from a roaring sea. These objects and figures include trees, peaches, butterflies, grasses, *lingzhi* mushrooms, bats, bridges, fences, rivers, toads, flowers, deer, monkey, cranes, steles, decorative rocks, landforms, immortals, and deities. Scattered across the whole mountain are the immortals and deities, including the Eight Immortals, Guanyin, the Deity of Longevity, and other unspecific figures ranging from children to aged men and women wearing Taoist robes. The figures are engaged in different activities like dancing, playing musical instruments, meditating, conversing, and playing with one another. Altogether, this assortment of stones and forms brings forth an unparalleled representation of an immortal mountain that corresponds well with the unique status of Empress Dowager, the most powerful figure in the Forbidden Palace at that time.

In spite of its intricacy, the arrangement of objects in this assemblage sculpture was carefully planned. For example, all of the figures were made out of white jade. All but one figure is facing the front. There is also a striking contrast between the front and back of this assemblage: while the front side is populated with objects, figures, and plants, there is only one small niche in the center of the backside. Inside the niche, there is a miniature stele inscribed with the names of the donors of the assemblage (plate 6.4.3). Moreover, an apparent central axis and symmetry also appear in this immortal mountain, indicating a thoughtful arrangement in the compositional design. For example, there is a river located in the middle of the lower part of the mountain, dividing that area into two halves. The only figure who is not facing the front, but is instead looking and walking to the left, also appears in the center of the lower part of the assemblage. At the center of the middle part, there is a cave, which is a motif of transcendence in Chinese folklore. On each side of the cave, there is an immortal sitting next to a tree. There is also a straight vertical tree right in front of the entrance to the cave, further enhancing the centrality of the cave in the assemblage. At the very peak of the triangular immortal mountain, there is a niche on an altar. Inside the niche, a female figure wearing an elaborate robe is at the center of the altar. She appears to be the deity Queen Mother of the West and is being flanked by attendants at both of her sides. Right in front of the deity, a monkey is standing in the middle of the altar, raising a peach of immortality above its head. Further enhancing the work's central axis and symmetry, a pair of trees, rocks, and deer are positioned at each side of the altar. The trees, rocks, and deer on the right are exactly the same size as their counterparts on the left side. All of

these details indicate that this assemblage sculpture of an immortal mountain was carefully designed.

Although chapters 1 and 5 of this dissertation demonstrate the strong connotation of immortality in azurite, the mineral is nowhere to be found in this magnificent and carefully made immortal mountain. First of all, as indicated above, it is not mentioned in the explanatory text displayed with the assemblage. Yet, malachite—azurite’s close companion—enjoys a prominent place in this assemblage. The deployment of malachite rules out the possibility that the artist of this sculpture did not know the existence of azurite. A piece of a large, eye-catching malachite agglomeration composed of many bulbous formations strengthens the central axis of the mountain; it is located right above the cave in the middle of the work and right below the altar at the top. The most important blue rock in this assemblage is not azurite, but lapis lazuli. Chapter 1 of this dissertation suggests that lapis lazuli is the rock called *huihui qing* (回回青), whose name indicates a blue-green mineral coming from the west of China. Studies of conservation and restoration also reveal that lapis lazuli has been used in temple murals since the Tang dynasty. In this assemblage, lapis lazuli appears as decorative rocks adorning the mountain. However, a small piece of lapis lazuli was carved into a tablet and put on top of the entrance of the cave at the center (plate 6.4.4). On the tablet, four characters written in a golden pigment read, “the realm of the immortals at [Mountain] Penglai (*Penglai xianjing* 蓬萊仙境).” At the back of the assemblage, where a stele inscribed with the names of donors is located, another small piece of lapis lazuli appears as a tablet. On the tablet, four characters say, “jade palaces and jade ponds

(*Yuyu yaoci* 玉宇瑤池).” The two tablets in lapis lazuli thus take on an important role and articulate the otherworldly nature of the mountain (plate 6.4.3).

Apparently, by the late nineteenth century, azurite had lost its status as the most otherworldly mineral in Chinese culture. This assemblage sculpture of an immortal mountain aptly attests the notion that the meaning of a mineral or pigment is definitively historical, bound to the historical moment in question. As for why azurite was not used in this assemblage, the question remains and must be studied with reference to the economic production, cultural and cosmological beliefs, and aesthetics of the late nineteenth century, all of which are topics that merit in-depth investigation, but go beyond the time and scope of this dissertation.

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Appendix: Figures

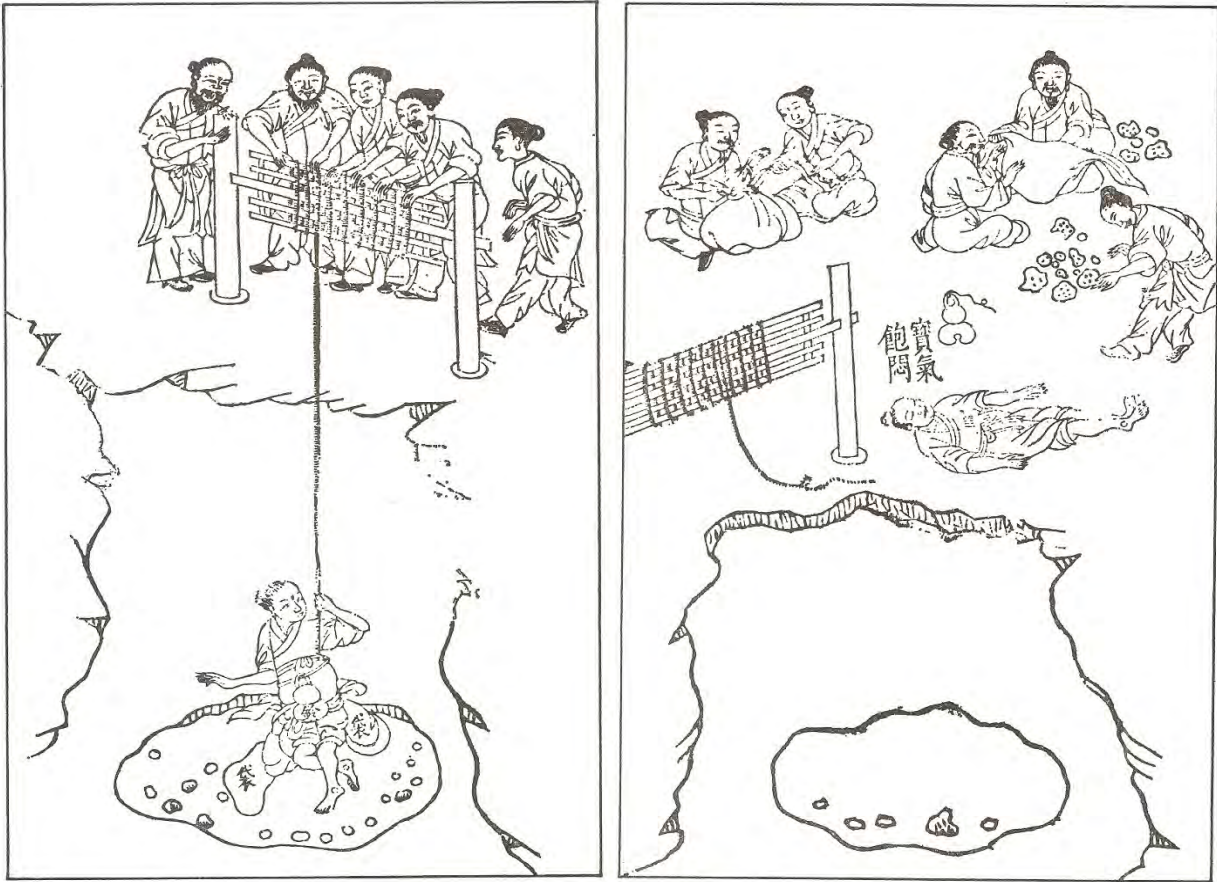


Figure 1.1. Song Yingxing. Illustration to *bao*-treasure, in fascicle of Pearl and Jade, *Heavenly Effort in Unpacking Things* (*Tiangong kaiwu*). 1637 imprint. Woodblock, original size unknown. Image in the public domain.



Figure 2.1.1. Wen Zhengming. *Goddess of Xiang and Lady of Xiang*. Dated 1517. Ink and color on paper, hanging scroll. 35.6 x 100 cm. The Palace Museum, Beijing.





Figure 2.2. Zhao Mengfu. Detail of *Grooms and Horses*. 1296 and 1359. Ink and color on paper, handscroll. 30.2 x 178.1 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of John M. Crawford Jr., 1988.35.



Figure 2.3. Attributed to Qian Xuan. Detail of *Consort Yang Mounting on a Horse*. Ink and color on paper, handscroll. 30.4 x 110.6 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.: Purchase — Charles Lang Freer Endowment, F1957.14.



Figure 2.4. Qiu Ying. *High Peaks amid Distant Lakes*, in *Picture Album of Imitating Song and Yuan Models*. Ink and color on silk, album. About 29.2 x 47.1 cm. The collection of National Palace Museum.



Figure 2.5. Qiu Ying. *Towers and Pavilions amid Mountains and Clouds*, in *Picture Album of Imitating Song and Yuan Models*. About 29.2 x 47.1 cm. The Collection of National Palace Museum.



Figure 2.6. Qiu Ying. *Farm Houses in Mountain Valley*, in *Picture Album of Imitating Song and Yuan Models*. About 29.2 x 47.1 cm. The Collection of National Palace Museum.



Figure 2.7. Qiu Ying. *Fishing Dwellings in Mountain Pass*, in *Picture Album of Imitating Song and Yuan Models*. About 29.2 x 47.1 cm. The Collection of National Palace Museum.



Figure 2.8. Qiu Ying. *Village Joy in Pine Forest*, in *Picture Album of Imitating Song and Yuan Models*. About 29.2 x 47.1 cm. The Collection of National Palace Museum.



Figure 2.9. Qiu Ying. *Bamboo Hedge Pressed by Snow*, in *Picture Album of Imitating Song and Yuan Models*. About 29.2 x 47.1 cm. The Collection of National Palace Museum.



Figure 2.10.1. Sheng Mao. *Enjoying Fresh Air in a Mountain Retreat*. Ink and color on silk, hanging scroll. 120.9 x 57 cm. Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City.



Figure 2.10.2. Sheng Mao. Detail of *Enjoying Fresh Air in a Mountain Retreat*.



Figure 3.1.1. Qiu Ying. *Study Studio Among Wutong Tree and Bamboo*. Ink and color on paper, hanging scroll. 148.7 x 52.2 cm. Shanghai Museum, Shanghai.



Figure 3.1.2. Qiu Ying. Detail of *Study Studio Among Wutong Tree and Bamboo*.



Figure 3.2. Xiang Shengmo. *Self-Portrait in Red Landscape*. 1644. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 151.4 x 56.7 cm. Collection of Shitou shuwu.



Figure 3.3. Tang Yin. *Pure Dream under the Shade of a Wutong Tree*. Undated. Hanging scroll, ink and light color on paper, 62 x 30.8 cm. The Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 3.4. Attributed to Qiu Ying. *Resting at Day in the Shade of Wutong Tree*. Undated. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 147 x 64.3 cm. The Collection of National Palace Museum.

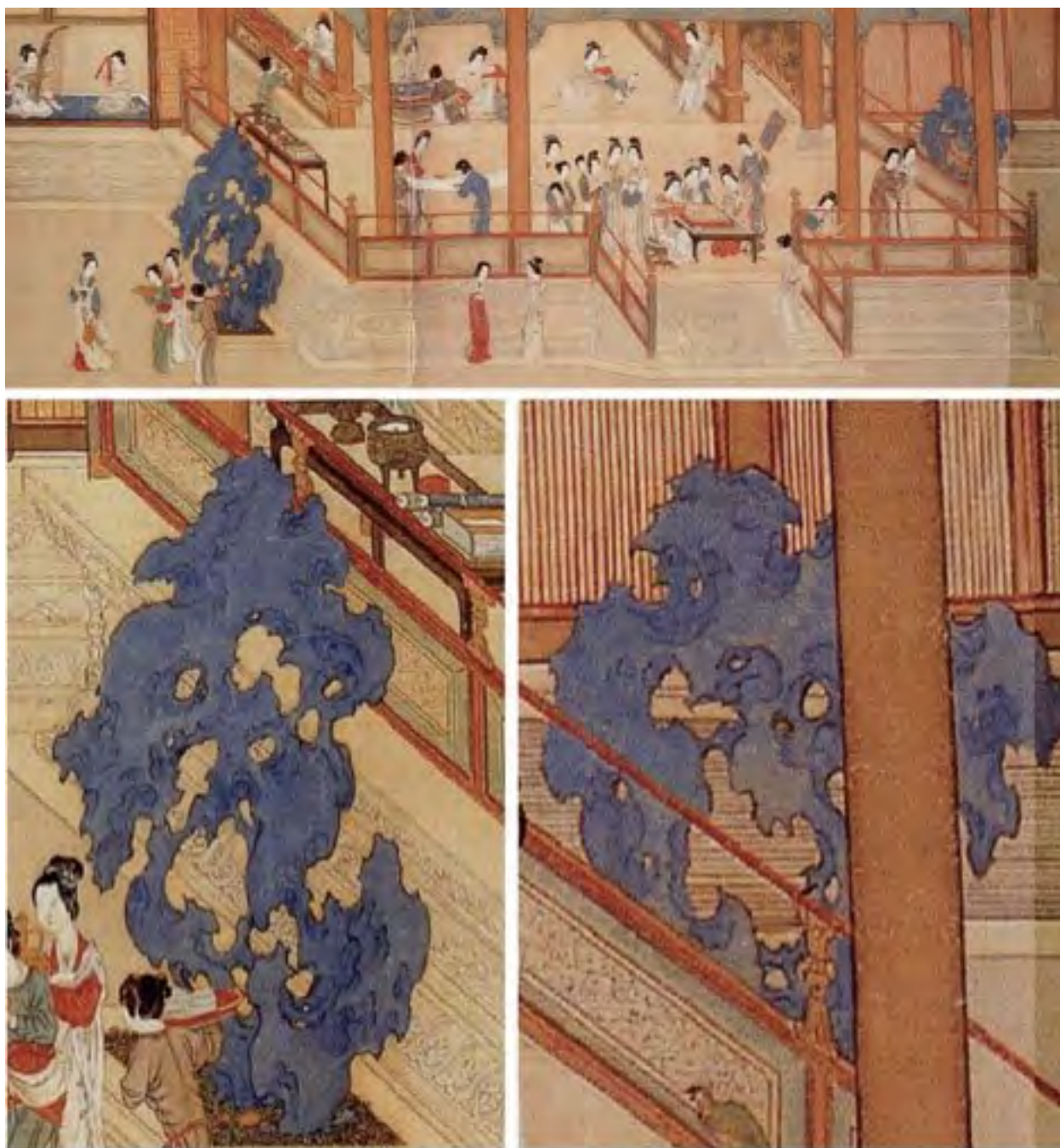


Figure 3.5. Qiu Ying. Three details of *Spring Dawn in a Han Palace*. Undated. Handscroll, ink and colors on silk, 30.6 cm x 574.1 cm. The Collection of National Palace Museum.



Figure 3.6.1. Qiu Ying. A detail of *Thatched Hall in Peach Blossom Village*. Undated. Hanging scroll, ink and colors on silk, 150 cm x 53 cm. The Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 3.6.2. Qiu Ying. A detail of *Thatched Hall in Peach Blossom Village*.



Figure 3.7. Qiu Ying. *Catching Willow Floss*, in *Picture Album of Figures and Stories*. Undated. Album leaf, ink and colors on silk, approx. 41.1 cm x 33.8 cm. The Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 3.8.1. Qiu Ying. *Towers and Pavilions in Immortal Mountains*. Dated 1550. Hanging scroll, ink and colors on paper, 110.6 x 42.1cm. The Collection of National Palace Museum.



Figure 3.8.2. Qiu Ying. *Towers and Pavilions in Immortal Mountains*, detail.



Figure 3.9. Top: Qiu Ying. *Lady on Riverbank*, approx. 1500-1522. Ming dynasty (1368-1644). Ink and colors on gold-flecked paper. Courtesy of Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Museum purchase, Docent Council Subscription Fund, B81D38. Photograph © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. Bottom: Detail.



Figure 3.10. Qiu Ying. *Trying Spring Water in a Pine Kiosk*. Ink and color on silk, hanging scroll. 128.1 x 61 cm. The Collection of National Palace Museum.



Figure 3.11. Qiu Ying. *Eastern Forest*. Ink and color on silk, handscroll. 29.5 x 136.4 cm. The Collection of National Palace Museum.



Figure 3.12.1. Qiu Ying. *Waiting for Ferry by an Autumn Stream*. Ink and color on silk, hanging scroll, 155.4 x 133.4 cm. The Collection of National Palace Museum.



Figure 3.12.2. Qiu Ying. Details of *Waiting for Ferry by an Autumn Stream*.



Figure 4.1.1. Anonymous.
*Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara in
Water-Moon Manifestation.*
14th century. Hanging scroll,
ink, color, and gold on silk,
111.1 x 76.2 cm. The Nelson-
Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas
City.



Figure 4.1.2. Anonymous. Detail of *Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara in Water-Moon Manifestation*.



Figure 4.2. Sheng Mao. *Noble Scholar in an Autumn Grove*. Mid- to late 1340s. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 134.3 x 59cm. The Collection of National Palace Museum.



Figure 4.3.1. Zhao Mengfu. *Self-Portrait*. 1299. Album leaf, ink and color on silk, 24 cm x 23 cm. The Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 4.3.2. Zhao Mengfu. A detail of *Self-Portrait*.



Figure 4.4.1. Tang Yin. *Tao Gu Presents a Poem*. Ca. 1515. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 168.8 x 102.1 cm. The Collection of National Palace Museum.



Figure 4.4.2. Tang Yin. *Tao Gu Presents a Poem*, detail.



Figure 4.4.3. Tang Yin. *Tao Gu Presents a Poem*, detail.

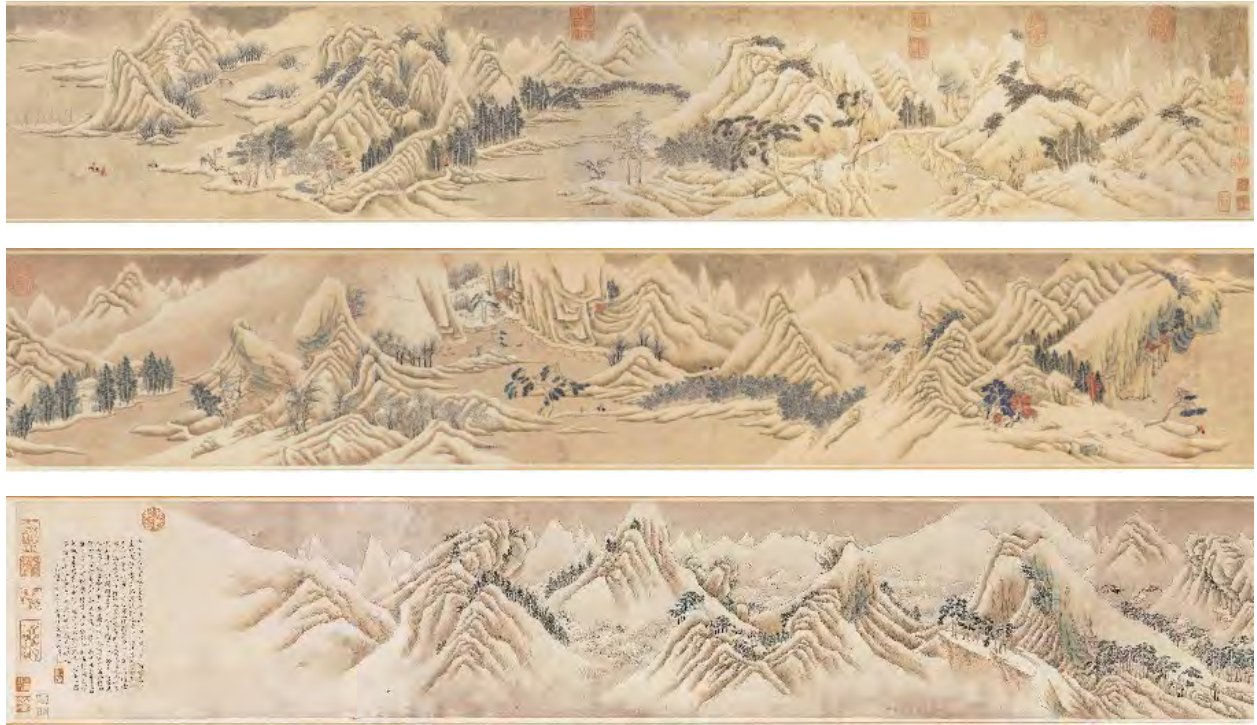


Figure 4.5.1. Wen Zhengming. *Heavy Snow in Mountain Passes*. Date 1528-32. Handscroll, ink and color on paper, 24.3 x 445.2 cm. The Collection of National Palace Museum.



Figure 4.5.2. Wen Zhengming. *Heavy Snow in Mountain Passes*, detail.



Figure 4.5.3. Wen Zhengming. *Heavy Snow in Mountain Passes*, detail.



Figure 4.5.4. Wen Zhengming. *Heavy Snow in Mountain Passes*, detail.



Figure 4.5.5. Wen Zhengming. *Heavy Snow in Mountain Passes*, detail.



Figure 4.5.6. Wen Zhengming. *Heavy Snow in Mountain Passes*, detail.



Figure 4.5.7. Wen Zhengming. *Heavy Snow in Mountain Passes*, detail.



Figure 4.5.8. Wen Zhengming. *Heavy Snow in Mountain Passes*, detail.



Figure 4.6. Anonymous. *Portrait of Emperor Yongle*. Undated. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 270 cm x 163.6 cm. The Collection of National Palace Museum.



Figure 4.7. Qiu Ying. Details of *Spring Dawn in a Han Palace*. Undated. Handscroll, ink and colors on silk, 30.6 cm x 574.1 cm. The Collection of National Palace Museum.



Figure 4.8. Qiu Ying. Two details (sections of the painting and the colophon) of *A Beauty Lost in Spring Thought*. Undated. Handscroll, ink and colors on paper, 20.1 cm x 57.8 cm. The Collection of National Palace Museum.



Figure 4.9.1. Left: Qiu Ying. A detail of *Spring Dawn in a Han Palace*. Right: Zhou Feng, attributed. *Palace Ladies Playing Double Sixes*. Undated, ca. late 12th to mid-13th century. Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 30.5 cm x 69.1 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: Gift of Jean-Pierre Dubosc, Lugano, Switzerland, F1960.4.



Figure 4.9.2. Above: Qiu Ying. A detail of *Spring Dawn in a Han Palace*. Below: Attributed to Emperor Huizong. A detail of *Court Ladies Preparing Newly Woven Silk*. Northern Song dynasty, early 12th century. Handscroll, ink, color, and gold on silk, 37.1 x 145 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Special Chinese and Japanese Fund. 12.886



Figure 4.9.3. Above: Qiu Ying. A detail of *Spring Dawn in a Han Palace*. Below: Zhou Wenju, attributed. A detail of *Palace Ladies Bathing Infants*. Round fan mounted as album leaf, ink and color on silk, 23 cm x 24.5 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: Purchase — Charles Lang Freer Endowment, F1935.8.



Figure 4.9.4. Above: Qiu Ying. A detail of *Spring Dawn in a Han Palace*. Below: Zhou Wenju, attributed. *United by Music*. Undated, 15th-16th century. Handscroll, ink and colors on silk, 41.9 x 184.2 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago. Kate S. Buckingham Endowment Fund, 1950.1370.



Figure 4.9.5. Qiu Ying. A detail of *Spring Dawn in a Han Palace*.



Figure 4.9.6. Anonymous (formerly attributed to Qian Xuan). *Infants under a Banana Tree*. Undated. Album leaf, ink and color on silk, 25.2 × 21 cm. Courtesy of Tokyo National Museum, Japan.



Figure 4.9.7. Qiu Ying. One of the fifteen paintings in the album of *Copies of Song Dynasty Paintings*. Undated. Album leaf, ink and color on silk, approximately 27.2 x 25.5 cm. Shanghai Museum.

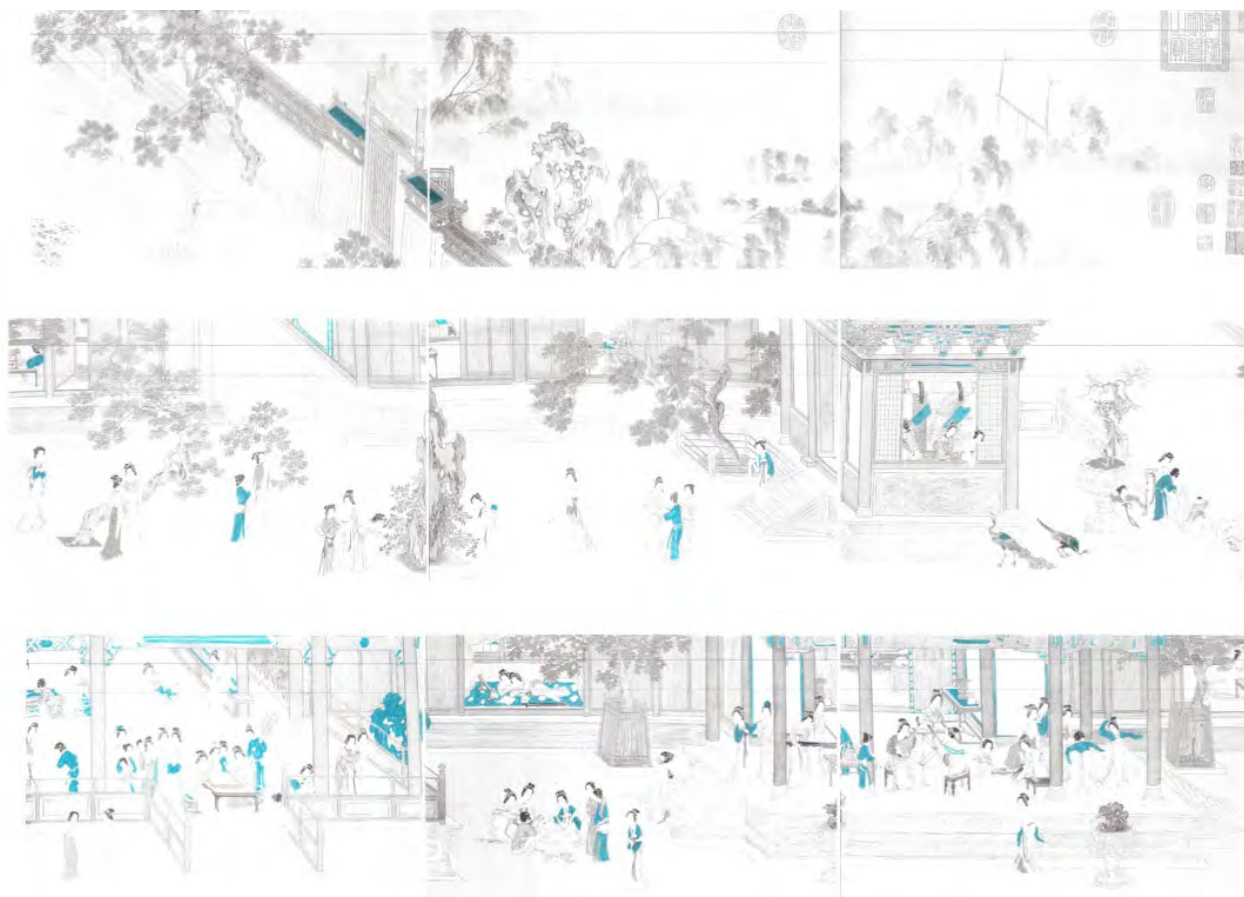


Figure 4.10.1. The placement of blue in Qiu Ying's *Spring Dawn in the Han Palace*.

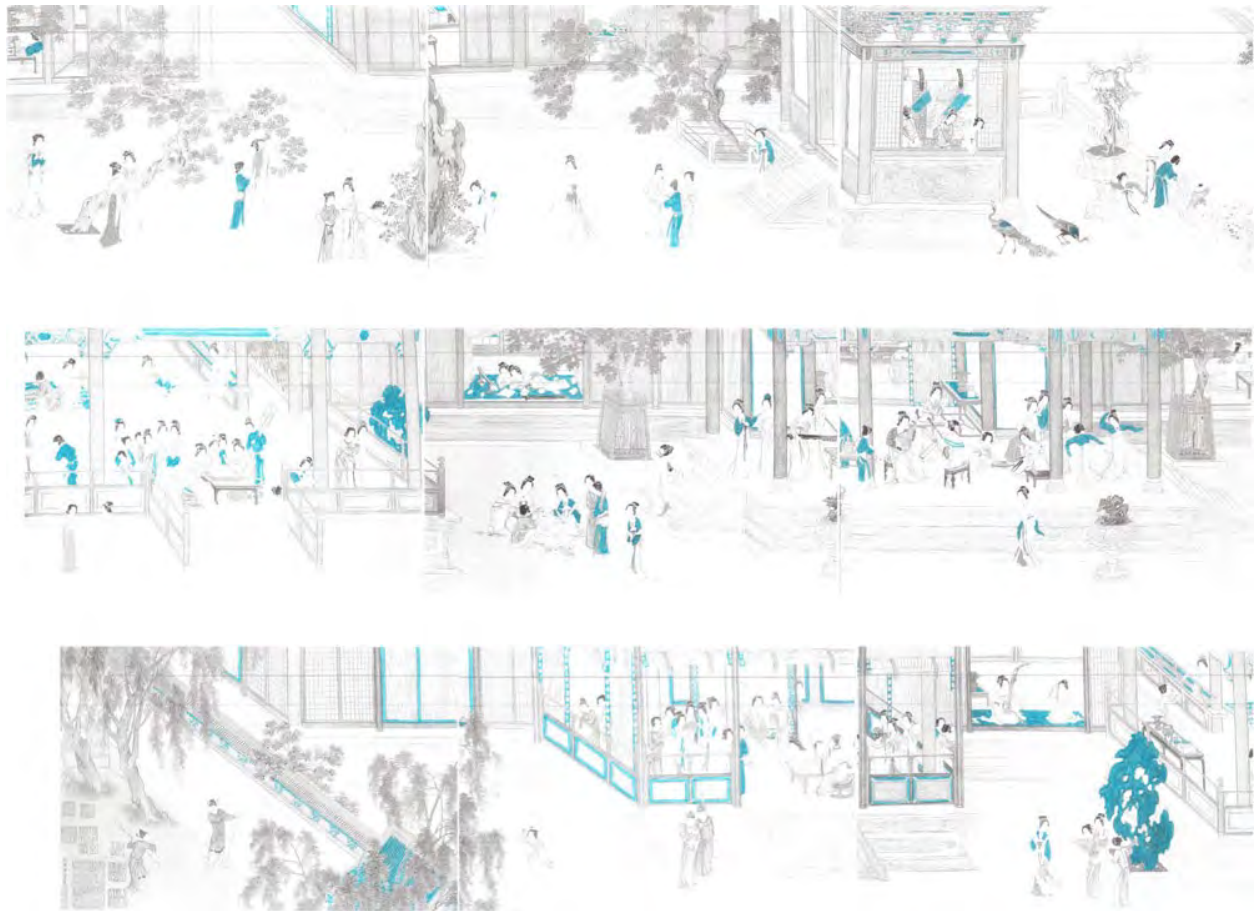


Figure 4.10.2. The placement of blue in Qiu Ying's *Spring Dawn in the Han Palace*.



Figure 4.10.3. The placement of blue in Qiu Ying's *Spring Dawn in the Han Palace*.



Figure 4.10.4. The placement of blue in Qiu Ying's *Spring Dawn in the Han Palace*.



Figure 4.10.5. The placement of blue in Qiu Ying's *Spring Dawn in the Han Palace*.



Figure 4.11. Top left: Qiu Ying. A detail of *Admiring Antiques in a Bamboo Courtyard*. Top right: Qiu Ying. A detail of *Spring Dawn in the Han Palace*, a decorative rock outside the palace. Below left and right: Qiu Ying. Two details of *Spring Dawn in the Han Palace*, two decorative rocks inside the palace.

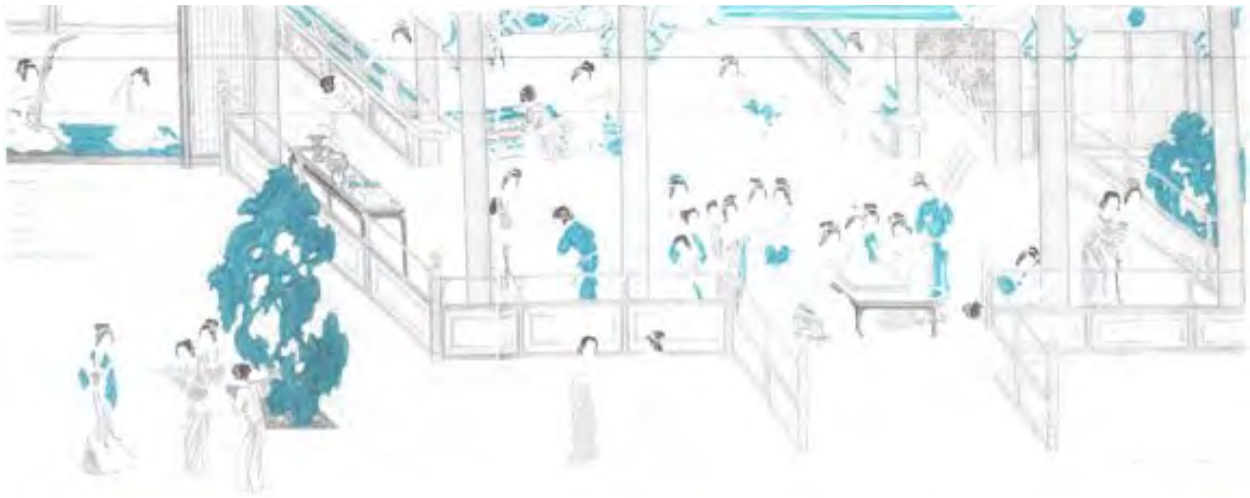


Figure 4.12.1. The location of decorative rocks in Qiu Ying's *Spring Dawn in the Han Palace*.



Figure 4.12.2. The location of decorative rocks in Qiu Ying's *Spring Dawn in the Han Palace*.

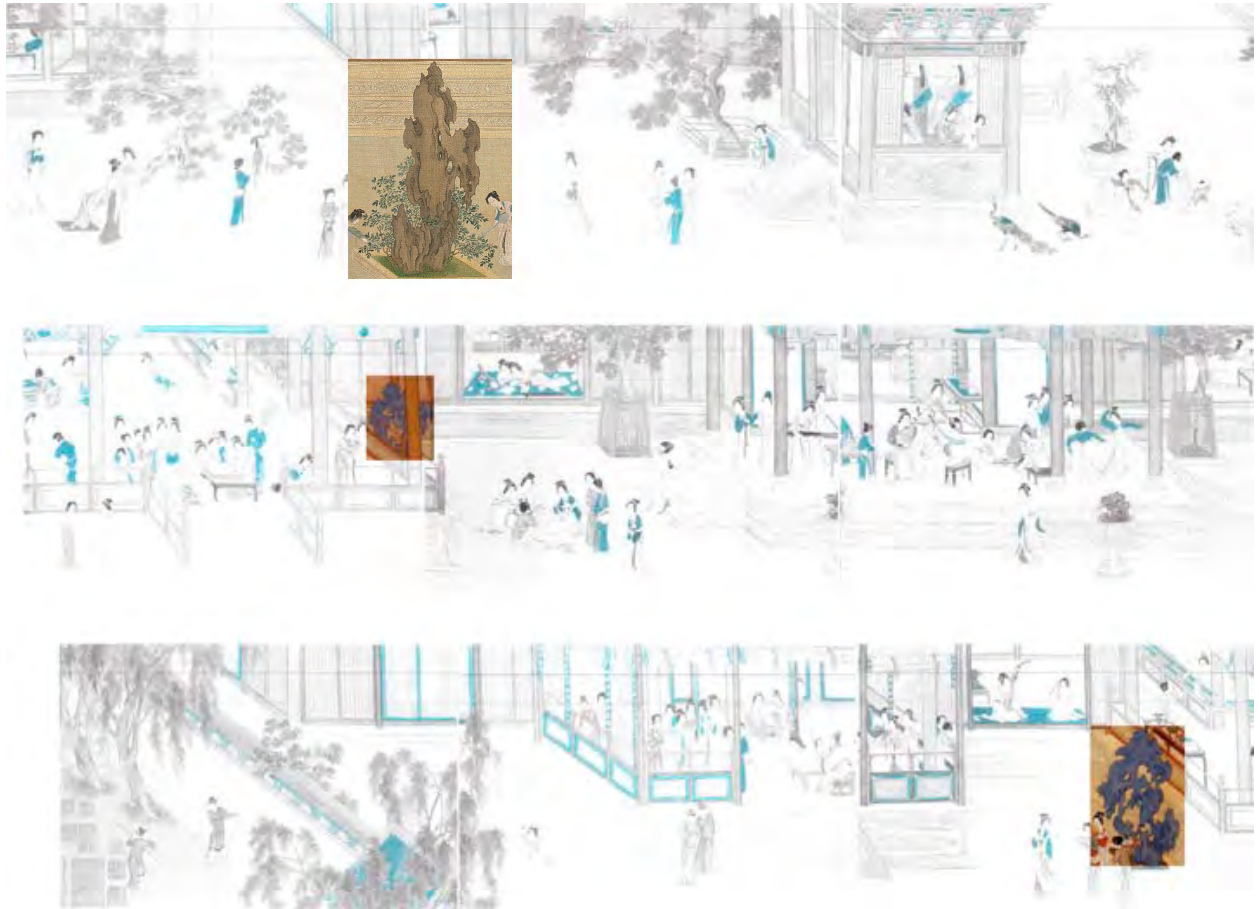


Figure 4.12.3. The location of decorative rocks in Qiu Ying's *Spring Dawn in the Han Palace*.





Figure 4.14.1. Li Cheng, attributed. *Luxuriant Landscape and Distant Mountains*. Undated. Handscroll, ink and colors on silk, 45.4 cm x 141.8 cm. Liaoning Provincial Museum, Liaoning.

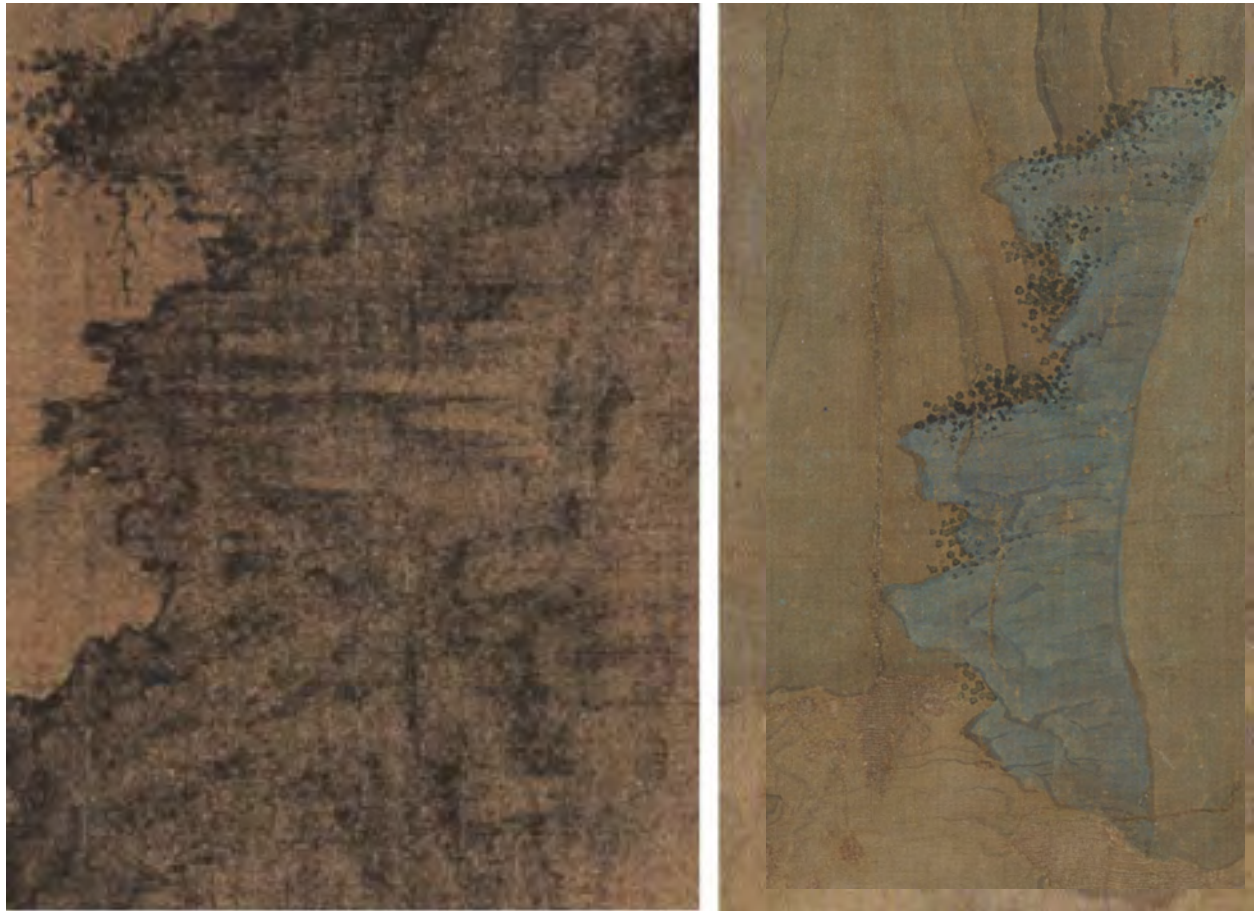


Figure 4.14.2. Left: Li Cheng, attributed. A detail of *Luxuriant Landscape and Distant Mountains*. Right: Qiu Ying. A detail of *Thatched Hall in Peach Blossom Village*.



Figure 4.14.3. Left: Li Cheng, attributed. A detail of *Luxuriant Landscape and Distant Mountains*. Right: Qiu Ying. A detail of *Thatched Hall in Peach Blossom Village*.

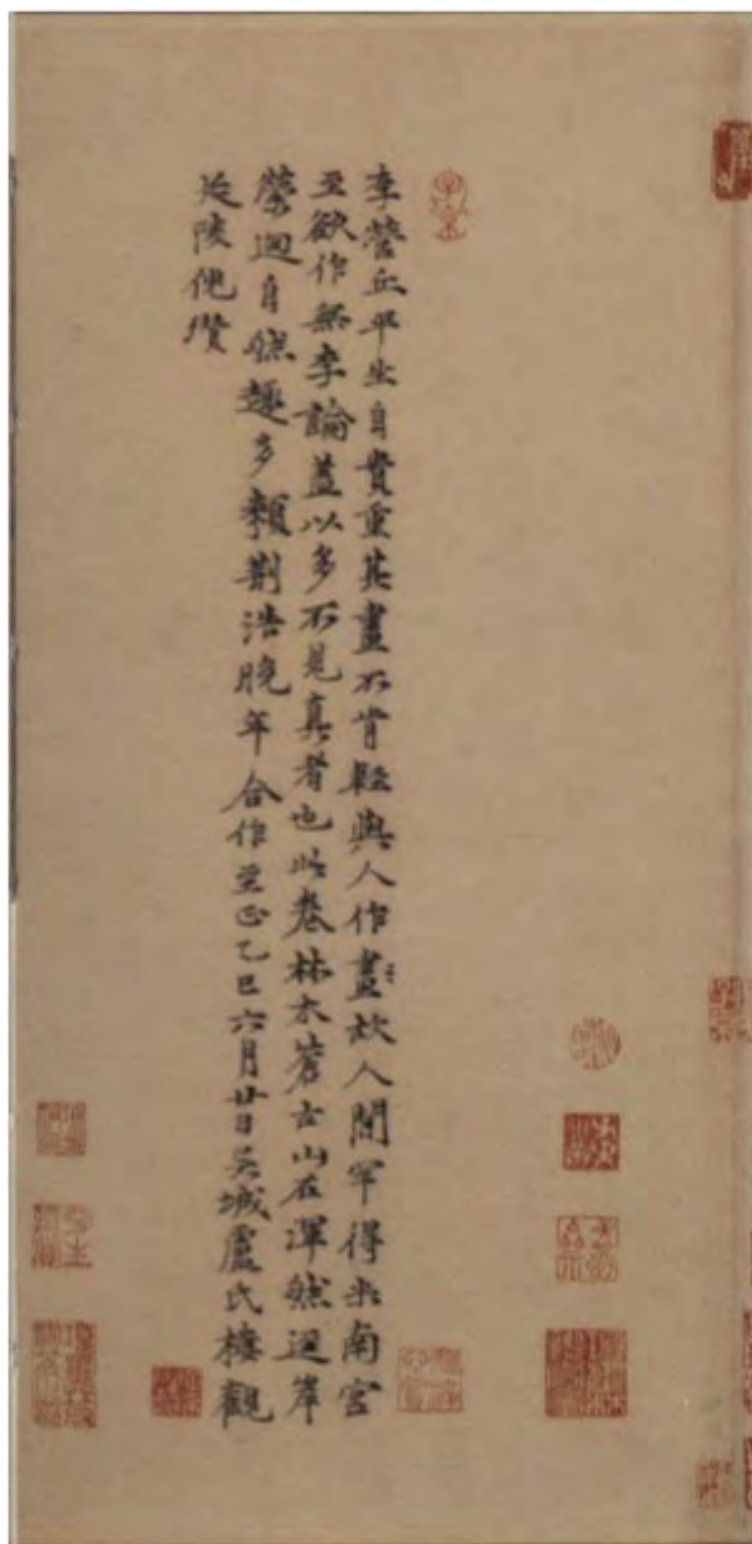


Figure 4.14.4. Ni Zan's colophon at *Luxuriant Landscape and Distant Mountains*.



Figure 4.15.1. Qiu Ying. *Copy of the Portrait of Ni Zan*. Dated 1542. Handscroll, ink and colors on paper, 31.5 cm x 47.9 cm. Shanghai Museum, Shanghai.



Figure 4.15.2. Left: Qiu Ying. A detail of *Copy of the Portrait of Ni Zan*. Right: Qiu Ying. A detail of *Thatched Hall in Peach Blossom Village*.



Figure 4.16.1. Anonymous artist. *Angler-Recluse by a Willow Pond*. Undated. Album leaf, ink and color on silk, 23.6 cm x 24 cm. The Collection of National Palace Museum.



Figure 4.16.2. Above: Qiu Ying. A detail of *Catching Willow Floss*. Below: A detail of *Angler-Recluse by a Willow Pond*.



Figure 4.17.1. Qiu Ying. *Zi Lu Asking the Way* in *Picture Album of Figures and Stories*. Undated. Album leaf, ink and colors on silk, approx. 31.4 cm x 27 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 4.17.2. The placement of blue in Qiu Ying's *Zi Lu Asking the Way*.



Figure 4.17.3. (Top) Ma Hezhi. The section “fur coat” of *Custom of Tang*. Undated, ca. Southern Song dynasty. Handscroll, ink and colors on silk, 28.3 cm x 826 cm. Liaoning Provincial Museum, Liaoning. (Bottom left) Qiu Ying. A detail of *Zi Lu Asking the Way*. (Bottom right) Ma Hezhi. A detail of the section “fur coat” in *Custom of Tang*.



Figure 4.18. Qiu Ying. *Pipa Songs at Xuanyang River* in *Picture Album of Figures and Stories*. Undated. Album leaf, ink and color on silk, approx. 31.4 cm x 27 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.

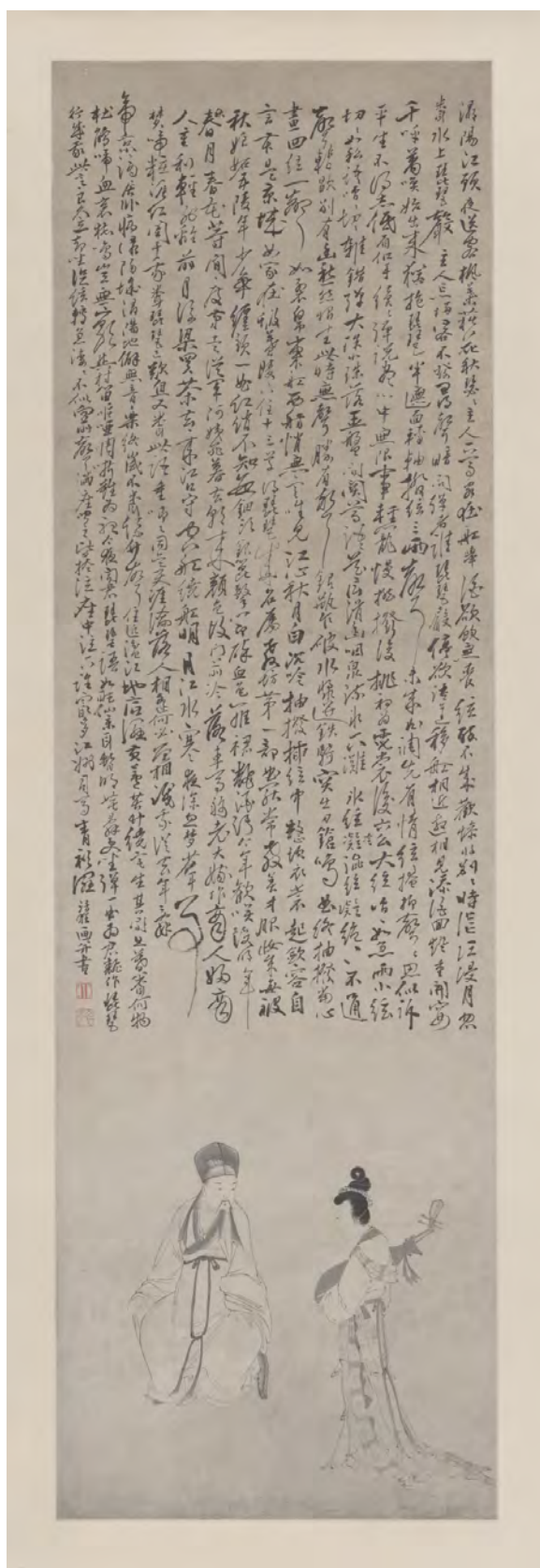
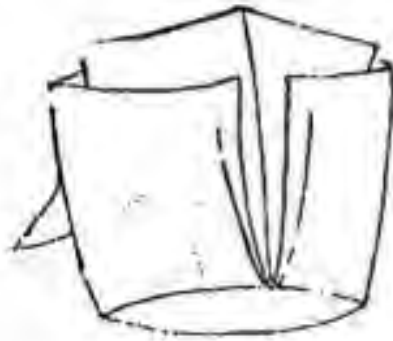


Figure 4.19. Guo Xu. *Illustration to the Song of the Lute*. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 153.5 x 46.3 cm. The Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 4.20. Qiu Ying. *Admiring Bamboo in a Bamboo Courtyard* in *Picture Album of Figures and Stories*. Undated. Album, ink and colors on silk, approx. 31.4 cm x 27 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.

東坡巾



巾有四墻墻外有重墻比內墻少
殺前後左右各以角相向著之則
角界在兩眉間以老坡所服故名
實見其畫像至今冠服猶爾

Figure 4.21.1. Wang Qi. An image of a hat invented by Su Shi in *Sancai tuhui*. 1609. Woodblock print. Image in the public domain.



Figure 4.21.2. Left: A detail from *Sancai tuhui*, showing how the hat invented by Su Shi looks like. Right: Qiu Ying. A detail of *Admiring Antiques in Bamboo Courtyard*.



Figure 4.22. The placement of blue in Qiu Ying's *Admiring Bamboo in a Bamboo Courtyard*.



Figure 5.1.1. Qiu Ying. *Towers and Pavilions in Immortal Mountains*, detail.



Figure 5.1.2. Qiu Ying. *Towers and Pavilions in Immortal Mountains*, detail.



Figure 5.2. Qiu Ying. *Playing the Flute to Attract Phoenixes* in *Picture Album of Figures and Stories*. Undated. Album leaf, ink and color on silk, 42.2 x 33.7 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 5.3. Qiu Ying. *Jade Grotto in an Immortal Spring*. Undated. Hanging scroll, ink and colors on silk, 167 x 65.2cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 5.4.1. Chen Ruyan. *Mountains of the Immortals*. Before 1371. Handscroll, ink and colors on silk, 33 x 102.9cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio.



Figure 5.4.2. Chen Ruyan. *Mountains of the Immortals*, detail.



Figure 5.5.1. Wen Boren. *Picture of Fanghu*. Dated 1567. Hanging scroll, ink and colors on paper, 120.6 x 31.8cm. The Collection of National Palace Museum.



Figure 5.5.2. Wen Boren. *Picture of Fanghu*, detail.



Figure 5.6.1. Anonymous. *Taoist Immortal Crossing the River in a Lotus Raft*. Undated, Song Dynasty. Album leaf, ink and color on silk, 21.4 x 22.4cm. The Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 5.6.2. Detail of *Taoist Immortal Crossing the River in a Lotus Raft*.



Figure 5.7.1. Chen Yuexi. *The Daoist Immortal Magu with a Crane and Flower Basket*. Yuan dynasty, 14th century. Hanging scroll, ink, colors, and gold on silk, 102.5 x 54.5 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. William Sturgis Bigelow Collection. 11.6168.



Figure 5.7.2. Attributed to Chen Yuexi. *The Daoist Immortal Magu with a Crane*, detail.



Figure 5.8.1. Zhou Lun.
Rabbit under the Moon.
Undated. Hanging scroll,
ink and color on silk,
159.9 x 87.2 cm. Seikado
Bunko Art Museum,
Japan.



Figure 5.8.2. Detail of *Rabbit under the Moon*.



Figure 5.9.1. Anonymous.
*Embracing a Qin in a
Pavilion by Pine Trees*.
Ming dynasty. Ink and
color on silk, 146 x 86.6
cm. Hanging scroll. The
Collection of National
Palace Museum.



Figure 5.9.2. *Embracing a Qin in a Pavilion by Pine Trees*, detail.

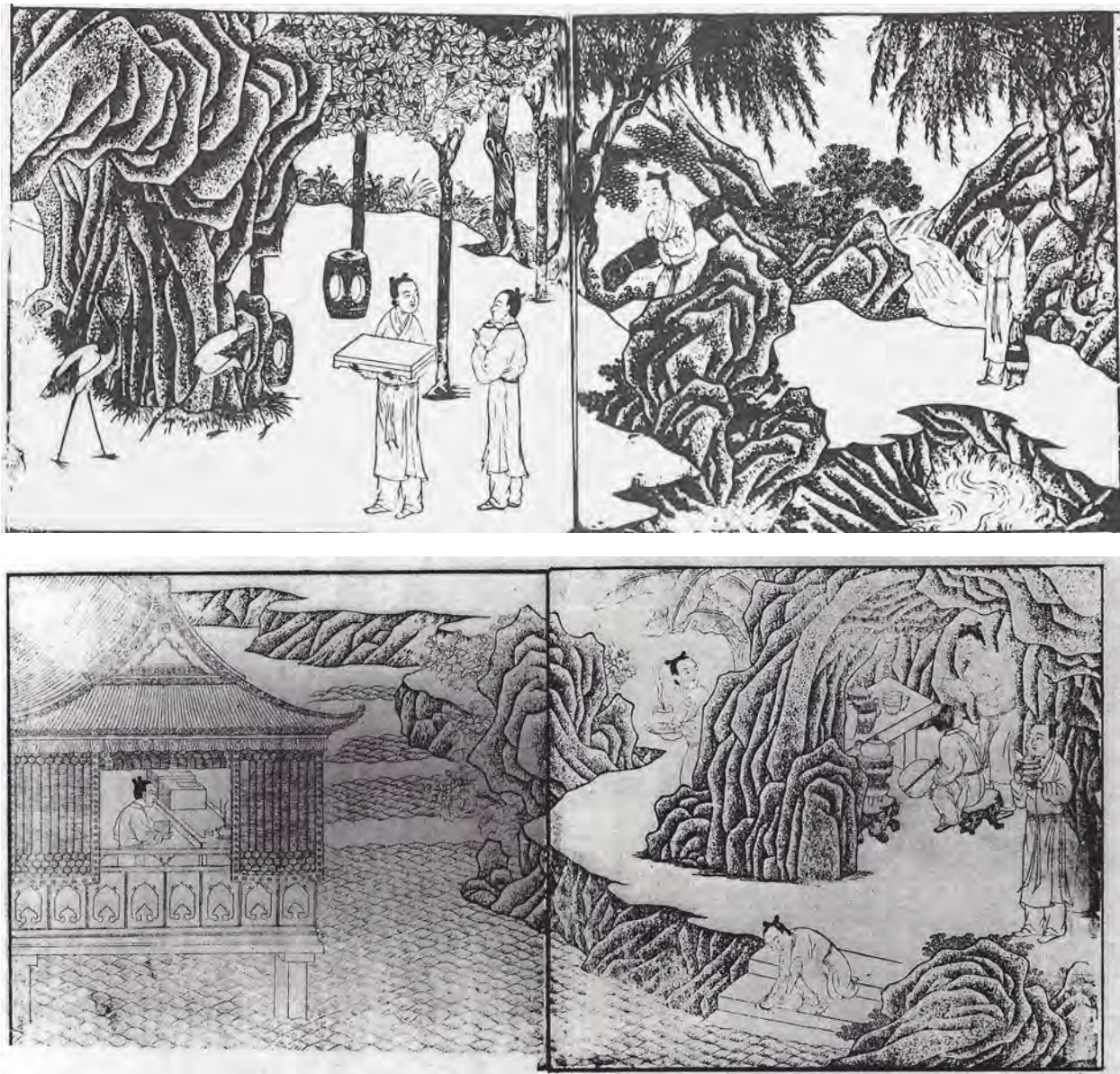


Figure 5.10.1. Wang Geng and Huang Yingzu. Illustrations to *A Shortcut Manual to Chess*, Meticulously Compiled by Mr. Zuoyin. Before 1609. Image in the public domain.



Figure 5.10.2. Wang Geng and Huang Yingzu. Illustrations to *A Shortcut Manual to Chess*, *Meticulously Compiled by Mr. Zuoyin*. Before 1609. Image in the public domain.



Figure 6.1. Zude (surname unknown). *Portrait of the Artist's Great-Granduncle Yizhai at the Age of Eighty-Five*. Dated *xinyou* (1561 or 1620). Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 156.8 cm x 96.2 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Figure 6.2. Zude (surname unknown). *Portrait of an Old Lady*. Dated *xinyou* (1561 or 1620). Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 156.8 cm x 96.2 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Figure 6.3.1. Attributed to Gu Jianlong. *Ximen Foolishly Presents His New Wife, Mistress Ping, to His Worthless and Bibulous Guests*. Late 17th century. Album leaf, ink and color on silk. 39 cm x 31.4 cm. Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City.



Figure 6.3.2. A detail of *Ximen Foolishly Presents His New Wife, Mistress Ping, to His Worthless and Bibulous Guests*.



Figure 6.4.1. Anonymous artist(s). *Immortal Terrace in Jades and Stones*. Before 1894. Assemblage sculpture, 130 cm x 117 cm x 96 cm. The Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 6.4.2. A Detail of *Immortal Terrace* in *Jades and Stones*. Photo taken by Quincy Ngan.



Figure 6.4.3. A Detail of the back of *Immortal Terrace in Jades and Stones*. Photo taken by Quincy Ngan.



Figure 6.4.4. A Detail of *Immortal Terrace in Jades and Stones*. Photo taken by Quincy Ngan.