

James Cahill

Pictures for Use and Pleasure

Vernacular Painting in High Qing China



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Recognizing Vernacular Painting

So much has been written over the centuries about Chinese painting—by the Chinese themselves, and over the past century by Japanese, Western, and other foreign authors as well—that the chance of any large and important area of it remaining unstudied might seem small. But the subject of this book, Chinese painting of the kind I call vernacular, is just such an unexplored area. It has been a focus of my own attention only relatively recently, late in a long career, and I arrived at it by a strange, roundabout route.

As a graduate student in the 1950s writing my doctoral dissertation about the artist Wu Zhen (1280–1354), I realized that a key to understanding his thought and his works lay in defining the ideas about expression in painting that had come to dominate the thinking and practice of the most prestigious artists of his time. This was the theory of literati painting, which had arisen in the eleventh century among a group of scholar-artist-critics associated with the great poet and statesman Su Shi, or Su Dongpo (1036–1101). It held that paintings by amateur artists, men of the scholar-official class who were learned in the classics and expected to devote themselves mainly to scholarship and government service, were by their very authorship superior to works by the technically trained professional painters. By the fourteenth century, the time of Wu Zhen's activity, this way of thinking about

painting was so widely accepted as to endanger the critical reception of other kinds of work, especially those by openly professional masters, many of whom continued in the “academic” styles practiced in the Imperial Painting Academy of the fallen Song Dynasty. I devoted half of my dissertation to a first attempt at formulating a coherent theory of literati painting; later I published an article incorporating some of my findings under the title “Confucian Elements in the Theory of Painting” and wrote about the literati-professional distinction on a more popular level in my book *Chinese Painting*.¹ I was sometimes accused, not undeservedly, of setting myself up as a spokesman for these critical ideas and attitudes, a true believer.

In the half-century since then, much has changed in my thinking. One fundamental truth I realized early on, though it was only later that I understood its full implications, is that the great corpus of Chinese painting theory and criticism as it has been preserved, richer and fuller by far than the literature of any other of the world’s premodern artistic traditions, is heavily biased in favor of the literati artists and their works—understandably so, since the authors of it were virtually all members of the literati class themselves, and so strongly inclined to favor the kinds of painting practiced and promoted by their fellows. A slower realization was that Chinese painting as it survives today has been, in effect, severely censored by this same elite, the Chinese male educated class, who have exercised control over its transmission, deciding which paintings should be preserved, remounted and repaired when they needed to be, and passed down through collections, and which others deserved to be neglected and lost. A good part of my later career has been devoted to attempts to recover and reconstitute, insofar as possible, “lost” areas of Chinese painting by identifying and bringing together pieces that have somehow survived, against the odds.

A closely related interest in recent years, and another that has led me away from orthodox Chinese attitudes about painting, has been the pursuit and study of pictures of women. This began with a mistake made in an exhibition that I organized with a graduate seminar and held at our University Art Museum in Berkeley in 1971. The exhibition was *The Restless Landscape: Chinese Painting of the Late Ming Period*; the mistake was including in the show and its catalog a very beautiful painting of a seated woman that proved, after further consideration and research, to have been falsely dated and misidentified in an interpolated inscription with a spurious signature.² In short, to make it more respectable and salable, a generic *meiren hua* or “beautiful-woman painting”—a picture, that is, of a beauty as a type, not of any individual person—had been fitted out with an impossibly early date and a spurious identification as a portrait of a famous woman. My concern with righting this mistake expanded into a deep curiosity about paintings of women in China: why were they so unstudied and so misunderstood? I complained in a lecture at the time that we “cannot even tell the portraits from the pinups.” Chinese writers on painting, when they mentioned pictures of women at all, referred to them loftily and without differentiation as *shinu hua* or “paintings of gentlewomen.” And no one had written seriously about them. At this time innovative studies by social historians and others

of women's changing role in Chinese society, especially in the Ming-Qing period, were adding rich revelations that were revising our old stereotypes of the stable Confucian society and its pattern of male dominance. Scholars engaged in women's studies of this kind were making heavy use of Chinese vernacular and popular literature, a field that had also opened up remarkably in recent decades. But no one was looking seriously at the paintings, or taking account of what they could reveal about these new concerns.

In the spring of 1994 I delivered a series of Getty lectures titled "The Flower and the Mirror: Representations of Women in Late Chinese Painting."³ As I began to rework those lectures for publication as a book, I added a section meant to supply a larger context not seriously addressed in the lectures: Who were the artists who did the generic pictures of women, *meiren hua* and others? What else did they paint? Why were their works so marginalized as low-class? Why have so many of their works been, like the picture in our exhibition, misattributed and misrepresented? The chapter meant to answer those questions grew as the answers unfolded, turning into a separate book—this one.

Gradually I came to recognize and attempt to define a great body of painting, created over the centuries by studio artists working in the cities, artists who produced pictures as required for diverse everyday domestic and other uses, pictures I have come to call vernacular. They were intended not so much for pure aesthetic appreciation as for hanging on particular occasions such as New Year's celebrations and birthdays, or for serving particular functions, such as setting the tone in certain rooms of the house or illustrating a story. These and other uses of them will be explored in the chapters that follow. They were executed in the polished "academic" manner of fine-line drawing and colors, usually on silk, and were valued for their elegant imagery and their lively and often moving depictions of subjects that answered the needs and desires of those who acquired and hung them, or enjoyed them in album and handscroll (horizontal scroll) form.

They fell outside the categories of painting praised by critics and preserved by collectors, which were valued, by contrast, as individual creations and personal expressions of prestigious masters; serious painting collecting in China, as in the West, was largely a matter of pursuing genuine works by name artists. Most desirable, especially for the periods after the Song Dynasty ended in the late thirteenth century, were the works of scholar-amateur artists or literati painters, educated men who, endowed with high principles through their study of the Confucian classics, were expected to devote their principal energies to scholarship and public service. In theory they practiced painting only as a leisure pastime and a form of self-cultivation, not for material gain. That this disinterested character of literati painting was largely a myth is a subject I have written about elsewhere.⁴ Myth or not, it served as a potent barrier to exclude openly professional artists who accepted commissions and produced pictures to satisfy particular needs.

Vernacular paintings, then, had several counts against them in the critical system that dominated Chinese connoisseurship and collecting. They were openly

functional, in a culture that professed to despise functionalism. They were in the wrong styles, executed in ways that did not prominently display the hand of the artist in personalized brushwork. The identity of their makers was ordinarily of small concern to those who acquired and hung them, and in any case the artists were not of the literati class, men who were supposed to manifest their high-culture refinements in their paintings. Moreover, the subjects of vernacular paintings were likely to be drawn more from everyday life and popular culture than from the revered classics and histories. Some of the subjects were mildly or outright erotic, and thus transgressed into an area forbidden to serious writers and painters—in a Ming play, a literati artist asked to paint the heroine's portrait refuses, saying that "beautiful women are the lowest level of painting in an artist's repertory."⁵ Moreover, since collectors had no interest in vernacular paintings, dealers and other owners commonly furnished them with misleading attributions and interpolated signatures of early and respected masters, intended to give them greater commercial value, if under false colors. Many of them survive, then, as "fakes," from which the misidentifications must be stripped away before they can be given their true art-historical status and seen for what they are.

There was a time, only decades ago, when some of the same factors excluded Chinese vernacular and popular literature from serious appreciation and study. Specialists devoted themselves largely to belletristic writing and poetry, along with philosophical and other texts that reflected the concerns of the literati elite, the educated male minority who dominated Chinese society. Non-elite literature (i.e., writing that was not addressed primarily, or only, at the classically trained male elite), like non-elite painting, was considered too low-class or vulgar to merit critical attention. But in the field of literary studies the taboos were broken, and there has appeared in the past half-century or so a large secondary literature, growing in subtlety of argument, on vernacular fiction, drama, local popular songs, and the like. If scholars of Chinese literature had remained hobbled by the old elitist attitudes, the great advances they have made in recent decades would not have happened, and the new understandings of Chinese social history, concepts of gender and the status of women, and all the other concerns that have been opened for investigation through studies of non-elite literature would have remained closed. The present book is meant to stimulate a similar opening up in Chinese painting studies, where similar rewards await those willing to expand their vision to include the long-scorned vernacular pictorial art.

The rewards, as we will see, are considerable. "Respectable" painting in China had long ago narrowed its range of acceptable subjects to rule out, with few exceptions, scenes of daily life, scenes that seem to convey the real feelings of the people portrayed, and scenes that explore human relationships in more than the stiffest and most moralistic ways. A heavy concentration on landscape promoted the virtues of escaping from the human world to live in nature; symbolic plants and birds, auspicious figures, historical scenes that carried political messages all belonged to a largely closed system of interpreting pictorial imagery. The artists who produced

vernacular paintings—mostly masters of small renown working in studios in the cities—also worked under constraints, the principal one being that they satisfy the needs and desires of their clientele. But because those desires were so diverse and flexible, the urban studio artists enjoyed considerable freedom, and they used it to explore the real world around them far more freely in their works than their prestigious contemporaries could do, revealing subtle insights into Chinese life and the workings of Chinese society.

In Japan a century of study, in an atmosphere less dominated by a censorious orthodoxy than in China, has illuminated the once-neglected areas of *fūzoku'ga* or genre painting and *ukiyo'e* (pictures of the floating world), both prints and paintings. Our vernacular paintings might be thought of as Chinese rough equivalents to those, as long as we are careful to get the sequence of events right: late-Ming erotic prints imported from China in fact played a large role in the beginnings of *ukiyo'e* in Japan, and some Chinese vernacular painting was familiar to Edo-period artists, and used by them. Pictures portraying the alluring figures and activities of the courtesan culture of China, and of the corresponding “floating world” of Japan, make up a large part of both painting traditions. Both shade easily into the openly erotic. This book will end with a chapter about courtesan culture and beautiful-woman (*meiren*) paintings in China, but will stop short of treating the *chungong hua* (spring palace pictures), Chinese erotic paintings mostly in album form; those will be the subject of a separate, smaller book, tentatively titled *Scenes from the Spring Palace: Chinese Erotic Printing and Painting*.⁶

The copious production of studies and reproduction books of Japanese *fūzoku'ga* and *ukiyo'e* prompts again the question: why has so little been written about the corresponding kinds of vernacular painting in China? I propose some tentative answers in what follows. But the primary explanation lies in the beliefs and attitudes, based in the dogma of traditional Chinese literati-painting theory, that have dominated our studies. No one states it exactly as I will here, but it nonetheless underlies a great deal of the writing and thinking in our field, both within China and outside. It takes the form of an unchallenged equation, an assumption that certain elements in Chinese painting and its surrounding circumstances always belong together and so take on the character of equivalence. It goes like this (the elements can appear in any order): in later Chinese painting, **scholar-amateurism = brushwork = calligraphy = self-expression = disdain for representation = high-mindedness = high quality.**

Nothing has so hampered independent and innovative directions in Chinese painting studies as the uncritical acceptance of this equation by many of our specialist scholars. It was, until recently, the likely basis of the training of a connoisseur in China; elsewhere, whole academic programs have promulgated it and indoctrinated students with it, as if it were a central truth about Chinese painting. It will not be overturned easily or soon. But books such as this one could not be written until its hold on at least one scholar was broken. At a time when little else of the old, self-serving rhetoric of elites has been allowed to stand, this one has been surprisingly tenacious. I hope this book will further erode it.

Paintings of the vernacular types had been made from the earliest periods of Chinese painting, but their production greatly increased in volume and variety during the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the period with which this book is mainly concerned. This is the “high Qing” of the book’s title, comprising the reigns of three emperors of the Qing or Manchu dynasty, Kangxi (r. 1662–1722), Yongzheng (r. 1723–35), and Qianlong (r. 1735–95). In the late Ming period, the later sixteenth century and first half of the seventeenth, Chinese society had been profoundly transformed from one that was basically agrarian to one increasingly urban and mercantile. In the new society, a growing urban middle class, affluent and eager to adopt the elegant lifestyle that had formerly been the prerogative of a landed gentry and government officials, provided a vastly expanded market for the works and services of artists, artisans, writers, and entertainers of all kinds. A huge increase in the production of printed books created in the great cities an urban print culture that underlies the heightened sophistication of the artists to be considered here and their clientele. The city of Suzhou, located below the Yangtze River some fifty miles inland from present-day Shanghai, experienced the most extraordinary new growth. The urban studio masters were also active in other cities located, like Suzhou, in the Yangtze delta region, cities such as Wuxi, Nanjing, and Yangzhou. Later, from early in the eighteenth century, a northern branch would grow up in Beijing, somewhat in the shadow of the Imperial Painting Academy there. I touch on regional aspects of vernacular painting at a few points where they seem relevant and ascertainable, but they cannot yet map the geographical development in any detail.

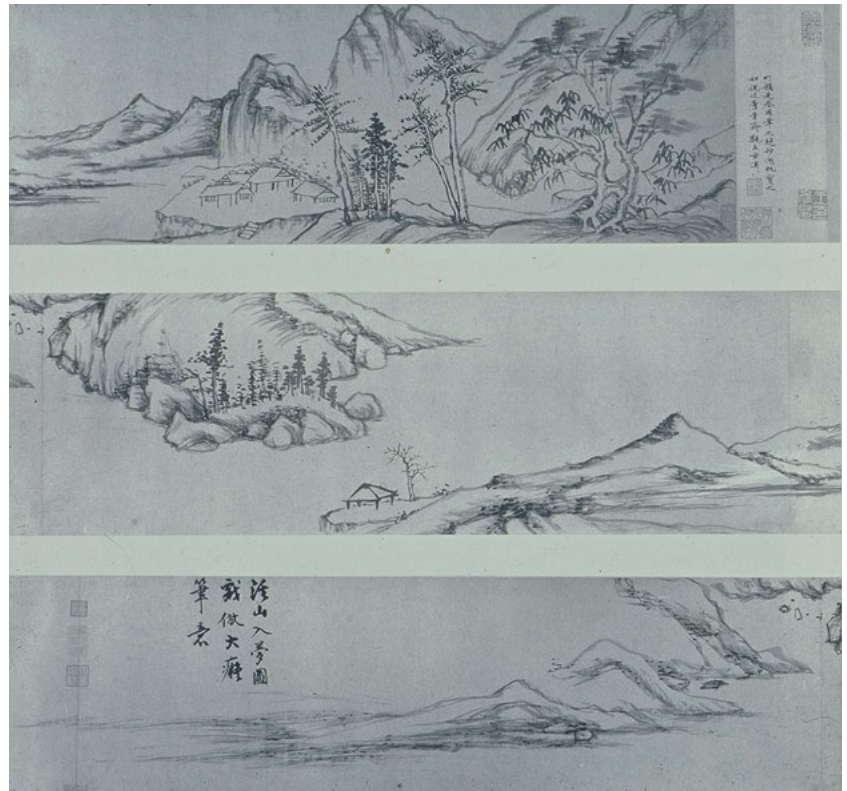
Since my purpose is to illuminate long-neglected areas of Chinese painting, I do not treat some genres and types in the repertoires of the urban studio artists that have been the subjects of substantial studies by others. These include single-figure portraits and Buddhist-Daoist religious painting.⁷ Imperial Academy painting—another heavily studied category—will be dealt with only peripherally, in its relation to the production of the urban artists who are our principal focus.⁸ Court painting, partly because of the glamour associated with the two Palace Museums, Beijing and Taipei, in which most of it is preserved, and partly because it is backed up with copious court records that support research on it, has received a great deal of attention in recent years, both in exhibitions and in scholarly publications. Again, this book is aimed at shifting some of that attention to the more relaxed, ultimately richer body of vernacular painting produced and used in the larger society outside the court.

Two Traditions of Painting

A few examples of the two types, literati and vernacular painting, can introduce them and demonstrate how deeply unlike, visually and expressively, they can be. For the most extreme contrast, a handscroll by a prominent scholar-amateur artist can be juxtaposed with one by an anonymous studio master. (I admit to slanting the comparison to favor the latter.) The late Ming literatus Li Rihua (1565–1635) was represented in the excellent 1988 exhibition *The Chinese Scholar’s Studio* by a

landscape handscroll he painted in 1625 titled *Rivers and Mountains in My Dream* (figure 1.1). Li had held a high position in the Ministry of Rites in Beijing, and his paintings, though amateurish (he never really studied painting), were much in demand, partly for their status-symbol value as creations of a man of high official rank. His 1625 scroll was praised in the catalog as a work in which “the landscape serv[es] as a vehicle for the poet-painter to express his desire to rise above the vicissitudes of the mundane world.”⁹ The other handscroll, an anonymous work, depicts a family New Year’s celebration, with the elders watching from the doorway as the children, seemingly all boys, enact the seasonal festivities as play. It is an example of one of the vernacular types to be represented in this book and dates probably from the early Qing, the later seventeenth century (figure 1.2, whole composition; see also figure 4.3, detail).

There is little doubt that Li Rihua’s scroll will have the more immediate appeal for many viewers, including some who are unfamiliar with Chinese painting but find more of visual stimulation, say, in an abstract-expressionist work of the 1950s than in a seventeenth-century Dutch interior. But on longer looking, I believe, Li Rihua’s scroll will reveal itself as a work of much smaller interest and accomplishment, more inept than untrammelled.¹⁰ It is a work that might seem to justify the old Chinese contention that “painting and calligraphy are a single art”—but only by



1.1

Li Rihua (1565–1635), *Rivers and Mountains in My Dream*. Dated 1625. Sections 1 and 2 of a handscroll, ink on paper, 23.4 x 253.3 cm. Shanghai Museum.

demonstrating the artist's confinement to nondescriptive, "calligraphic" brushstrokes. And it exemplifies an uncomfortable truth about studies of Chinese painting: we regularly praise and publish amateurish, even awkward works in the Chinese critical category of estimable art, or fine art, largely because of their authorship or because they exhibit some received ideas and shibboleths about the characteristics of high art.

The New Year's picture would normally not be praised or exhibited or published in China because it not only fails to "rise above the mundane world," but also chooses to represent that world in loving detail—a choice that more or less automatically, for a traditional Chinese connoisseur, consigns it to the realm of the trivial.¹¹ Such a connoisseur, noting also that it bears a false attribution to the great Ming master Qiu Ying (ca. 1495–1552), would pronounce it a forgery of the type called *Suzhou pian* (a dismissive term for the commercial productions of minor artists working in Suzhou in the Ming-Qing period), roll it up quickly, and forget it. But unrolled again and seen for itself, it proves to be a delightful picture, which apart from its artistic merit supplies a lot of detailed information about a New Year's celebration in a large, well-off family in early Qing China. I will return to the work in chapter 4.

Paintings by two artists who were not only contemporaries but also friends, Wang Shimin (1592–1680) and Gu Jianlong (1606–88 or after), offer an equally unlike but more congenial pairing (see figures 1.4 and 1.5, below). Wang Shimin was one of the most respected literati painters of his time, and the oldest of the so-called Four Wangs who were leading masters of the Orthodox school of landscape in the early Qing. He was, moreover, a direct pupil of Dong Qichang (1555–1636), the master

1.2

Anonymous (late Ming or early Qing period), *A Family Celebrating New Year's*. Horizontal painting, ink and colors on silk, 94 x 176 cm. Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing.



who was surely the most powerful figure in later Chinese painting, as a landscapist, a critic, and the theorist who formulated the immensely influential doctrine of the Southern and Northern schools of painting. This doctrine (which will be discussed further below) was a quasi-art-historical division of landscape painters into two lineages, the Southern, made up of the literati masters and the artists they claimed as predecessors, and the Northern, to which the professional and academy painters were assigned. Wang was a Southern and Gu a Northern school master within this formulation. Gu Jianlong was an openly professional studio artist, one of the relatively few of that class to attain some prominence, even if only as a painter of secondary rank—he will reappear a number of times in this book as an innovator of certain types within our category of vernacular painting. Both Wang and Gu were natives of Taicang in Jiangsu, another of the Yangtze delta cities; Gu was active as an artist mostly in nearby Suzhou, and spent some of his later years in Beijing as a court painter for the Kangxi emperor. In Suzhou he lived at Tiger Hill, one of the pleasure districts a short distance outside the city, where artists like him, who portrayed beautiful women and other images popular within the courtesan culture, commonly lived, surrounded by both their subjects and the market for their works. Gu also painted erotic albums, a genre within which he was a notable innovator.

Today Gu Jianlong is remembered especially in Chinese painting circles as the artist of a surviving forty-six-leaf album of *mogu fenben* (study sketches after old paintings) that reveals a great deal about his working methods and about traditional studio practice more generally (figure 1.3).¹² Few such albums have been preserved, especially outside China. This was only one of many such albums that Gu compiled over the years; Wang Shimin, in a long colophon written for one of them, reported seeing the albums “piled as high as himself.” As opportunities arose for him to see and copy from old pictures, Gu Jianlong added to the albums. He kept them for reference, to supply imagery and pictorial information—costumes and hairdos of early periods, old furniture and architecture, fabric designs, and components of landscape in the styles of various schools—for incorporation into his own pictures as needed. This way of working contrasted sharply with the literati painters’ insistence on spontaneity and on maintaining a consistent, distinct personal style.

An example of how Gu Jianlong put the antique imagery from his *fenben* albums to work can be seen in a painting that probably represents the eighth-century emperor Xuanzong spying on his favorite consort, Yang Guifei, as she bathes (figure 1.4). Although it is unsigned and has been loosely catalogued as “anonymous Ming,” it can be attributed to Gu Jianlong or a close follower on the basis of style. Its overtly erotic content—the near-nudity of Yang Guifei, viewed through a split-bamboo screen, and the prurience of the emperor’s spying on her, a transgression of which she is quite aware, as her sidelong look betrays—suggests that the painting might have hung in the bedroom of a man, or in a courtesan’s chambers. This is a work of high technical finish, with meticulous attention to fine details of architectural ornament and furniture, luxury objects, the attendants’ costumes (suitably antique in appearance though scarcely true to the intended period, the mid-Tang)



1.3

Gu Jianlong (1606–88 or after), Leaf 45 from an album of 46 leaves, *Sketches after the Old Masters (mogu fenben)*. Ink and colors on paper, 36.8 x 29.2 cm. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri; purchase: Nelson Trust (59–24/45). Photograph by Jamison Miller.

with lavish use of gold and heavy pigments that still glow from the darkened silk surface.

Wang Shimin, in the long colophon he wrote for one of Gu Jianlong’s *fenben* albums, praises Gu’s precocious proficiency in drawing and his versatility in handling a wide repertory of subjects, including portraiture.¹³ Wang writes that Gu, determined to rise above the common level of professional painters, studied with a number of masters to broaden his skills. One might wonder how Wang Shimin, the most orthodox of the Orthodox school landscapists, could admire Gu Jianlong, an irredeemably Northern school artist who seems at first to exemplify everything Wang disapproved of in painting. But Wang’s colophon is not the only testimonial to their mutual esteem. In 1683, after Wang Shimin’s death, Gu Jianlong was shown a landscape that Wang had painted in 1651 (figure 1.5) and, presumably at the owner’s request, wrote a long inscription on it. In this he recalls his friendship with Wang



1.4

Gu Jianlong or close follower, *Emperor Xuanzong Spies on Yang Guifei Bathing*. Hanging scroll, ink and colors on silk, 151.5 x 87.9 cm. Yurinkan Museum, Kyoto. (For a detail, see figure 5.25.)

1.5

Wang Shimin (1592–1680), landscape in the manner of Huang Gongwang. Dated 1651. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 115.6 x 50.7 cm. Inscription by Gu Jianlong dated 1683. Matsushita collection, Tokyo.



over some fifty years, and praises him as heir to the lineage of Huang Gongwang (1269–1354), a revered literati master of the late Yuan period, and Dong Qichang, whose combined styles Wang indeed follows in the painting. Gu’s inscription scarcely differs in any respect, even in its calligraphic style, from what one of the Orthodox school landscapists themselves might have written. And Wang Shimin, when he wanted a group portrait representing himself and his family in their residence, requested or commissioned Gu Jianlong to make it (see figure 4.14).

The paintings that Wang Shimin disdained in his writings as falling outside his Orthodox lineage were the work of errant contemporary landscapists—those who, as he put it, “try to produce new ideas” instead of following the old masters.¹⁴ Because Gu Jianlong was neither a landscapist nor a breaker of traditions, he was no threat to Wang Shimin’s cherished beliefs. The pictures Gu produced were not judged by the same criteria as Wang’s works and placed far below them; they rep-

resented (as both would have agreed) another *kind* of painting, different in intent and function. And that difference is fundamental to the argument of this book. In some part it was a matter of social and economic class: Wang Shimin, as scion to a wealthy gentry family and a direct pupil of Dong Qichang, could never have painted pictures like those of Gu, even had his technique permitted it. And although some leaves in Gu Jianlong's *fenben* album indicate that he could have painted good approximations of Wang's pictures had he chosen to do so, the point is that no one would have asked him to. Seekers after paintings went to artists of certain types in the expectation of receiving the corresponding types of pictures. And the artists, though in principle free to paint whatever they chose, in practice stayed mostly within the bounds of those expectations.

The Neglected North

For our traditional Chinese connoisseur, these contrasting pairs of works—Li Rihua's landscape and the anonymous New Year's picture, Wang Shimin's landscape and Gu Jianlong's picture of the bathing Yang Guifei—typify the differences between the Southern and Northern schools of painting that Dong Qichang famously formulated. This theory, or argument, is well known and often cited and discussed.¹⁵ In brief, the Southern and Northern schools have little or nothing to do with geography. The designations have instead been adopted from two schools, or lineages, of Chan (Zen) Buddhism. The Southern school in painting, named after the "sudden enlightenment" school of Chan, corresponded loosely to the tradition of the literati artists, together with the earlier masters they claimed as predecessors; the Northern school, named after the "gradual enlightenment" branch of Chan, comprised the professional and academy painters. Li Rihua and Wang Shimin, then, were Southern school masters, Gu Jianlong and the artist of the New Year's picture typically Northern school. But because Dong Qichang had taken his terms from the two schools of Chan, implying an analogous distinction in painting, the formulation was, to say the least, rhetorically unbalanced: given a choice between Southern (sudden enlightenment, intuitive understanding) and Northern (gradual enlightenment, painstaking study), who would not choose the former? The powerful rhetorical advantage of *Southern*, in both its uses, has been potent in determining which Chan lineage, and which kind of painting, was admired, practiced, and studied. A revisionist scholar of Chan, Bernard Faure, has published a book that attempts to right the balance, recognizing that the Southern-Northern opposition is a misleading, historically unfounded construction and providing a less biased account of the doctrines and development of what came to be called the Northern school of Chan. A similar reassessment of the Northern school in painting is clearly in order.¹⁶

The dominance of the Southern school and its critical attitudes was based on far more than the term's rhetorical advantage. The literati were educated men, usually from well-off families, who could attain official rank in the government bureaucracy by passing examinations in the classics; so they made up the Chinese administrative system at all levels below the imperial house, from those great ministers

close to the emperor in the capital down to minor local officials. They also compiled the histories and wrote the books, thus establishing themselves as the supreme cultural authority of China. The acquaintance with old styles they gained through their privileged access to painting collections qualified them as connoisseurs and critics, and permitted them to include cultivated references to those old styles in their own artistic works.

The principal source of Northern school styles, for artists of the later periods, was the work of painters who had been active in the Southern Song Imperial Academy or had practiced the same styles outside the Academy in the same period (twelfth and thirteenth centuries). This “academic” manner of painting, as it continued to be called (usually pejoratively) in the following centuries, was a skilled and polished manner of depicting figures and buildings in fine outline and color, plants and animals with close observation and accuracy, trees and rocks in descriptive brushstrokes that imparted naturalistic textures and volume, and of combining these elements as required by the pictorial theme and purpose to produce elaborate but clearly readable compositions. The professional-academy tradition appears to have assumed its lasting shape and stylistic repertory in this period, and was drawn on continually by conservative studio painters ever after. A great many Southern Song pictures in the academy styles were extant in Ming-Qing times, accessible to studio artists working in the cities, where major collections were mostly located. People who commissioned works from these artists for hanging or presentation, to decorate their houses with appropriate auspicious and seasonal scenes or to carry symbolic congratulatory messages (for instance, on someone’s birthday or retirement), normally expected pictures in these technically finished styles. They went to the local literati, or scholar-amateur, masters for paintings of other kinds, and used and valued them differently. The works of literati artists also sometimes served gift and occasional functions, although in principle they were not supposed to do so.

Only a few of these urban studio artists rose to real prominence in the Ming: Du Jin in fifteenth and sixteenth century Nanjing; Zhou Chen, Qiu Ying, and Tang Yin a little later in Suzhou; Chen Hongshou in Hangzhou in the late Ming; a few others.¹⁷ Except for these few who achieved a measure of fame, Chinese studio artists’ status resembled that of the Japanese *machi eshi* (urban picture-makers). For instance, a number of late Ming and Qing portraitists, known from their names inscribed on paintings, are unrecorded in books on artists. They were called in when needed to execute a portrait, or sometimes only to contribute a portrait face to a painting by someone else; they were what in the West used to be called limners. A painter of this kind, even if included in the books supplying information on artists, was likely to receive only a line or two, telling where he was active and what his specialities were—“He was good at painting beautiful women, and also did portraits.” What else, within the Chinese biographical conventions, was there to say about him? If he did not hold an official post, belong to a gentry-official family, write books, or otherwise distinguish himself in some field outside his profession, the answer was: nothing at all.

The Social Functions and Status of Vernacular Paintings

The urban studio masters who produced functional paintings—to hang as decoration in one’s home, or to be presented as felicitations on public holidays or domestic occasions—fitted the subjects and styles to the function or occasion. These artists had large repertoires that included pictures of popular deities and legendary figures as well as narrative and historical scenes. Figural subjects, usually set in domestic interiors or gardens, were central to their production; these are not works that celebrate reclusion in mountain retreats and the like. Terms used to praise literati painting, especially landscapes, did not apply to them: they neither embody “high-minded” attitudes nor “rise above the dusty world.” Because of their functionalism, traditional Chinese connoisseurs dismissed them as artistically inconsequential; in principle, they were not meant to elicit aesthetic contemplation or to express the artist’s feeling and temperament, as paintings in China mostly were supposed to do, to be taken seriously. Such judgments assumed that once the occasion for their use was past and their function fulfilled, occasional and functional pictures lost most of their value. They were not, as the Chinese phrase has it, “worthy of refined appreciation” and preservation as works of art. Only if the occasional paintings were by major artists of the past, such as Qiu Ying, would they be preserved; recent pictures by lesser masters ordinarily would not.

An eighteenth-century writer named Zhai Hao, looking over the lists of paintings owned by the “wicked” grand secretary Yan Song (1480–1565), notes the inclusion among them of many birthday and other auspicious pictures, and criticizes these as “lowly” and “vulgar.”¹⁸ Zhai Hao’s judgment, however, is misdirected for two reasons. First, what we have for Yan Song is not a catalog of what he considered his collection, a list that would presumably have recorded only those pieces he took pride in owning. No such catalog was compiled during Yan’s lifetime. The longer of the two surviving lists of his paintings is part of an uncritical inventory of objects of value in his possession—representing, supposedly, the wealth he had amassed through bribery and corruption—that were confiscated from his household after he was deposed. Second, as Zhai Hao himself points out, many or most of the “vulgar” paintings were probably acquired as gifts from well-wishers (and influence-seekers) felicitating this powerful personage and his family members on birthdays and other occasions.

The shorter list was compiled by Wen Jia (1501–83), son of the great literati painter Wen Zhengming (1470–1559) and himself a noted artist and connoisseur. The paintings he chose to include in it are all by famous-name masters, except for a few early anonymous pieces listed at the end. In effect, Wen Jia was compiling Yan Song’s “collection” catalog, applying his skills as connoisseur to judge which pieces merited inclusion. The longer list contains hundreds of paintings for which only titles and sometimes artists’ names are given. In this, by contrast, more than half of the works are anonymous; many others are by Ming professional and academy artists, or are attributed to Song-Yuan masters. Because only a few of these attributed works appear in Wen Jia’s list, their authenticity is doubtful. The birthday paintings mostly appear in this larger list, together with other auspicious images—pictures of Zhong

Kui, the exorcist of demons; narrative and historical pictures with political implications; popular religious images; *meiren* pictures of unidentified authorship; and diverse other works. These, we can assume, were the paintings used in Yan's household for auspicious and decorative hanging.¹⁹ They belong, loosely, in the same category as the paintings Gu Jianlong made for Wang Shimin and his other clients, without much hope that this work would ever be included in their "collections."

We can assume that large, rich families commonly divided their holdings of paintings into functional and "fine" art, although the distinction need not have been a sharp one. Proper catalogs compiled for later collections ordinarily do not include the functional paintings so numerous in the Yan Song inventory, or works by recent and contemporary artists. Such paintings, however, could no doubt have been seen hanging, enjoyed but not (in principle) aesthetically appreciated or treasured, in the houses of the same collectors. Their collection pieces could be shown with pride to knowledgeable visitors, and besides serving as indicators of status also functioned as investments, tangible components of the family wealth, which could (unless badly chosen) be pawned or resold to raise money as needed. Presumably they passed their functional and decorative pieces down through generations as part of the family heritage; these works were unlikely to enter the art market or to be acquired by serious collectors, except when furnished with false signatures or attributions aimed at legitimizing them. The likelihood of their long-term preservation was thus much smaller.

An especially valuable source of information on how paintings were hung in the houses of affluent and cultivated people is a passage in the *Zhangwu Zhi*, a book now well known through a study by Craig Clunas, who renders the title *Treatise on Superfluous Things*, that is, luxury goods that did not primarily serve practical functions.²⁰ The author of the treatise was another descendant of Wen Zhengming, his great-grandson Wen Zhenheng (1585–1645). Like Wen Jia, he drew on his family connections (his brother served briefly as grand secretary) and his own upbringing in an atmosphere of cultural refinement to present himself as an arbiter of taste and elegant living. His book offers, among other things, advice to new collectors on such questions as quality and authenticity in antiques and how these should be conserved and displayed. His "Calendar for the Displaying of Scrolls" reads in part (as translated by R. H. van Gulik),

On New Year's morning you should display Song paintings of the Gods of Happiness and images of the Sages of olden times. . . . In the second moon there should be representations of ladies enjoying spring walks, of plum blossoms, apricots, camellia, orchids, and peach and pear blossoms. On the third day of the third moon there should be shown Song pictures of the Dark Warrior. . . . On the eighth day of the fourth moon, the birthday of Buddha, you should display representations of Buddha by Song and Yuan artists, or Buddhist pictures woven in silk dating from the Song period. On the fourteenth day of that moon you should show images of Lü Dongbin, also painted by artists of the Song dynasty. . . .

During the sixth moon there should be displayed large Song or Yuan pictures of towers and palaces, of forests and rocks, of high mountain peaks, of parties gathering lotus flowers, of summer resorts, and similar scrolls. On the seventh evening of the seventh moon there should be displayed pictures of girls praying for skill in needle work, of the Goddess of Weaving, of towers and palaces, of banana trees, of noble ladies, and suchlike representations . . . while during the eleventh moon there should be paintings of snow landscapes, winter plum trees, water lilies, Yang Guifei indulging in wine, and suchlike pictures. During the twelfth moon there should be scrolls showing Zhong Kui inviting good luck and chasing away devils or of Zhong Kui marrying off his sister. . . .

Further, on the occasion of changing your abode you may display pictures like that of Ge Hong moving to the Lofou Mountain, while on the occasion of an anniversary there should be shown images of the God of Longevity by artists of the Song Imperial Academy or representations of the Queen of the Western Paradise. If you are praying for clear weather, hang on your wall an image of the Sun God, and when praying for rain, pictures of transcendental dragons sporting in wind and rain. . . .

Thus all scrolls should be displayed according to the season so as to indicate the time of the year and the various calendar festivals.²¹

Yan Song's inventory and Wen Zhenheng's calendar match up well: one could fulfill, more or less, the calendar's stipulations for what to hang by drawing on the pictures listed in the inventory. Together they provide a good indication not only of the practice of hanging scrolls of different subjects to suit season and occasion, but also of the demands that were placed on professional painters, as well as on the antiques market and the studios of forgers, who supplied "Song paintings" (such as are stipulated in Wen Zhenheng's list) for a demand that must have vastly exceeded the authentic supply. The urban studio masters responded to similar demands. But their output was by no means limited to domestic uses; they also made paintings intended for hanging and viewing in other settings and contexts: public and semi-public places in the pleasure districts of the cities, such as restaurants and brothels. Some of them painted illustrations to fiction and drama; some represented subjects that can properly be classified as erotic, whether soft-core pictures of "beauties" (*meiren*), often with coded sexual allusions, or hard-core erotic albums. The primary function of these, as of erotica today, was to entertain and arouse—principally the male viewers but sometimes, if we can believe Chinese fictional accounts and other written evidence along with the paintings themselves, female viewers as well. But the best of them evoke sensations and feelings far beyond simple titillation.

Urban Professional Masters in High Qing Painting

The clientele and viewership for these paintings cannot be identified more narrowly than as the well-off inhabitants of the great prosperous cities of China. From the late Ming, members of old gentry families, new merchant families, elites of all kinds had moved in large numbers to the cities, where they made up a rich mix of people of diverse occupations and backgrounds.²² The time was long past when landed gentry and literati were clearly set off socially from merchants; now a single family might have members in both groups, and even a single person could move easily between

one role and another. What one writer calls a “culture of mid-level merchants” emerged in the late period on which I focus, when “successful landlords, merchants, artisans and officials tended to associate socially on a basis of approximate equality.”²³ Patronage for painting came from correspondingly diverse groups.²⁴

The High Qing period, as the term is commonly used, covers the reigns of the three great Manchu emperors, Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong (1662–1795); I extend the term to reach roughly from the dynasty’s founding in 1644 to the end of the eighteenth century. Accounts of the painting of this period in art-historical writings are commonly constructed in terms of broad polarities. For the early Qing (second half of the seventeenth century and early eighteenth), the poles are the Orthodox school landscapists, made up of the so-called Four Wangs and others who trace their lineage in a conservative descent from Dong Qichang, and the masters known collectively as the Individualists. For the middle Qing (roughly the remainder of the eighteenth century) the opposition is usually described as between a continuation of Orthodox-school landscape and the production of the so-called Eccentric Masters of Yangzhou. Lesser local schools and artists working outside these major trends have been recognized and studied, as has the painting of the Imperial Painting Academy in Beijing.²⁵ But the Orthodox versus Individualist and Orthodox versus Yangzhou formulations still underlie most accounts. Although the two schools in each are placed in opposition to each other, they are customarily taken to represent together a polarized main line of development in these periods. Yangzhou painting, in particular, is hailed as liberating, an escape from an orthodoxy in landscape that was by this time already in decline.

My purpose is not to upset altogether these formulations, which contain some truth and serve to bring some order to the plethora of great and small masters and diverse stylistic directions. I want only to supplement the accounts of early and middle Qing painting, and later Chinese painting more generally, by drawing together and introducing the missing component, the deeply interesting category of paintings dealt with in this book. It cannot properly be termed a school, being too dispersed for that, both geographically and chronologically, nor is it properly a movement. In a preliminary, working definition it consists of works by studio artists active in the cities during the High Qing period, especially in the Jiangnan or Yangtze delta region but also in the north. Their paintings were in some sense functional, and stylistically within the great Chinese professional-academic tradition extending back to the Song period, with the addition of some new elements of style drawn from European pictorial art. Chinese artists had access to new representational techniques, especially illusionistic ones, adopted from European pictures (chiefly engravings, but also some oil paintings) beginning in the late sixteenth century, and used them in diverse forms and contexts. These techniques, or pictorial ideas, were crucial to the development of urban studio painting in the early and middle Qing. I have addressed this large phenomenon in a number of writings, and will only outline here the forms it took in paintings, so that I can take it up again in chapter 3.²⁶

Many of the illustrations in this book are pictures of figures in interior settings, or outdoor-indoor scenes. They differ markedly from the relatively few figures-in-interiors compositions painted by Chinese artists during preceding centuries. Notably, they exhibit a new mastery of techniques for representing interior space, often with elaborate systems of openings from foreground spaces to others farther back, and of positioning figures within these spaces. Some of them display also a mastery, or at least a determined employment, of light-and-shadow effects. It appears clear that these new techniques were largely inspired by the Chinese artists' acquaintance with European pictures, especially northern European, Dutch and Flemish ones, and were in part learned from those pictures, though never through slavish copying or imitation—the Chinese painters quickly and artfully turned their appropriations to their own special purposes. And in doing so they opened a new chapter in Chinese painting of figures in interiors, a genre that had seriously occupied artists up to the Five Dynasties and early Song, the tenth century (as seen, for instance, even in the surviving late-Song copy of Gu Hongzhong's *Han Xizai's Night Revels* composition)²⁷ but had generally languished in the intervening centuries, exhibiting little innovation even in the hands of mid-Ming artists of the stature of Qiu Ying and Tang Yin (1470–1523).

Gu Jianlong appears to have been a pivotal figure in the transition to this new mode, as he is for a number of the developments that this book will treat. Although it may be that no single painting by Gu impresses us as truly brilliant, as do some works by his contemporaries among the Individualist masters of landscape, his whole achievement, considered in context, is nonetheless impressive. What he and other early Qing urban studio masters of the Jiangnan cities inherited was the “low tradition” of *Suzhou pian*, the dismissive collectors' term for paintings produced by followers of Qiu Ying and Tang Yin working in Suzhou studios in the later Ming and early Qing. Much of the output of these epigones consisted of copies and forgeries of Song-Yuan painting, or of the works of Qiu and Tang themselves. What Gu and other transitional masters passed on to studio artists active over the century or so that followed was a number of new or rejuvenated subject types and genres, as well as stylistic innovations, that were instrumental in bringing new life to a tradition of professional painting that had fallen into decline.

The new mastery of complex and readable spatial systems permitted painters to employ these for narrative purposes, as well as for ascribing depths of feeling to the people they depicted and evoking nuances of relationships between them; it also engaged the viewer more fully by seeming to draw the gaze into the depicted space. Gu Jianlong employed these techniques skillfully, as seen in his illustrational and erotic albums (see figures 4.37, 5.4, and 5.6). His interiors are not so illusionistically spacious and visually penetrable as those by some later artists would be—much of the older, flatter Suzhou mode persists in his pictures, partly because he did not attempt to render light and shade as strongly or convincingly as others would do. The technique of using shadowy areas to increase the readability of spaces was adopted only later—an early example, from 1697, is by the Yangzhou master Yu Zhi-

ding (1647–1710 or after), who creates a shadowed alcove behind a draped curtain and places in it a melancholy woman waiting for her lover (see figure 5.18). From the early eighteenth century, both techniques were taken up and practiced at the Imperial Academy in Beijing, where the development of a semi-Westernized illusionistic manner was further stimulated by the active presence of European Jesuit artists, notably Giuseppe Castiglione (Chinese name Lang Shining, 1688–1766).

These Western-inspired techniques were not, then, adopted for sheer novelty or exoticism, but because they permitted the painter to engage the viewer with the imagery of the picture in ways that Chinese painting after the Song Dynasty had largely lost the capacity to do. The loss, one hastens to add, had come about through a process of deliberate rejection, reflecting a distaste among the most prestigious Yuan and Ming painters for illusionism of all kinds, which they scornfully referred to as *xingsi* (form likeness) and ranked lowest on a scale of value criteria in painting. The foreign-derived illusionistic techniques paralleled, in their purpose and for the genres in which they were adopted, the new kind of portraiture practiced in the same late-Ming period by Tseng Qing (1568–1650) and others, as well as the contemporaneous revival in Nanjing and elsewhere of the Northern Song monumental, and relatively naturalistic, mode of landscape painting.²⁸ In all three subject categories (and in others as well, e.g., some heavily colored flower paintings by Yun Shouping, 1633–90), techniques adopted from European pictures combined with elements of native Chinese style that had long fallen into disuse and were now rediscovered to enhance the “reality” of the images—which is not the same as making them more realistic; they are certainly not that by Western criteria.

A New Genre in Ming-Qing Figure Pictures: Paintings for Women?

There is a sense, however, in which these paintings *can* be called realistic, within the Chinese painting tradition. That sense can perhaps be best understood through some parallels, inexact but suggestive, with developments in Chinese literature of the same period. The late Ming–early Qing is now recognized in all fields of Chinese studies as an age of great economic and social changes, which affected every aspect of the culture. Rising prosperity, along with urbanization and a great increase in the production of printed books, meant more widespread education and literacy, an expanded readership that stimulated the production of popular and vernacular forms of literature to meet a new demand. Similarly, a great increase in the number of families sufficiently well off to aspire to elegant living created a demand for paintings to hang and present on various occasions, as stipulated by Wen Zhenheng’s calendar, or simply to enjoy—paintings of the kinds this book is about. The writers of the new fiction and drama turned away from the high-minded themes of classical Chinese learning (while sometimes echoing or even parodying them), as well as from the unnaturalness of the literary language, to explore a “low mimetic” mode—in Northrop Frye’s definition, “a mode of literature in which the characters exhibit a power of action which is roughly on our own level, as in most comedy and realistic fiction.”²⁹ The painters of our pictures, as we will see, similarly break out of the limited thematic range of traditional painting, devoted as that

was to edifying and symbolic subjects, all deliberately distanced from quotidian life. They create their own version of a low mimetic mode for painting, portraying scenes and situations that could be imagined as occurring, not as defining moments in the careers of Confucian exemplars or historical personages, or in the ideal lives of lofty scholars inhabiting an unreal realm, but as small events and epiphanies in the everyday lives of the real people who made up their viewership. This remains true even when the pictures also commemorate occasions, illustrate narratives, or carry erotic messages. Like fiction written in the vernacular, they fulfill, with their evocative incidents, richly detailed settings, and descriptive styles, “the aesthetic expectation of a ‘realistic’ representation of some phase of human experience.”³⁰ At their best, they can convey that quality that Susanne K. Langer, in a memorable phrase, calls “a passage of ‘felt life.’”³¹

It is exactly this basic shift in mode, in effect creating a new genre, that opens Chinese painting, at least the kinds with which we are concerned, to wider participation by women, both as artists and as viewers of the paintings.³² Ian Watt, noting the importance of female readers in the rise of the English realistic novel, quotes Henry James’s tribute: “Women are delicate and patient observers; they hold their noses close, as it were, to the texture of life. They feel and perceive the real with a kind of tact.”³³ David Johnson, writing about the readership for popular Chinese literature, points out that women “must have remained much closer to the main currents of non-elite culture; they had not been taught to prefer the monuments of the great literary tradition, the subtleties of classical scholarship, the systems of the approved philosophers. These literate, well-to-do women must also have formed a significant audience for popular written literature.”³⁴ That the vernacular language was easier to learn was of course a factor—the early Qing writer Li Yu advises that when one is educating a concubine, it is best to start her off with vernacular fiction, for that reason.³⁵ But Johnson’s point is nonetheless valid.

The same assumptions can be made—short of proof, but compelling in the light of all the circumstances this book will explore—about the likelihood of women having been engaged in choosing and using popular or vernacular paintings, which similarly presented familiar materials in traditional representational styles, free of allusions to the old masters and the like. It may well have been the wife or the matriarch of the household who selected paintings for seasonal hanging and family occasions, with the artists responding to her understood taste, while the dominant male chose the more prestigious name-artist paintings for the family collection. That women were mostly excluded from the male world of connoisseurship and collecting can be judged from Dong Qichang’s listing of five conditions under which calligraphy and paintings should not be shown: the fifth, following bad weather and vulgar guests, is “in the presence of a woman.”³⁶ But there were exceptions, notably in the late Ming, for cultivated courtesans and concubines who moved easily in the company of men, and who were sometimes present at gatherings where calligraphy and paintings were produced and appreciated.³⁷ The same was no doubt sometimes true of educated gentry wives in the Qing period; and in

any case, numerous examples attest that women could own and appreciate paintings in the quiet of their domestic spheres.

David Johnson continues, “It is not surprising, therefore, that . . . one of the hallmarks of true popular literature in China is the heroine who initiates actions, who is one of the moving forces of the plot, and who is not submissive but who, on the contrary, struggles against the restrictions of conventional domestic morality.” Again, something similar can be said of the paintings we will consider: although some of them, especially those of the *meiren* and erotic genres, treat women as objects of desire, others afford them more individuality and dignity than they had commonly enjoyed in traditional Chinese painting. We will even argue for a loose gender distinction in the intended clientele for these two large categories, with the more overtly erotic types being aimed primarily at a male viewership, those that present women more as subjects in their own right at a female one—or at viewers, regardless of gender, whose responses were not primarily sexually determined. This argument will be developed, and some evidence presented, at suitable points in the chapters that follow.

Suzhou and *Suzhou pian*

The main locus for the production of such painting in the late Ming and early Qing appears to have been the city of Suzhou and its environs. The very center of both professional and scholar-amateur painting through most of the Ming, Suzhou by the late sixteenth century had slipped into decline, in the eyes of influential critics; it was cast into shadow by nearby Songjiang, where Dong Qichang and his adherents were creating and promoting a powerful new mode of literati painting, chiefly landscape, that quickly came to be accepted as the touchstone for high-level painting, the kind that collectors should seek and artists aspire to. Suzhou painting was cast, in this scenario, as the survival of an outmoded tradition, commercialized, trivial or vulgar in its subjects, conservative in its styles. Despite the presence of a few innovative but underrated painters in late-Ming Suzhou, notably Zhang Hong (1577–ca. 1652), the painting scene there was dominated, in the critics’ view, by the numerous followers and imitators of the great early sixteenth-century professional masters Tang Yin and Qiu Ying. Some of these followers devoted their skills to producing the *Suzhou pian* that were described earlier as made up mostly of copies and forgeries of earlier masters, including Qiu and Tang themselves but also the great Song and Yuan painters.³⁸ Use of the term commonly extends also to original paintings by Suzhou small masters of the late Ming and Qing: the writer of the Chinese entry for the New Year’s picture (figure 1.2) in the catalog in which it was first published (see note 2 above), for instance, calls it a *Suzhou pian*, in effect removing it from serious consideration.

What has gone unremarked in this standard, dismissive account is a high-level continuation in late Ming–early Qing Suzhou of figure painting as it had been practiced earlier in the Ming by Qiu Ying and his daughter Qiu Zhu (also known as Qiu Shi, “Miss Qiu,” since her given name is uncertain). Qiu Ying’s wide repertory had encompassed sensitive portrayals of women, and Qiu Zhu had made a speciality of

them: pictures of the woman waiting genre, of literary and cultivated women, of women engaged in leisurely pursuits in gardens. Artists who were in some sense their followers will appear throughout this book, together with others from other places and later periods, and will be seen to achieve striking innovations while remaining within this lineage. One from the late Ming is Wang Sheng, who is the artist of the earliest extant erotic album attributable to a particular master, but also of a picture of a woman playing a flute in a garden, done in 1614. Another Suzhou figure master, Shen Shigeng, painted in 1642 a woman in a garden picking mulberry leaves and gazing at a pair of amorous dogs, a coded indication that she is thinking of her absent husband. (Qiu Ying did similar pictures in which the woman gazes at mandarin ducks instead of dogs.)³⁹ In seeming to give pictorial expression to specifically feminine concerns, these are good candidates for the still-hypothetical category of paintings intended for women to acquire and enjoy.

Suzhou in this period was the very center of what Dorothy Ko calls “a floating world,” a “mobile and fluid society” that had come into being in the Jiangnan region through the influx of money and sweeping changes in the social order. Commentators of the time, she writes, “were all too aware of the incongruity between realities in this floating world and the idealized Confucian order frozen in terms of such binaries as high/low, senior/junior, or male/female.”⁴⁰ Kathryn Lowry, quoting Ko and building on her perception in a study of Suzhou popular songs and courtesan’s songs, notes that it was this “blurring of categories that attracted seventeenth-century readers to the literature on desire (*qing*),” along with the prestige of the city as “the most cosmopolitan of places,” with its “range of written materials, goods, and social practices that led people [in other places] to emulate Suzhou ways.”⁴¹ Suzhou paintings of the kinds that concern us from the same period can also be seen as fitting comfortably into this large cultural phenomenon, with their high technique, visual elegance, and association in many cases with women. Their “blurring of categories” such as high/low and male/female, on the other hand, no doubt accounts for some of the denigration they received from literati writers, especially by Dong Qichang and his followers in Songjiang.⁴² The creation and appreciation of paintings for this *Suzhou pian* market in Suzhou and the very different production of landscapes in literati styles in Songjiang, while we have been in the habit of lumping them together in “late Ming painting,” can be recognized as making up two somewhat separate systems, one producing pictures of attractive and popular subjects in accessible styles that demanded no connoisseurship and could be enjoyed by viewers of either gender, the other concentrating primarily on landscape, deeply involved with stylistic references to the old masters and the brushwork or hand of the individual artist, and demanding high levels of connoisseurship to determine authenticity and quality. The world of the connoisseurs was a male one from which, as noted earlier, women were mostly excluded.

Some Suzhou figure specialists in the early Qing period took the important step of placing the women in interiors, making use of the new spatial techniques discussed earlier. One of them, unfortunately unidentified (the work bears a false Qiu

Ying signature), painted an eight-leaf album of uncommonly subtle and sensitive pictures of women, alone or in pairs, in domestic settings; this album will be central to our discussion of paintings probably done for women (see figures 4.26–28). Gu Jianlong in an early erotic album, and the anonymous painter of a closely related album, include, in addition to a few leaves in which sexual activities are openly depicted, others in which women and men appear in varied situations and relationships, all having to do with love affairs and attempted seductions.⁴³ No comparable albums of interiors occupied only by men are known to me; it is difficult to imagine what the theme of such an album would be, within the low mimetic mode. We are observing, perhaps, a new pictorial reflection of the traditional separation of *nei*, inner or feminine, from *wai*, outer or masculine, as the latter was represented in images of landscape, often with (male) recluses.⁴⁴

More important, we are also observing, in the new popularity from the early Qing period on of pictures of men and women relating in untraditional, seemingly real-life patterns within domestic interiors, some reflection of a new awareness, in writing and painting, that the perceived locus for romantic love had shifted. Up to the late Ming it was typically situated in scholar-beauty liaisons between literati and courtesans, and the cultivated courtesans were central figures not only in the real events but also in the idealized versions portrayed in fiction and poetry, much of the latter written by themselves. In the Qing, courtesans were deposed from any central role in the production of the literature of *qing* or emotional feeling, replaced by gentry women or *guixiu* from literary families, who were the leading women writers of this later period. The *guixiu* were understandably more inclined to take as their subjects for poetry and prose their own family concerns and their relations with both men and other women. Love and other relationships *within* the household now come to the fore in the thematics of poetry and painting; as Susan Mann points out, “women’s writings opened new paths to intimacy, revealing wives, daughters, and sisters as masters of high culture who were newly intelligible as human beings to their erudite husbands, fathers, and brothers.”⁴⁵ Their poems can be expressions of love—usually moderated, to avoid compromising their reputations—or can be complaints over their neglect or abandonment by men who are too long absent, or who turn their attention to other women.⁴⁶

Another painting that appears to fit this new pattern, more elaborate because of its larger hanging-scroll format, is by Wang Qiao, a Suzhou figure master whose dated works range from 1657 to 1680. *A Woman at Her Dressing Table* (figure 1.6) was painted in 1657.⁴⁷ The artist has signed it simply with the date and his name; the long inscription in upper left is a poem by an early nineteenth-century woman writer, Zhou Qi, who was herself a painter. The scene is morning in the boudoir of a woman who, judging from the painting itself, might be a courtesan, but might also be a wife or concubine in a prosperous household. She sits at a table looking into a mirror while her maid does her hair; another maid is making up the bed beyond. The rumpled bedclothes and clothing draped hurriedly over a stool at right identify the scene, as they commonly do in erotic paintings, as the aftermath of a sexual



1.6

Wang Qiao (active 1657–80), *A Woman at Her Dressing Table*. Dated 1657. Hanging scroll, ink and colors on silk, 100 x 58 cm. Minneapolis Institute of Arts, gift of Ruth and Bruce Dayton.

The Survival of Vernacular Paintings

encounter. Zhou Qi's poem (see the appendix, a translation by Ellen Widmer) makes it clear that she reads the picture as representing a cultivated courtesan repairing the ravages of a night of lovemaking.⁴⁸ Her poem is addressed to the woman, almost like a love poem, and it is true that *guixiu* were sometimes themselves engaged in love affairs with courtesans.

However we read the painting, it clearly belongs within the new low mimetic mode. In its simple spatial scheme and in the relatively small size of the figures within the composition, the picture exemplifies the early Qing type of women in interiors developed in Suzhou. The fine, supple, "feminine" line drawing further relates it to that group.⁴⁹ As a representation of a woman in her boudoir, with only restrained sexual overtones, it is decidedly at the cool end of a scale of erotic intensity; how warmer and hot pictures of the same subject might look, pictures presumably aimed more at a male audience, will be revealed in chapter 5.

The development from the late Ming onward of a popular, vernacular literature has by today become a well-recognized, heavily studied part of Chinese literary history. The corresponding rise of urban studio painting, and within it the new genre that I take to be in part aimed at a female viewership, has received no such recognition or attention. One reason is that literary texts, even those of a kind depreciated, ignored, and even banned in late-period China, could not so easily be eradicated: copies survived in Japan, or in unsuspected places in China, and could be recovered, reprinted, and studied when the old taboos broke down in the twentieth century. The same is true of pictorial prints, including woodblock-printed illustrations: produced in multiples, they have a good chance of survival, if sometimes only in unique copies, and can easily be reprinted and disseminated. The scholarly literature on these, accordingly, is relatively full. Paintings, by contrast, unless replicated by hand copying (and such copies, in the connoisseur's view, had little value and were scarcely worth preserving), are one-of-a-kind objects, and depend for their preservation on transmission through a succession of collections in which they are cared for and, when necessary, remounted. In the cases of the paintings that are our concern, such a history was highly unlikely. All the critical biases operating within the Chinese tradition of collecting and connoisseurship worked against their survival: their popular and functional character; their traditional styles (in which the artist's distinctive handwriting was typically not displayed); their low mimetic, "trivial" content; the production of many of them in Suzhou; the association of some (if I am right) with a largely female audience; their exclusion from the desirable category of genuine works by name artists; the common practice in later times of adding false signatures to them, attributing them to masters earlier and more famous than the ones who painted them.

This last practice places the paintings in a category that, though scarcely peculiar to China, is unusually common there. In addition to genuine paintings by known artists and deliberate copies and forgeries of them, a large number of paintings

survive that did not originate as forgeries at all, but were caught in a peculiarly Chinese trap: too high in quality and pictorial interest to be discarded, but lacking the name identifications that would place them in the ranks of marketable and collectible commodities, they have had their original identifying marks (signatures and seals of less-known masters) removed and have been fitted out by dealers and owners, over the centuries, with erroneous attributions, spurious inscriptions and seals, misleading identifications of subjects—all designed to move them, however dishonestly, out of undesirable authorial and thematic categories and into desirable ones. Zhe-school landscapes by lesser Ming artists are ascribed to great Song-period landscapists; works by lesser followers of some prestigious master are credited to the master himself; most to the point for this book, Ming-Qing pictures of figural subjects in the academic manner are reattributed to famous early figure painters, with added titles reidentifying their subjects. Paintings of this kind are found in large numbers in old collections outside China, especially those assembled by discerning collectors such as Charles Lang Freer (donor of the original collection of the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.), collectors whose eye for quality was not matched—could not be, in their time—with the kind of expertise that would permit sound judgments of date, school, and authorship. Paintings in this group might equally be assigned to the “anonymous” category, and in fact do fall into it once the misleading attributions are stripped away from them.

Still another category of surviving works is paintings that, for diverse reasons having to do with their subjects, styles, and original functions, were excluded from the range of what was held to be art, or fine art. (And yes, we can recognize that Chinese critics and connoisseurs *did* make distinctions similar enough to ours between art and non-art, as well as between good and bad art, that we can, if we choose, legitimately go on using those terms.) Out of a huge output of pictorial matter, the Chinese arbiters of taste and quality in any period dictated what deserved to be preserved and collected, mounted and remounted as the need arose, appreciated and written about, rescued from the burning house—what should, in short, make up the history of Chinese painting. That the vernacular paintings of this book were among the works excluded is another major reason for their poor survival rate. Today we can explore beyond the fences erected by the literati critics and collectors, using whatever surviving works can still be located and identified in attempts to reconstruct the excluded areas. Most of all, we can revisit and revise our evaluations of the kinds of functional, decorative, entertaining, and otherwise “low-class” Chinese painting that have been considered beyond the pale.

That they were considered so by Dong Qichang and other Ming-Qing literati critics is understandable, given the personal investment of these men in promoting the doctrines of literati painting. What is strange is that none of the successive twentieth-century movements aimed at opening up non-elite areas of Chinese culture for appreciation and study has given these paintings any attention. When Hu Shih, the great champion of vernacular literature and of writing in the colloquial language, made what is (so far as I know) his only published statement on Chinese

painting, one might have expected him to call for a corresponding recognition of what can properly be called vernacular painting. Instead, he adopted the very position he was battling against on the literary front, serving up yet again the familiar literati claim that whereas such other arts as architecture and sculpture were “deficient” in China because they “remained in the hands of uneducated artisans and . . . have not had the illuminating touch of men of advanced education, rich experience, and refined taste,” calligraphy and painting came to be “preeminent” through being “the only two fine arts which the scholarly class in China has taken up and developed to such heights.”⁵⁰ In the early years of the People’s Republic, some other previously undervalued kinds of painting began at last to be studied and published—portraiture, temple wall painting, works of the Zhe school in the Ming and the Imperial Academy in the Qing—and whole academic departments were formed to study and promote the popular prints called *nianhua* (New Year’s pictures). But paintings of the kind introduced in this book, though amply represented in study collections and museum storage rooms in China, somehow never made their way into the politically positive category of “people’s art,” and the neglect continued. A 1958 book on “artisan painters of the people” (*minjian huagong*) was devoted to wall paintings in tombs and temples, anonymous portraiture, *nianhua*, and the like, and quite blind to the productions of the urban studio masters. These apparently were not popular enough, or were popular in the wrong way.⁵¹

Such a consistent pattern of neglect and marginalization impels the question: have Chinese paintings of this kind deserved to be ignored because they really are so vulgar, or of such low quality? The illustrations of the present book will quickly convince any reader, I hope, of the absurdity of that view. The neglect owes, rather, to everyone—specialist scholars as well as collectors and museum curators—having consciously or unconsciously adopted the pro-literati biases that pervade virtually the entire literature on the subject.

Because of the low esteem in which they were held by the literati who wrote the books, paintings of the kinds dealt with here are seldom mentioned in literary sources. Whatever we can say about them has to be pieced together from scattered clues, just as the paintings themselves, only thinly represented in major collections and publications, have had to be sought out and assembled from untraditional holdings. Among such holdings are lesser collections (or forgotten corners of great collections) in China and Japan, including Japanese dealers’ stocks; old European and American collections, for the reasons noted above; and auction catalogs, which make up a rich source for what is commonly thought of as secondary or even minor material. The misleading attributions that encumber them must be stripped away, the misidentifications of subjects corrected, before they can be effectively dealt with. The task of assembling and assessing the pictures, against these difficulties of access and identification, has required some years of work and will require many more; the present book is only a first step.

Some of the pictures bear reliable signatures of identifiable artists, but many more “float free,” essentially anonymous—when the signatures or seals are those of well-

known masters, these are frequently spurious, as the paintings do not agree in style with more acceptable works by the same artists. The true authorship of such pictures, their dates of execution and places and circumstances of creation, are thus not easily to be determined. These are questions that could not even be addressed effectively until the paintings had been brought together and considered as a group.

Individual style, in any case, is not really to the point in these paintings, and individual hands can seldom be decisively identified among them, although we can form stylistic groups among the unsigned or misattributed works and speculate about their authorship. The painters tended to work, as the masters of the Song Imperial Academy had mostly worked, in a deliberately impersonal mode, sometimes employing studio assistants, concerned more with the excellence and salability of their pictures than with the display of distinct artistic personalities. Although questions of authorship have traditionally been paramount among the concerns of Chinese connoisseurs and scholars, they need not be so for us. The position and significance of the paintings within Qing society, how they functioned in certain situations and how people of their time understood them, along with their intrinsic artistic worth, may well be matters of greater interest. But these, in turn, cannot be effectively pursued until some broad art-historical, geographical, and sociological aspects of their production have been clarified. The attempt to do so will draw us into large issues of Qing cultural history, such as the growth of a lively popular culture in the pleasure districts of the cities, including what has been called the courtesan culture, and the relationship between two great centers, the one economic and the other political—the Jiangnan cities in the south and the imperial court in the north.

Plan of the Book

During the dozen or more years in which I was writing this book, a number of sub-themes opened that seemed important enough to warrant being followed up at length, and I did so, even at the risk of giving the book a somewhat episodic character. Several of these, such as the engagement of women as probable clientele and viewership for some vernacular painting and the rise of a school of vernacular figure painting in Beijing in the eighteenth century, are discussed in different contexts in successive chapters. I hope readers will understand the reasons behind this odd organization and tolerate what might seem failures of clear continuity.

Chapter 2 opens by introducing some urban studio artists active in the Jiangnan cities in early Qing, to define further the type, and goes on to recount how some of them traveled north to Beijing in search of patronage, or were invited there to become members of the Academy of Painting in the imperial court. They carried with them not only their styles but also the fruits of their immersion in the popular culture of the southern cities, which exerted a strong attraction on the Manchu rulers. A striking instance of this northward movement and its reception within the court, centered on a minor Yangzhou master and his son and grandson, serves to open a new, erotically tinged episode in the history of Manchu–Han Chinese relations. A discussion of court painters who were absent from the court during the Yongzheng

era (1723–35) concludes the chapter and prepares the way for a somewhat speculative account of how these and other artists working outside the court can be recognized as making up a “northern school” of vernacular figure painting in the Yongzheng and Qianlong (1735–95) eras.

Chapter 3 explores how the artists of vernacular painting, along with many others of their age, adopted representational techniques and elements of style from Western (European) pictures that were by this time accessible to them, and how this appropriation opened to them new ways of composing their paintings, especially interiors with figures, with spatial complexities that allowed greater clarity of relationships and new expressive effects. Painters working in the imperial court, in particular, were encouraged or commanded to develop the semi-Westernized styles favored by their imperial masters. Some of them learned the rules of linear perspective from Jesuits serving at the court or from other foreign sources. I stress the importance of distinguishing this Italian system of perspective, which was not much employed outside the court, from northern European (Dutch and Flemish) modes of rendering space and solid form, which Chinese artists found more congenial and adaptable to their purposes. The growth of a northern school of vernacular figure painting in the Beijing region is further pursued, and within it some especially successful fusions of foreign and Chinese styles are recognized.

Chapter 4 deals with the repertoires of these artists, offering examples of the kinds of subjects they depicted, including pictures for New Year’s celebrations, birthdays, and other occasions, and discussing how these might have functioned within the society of the time. The question of whether certain types were directed toward women is raised again in the context of a discussion of family group portraits and other family scenes. A section on narrative paintings leads into a consideration of cityscapes, with special attention to one remarkable example, a handscroll depicting the busy pleasure district at the foot of Tiger Hill near Suzhou. Throughout, the more open expressiveness of the vernacular works is contrasted with the stiffer, cooler styles of the Academy and other more “elevated” figure painting.

Chapter 5 is devoted to pictures related somehow in their subjects to the flourishing courtesan culture of the Ming-Qing period. The question is raised of where such paintings were hung or displayed, and provisional answers attempted on the basis of scanty available evidence. A discussion of large changes in societal attitudes toward romantic love and erotic feelings between the Ming-Qing transition and the mid-eighteenth century, a contextual theme introduced in the fourth chapter, is expanded here as a background for a consideration of changes in the subjects and styles of paintings from the same periods. The remainder of the chapter offers a first detailed and scholarly account of the popular genre of *meiren hua*, or beautiful-woman paintings. The question of female nudity in Chinese painting is briefly considered and illustrated by a few examples. A conclusion reiterates some large assumptions underlying the approach I have used in the book, and expresses hopes for follow-up studies of its materials and topics.

- log; see also figs. 5.8–5.9 in the present book and the accompanying text, which discusses the deception.
3. The “Flower and the Mirror” lectures were delivered as the Getty Lectures at the University of Southern California and later at the University of California, Berkeley, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. They remain unpublished, but the texts, with some added references and corrections, are accessible on my Web site, jamescahill.info, as “Women in Chinese Painting.”
 4. James Cahill, *The Painter’s Practice*.
 5. Quoted by Judith Zeitlin, “The Life and Death of the Image,” pp. 232–33.
 6. A preliminary presentation of my findings on Chinese erotic paintings, which in important ways contradicts much of what has been written about them, is my essay “Les Peintures érotiques chinoises de la collection Bertholet,” in the exhibition catalog *Le Palais du printemps*, pp. 29–42. The English text for this is on my Web site, jamescahill.info, as CLP 158.
 7. For portraiture in the late period, see Richard Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self*. For Buddhist painting of the later periods, see Marsha Weidner, ed., *Latter Days of the Law* (exhibition catalog). For Daoist painting, Stephen Little et al., *Taoism and the Arts of China* (exhibition catalog).
 8. Yang Boda, “The Development of the Ch’ien-lung Painting Academy,” in *Words and Images*, ed. Alfreda Murck and Wen C. Fong (exhibition catalog), pp. 333–56. She Ch’eng, “The Painting Academy of the Qianlong Period.” Yang Xin, “Court Painting in the Yongzheng and Qianlong Periods of the Qing Dynasty.” Howard Rogers, “Court Painting under the Qianlong Emperor.” Also Nie Chongzheng’s texts for *Qingdai Gongting A* and *B* (two books). An important recent addition is Evelyn Rawski and Jessica Rawson, eds., *China: The Three Emperors, 1662–1795* (exhibition catalog). Other studies of Imperial Academy painting will be cited in later chapters.
 9. Chu-tsing Li et al., *The Chinese Scholar’s Studio* (exhibition catalog), p. 43.
 10. “Untrammled,” meaning “free of stifling restraints,” is a common term of praise in Chinese painting criticism, applied generously in the later centuries to the works of literati painters. It should be noted that Li Rihua was by no means working for sheer love of art or for Confucian self-cultivation; like his contemporary Dong Qichang and many other so-called amateurs of the time, he operated his own “painting business.” See Cahill, *The Painter’s Practice*, pp. 105–7, section based largely on the research of Hsingyuan Tsao. A section of another handscroll by Li, even more amateurish and ill-organized, is reproduced there (fig. 3.34).
 11. It was in fact exhibited and published, along with many other “low-class” works from the study collection of the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, in Xue Yongnian, Richard Vinograd, and James Cahill, eds., *New Interpretations of Ming and Qing Paintings*, no. 88. This was the catalog of an exhibition shown at the Central Academy in December 1994.
 12. All the leaves of the album are reproduced in *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting* (exhibition catalog), no. 254. For another leaf and its early-painting source, see Cahill, *The Painter’s Practice*, figs. 3.25 and 3.26.
 13. The colophon is quoted from Li Yufen, *Yanke Tiba* [Colophons by Wang Shimin], chap. xia 15a–b. It is summarized in the entry for this album in *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting*; a complete translation is in Ann B. Wicks, “Wang Shih-min (1592–1680) and the Orthodox Theory of Art,” pp. 69–70.
 14. See James Cahill, “The Orthodox Movement in Early Ch’ing Painting,” pp. 178–79.
 15. For a convenient brief discussion, see James Cahill, *The Distant Mountains*, pp. 13–14, 27.
 16. Bernard Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy*. Faure writes of the “Northern school” of Chan as “an orthodox line that would soon be marginalized by its defeat in the contest with the

- Southern school” (Introduction, p. 8). Among the revisionist arguments relating to landscape painting have been those proposed by Richard Barnhart and Jerome Silbergeld—see especially the former’s *Painters of the Great Ming* (exhibition catalog).
17. I am leaving out, for the present purpose, the artists of the Zhe school and Ming Academy, since they are less implicated in the urban development we are tracing and had less effect on it, and because their period of flourishing was long over by the High Qing.
 18. Cited by Anne Burkus-Chasson in her essay on “Three Stars” birthday paintings in Xue Yongnian et al., eds., *New Interpretations of Ming and Qing Paintings*, p. 53. The passage on Yan Song’s paintings is from Zhai Hao’s *Tongsu Bian*, and in the reprint she used (Taipei, 1963) is in chap. 8, pp. 87–88. I am grateful to her for this reference.
 19. I have used the *Zhibuzu Zhai Congshu* edition of *Tianshui Bingshan Lu*, compiled by Zhou Shilin of the early Qing after a Ming manuscript. Wen Jia’s *Qinshantang Shuhua Ji*, which bears a postface by the author dated to 1569, is appended to this. The *Tianshui Bingshan Lu* list of Yan’s paintings and calligraphy appears also in Wang Keyu’s *Shanhuwang Hualu*, preface 1643, chap. 23, and under the title *Yan Shi Shuhua Ji* in *Peiwenzhai Shuhua Pu*, chap. 98. I have not attempted an exhaustive study of the relationship among these texts, since I use them here only to make a simple point. For notes on them, see Hin-cheung Lovell, *An Annotated Bibliography of Chinese Painting Catalogues and Related Texts*, pp. 14–16; also Howard Rogers’s “Notes on Wen Jia” and his involvement in this project, *Kaikodo Journal* 12 (1999): 98, 253–55 at 254. A study of the Yen Song inventory as a record of gift paintings is Kuo Li-ch’eng, “Zengli-hua Yanjiu.”
 20. Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things*.
 21. R. H. van Gulik, *Chinese Pictorial Art as Viewed by the Connoisseur*, pp. 4–6.
 22. Richard J. Lufrano, *Honorable Merchants*, p. 24.
 23. Lufrano, *Honorable Merchants*, pp. 23, 37; the latter statement quoted from William Skinner.
 24. A pioneering study was the dissertation by Ginger Cheng-chi Hsü, “Patronage and the Economic Life of the Artist in Eighteenth-Century Yangchou Painting,” published, much reworked, as *A Bushel of Pearls*. See also her “Zheng Xie’s Price List.”
 25. An admirable attempt to break this pattern was made by Brown and Chou in their exhibition catalog *Elegant Brush*, which uses regional and other criteria to organize painting of the Qianlong era. They did not, in my view, sufficiently distinguish minor artists and currents from major ones, but that, to be fair, was not the aim of their exhibition and catalog.
 26. I discuss this subject, with references to earlier writings, in *The Compelling Image*, chaps. 1 and 3.
 27. Palace Museum, Beijing; see Yang Xin et al., *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting*, pl. 103.
 28. See Cahill, *The Compelling Image*, chaps. 3 and 5.
 29. Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, p. 366. I was set to reading and thinking in this direction by correspondence with Victoria Cass, to whom I am grateful.
 30. Andrew Plaks, “Full-Length Hsiao-shuo and the Western Novel,” p. 168.
 31. Susanne K. Langer, *Feeling and Form*, p. 374: “for what a work of art sets forth—the course of sentience, feeling, emotion, and the *élan vital* itself—has no counterpart in any vocabulary. . . . What it conveys is really just one nameless passage of ‘felt life,’ knowable through its incarnation in the art symbol even if the beholder has never felt it in his own flesh.” The term *felt life* Langer takes from Henry James. She does not apply her phrase especially to “low mimetic” kinds of art, but I have appropriated it for that meaning.
 32. For female artists in China, see Marsha Weidner et al., *Views from Jade Terrace*. Paintings of women (or of the feminized bodhisattva Guanyin) are prominent among paintings by

- women (though not so in this catalog), along with pictures of flowers, birds, and insects. “Pure” landscapes by them, though not entirely unknown, are relatively uncommon.
33. Quoted in Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel*, p. 298.
 34. David Johnson, “Communication, Class, and Consciousness in Late Imperial China,” p. 62. Dorothy Ko, in *Teachers of the Inner Chambers*, chap. 1, “Women and Commercial Publishing,” deals at length with the expanding female readership in the seventeenth century; she points out, however, that the only books specifically published for women are moralizing and didactic texts. See chap. 4, n. 37, for further studies of women’s reading in Ming-Qing times.
 35. Patrick Hanan, *The Chinese Vernacular Story*, p. 10.
 36. Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure*, p. 228 and n. 178, quoting Dong Qichang, *Yunxuan qingbi lu*, p. 25.
 37. Liu Yin, after she became the concubine of Qian Qianyi, reportedly took part in male gatherings dressed in male attire; and Dong Xiaowan, while she was Mao Xiang’s beloved concubine, “took a great fancy to paintings, ancient and modern.” She also was present when Dong Qichang wrote a piece of calligraphy for Mao Xiang. See Mao Xiang, *Yingmei’an Yiyu*, translated by Pan Tze-yen as *The Reminiscences of Tung Hsiao-wan*, pp. 45, 47.
 38. For the *Suzhou pian*, see Ellen J. Laing, “*Suzhou pian* and Other Dubious Paintings in the Received Oeuvre of Qiu Ying.” She cites a passage from Arthur Waley’s 1923 *An Introduction to the Study of Chinese Painting*, translated from an early nineteenth-century book and describing the activity of a Suzhou family named Qin, who in the early Qing period specialized in forging old master paintings. One of the specialities of the Suzhou copyists and forgers was handscroll paintings copied after originals (now mostly lost) by earlier masters, especially Qiu Ying, with subjects such as famous women of antiquity that would have had a special appeal to female viewers. I have argued elsewhere that the replication of these works was not so much a matter of forgery—the “Qiu Ying” signatures were probably conventional, dignifying the works even when disbelieved—as of allowing purchasers, including many women, to acquire handsome, well-painted versions of desired subjects that they could enjoy, without being much concerned about the (mostly male) collectors’ criterion of “authenticity.” See James Cahill, “Paintings for Women in Ming-Qing China?”
 39. Wang Sheng’s erotic album is reproduced in the Musée Cernuschi exhibition catalog *Le Palais du printemps*, pp. 47–69. For his 1614 painting, see *Bimo Jinghua* (exhibition catalog), pl. 62. Shen Shigeng’s work of 1642 is in the Tianjin Municipal Museum; see *Yiyuan Fijin*, pl. 19. The latter painting is discussed, along with Qiu Ying’s, in a discussion of “women waiting” pictures in the first of my Getty lectures “The Flower and the Mirror: Images of Women in Late-Period Chinese Painting,” unpublished but accessible on my Web site (see n. 3 above).
 40. Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers*, p. 33.
 41. Kathryn Lowry, *The Tapestry of Popular Songs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century China*, p. 29.
 42. For a discussion of this issue, quoting writings of the time, see Cahill, *The Distant Mountains*, pp. 27–30, “The Soochow Sung-chiang Confrontation.”
 43. For leaves from both albums, see Cahill, “Where Did the Nymph Hang?” and “The Emperor’s Erotica.” They will be treated fully in *Scenes from the Spring Palace*.
 44. A provocative parallel could be made with the feminist argument advanced in recent years, principally by the late Chino Kaori, that studies of Japanese Muromachi-period painting have been unduly weighted, in the writings of predominantly male scholars, toward Chinese-derived ink-monochrome landscape, the works of Shūbun and Sesshū and others, to the neglect of the “feminine,” *Yamato-e*-derived tradition of the Tosa school and others in figure compositions (often with women in interiors), flowers-and-birds, etc. This argument was

- made in a paper she delivered in 1989 at a College Art Association session in San Francisco, which so far as I know is unpublished; a more general discussion by her is “Gender in Japanese Art,” pp. 17–34.
45. Susan Mann, “Women, Families, and Gender Relations,” p. 447. A more extended discussion of how the increase in writing by Qing gentry women had the effect of locating love as a literary theme more within the household than outside it is in Paul S. Ropp, “Love, Literacy, and Laments.”
 46. For this transition, and for a discussion of differences in style and content between the poems of courtesan poets and those of gentry women, see K’ang-i Sun Chang, “Liu Shih and Hsu Ts’an,” especially pp. 18off.
 47. See the entry by Howard Rogers for this painting in *Kaikodo Journal* 20 (Autumn 2001), no. 9, pp. 94, 279–80. A compositionally similar painting, this one of a single woman in her boudoir, by an artist active in nearby Wuxi, is noted in chap. 2, n. 6.
 48. The translation (see the appendix), along with the Chinese text, are in Appendix B to Ellen Widmer’s *The Beauty and the Book*, pp. 298–99. See also pp. 148–51, “Zhou Qi’s Poems and Prose,” and p. 172, where she mentions this painting in a discussion of “inappropriate” themes in *guixiu* poetry.
 49. A contrastingly “masculine” mode of drawing, in heavier, more angular brushstrokes strongly fluctuating in breadth, can be seen in a painting done by the same artist in the same year, 1657, representing a scholar gazing at a hanging-scroll representation of a Buddhist figure (Guanyin?) held by a servant boy. Other elements of the composition also pertain to the scholarly male subject: antique bronzes, the wrapped *qin* (zither) he holds, a bundle of scrolls, a tipped wine cup—and, of course, the high-mindedness implied by his absorption in an emblem of spirituality. See Duo Yün Xuan auction catalog, “Spring Auction of Art Works, Ancient Calligraphy and Painting,” Shanghai, June 1, 1998, no. 815. See also Cahill, “Paintings for Women in Ming-Qing China?” fig. 7.
 50. Hu Shih, “A Historian Looks at Chinese Painting.”
 51. Qin Lingyun, *Minjian Huagong Shiliao*. For another example, see Zuo Hanzhou, ed., *Minjian Huihua*. A recently published volume of genre paintings in the National Museum of China (see *Zhongguo Guojia Bowuguan . . . [Fengsu Hua]*) is a move in the right direction, but still avoids domestic, quotidian, and truly “low-life” subjects.

TWO Studio Artists in Cities and Court

1. Li Dou, *Yangzhou Huafang Lu*, II, 15b. Shi was brought to my attention by a passage in Hsü, “Patronage and the Economic Life of the Artist,” p. 150; see also her *A Bushel of Pearls*, p. 95.
2. Zeitlin, “The Life and Death of the Image,” p. 239.
3. E. A. Strehlneek, *Chinese Pictorial Art*, pl. 178, which (erroneously) claimed for the picture an inscribed title reading *Long Summer Evenings by the Hibiscus Terrace*. This factitious title was apparently compounded of two terms that actually do appear in the inscription on the painting: *rongqi* (hibiscus stream), which was one of the painter’s bynames and appears in his signature on the work (*Rongqi Hua Xuan xie*); and *changxia*, which means “long summer” and which is part of the date preceding the signature (*sui zai bingchen changxia*, “The year is at [the cyclical date] *bingchen* [1736] *changxia* [sixth month].”
4. I am grateful to Ch’en Pao-chen for pointing this out to me.
5. For Hua Xuan, see Yu Jianhua, *Dictionary*, p. 1110 bottom; the information is from *Qingchao* (or *Guochao*) *Shuhuaqia Bilu* by Dou Zhen (1847–ca. 1922).
6. One who might be related is Hua Xu, recorded as a specialist in figures and especially pictures of women; see Yu Jianhua, *Dictionary*, p. 1110. For an extant work by him, with enough

- similarities in style to the *Eight Beauties* to suggest a family workshop or tradition, see *Ancients in Profile*, no. 36. The title given to it there is *Lady Zhen Dressing Herself in the Morning*, but there is nothing in the picture or its simple signature to support such an identification; it would appear to be simply a generic picture of a beautiful woman in her boudoir, similar to the 1657 work by Wang Qiao (fig. 1.6).
7. For these and other paintings by Kang Tao in the Tianjin Municipal Museum (now the Tianjin Art Museum), see *Tumu*, vol. 10, 7–1094–99.
 8. This statement is based partly on a quick survey of Hu Jing, *Guochao Yuanhua Lu*, and partly on the list of Academy painters and their backgrounds in She Ch'eng, "The Painting Academy of the Qianlong Period," pp. 325–32. For the earlier period, see Daphne Rosenzweig, "Court Painters of the K'ang-hsi Period," pp. 60ff., where she points out that of twenty-seven court artists of the Kangxi era, fifteen were from Jiangsu, only three from Beijing. By the Qianlong era, more northerners were active in the Academy. Rosenzweig also discusses the routes by which painters came into the court (pp. 66ff.).
 9. Yang Boda, "The Development of the Ch'ien-lung Painting Academy." See also Nie Chongzheng's essay on the Painting Academy under the Qing in *Qingdai Gongting A*, pp. 1–24 (Chinese) and 25–27 (English summary); this reference on p. 5.
 10. For an account of the southern tours or "progresses" made by Kangxi and Qianlong, see Tobie Meyer-Fong, *Building Culture in Early Qing Yangzhou*, pp. 174–81 (Kangxi) and 181–88 (Qianlong); also Michael G. Chang, *A Court on Horseback*.
 11. Yang Boda, "The Development of the Ch'ien-lung Painting Academy," pp. 345–46.
 12. Hironobu Kohara, "Court Painting under the Qing Dynasty," p. 99; also by Kohara, "Sandō Sessetsu-zu."
 13. See Rogers, "Court Painting under the Qianlong Emperor," pp. 305–6. I depend here also on unpublished notes on the artist by Rogers, written to accompany a painting (formerly in the Kaikodo collection) on which the artist signs with this title ("Painting attendant to the inner court") and uses a seal with the same title.
 14. She Ch'eng, "The Painting Academy of the Qianlong Period," p. 319. I cannot identify the Zeng Ao mentioned in She's paper as the artist of the album Gu copied, and assume that this is a mistake for the great portraitist Tseng Qing, who was reportedly one of Gu's teachers. She Ch'eng does not identify the source of his quotation. An album by Gu of portraits of forty Ming dynasty officials is recorded in Pei Jingfu, *Zhuangtao Shuhua Lu*.
 15. *Fairy Scattering Flowers, after Ma Hezhi*. Reproduced in *Ars Asiatica* 9 (ca. 1926), pl. LVIII.1.
 16. Rogers, "Court Painting under the Qianlong Emperor," p. 307, and Howard Rogers and Sherman E. Lee, *Masterworks of Ming and Qing Painting* (exhibition catalog), p. 185, in the entry for Leng Mei. The originals of the *Wanshou Tu*, densely populated cityscapes of Beijing showing the festivities and performances laid on to celebrate the birthday, appear not to have survived; late-eighteenth-century court copies are partly reproduced in Rawski and Rawson, eds., *China: The Three Emperors*, nos. 24 and 25. The complete compositions were also published by the court in 1616–17 in linear woodblock print renderings; see Monique Cohen, *Impressions de Chine*, no. 84.
 17. Lothar Ledderose et al., *Im Schatten höher Bäume* (exhibition catalog), no. 66.
 18. For the collaborations with Wang Hui and others, see Maxwell Hearn, "Document and Portrait," n. 40, pp. 187–88. Xu Mei's leaf for the 1692 landscape album is reproduced in Maxwell Hearn, *Cultivated Landscapes*, pl. 6b. For the picture of birds and fish, etc., see *Gugong Bownyuan Cang Hua Niao Hua Xuan*, pl. 77.
 19. Rogers, "Court Painting under the Qianlong Emperor," p. 306, writes of him as a "functionary in the Court of State Ceremonial." See also Rogers and Lee, *Masterworks of Ming and Qing Painting*, pp. 180–81. For much of the information given here, I am indebted also to

- the section on Yu Zhiding in the unfinished dissertation by my student Weikuen Tang about the patronage of early Qing painters.
20. The Changchun Yuan was designed by a court painter named Ye Tao, modeled after gardens of the Jiangnan region that Kangxi had seen on his southern tours. In Kangxi's time it was twice as large as the nearby Yuanming Yuan, which was made for presentation to the prince who would become the Yongzheng emperor. The Yuanming Yuan was greatly expanded under Yongzheng.
 21. See Alfreda Murck, "Yüan Chiang; Image Maker," pp. 229–30. She notes a Yuan Jiang painting dated 1724 and inscribed as having been painted in Yantai, i.e., Beijing (p. 230). See also Nie Chongzheng, *Yuan Jiang yu Yuan Yao*; and Anita Chung, *Drawing Boundaries*, especially chaps. 5 and 6.
 22. See *Qingdai Gongting A*, nos. 39–44, and B, nos. 10–20—comprising all but one of the paintings in both volumes from the Yongzheng period. Many more may be in the Beijing Palace Museum collection, unpublished. The series "Portraits of the Yongzheng Emperor in the Twelve Months" (B, 20)—twelve large, elaborate hanging scrolls of palace buildings and figures—particularly suggest the participation of Yuan Jiang. Signed paintings by court artists from the Yongzheng period are rare. A fuller discussion of this problem is in my forthcoming essay "A Group of Anonymous Northern Figure Paintings."
 23. I will argue below that the women in some of them, e.g., figs. 2.8–2.10, appear to be in the manner of the Yangzhou master Zhang Zhen and perhaps his son Zhang Weibang; but this is a matter of local and family style, not individual hand.
 24. For a detailed biography of Li Shan, see Rogers and Lee, *Masterworks of Ming and Qing Painting*, pp. 192–93; a short account is in Rogers, "Court Painting under the Qianlong Emperor," p. 163.
 25. Rogers and Lee, *Masterworks of Ming and Qing Painting*, pp. 188 (Hua Yan) and 199 (Luo Ping). For the latter, see also Kim Karlsson, *Luo Ping: The Life, Career, and Art of an Eighteenth-Century Chinese Painter*.
 26. A shorter and somewhat different form of this section was published under the title "The Three Zhangs, Yangzhou Beauties, and the Manchu Court." At the time I wrote I was unaware of two articles on the subject by Nie Chongzheng: "Qing Gongting Huajia Zhang Zhen, Zhang Weibang, Zhang Tingyan" and "Zhang Tingyan Shengzu Nian Zhiyi." Revised datings based on Nie's research have been incorporated here.
 27. A small painting of a dog with Zhang Zhen's signature is owned by Paul Moss, London.
 28. Anonymous, *Duhua Jilue*, p. 22b. The date of this compilation is unknown; it includes artists active through the early nineteenth century.
 29. Yang Boda, "The Development of the Ch'ien-lung Painting Academy," p. 338.
 30. Yang, "The Development of the Ch'ien-lung Painting Academy," pp. 335–36.
 31. An "unofficial history" cited by Harold Kahn in *Monarchy in the Emperor's Eyes*, pp. 52–54, describes the elaborate ritual by which a chosen concubine was introduced to the emperor's bed while he was living in the palace, and adds, "When the emperor is residing in the Summer Palace (Yüan-ming yüan) these practices are disregarded, and he can engage in intercourse whenever he pleases, as ordinary people do. . . . For this reason all of the emperors have spent most of their time in the Yüan-ming yüan." Although the reliability of information in these unofficial histories is suspect, and Kahn points out that the emperors' sexual activities were not so severely regulated within the palace, the report that they had more freedom in the Yuanming Yuan is plausible, and helps to explain why both Yongzheng and Qianlong spent so much of their time there. It is also consistent with a report by a foreign observer to be cited below.
 32. Young-tsu Wong, *A Paradise Lost*, p. 76. On Yongzheng's occupancy of the garden, see pp. 74–80.

33. Evelyn Rawski, "Reenvisioning the Qing." See also Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way*.
34. See Wang Yi, Wang Shuqing, and Su Yanzhen, *Qingdai Gongting Shenghuo*, explanatory texts accompanying pls. 429 (the present painting) and 274 (one of the so-called *Twelve Consorts of Yongzheng*, to be considered below). For the differences between the dress of Manchu court women and upper-class Han women in the same period, see also Valery M. Garrett, *Chinese Clothing: An Illustrated Guide*, chaps. 4 ("Manchu Women's Dress") and 7 ("Han Chinese Women's Clothing").
35. See Evelyn S. Rawski, "Ch'ing Imperial Marriage and Problems of Rulership."
36. Silas H. L. Wu, *Passage to Power*, pp. 114–16.
37. Shan Guoqiang, "Gentlewomen Paintings of the Qing Palace Ateliers," p. 58. Shan quotes also two edicts issued by the Jiaqing emperor (r. 1795–1820) forbidding the wearing of Han Chinese dress by Manchu noblewomen; the second of these suggests that the rule had frequently been breached. See also Evelyn S. Rawski, *The Last Emperors*, pp. 40–41.
38. Quoted in Wang Yi et al., *Qingdai Gongting Shenghuo*, text for pl. 274. The lines are from the Qianlong emperor's inscription on a painting by Jin Tingbiao discussed below (fig. 2.11). For a translation of the poem (with these lines rendered differently), see Wu Hung, "Emperor's Masquerade," p. 37.
39. Shan Guoqiang, "Gentlewomen Paintings," p. 59.
40. Wu Hung, "Beyond Stereotypes," p. 357.
41. For Yongzheng's inclination to adopt roles, see Wu Hung, "Emperor's Masquerade," pp. 25–41. An anonymous fourteen-leaf album of costume portraits of the Yongzheng emperor, of which eleven leaves are reproduced there (fig. 6a–k), portrays him in a diversity of costumes and roles, most of them adopted from the conventions of Chinese figure and figure-in-landscape paintings. For a comparable work from the late Ming in which a Chinese gentleman is portrayed in five different guises and settings, see Cahill, *The Compelling Image*, pp. 122–23 and figs. 4.20–24. Other examples of this practice from the Qing period could be cited, obviating the need to find for it a foreign model.
42. Wu, *Passage to Power*, pp. 95ff. See also Frederick Mote, *Imperial China: 900–1800*, pp. 884–85.
43. Wu, *Passage to Power*, p. 90, poem composed on one of the emperor's southern tours. On Yangzhou as the "national center for the procurement of beautiful women in late Ming times," see Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers*, p. 261 and p. 342 n. 19. "The tradition of procuring women from Yangzhou for pleasure," she writes, "was started by Sui Yang-ti . . . in the early seventh century" and was "followed by generations of emperors after him."
44. Rawski, "Ch'ing Imperial Marriage," pp. 181–82. See also Rawski, *The Last Emperors*, p. 130 and p. 340 n. 14.
45. Zhu Jiajin, "Guan yu Yongzheng Shiqi Shi'erfu Meiren Hua di Wenti," p. 345; summarized, with the 1732 record translated, in Wu Hung, "Beyond Stereotypes," p. 340.
46. See Hu Jing, *Guochao Yuanhua Lu*, HSCS edition, p. 24. A painting by him mentioned there was inscribed by the Qianlong emperor in 1768. A painting of two women, one holding a white rabbit and perhaps representing the moon goddess Chang'e, is in the National Palace Museum, Taipei; see *Shinü Hua zhi Mei*, no. 32. The dates for Zhang Tingyan given there are 1735–94; no source is given, and this birth date would have him entering the Academy at age nine. See also Nie Chongzheng's "Zhang Tingyan Shengzu Nian Zhiyi."
47. A large anonymous court painting, which appears to represent Qianlong's consorts and their servants in palace buildings within the Yuanming Yuan, deserves attention here but unfortunately is known to me only in a poor black-and-white reproduction. Now kept in the Palace Museum, Shenyang, it is reproduced in the exhibition catalog *I Tesori del Palazzo Imperiale del Shenyang*, no. 59, p. 295.

48. *Qingdai Gongting A*, pl. 88; it is reproduced also as fig. 8 in Cahill, “The Three Zhangs, Yangzhou Beauties, and the Manchu Court.”
49. Rawski, “Ch’ing Imperial Marriage,” pp. 182, 194.
50. Philip A. Kuhn, *Soulstealers*, pp. 70–72 and p. 246, n. 50. On Qianlong’s alleged escapades with courtesans in the Jiangnan cities on his southern tours, see also Michael G. Chang, *A Court on Horseback*, pp. 384–87.
51. Denis Attiret, “A Particular Account of the Emperor of China’s Gardens Near Peking,” pp. 22–23, 47–49.
52. I am grateful to Michele Pirazzoli-T’Serstevens, author of the book *Giuseppe Castiglione* through which I first became aware of the existence of these sketches, for additional information about them, sent in response to my query. John Finlay also gave me valuable advice and research assistance.
53. An illusionistic wall painting of this type, opening a doorway to reveal a woman inside, is reportedly on the upper floor of the Juanqin Zhai (Lodge of Retiring from Hard Work) in the Palace Museum, Beijing, of which the remarkable trompe l’oeil main-floor paintings have been published: see Nie Chongzheng, “Architectural Decorations in the Forbidden City.” Visitors are not allowed to see it because the stairway and upper floor are precarious, and to my knowledge it has not been published.
54. *Qingdai Gongting A*, p. 260, note to pl. 116. Another collaboration of this kind between Jin Tingbiao and Castiglione, compositionally similar to the painting being considered, is a *Yuejun Tu* (Inspecting the Steeds), which also situates Qianlong in the upper left and the objects of his gaze below and to the right. See Yu Hui, “Naturalism in Qing Imperial Group Portraiture,” fig. 6.
55. The title written on the work by Qianlong reads “Autumn Cries on the Artemisia Plain.” For the poem, see Bernhard Karlgren, *The Book of Odes*, p. 104. The “Lu Ming” poem itself has an erotic theme: the image of the deer precedes an invitation to sex from a woman. See, for this reading, Paul Rakita Goldin, *The Culture of Sex in Ancient China*, p. 13. Another painting by Castiglione of deer in an autumn forest, formerly in the palace collection, in which the stag in the foreground gazes back at a herd (or harem) of eight does among trees, was recently offered at auction: see Christie’s Hong Kong, “Fine Classical Paintings and Calligraphy,” October 30, 2000, no. 548; also same, May 30, 2005, no. 1207.
56. On these imperial hunts as conducted under the Manchus, see Rawski, *The Last Emperors*, pp. 20–21.
57. Zhang Hongxing, *The Qianlong Emperor* (exhibition catalog), no. 38, an example made for Qianlong in 1763, one of three made during his reign. The antlers were from deer killed in the hunts. See also Rawski, *The Last Emperors*, pp. 316–17, n. 89.
58. A harrowing account of it is in Frederic Wakeman Jr., *The Great Enterprise*, vol. 1, pp. 546–69.
59. The works of this artist, whom I term the Qianlong Albums Master, are discussed in my article (in press) “A Group of Anonymous Northern Figure Paintings from the Qianlong Period.” See also my “The Emperor’s Erotica.” Non-erotic leaves from his albums are reproduced in the present book, figs. 4.20–4.24.
60. A recorded collaborative work done by Jiao with two other artists is dated 1726; see Nie Chongzheng, “Jiao Bingzhen, Leng Mei ji qi zuopin,” p. 81 in the original.
61. In recent times, and presumably earlier as well, paintings of the god of old age, Shoulao Xing, were hung at birthday celebrations for a man, and paintings of the immortal Magu for a woman, as recounted in H. Y. Lowe, *The Adventures of Wu*, pp. 215–16. For another example of a Magu birthday painting that appears to be by Leng Mei or a close follower, see Christie’s New York auction catalog, June 29, 1984, no. 830.
62. Yang Boda, former director of the Palace Museum, Beijing, and Nie Chongzheng, a now-

retired curator there who specializes in Qing court painting, have used effectively their special access to Qing court records to clarify many questions regarding the Painting Academy, including the one of Leng Mei's years of absence from it. Yang Boda, "Leng Mei ji qi *Bishu Shanzhuang Tu*," pp. 172–77; repr. in his *Qingdai Yuanhua* [Qing Academy Painting] (Beijing: Cijin Cheng Chuban She, 1993), pp. 109–30. Nie Chongzheng, "Jiao Bingzhen, Leng Mei ji qi zuopin," pp. 81–84. An English summary of their findings is in Claudia Brown and Ju-hsi Chou, *Heritage of the Brush*, p. 76.

63. See note 17 above.
64. Reproduced in *Qingdai Gongting A*, pl. 3:1–10.
65. Frederic Wakeman Jr., *The Fall of Imperial China*, pp. 95–96.
66. Nie Chongzheng, "Jiao Bingzhen, Leng Mei ji qi Zuopin," p. 59. An album by Leng Mei dated to 1735 and bearing seals with names used by Prince Hongli before his enthronement leads Nie to speculate that Leng may have stayed with him for part of his time away from the Academy.
67. *Zhongguo Gongting Huihua Nianbiao*, p. 42.
68. See *Qingdai Gongting A*, 37. I am indebted to Alfreda Murck for the information that this was Yongzheng's birthday.
69. Hu Jing, *Guochao Yuanhua Lu*, HSCS ed., p. 10.
70. The scroll has often been reproduced; for a detail, see Cahill, *The Painter's Practice*, p. 48.
71. Hu Jing, *Guochao Yuanhua Lu*, HSCS ed.; the death date is from a document quoted by Anita Chung, *Drawing Boundaries*, p. 59.
72. Zhang Geng, *Guochao Huazheng Lu*, HSCS ed., *xu shang* p. 99.
73. Works of this kind include "Searching for a Line of Poetry," dated 1730, in the Palace Museum, Beijing, in *Zhongguo Meishu Quanji*, vol. 10 (*Qing Painting 2*), pl. 108; *Gazing at Clouds* in the Tianjin Municipal Museum, dated 1729; another, undated, in the same museum (*Tumu*, vol. 10, 7-1320 and 1322); a landscape with figure dated 1733 in the Nanjing Museum (*Tumu* VII, 24–0927.); and, an especially fine example, a *Landscape with Returning Woodcutter* dated 1731 in the Shanghai Museum; see Liu Yang et al., *Fantastic Mountains* (exhibition catalog), no. 75, detail p. 20. An example dated 1734 bears a seal of Prince Hongli, the future Qianlong emperor: see Howard Rogers in *Kaikodo Journal* 15 (Spring 2000), no. 18 and pp. 265–68, where Rogers cites other dated works.
74. Hu Jing, *Guochao Yuanhua Lu*, HSCS ed.; for a translation of this passage see Howard Rogers, "A Matter of Taste: The Monumental and Exotic in the Qianlong Reign," in *Elegant Brush*, p. 307.
75. Several other works of this type by Chen Mei are, like the Freer picture, attributed to earlier periods and artists; an example is an "anonymous Yuan" painting formerly in the collection of Huang Chün-pi, see *Baiyuntang Canghua*, pl. 21. The technical excellence and beauty of the paintings, together with Chen Mei's small reputation in China, encouraged such misrepresentations.
76. The 1725 *Nine Egrets*, collection of Roy and Marilyn Papp, Phoenix, Arizona, is reproduced in Brown and Chou, *Heritage of the Brush*, no. 24. The 1730 album titled *Nongjia Gushi* (Stories of Farmers), in the Palace Museum, Beijing, is cited by Yang Boda, "Leng Mei ji qi *Bishu Shanzhuang Tu*," p. 173.
77. Cahill, *The Painter's Practice*, pp. 102–12.
78. For Leng Jian, see Yang Boda, "The Development of the Ch'ien-lung Painting Academy," p. 345; also Yang Xin, "Court Painting in the Yangzheng and Qianlong Periods of the Qing Dynasty," p. 346. Nie Chongzhen (personal communication) believes that Leng Quan was probably another son of Leng Mei. For a painting of palace ladies by Leng Quan, see Guo Xueshi and Zhang Zikang, eds., *Zhongguo Lidai Shinü Huaji*, pl. 108.

THREE Adoptions from the West

A slightly longer and more polemical version of the section “Recognizing the Appropriations” was published under the title “Misdirected Scruples” in the Commentary section of *Orientalisms* (October 1996): 93–94.

1. On the phenomenon of “Western influence” on Chinese art, see Xiang Da, “European Influences on Chinese Art in the Later Ming and Ch’ing Periods”; the original article, in Chinese, was published in *Dongfang Zazhi* 27, no. 1 (1930). See also Michael Sullivan, *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art*; Mayching Kao, “European Influences in Chinese Art, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries”; and Richard Swiderski, “The Dragon and the Straight-edge,” pts. 1–3.
2. Rudolf Wittkower trenchantly stated the salutary effect on European art of adopting elements from outside traditions: “Misinterpretation is the real secret of the vitality of European cosmopolitanism in the arts. Misinterpretation (and I am using the term in lieu of adaptation and translation) made it possible to incorporate the consecutive waves of non-European penetrations into the mainstream of European art.” In Donald M. Reynolds, ed., *Selected Lectures of Rudolf Wittkower*, p. 192.
3. Michael Baxandall, “Excursus against Influence,” in *Patterns of Intention*, pp. 58–62.
4. See Gauvin A. Bailey, *The Jesuits and the Grand Mogul*. The impact of Western pictorial art on Indian painting was of course not limited to copying; for more original work and a discussion of this impact, see Susan Stronge, “Europe in Asia: The Impact of Western Art and Technology in South Asia,” in Anna Jackson and Amin Jaffer, eds., *Encounters*, pp. 285–95.
5. Some of these are reproduced and studied in Berthold Laufer, “Christian Art in China.”
6. Wu, Zhang, and Zou are all quoted in Cahill, *The Compelling Image*, p. 72. See also Mayching Kao, “European Influences in Chinese Art,” p. 273 (Zou Yigui) and p. 275 (Wu Li).
7. Yang Boda, “The Development of the Ch’ien-lung Painting Academy,” pp. 349–50.
8. Gao Shiqi, the Kangxi emperor’s “favorite personal secretary,” who was himself a major collector of paintings, was granted a special audience in 1703 in which the emperor showed him European pictures hanging in the Imperial Theater, and also two portraits of his concubines, one Manchu and one Chinese, painted by Giovanni Gherardini, an Italian painter employed by the Jesuits in China. The emperor offered the view that “the Westerners could paint portraits as wonderfully as Gu Hutou,” i.e., Gu Kaizhi. Gao Shiqi, who was leaving the emperor’s service, was presented with three European paintings, among other items. See Fu Lo-shu, *A Documentary Chronicle of Sino-Western Relations (1644–1820)*, vol. 1, pp. 112–13, “The K’ang-hsi Emperor Is a Lover of Western Art and Music.” For Kangxi’s “stupefied” and reverential response to European religious paintings presented to him by Matteo Ricci, see Jacques Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, pp. 86–87.
9. Sullivan, *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art*, p. 79.
10. Westernizing elements appear also in the works of late Ming–early Qing artists active in Songjiang, such as Zhao Zuo (ca. 1570–ca. 1633) and Lu Wei (d. 1716; but these artists, being primarily landscapists, are outside our present concern. For Zhao Zuo, see Cahill, *The Compelling Image*, pp. 83–86, and *The Distant Mountains*, pp. 70–79. For Lu Wei, see Cahill, “Brushlessness and Chiaroscuro in Early Ch’ing Landscape Painting.”
11. *The Compelling Image*, pp. 15–26; cf. *The Distant Mountains*, pp. 56–59.
12. A good discussion of these is Hironobu Kohara, “Sandō Sessetzu-zu.” Examples of the prints, which survive in large numbers, are reproduced in many places; a good selection is in the Machida City Print Museum catalog *Chūgoku no Yōfūga-ten*, pls. 109–33.
13. Some distinctly bizarre Westernized paintings are still to be found in old collections, often ascribed to such artists as Jiao Bingzhen and Lang Shining. For examples, see Machida City Print Museum, *Chūgoku no Yōfūga-ten* (exhibition catalog), pls. 73–74.

14. For some of these statements and a brief treatment of Tseng Qing's portraits, see Cahill, *The Distant Mountains*, pp. 213–17.
15. Cahill, "Wu Pin and His Landscape Paintings," fig. 13; a section of Fan Qi's painting is reproduced there as fig. 14, and the whole in Osvald Sirén, *Chinese Painting*, vol. 6, pl. 359.
16. Cahill, *The Compelling Image*, pp. 168–83, offers an account of Gong Xian's development that considers how his style was formed in part from his exposure to European pictures. Gong Xian's statement about "places where no one has ever gone" is on p. 181. His great *Thousand Peaks and Myriad Ravines* (Cahill, *The Compelling Image*, color pl. 10, fig. 5.40) best exemplifies the qualities ascribed to him here.
17. In the section of *The Compelling Image* cited in the previous note, I adduce comparisons that bring out these derivations.
18. Arthur Waley, *Introduction to the Study of Chinese Painting*, p. 251.
19. For Daocun, see Yu Jianhua, *Dictionary*, p. 1242; according to Yu, an album by him dated to 1709 is in a Japanese collection. The entry for him in *Huaren Buyi* (in *Qing Huazhuan Jiyi Sanzhong*; cf. chap. 2, n. 23) states that he lived in Hua'an and painted landscapes in the manner of Kuncan. Sotheby Parke Bernet, New York, "Fine Chinese Paintings," June 1, 1988, no. 72, dates this album to 1706, whereas Sotheby's Hong Kong, "Fine Chinese Paintings from the Currier Collection," May 1, 2000, no. 109, reads the date as 1766 and gives Daocun's death date as 1792. Further research is needed to resolve the discrepancy.
20. An example is in Xue Yongnian, Richard Vinograd, and James Cahill, eds., *New Interpretations of Ming and Qing Paintings*, no. 42, a painting in the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing. Others of his works are listed in the commentary to that picture.
21. An album of twelve landscapes with figures by Wang Yun, dated to 1722, exhibits Wang's close stylistic relationship with Yuan Jiang, and is, like most of Yuan's paintings, in the semi-Westernized manner; see *Wang Hanzao Renwu Shanshui Ce*.
22. Hidemi Kondō, for instance, in "Shen Nanpin's Japanese Roots," argues that scholars who trace the source of Shen's realism to Western art are in error, since its real source is in Song painting and the Ming academic tradition. Kondō's research is valuable and his argument has much merit, but his is another example of the frequently encountered fallacy that an artist's use of native sources must have precluded his use of nonnative ones. It scarcely needs repeating that *all* the artists to whom I ascribe some derivations from Western style used them in a context of Chinese style; it is exactly the successful fusions that must have made the paintings, for their audiences, both acceptably Chinese and interestingly novel. On Shen Quan, see also Zhou Zhiyin and Hidemi Kondō, *Shen Quan Yanjiu*; and Howard Rogers and Sherman E. Lee, *Masterworks of Ming and Qing Painting*, pp. 186–87.
23. Cahill, "Wu Pin and His Landscape Paintings"; *The Compelling Image*, chap. 3; and *The Distant Mountains*, pp. 176–80.
24. One of the largest of the Jesuit missions was in Nanjing, and local literati came to admire books in its library. See Michael Sullivan, "Some Possible Sources of European Influence on Late Ming and Early Ch'ing Painting," this reference on p. 597. For the *Record of the Year's Holidays* album, see Wen C. Fong and James C. Y. Watt, *Possessing the Past*, pl. 206a–d.
25. See Nie Chongzheng, "Qing Shunzhi Chao Gongting Huajia Huang Yingshen." Nie recognizes no sign of European style in Huang's works and believes that the mixed Sino-Western manner began to develop only in the Yongzheng and Qianlong periods, after European missionary artists had become active at court.
26. See *Kokka*, 687 (June 1949) for a reproduction of part of this scroll, representing the environs of Suzhou and Tiger Hill. According to the accompanying text, the scroll is signed and bears a seal of the Yongzheng emperor. It was owned then by Yamamoto Yoshitsugu.
27. For a thorough study of this series, see Paul Pelliot, "À propos de *Keng tche t'ou*." A rare copy

- of the original woodblock-printed edition is partly reproduced and discussed in Philip K. Hu, comp. and ed., *Visible Traces*, no. 17. A painted copy that purports to be the original but certainly is not, bearing imperial seals, possibly one of many painted copies made by lesser Academy masters for dissemination by the emperor, is in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; see Nathalie Monnet, *Le Gengzhitu*.
28. For instance, in a 1663 work by Jan Steen (1626–79), *A Woman at Her Toilet*, in which a lute lies across the sill of the doorway leading to a woman's boudoir, linking the foreground, as an extension of the viewer's space, with the room beyond. For the Steen painting, which is in Windsor Castle, see Perry Chapman et al., *Jan Steen: Painter and Storyteller*, no. 19.
 29. Zhang Geng, *Guochao Huazheng Lu*, HSCS ed., chap. 3, pp. 31–32; translation from Kao, "European Influences," p. 272.
 30. The Jesuits had been reinstated in 1671 in the Bureau of Astronomy, with Ferdinand Verbiest (1623–88) as director, after a period of banishment. See Arnold H. Rowbotham, *Missionary and Mandarin*, pp. 92–94. For the Jesuit teaching of perspective and other techniques of illusionistic painting to the Chinese, see Sullivan, "Some Possible Sources of European Influence"; also Sullivan, *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art*, chap. 2: "China and European Art, 1600–1800," especially p. 46.
 31. Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing*.
 32. Quoted in Sullivan, *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art*, p. 80.
 33. Rowbotham, *Missionary and Mandarin*, p. 183.
 34. On this book and its 153 engravings, published in Antwerp in 1593, see Sullivan, *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art*, pp. 46–50.
 35. David Howard and John Ayers, *China for the West*, vol. 1, p. 35.
 36. Howard and Ayers, *China for the West*, vol. 2, p. 632, no. 658.
 37. An excellent study of how space is manipulated for expressive purposes in Dutch seventeenth-century painting is Martha Hollander, *An Entrance for the Eyes*. Nadine Orenstein, associate curator in the Department of Drawings and Prints at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, kindly sent me copies of many Dutch mezzotints from the late seventeenth century that featured the drawn-back curtain, along with French prints from about the same time portraying women looking into mirrors (personal communication, March 1998); I am grateful to her for calling these to my attention. Some are suggestively close in composition to the Leng Mei painting.
 38. Sullivan, "Some Possible Sources of European Influence," p. 607.
 39. Richard Swiderski, "The Dragon and the Straightedge," is a long, well-documented study of this phenomenon that nevertheless, I believe, overemphasizes linear perspective to the neglect of other Chinese borrowings from European pictorial practice. My inability to read Spanish prevents me from appraising properly Elisabetta Corsi's *La fábrica de las ilusiones*, said to be an important book on Chinese artists' learning and uses of Western perspective. An English translation is projected.
 40. Wall paintings: Yang Boda, "The Development of the Ch'ien-lung Painting Academy," pp. 349–50. For surviving examples in the palace, see Nie Chongzheng, "Architectural Decoration in the Forbidden City"; Wu Hung, "Emperor's Masquerade"; and Nie Hui, "Qinggong Tongjing Xianfa-hua Tanxi."
 41. *Uki'e* (literally, "floating pictures"), i.e., perspective prints, as a special type within *ukiyo'e* (pictures of the floating world), began to appear in Japan in the 1730s and 1740s. For a discussion of them, see Timon Screech, *The Western Scientific Gaze and Popular Imagery in Later Edo Japan*, pp. 102–4.
 42. Another album of palace-lady paintings, again depicting their activities in the twelve months of the year, was painted by the court artist Yao Wenhan (active 1739–52) in 1743, based on poems by the Qianlong emperor. See Christie's New York, June 29, 1984, no. 829.

43. Howard Rogers, “Court Painting under the Qianlong Emperor,” p. 307.
44. This topic is discussed more fully in my unpublished paper “A Group of Northern Figure Paintings from the Qianlong Period.”
45. A notable example is the *Landscape with Rainstorm* in the National Museum, Stockholm; see James Cahill, *Fantastics and Eccentrics in Chinese Painting* (exhibition catalog), no. 22.
46. Eight-leaf album, ink and colors on silk; Freer Gallery of Art, reg. no. 14.24–31. An inscription by an identifiable early Qing writer named Liu Hualiang includes a cyclical date that must correspond to 1708, and the album dates from about that time or a bit earlier. See Cahill, *The Compelling Image*, fig. 3.22.
47. For a painting that appears to link Leng Mei to a Cui Zizhong lineage, probably an early work by Leng (the form of his signature differs from those on others of his works), depicting two foreign-looking men watching a boy atop a bizarre, illusionistically shaded elephant, see *Tumu*, vol. 18, *shan* 2–16; also (in color) in *Zhongguo Huihua Quanji*, vol. 27, pl. 170.
48. Rawski, *The Last Emperors*, p. 120.
49. See Kim Karlsson, *Luo Ping*, chaps. 6 and 7, on Luo’s late-life sojourns in Beijing and his patronage there.
50. The work seems to have been preserved in recent times in Japan; a label on it reads “Nihon Kokin Kaiga Tenrankai” (Exhibition of Old and New Paintings [in?] Japan), and an inscription in the lid of the Japanese-style box reads “Formerly owned by the Xuanton Emperor” (r. 1908–12). Another signed *meiren* painting by Jiao Bingzhen, this one outdoors with the woman holding a fishing pole and leaning on a rock beneath a waterside willow, was offered at auction more recently, and appears likely to be genuine: see Christie’s Hong Kong, “Fine Classical Chinese Paintings and Calligraphy,” May 28, 2007, no. 841.
51. A small imaginary portrait of Li Qingzhao, in the Palace Museum, Beijing. See *Zhongguo Meishu Quanji*, vol. 10, pl. 108.
52. Cui Hui, along with Gao Qipei and Li Shizhuo, have all been called Korean on the basis of this designation of *Sanhan* as their place of origin. Marc Wilson and Kwan S. Wong point out, however, that *Sanhan* can designate either an area of North Korea or a region east of the Liao River near present-day Liaoyang, and that Li Shizhuo came from the latter; see *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting*, pp. 377–78. Possibly the term refers to Korean ancestry, and was used for Korean bannermen who relocated to northeastern China after participating in the Manchu conquest. I am grateful to Ms. Hwang Jung-yon, a graduate student in the Academy of Korean Studies in Seoul, for help and references on this problem, which I must leave unresolved.
53. An exception might be the original of what I take to be a copy after a work by Cui Hui, discussed in chap. 5: see fig. 5.24. This bears a (copied) poetic inscription by Cui.
54. The painting is known to me only through an image that was briefly on the Internet; it was posted there in 2005 by a Beijing auction company called Arttrade, and sold to an unknown buyer for about U.S. \$50,000. The image, which has now been removed from the Web site, was discovered there and passed on to me by Dr. J. P. Park, to whom I am indebted for the discovery and for much other help. Park is currently trying to locate the auction company and the owner in Beijing.
55. See Ellen Widmer, “Xiaoqing’s Literary Legacy and the Place of the Woman Writer in Late Imperial China”; Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers*, pp. 91–96.
56. Christie’s New York, “Fine Chinese Paintings and Calligraphy,” June 1, 1989, no. 88.
57. Kinjirō Harada, comp., *Shina Meiga Hōkan*, pl. 944.

FOUR The Artists’ Repertories

1. Birthday pictures: see Xue Yongnian, comp., *Kunluntang Shuhua Ji*, no. 52, a large composition with numerous figures representing the birthday celebration of an elderly man.

Portraits: his signed portrait of a Manchu nobleman (?) before a folding landscape screen was sold at auction: see Sotheby's New York, "Fine Chinese Paintings," March 18, 1997, no. 53. For a portrait by him dated 1663 in the Suzhou Museum, see *Tamu*, vol. 7, *Su* 8–065. An imaginary portrait of a Han statesman dated to 1673 was owned by the late Alice Boney. A portrait dated 1687 is in the Nelson-Atkins Art Museum; see *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting*, no. 255. A portrait of a contemporary in handscroll form, done by Gu in his eighty-fourth year (i.e., in 1688), is in the Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst in Cologne. The well-known anonymous portrait of the young Kangxi emperor writing with a brush (*Qing-dai Gongting* B, pl. 1), judging from its style, also may be his work; it was done in the mid- or late 1670s when Kangxi was in his early twenties and Gu was still at court. The depiction of rugs and furniture in the Kangxi portrait compares closely with similar imagery in Gu's paintings.

2. David T. Roy, trans. and annot., *The Plum in the Golden Vase*.
3. Deng Chun, *Hua Ji*, p. 123; translation in Susan Bush and Hsio-yen Shih, eds., *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*, p. 136.
4. Craig Clunas, "Gifts and Giving in Chinese Art," p. 8.
5. The latter judgment is made about flower paintings by Zhao Chang; see Mi Fu, *Hua Shi*, pp. 35–36.
6. Hironobu Kohara, "Court Painting under the Qing Dynasty," p. 100.
7. Another relatively early example is a small painting attributed to Li Song (active ca. 1190–ca. 1230) in the National Palace Museum, Taipei; see *Gugong Shuhua Tulu* (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1989), vol. 2, p. 145. This is not a family scene; all the figures in it are men, excepting a maid at upper right. It portrays people drinking in the entry hall of a large house, and visitors coming to pay their New Year's respects, as well as boys setting off fire-crackers. It appears to be early Ming in date.
8. Collection of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing; published in Xue Yongnian, Richard Vinograd, and James Cahill, eds., *New Interpretations of Ming and Qing Paintings*, pp. 118, 120, entry by Wang Xiaomei, where it is called "anonymous Ming."
9. For these, see Ellen J. Laing, "From Sages to Revellers."
10. Yoshiho Yonezawa, "Shin-ga Taji Zu."
11. Still another version is reproduced in *Qing-dai Gongting* B, pl. 31; the figure groups correspond closely to those in the signed version discussed here, but they are shown in a larger palace setting. Another work of this type painted jointly by several Qianlong Academy masters, including Yao Wenhan, is reproduced in *Gugong Bowuyan Socang Zhongguo Lidai Minghua Ji*, vol. 2, pl. 239. Compositionally it is closer to the "Qiu Ying" painting (fig. 1.2), and the principal figure is not the emperor but, presumably, some high official for whom the painting was done.
12. Yang Boda, "The Development of the Ch'ien-lung Painting Academy," pp. 346–49.
13. Yang, "The Development of the Ch'ien-lung Painting Academy," p. 348. The differences between Imperial Academy and outside paintings of similar subjects and styles are further discussed in my essay "A Group of Northern Figure Paintings of the Qianlong Period" (in press). I cite there, and quote from briefly, a review by Souren Melikian of the 2006 *China: The Three Emperors* exhibition (edited by Evelyn S. Rawski and Jessica Rawson) complaining about the low aesthetic interest of the elaborate Academy paintings that made up much of the show; his review offers, I comment, "a welcome break with a general reluctance to recognize the dullness of a great deal of Qing Academy painting."
14. A cruder painting of this type, with some of the folk-art character of the printed *nianhua*, by an anonymous painter of the Huizhou (Anhui) region, is reproduced in *Huizhou Rongxiang Yishu*, p. 47. It is there titled *Jiaqing Tu* (Family Auspicious Picture).
15. For two typical examples, see Cahill, *The Painter's Practice*, figs. 1.14 and 3.9.

16. Jerome Silbergeld, “Chinese Concepts of Old Age and Their Role in Chinese Painting, Painting Theory, and Criticism”; and Ju-hyung Rhi, “The Subjects and Functions of Chinese Birthday Paintings.”
17. Guo Weiqu, *Song Yuan Ming Qing Shuhuajia Nianbiao*, p. 219. A *God of Old Age* by Gu Jianlong dated 1683 is in the National Palace Museum, Taipei; see *Gugong Shuhua Tulu*, vol. 10, p. 235.
18. Anne Burkus-Chasson offers a study of this subject in relation to several Ming-Qing examples in Xue Yongnian et al., eds., *New Interpretations of Ming and Qing Painting*, pp. 53–54, including a detailed reading of the one by Zhao Wei reproduced here as fig. 4.10.
19. See E. A. Strehlneek, *Chinese Pictorial Art*, pp. 284–85.
20. She Ch’eng, “The Painting Academy of the Qianlong Period,” p. 330.
21. Handscroll: see Zhuang Zhifa, “Xie Sui Gengzhi Tu Yanjiu.” Landscape: see *Qingdai Gongting A*, no. 121.
22. For two typical examples, see Cahill, *The Painter’s Practice*, fig. 1.15.
23. Howard Rogers and Sherman E. Lee, *Masterworks of Ming and Qing Painting*, p. 153. Three versions of a painting of this theme done by Chen Hongshou and his studio are reproduced in Cahill, *The Painter’s Practice*, fig. 3.36.
24. Formal portraits of couples can be seen in Ming painting; I refer here to informal, particularized family portraits, like the single portraits with individualized settings that were popular from the late Ming.
25. See chap. 2, n. 41, for a reference to this late-Ming example and to an imperial court production from the Yongzheng era imitating this kind of series, with the Yongzheng emperor playing the (quite imaginary) role of the benevolent farmer.
26. See *Ming-Qing Fengsu Hua*, no. 68.
27. This development is traced in detail in my unpublished book on Chinese erotic painting; it is discussed also in my essay (in French) in the Musée Cernuschi exhibition catalog *Le Palais du Printemps*.
28. The leaf, remounted as a hanging scroll and attributed to Qiu Ying with interpolated seals, was offered at auction (Christie’s New York, June 4, 1993, no. 135) and is now in a private collection in Taipei. It was originally part of an album of large leaves (Album P) published under the title *Naishi Xingle* [Pleasures of the Age] by the Yiyuan Zhenshang She, Shanghai, probably in the 1940s. Beneath the title is the note, “Formerly owned by the Qing court,” indicating that this was another palace production, probably removed from the palace in the 1920s. For paintings by the Qianlong Albums Master, see my article “The Emperor’s Erotica,” also my forthcoming “A Group of Anonymous Northern Figure Paintings from the Qianlong Period.”
29. John Meskill, *Gentlemanly Interests and Wealth on the Yangtze Delta*, pp. 157–74, “The New Temper”; also pp. 141–55, “The New Abundance.” The lines quoted are on p. 164. Kathryn Lowry makes the same point, writing that *qing* in late-Ming literature is an “emotion serving self-interest (*si*) rather than the interests of kin or other social networks,” as it had done before. See her “Duplicating the Strength of Feeling,” p. 247.
30. Victoria Cass, *Dangerous Women: Warriors, Grannies and Geishas of the Ming*, pp. 28–30.
31. Cass, *Dangerous Women*, p. 30.
32. Mao Xiang, *The Reminiscences of Tung Hsiao-wan*.
33. Good studies of women’s reading in Ming and Qing times include Joanna F. Handlin, “Lü K’un’s New Audience”; Susan Mann, “‘Fuxue’ (‘Women’s Learning’) by Zhang Xuecheng (1738–1801)”; Dorothy Ko, “Pursuing Talent and Virtue”; and Anne E. McLaren, “Chinese Popular Culture and Ming Chantefables,” esp. pp. 67–76, “Chantefable Audiences: the Emergence of a Female Readership.” See also the same author’s chapter “Constructing New

- Reading Publics in Late Ming China,” in *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China*, especially pp. 160–63; she suggests the possibility of distinguishing different “female literacies.” Women’s reading in China is well summed up also in Ellen Widmer’s *The Beauty and the Book*, pp. 3–22.
34. Cass, *Dangerous Women*, p. 15. Her n. 43, p. 127, supplies references to English-language discussions of *qing*. Especially enlightening is Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers*, chap. 2, “The Enchantment of Love in *The Peony Pavilion*.”
 35. For the album leaf, see Cahill, “Where Did the Nymph Hang?” fig. 5.
 36. All the leaves of this album are reproduced in Cahill, “Paintings for Women in Ming-Qing China?” The color plates for that article were mistakenly omitted from the first printing of the journal (*Nan Nü* 8), and were sent later to subscribers; they may be missing from some library copies.
 37. Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Women’s Chambers*, pp. 202–7 and passim. On poetry clubs within households, and on women’s literacy in this period more generally, see also Irving Yucheng Lo, “Daughters of the Muses of China,” esp. pp. 41–42. Much information on women’s literary networks is found in the commentaries on individual Ming-Qing female poets in Kang-i Sun Chang and Haun Saussy, eds., *Women Writers of Traditional China*.
 38. The place of bound feet in women’s bonding is treated in Dorothy Ko, “The Written Word and the Bound Foot,” and in Wang Ping, *Aching for Beauty*, chap. 6, “Binding, Weaving, Chatting: Female Bonding and Writing.” More recent is Dorothy Ko’s book *Cinderella’s Sisters: A Revisionist History of Footbinding*.
 39. Dorothy Ko, in “The Written Word and the Bound Foot,” p. 98, writes that scenes of men fondling women’s bound feet are “often portrayed in erotic paintings,” while “women were never depicted as fondling their own feet.” The opposite, however, would seem to be true: these two leaves appear to depict the latter practice, while no examples of the former are known to me. Paintings in which men gaze at women’s bound feet are of course common.
 40. Gary Baura, entry for catalog no. 50 in Marsha Weidner, ed., *Latter Days of the Law*, pp. 362–64.
 41. Chün-fang Yü, “Guanyin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara,” in Marsha Weidner et al., *Latter Days of the Law*, esp. pp. 166–69, “Guanyin as Seductress.” This theme is further explored by Yü in her book *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara*, pp. 421ff.
 42. Gary Baura, in Marsha Weidner et al., *Latter Days of the Law*, p. 362.
 43. A set of the prints is in the Machida City Print Museum, Tokyo; see their catalog *Chūgoku no Yōfūga-ten*, pp. 336–54. The picture is no. 41 in the series. Another set is in the Spencer Collection at the New York Public Library print room. The printed series is sometimes dated to the late Ming period, but from the style and technique, a dating in the early or mid-eighteenth century seems more likely. The correspondence of print and painting was first pointed out in a paper written by Karl Debreczeny for my seminar given at the University of Chicago in spring 1998.
 44. Notably in Weidner, ed., *Latter Days of the Law*.
 45. Good recent writings on narrative pictorial prints include Dajun Yao, “The Pleasure of Reading Drama”; and Robert E. Hegel, *Reading Illustrated Fiction in Late Imperial China*. Scholarship on narrative painting has been greatly enriched by the publication of Julia Murray’s book *Mirror of Morality*. Murray deals principally with the early periods, through the Song, and comments (p. 5) on the critical dismissal of narrative painting in later centuries.
 46. For the *Roupu Tuan* illustrations, see Christie’s New York, “Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art,” December 1–2, 1994, no. 308. The album comprised eight leaves of illustrations, eight of text. For the two albums from the *Liaozhai* series, see Christie’s New York,

- “Fine Classical and Modern Chinese Paintings,” November 30, 1984, no. 787. Another album of *Liaozhai* illustrations, forty-six leaves, is in the National Museum of China; see *Zhongguo Guojia . . . (Lishi Hua)*, pp. 296–305; still another, twenty-four leaves of fine quality, was offered in China Guardian, Beijing auction “Chinese Paintings and Calligraphy,” May 12–13, 2007, no. 1201. For the album ascribed to Fang Xiaowei, see Sotheby Parke Bernet, New York, “Fine Chinese Paintings,” May 31, 1989, no. 74. The information that Fang served in the Kangxi court is from the catalog note; I have not located him. Other such series include a set of twelve leaves with a signature (presumably interpolated) of the Ming master Fan Mu or Xingwu (Sotheby Parke Bernet, New York, “Chinese and Japanese Decorative Works of Art,” October 2–3, 1985, no. 58); and a fifty-nine-leaf album of illustrations to *Xixiang Ji*, eighteenth to nineteenth centuries, in which the anonymous pictures appear above passages of printed text (Christie’s New York, “Fine Chinese Paintings and Calligraphy,” June 1, 1989, no. 137).
47. Complete black-and-white reproduction in *Kokka* 1163 (1992); color reproductions of all leaves in *Gen Dai no Kaiga* (exhibition catalog), no. 48.
 48. The versions published in old reproduction albums are *Qiu Wen Hebi Xixiang Zhenji Quance* and *Qiu Wen Hezhi Xixiang Ji Tuce*. For a series of *Xixiang Ji* illustrations in handscroll form ascribed to Qiu Ying, with text by Wen Zhengming dated 1532, which appears from the reproduction to be better than these, see Christie’s New York, “Fine Chinese Paintings and Calligraphy,” December 1, 1986, no. 17. A fine nineteen-leaf album of *Western Wing* illustrations, with seals of Qiu Ying and facing leaves of textual excerpts with seals of Wen Zhengming, was offered for sale in China Guardian, Beijing, auction “Classical Paintings and Calligraphy,” June 3, 2006, no. 330.
 49. For another leaf, depicting the scene in which Cui Yingying appears to Scholar Zhang in a dream, see Deborah Rudolph, *Impressions of the East*, p. 125.
 50. The ways in which the best woodblock prints achieve a degree of independence from painting, exploiting the special nature of the medium, would be the subject of another study.
 51. See Cahill, “Paintings for Women?” pp. 40–50.
 52. For the whole album, see *Tumu*, vol. 22, *jing* 1–4805.
 53. Translation from David Roy, *The Plum in the Golden Vase*, vol. 1, p. 496, n. 5.
 54. Fu’s fan painting is reproduced in Weidner, ed., *Views from Jade Terrace*, no. 32; for information on her see p. 179.
 55. Cass, *Dangerous Women*, pp. 9–17.
 56. Cass, *Dangerous Women*, p. 23.
 57. A complete annotated translation by David T. Roy is under way; the first sixty chapters have been translated in the three volumes published so far. See *The Plum in the Golden Vase*.
 58. Eight leaves are in Nelson-Atkins Art Museum in Kansas City; seventeen formerly in the collection of Andrew Franklin, London; thirteen formerly in the collection of C. C. Yeh, Taichung. The Franklin and Yeh groups have recently been further dispersed in auctions. The remainder are presumably still in Taiwan, where the whole series was until recently owned by the late Zhang Xueliang (1898–2001), whose father, the warlord Zhang Zuolin (1873–1928), is said to have looted the albums from the Forbidden City while he was briefly in control of Beijing in 1926—or, in an alternative version, from the Shenyang Palace during the longer period (1918–28) when he was military governor of Manchuria. It would appear that Zhang Xueliang during his years in Taiwan gave groups of leaves as political and other gifts to friends and acquaintances who—because of the erotic nature of some of the images—are reluctant to acknowledge ownership of them, so that tracing their whereabouts has proved difficult.
 59. See Cahill, “Where Did the Nymph Hang? where the argument is made for this attribution.

60. This passage in the novel is translated in Roy, *The Plum in the Golden Vase*, vol. 1, pp. 413–18.
61. Maxwell Hearn, “Document and Portrait.” On the tours themselves, see Michael G. Chang, *A Court on Horseback*. A good general discussion of cityscapes painted by Qing court artists is in Anita Chung, *Drawing Boundaries*, pp. 91–100.
62. The Kangxi emperor’s tour is recorded in twelve scrolls by Wang Hui and others, who began work in 1691. For five of the scrolls, nos. 1 and 9–12, along with a preliminary drawing for another, see *Qingdai Gongting* B, 5–6.
63. From the accompanying text to the book in which this scroll is reproduced, *Shengshi Zisheng Tu*, descriptive text, unpaginated, for pl. 77. This is a valuable description of a shop that sold paintings of the kind this book is about.
64. A similar scroll appeared recently at auction in Christie’s Hong Kong, “Fine Classical Chinese Paintings and Calligraphy,” May 30, 2005, no. 1085. Painted in 1774 by the little-known figure master Yao Zai from Wuxi, it depicts at length (680 cm) the scenery along the route taken by the official Bi Wan (1730–95) in returning home upon retirement; it was presumably painted for presentation to him on that occasion. More polished and less entertaining than the Franklin scroll, it portrays, along with Bi himself in his boat, the buildings, other boats, bridges, and a great many people along the canals. Although two scrolls with similar themes and purposes do not constitute proof of a type, they suggest one; more examples may turn up.
65. Cao Xueqin, *Honglou Meng*, trans. by David Hawkes as *The Story of the Stone*, vol. 3, pp. 311–16.
66. This is a small joke—there is indeed a painting of this kind in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York with a Tang Yin signature, an old acquisition, no longer credited as a work by that great Ming master.
67. This was the late Andrew Franklin, who had spent years in Taiwan as the British consul and had collected a large and very mixed assemblage of paintings and prints, presumably purchased on the local market. I visited him in his London retirement home in November 1996. The collection has been dispersed, some of it (including this scroll) given to the City of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, the remainder sold at auction. I am grateful to his son-in-law Kirit Vaidya for help in locating the scroll.

FIVE Beautiful Women and the Courtesan Culture

1. Paul S. Ropp, “The Seeds of Change,” p. 19. See also Ropp, “Ambiguous Images of Courtesan Culture in Late Imperial China”; and Victoria Cass, *Dangerous Women*, pp. 6–17. On the pleasure quarters of the great Jiangnan cities, see also Tobie Meyer-Fong, *Building Culture in Early Qing Yangzhou*, pp. 133–36; quoting from an unpublished essay by Jonathan Hay, she terms them “leisure zones.”
2. The term *geisha* is used for them, and defended, by Victoria Cass in her book *Dangerous Women*. Earlier, it had been proposed as the best rendering for the Chinese *ji* by Edward Schafer, in his privately circulated *Schafer Sinological Papers*, vol. 2: *Notes on Tang Geisha*, 1984. Dorothy Ko (*Teachers of the Inner Chambers*, p. 256) likens them to the Japanese *tayū*; Stephen Owen in *The Poetry of Meng Chiao and Han Yü*, p. 131, calls them women of the demimonde. Cass’s chapter titled “Geishas,” pp. 25–46, is a very perceptive account of the status of these women and their relationships with prominent men.
3. For an account of the development of this theme in Ming–Qing fiction, see Keith McMahon, *Misers, Shrews, and Polygamists*, pp. 99–159. McMahon further divides the genre into two sub-genres: the chaste beauty-scholar romance and the erotic scholar-beauty romance. In romantic literature, the *jiaren* of the phrase was often a young woman of good family, not a prostitute.

4. The identification of this painting's subject has been called into question by Jan Stuart, who believes it may portray only a generic scholar-beauty romance, or a young man dallying with a courtesan. See her "Two Birds with the Wings of One," pp. 25–28.
5. Cass, *Dangerous Women*, p. 30.
6. McMahon, *Misers, Shrews, and Polygamists*, p. 14.
7. Wang Shifu, *The Moon and the Zither: The Story of the Western Wing*.
8. Pearl S. Buck, *The Good Earth*, pp. 179–83.
9. This episode is recounted in the second volume of David Roy's translation, *The Plum in the Golden Vase*, pp. 20–23.
10. I acquired the old photo from the estate of Archibald Wenley, director of the Freer Gallery of Art, upon his death in 1962; he must have received it from the Shanghai dealer E. A. Strehlneck during his early years in China. Writing on the back, initialed by Strehlneck, identifies the painting as "Imperial lady with attendant" and calls it a "eulogic painting presented by Tang Ying [*sic*] to the palace, described by Tai Yen Ko . . . Price: Mex. \$950." A long inscription, not entirely readable in the photo but containing the "signature" of Tang Yin and a dedication to some high official, is written in the upper left of the painting; it is obviously a later interpolation.
11. Yu Huai, quoted in Howard Levy, *A Feast of Mist and Flowers*, p. 37.
12. Anne Birrell, trans., *New Songs from a Jade Terrace*, pp. 12–13: "Since the sleeve is of a piece with a woman's dress, to describe a woman's sleeves and her arm suggests entrée to more intimate parts of her body."
13. Paul F. Rouzer, "Watching the Voyeurs," p. 20.
14. For a detailed, unromanticized account of the choosing and purchase of a concubine in early Qing Yangzhou, see the essay "The Jades of Yangzhou" by Zhang Dai (1597–1684), translated in David Pollard, *The Chinese Essay*, pp. 90–92.
15. Susan Mann, "Grooming a Daughter for Marriage," p. 224, n. 16, citing a book by Wang Shu-nu. A more recent and detailed account by Mann is in her *Precious Records*, pp. 125–42.
16. Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers*, pp. 22, 255. Ko's section on "The Floating World of Courtesans and Singing Girls," pp. 252–56, is a good account of the changing position of these women, with illuminating comparisons with French courtesans and Japanese *tayū*.
17. Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers*, p. 342, n. 11. On this issue, see also Ropp, "Ambiguous Images of Courtesan Culture in Late Imperial China," pp. 19–20.
18. Mann, *Precious Records*, p. 122.
19. For another good account of this development, see Kang-i Sun Chang, "Ming-Qing Women Poets and the Notions of 'Talent' and 'Morality,'" especially pp. 253–54.
20. Keith McMahon, "Eroticism in Late Ming, Early Qing Fiction," p. 223.
21. The story is "The Painted Wall," from Pu Songling's *Liaozhai Zhiyi*; see Judith Zeitlin, *Historian of the Strange*, pp. 216–17.
22. Wai-ye Li, "The Late Ming Courtesan," pp. 49–50.
23. Some of the references and arguments of this section were presented earlier in Cahill, "Where Did the Nymph Hang?"
24. Several stories of these kinds appear in Feng Menglong's *Qingshi* [History of Qing], late Ming, in the section titled *hua huan* or "Illusions in Painting."
25. See n. 17 above. Instances of *meiren* portraits and paintings that figure in literary works are discussed in Judith Zeitlin, "Making the Invisible Visible," and "The Life and Death of the Image." The *locus classicus* for this theme is of course *Mudan Ting* (The Peony Pavilion); for a discussion of the role of the portrait there, see Tina Lu, *Persons, Roles, and Minds*, pp. 28–62. Zeitlin, discussing in both articles this "slippage" between portraits and generic pic-

- tures of beauties, cites a passage in chap. 63 of *Jin Ping Mei* in which a posthumous portrait of Li Ping'er is praised as a "beautiful woman picture." This, too, is a literary device, a way for characters in the novel to extol Li Ping'er's beauty.
26. Examples of this practice are discussed in James Cahill, *The Compelling Image*, chap. 4, "Ch'en Hung-shou: Portraits of Real People and Others."
 27. Li Dou, *Yangzhou Huafang Lu*, pp. 2, 13b.
 28. See n. 17 above; a number of them are reproduced also in Zeitlin, "Making the Invisible Visible" and "The Life and Death of the Image." For other *meiren* hanging scrolls represented in woodblock illustrations, see *Guben Xiaoshuo Banhua Tulu*, vol. 8, fig. 485, from a 1621 edition of *Zhaoyang Qushi* [The Lascivious History of Han Empress Feiyan], and vol. 10, fig. 664, from *Qishi'er Chao Renwu Yanyi*, published about the end of the Ming.
 29. Cahill, "Where Did the Nymph Hang?" fig. 1.
 30. Ellen J. Laing, "Erotic Themes and Romantic Heroines Depicted by Ch'iu Ying." The painting is a handscroll by Qiu Ying in the National Palace Museum, Taipei.
 31. Translation by Robert H. van Gulik, *Chinese Pictorial Art as Viewed by the Connoisseur*, pp. 4–6.
 32. Cao Xueqin (ca. 1717–63), *Honglou Meng*, translated by David Hawkes as *The Story of the Stone*. I am grateful to Charles Mason and Andrea Goldman for bringing these mentions of paintings in *Honglou Meng* to my attention. For the passages discussed here, see vol. 1, p. 127 of the Hawkes trans. (Qin Shi), vol. 1, p. 377 (Cousin Chen), vol. 2, p. 318 (Baoyu), and vol. 2, p. 504 (Grandmother Jia).
 33. Hawkes, trans., *The Story of the Stone*, vol. 1, pp. 127–50.
 34. For this well-known passage in Guo Xi's essay, see Susan Bush and Hsio-yen Shih, eds., *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*, pp. 150–51. A brief discussion of this and other capacities of landscape painting is in James Cahill, *Three Alternative Histories of Chinese Painting*, pp. 63–66, "The Functions of Early Landscape Painting."
 35. Hawkes, trans., *The Story of the Stone*, vol. 2, p. 292.
 36. Hawkes, trans., *The Story of the Stone*, vol. 1, p. 377. It is worth noting, in view of the emphasis of some recent *Honglou Meng* commentators on Baoyu's "bisexuality," that his response to this painting—and, we can assume, to the one hanging in his own bedroom—is distinctively male. See Louise P. Edwards, *Men and Women in Qing China*, pp. 33–49, esp. p. 39, where Edwards cites evidence that "the decor [of Baoyu's bedroom] is feminine and the feel is feminine."
 37. How the same figure would look if executed in traditional Chinese brushline and style, with a loss of the Metropolitan Museum picture's illusionism but, by traditional Chinese criteria, a corresponding gain in quality, can be seen in a version by Kang Tao, identified there as the immortal Magu; see *Tumu*, vol. 12, hu 7–0545 (collection of Duo Yun Xuan, Shanghai). More or less the same figure was painted several times by Huang Shen; see, for one, *Tumu*, vol. 16, ji 1–210, also identified as Magu (collection of Jilin Provincial Museum).
 38. Male sojourning along with the problems it raised for wives and families left behind, a phenomenon especially widespread in the late Ming–early Qing period, is discussed by Susan Mann in her essay "Women, Families, and Gender Relations," pp. 456–63.
 39. Paul S. Ropp, "Love, Literacy, and Laments," p. 119.
 40. The painting in its present state shows evidence of having been cut down and worked over: a round window in upper right, seen in the complete version, has been expunged, and traces of the removal of parts of furniture, etc., are visible, especially on the left margin. I am grateful to Robert Mowry for confirming and adding to my own observations on the state of the painting.
 41. It was published in *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift* 1 (1912): 58, with a partial translation of the inscriptions on p. 64. It was at that time owned by the dealer Mme. Langweil. Its present ownership is unknown to me.

42. The published article is Robert Maeda, "The Portrait of a Woman of the Late Ming–Early Ch'ing Period: Madame Ho-tung." I should say in defense of Maeda that at the time he wrote it, I was as fooled by the deception as he was.
43. A study of this group is Cahill, "A Group of Anonymous Northern Figure Paintings from the Qianlong Period."
44. Late in the preparation of this book I learned, through the kindness of Cary Y. Liu, Curator of Asian Art at the Princeton University Art Museum, that this painting is one of a pair. The other represents a woman having her hair done by a maid in a garden, while gazing at a cat and a rabbit. This second painting is inscribed with a poem, but with no indication of author or artist. The sexual symbolism of peonies in full bloom is noted by Stephen H. West and Wilt Idema in their translation of Wang Shifu, *The Moon and The Zither: The Story of the Western Wing*, p. 143: "the red peony has especially come to symbolize the vagina in full flush of engorgement."
45. Inscriptions on some figure paintings by Chen Hongshou are unusual in naming the assistants who added coloring and filled in designs; see Cahill, *The Painter's Practice*, pp. 109–10. We can assume a similar, but unacknowledged, use of assistants for these tasks in much other meticulous-style figure painting.
46. Several partial copies of this work exist, all on paper, all less successful because they leave out crucial elements of the pictorial complex, so that there can be no question about priority. A copy by Kang Tao dated 1746 is in Christie's New York auction, March 18, 1997, no. 112; also Duo Yun Xuan, Shanghai, November 23, 1997, no. 912. Another by Luo Ping dated 1781 is in the Lin Po-shou collection, Taipei; see *Lanqian Shanguan Shuhua* (Tokyo: Nigen-sha, 1976), no. 29; also *Junfang Pu*, p. 75. These could be legitimate copies by the later artists; Luo Ping has appropriated the image for an imaginary portrait of the fifth-century courtesan Su Xiaoxiao. A relatively close copy, lacking only the rabbits, was offered at auction by Sotheby's London, May 13, 1988, no. 106. None of these contains the full thematic program that conveys the moving message in the original.
47. Lady Murasaki, *The Tale of Genji*, pt. 1, chap. 6.
48. Another is the work by Hua Xu; see chapter 2, n. 6.
49. The gesture can be seen in two works by Qiu Ying: the *Nymph of the Luo River* handscroll that is the main subject of Ellen Laing's article "Erotic Themes and Romantic Heroines," and the hanging scroll in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts in which the beauty gazes out over a river from an upstairs room (see Osvald Sirén, *Chinese Painting*, vol. 6, pl. 240).
50. The full title is *China monumentis qua sacris qua profanis, nec non variis naturae & artis spectaculis, aliarumque rerum memorabilium argumentis illustrata*. Kircher writes that the picture is a copy from a Chinese painting sent to him by the Jesuits, but it is hard to imagine any close Chinese original for it. It is one of a pair. In the other, the woman holds a bird on a perch; a misunderstood *qin* (zither) is on the table beside her, a small sculpture of a Buddha hangs on the wall, and a tall vase holding flowering branches is decorated with designs that appear to be based more on Japanese than on Chinese models.
51. See Cahill, "Where Did the Nymph Hang?" figs. 3 and 4.
52. Another *meiren* painting in which the woman is reading a book of boudoir poetry is in the Freer Gallery of Art, reg. no. 19.155, unpublished; the poems in the book have been identified by Stephen Allee of the gallery's curatorial staff.
53. Rouzer, "Watching the Voyeurs," p. 19.
54. Cahill, "The Emperor's Erotica," fig. 22.
55. For example, by Wang Ping, *Aching for Beauty*, pp. 119–23 and *passim*.
56. Annette Kuhn, *The Power of the Image*, p. 30.
57. My facetious account of the event implies no criticism of the then-curator, Stephen Little, to whom I am indebted for bringing the work to my attention.

58. Another painting of a very similar subject has appeared more recently in the Bertholet collection, so close in style and corresponding in so many features that we can see it as a product of the same studio, possibly the same artist. Here the woman sits on a bamboo bench beside a large bronze bathtub, holding her hands within the transparent robe, about to take it off and enter the bath but pausing for a contemplative moment. See *Le Palais du printemps*, pp. 196–97.
59. Derk Bodde, *Chinese Thought, Society, and Science*, p. 281.
60. Mark Elvin, “Tales of Shen and Xin,” p. 213.
61. Robert van Gulik, *Erotic Colour Prints*, vol. 1 of the reprint, p. 163. In his preface to the same book (p. ii), van Gulik acknowledges that “Chinese painters did, when necessary, draw from the living model.”
62. On these fabrications, see Cahill, “Judge Dee and the Vanishing Ming Erotic Colour Prints.”
63. John Hay, “The Body Invisible in Chinese Art?”
64. Henry Charles Sirr, *China and the Chinese: Their Religion, Character, Customs, and Manufactures: The Evils Arising from the Opium Trade: with a Glance at Our Religious, Moral, Political, and Commercial Intercourse with the Country* (London: W. S. Orr & Co., 1849; repr. Taipei: Southern Materials Center, 1977), vol. 1, pp. 324–25, and vol. 2, p. 43. I am grateful to Charles Mason for bringing this reference to my attention.
65. Li Yu, *The Carnal Prayer Mat*, p. 45.
66. McMahon, *Misers, Shrews, and Polygamists*, p. 143. The story is *Tao Hua Ying*.
67. I know very well the response this statement will arouse among enthusiasts for nineteenth-century *meiren hua* and could write the riposte myself, even while disagreeing with it. There are, I will quickly grant, some exceptions, works of high quality and interest from this late period. I believe nonetheless that the appraisal made here is basically correct.
68. See *Qingdai Gongting A*, pls. 135–51, for a series of court paintings, ranging in date from late Qianlong through the nineteenth century, that will support this judgment.

Conclusion

1. For a fuller presentation of this argument, see on my Web site, jamescahill.info, CLP 31, a discussant paper I presented at the symposium “Visual Dimensions of Chinese Culture” held at the Institute for Advanced Studies, Princeton, New Jersey, March 26, 1999. My remarks were not intended as specific criticisms of the two paper-givers in that session, both excellent scholars, but as general observations.
2. Evidence for this unhealthy trend is given, and an argument against it advanced, in my paper “Visual, Verbal, and Global (?): Some Observations on Chinese Painting Studies,” delivered at a University of Maryland symposium “Chinese Painting Studies in Postwar America” in November 2005, available on my Web site, jamescahill.info, as CLP 176. Also to the point, for those who wish to read more on these issues, is CLP 178, my concluding talk in the April 2007 Berkeley symposium “Returning to the Shore.”

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