

Taoist, Buddhist, and Confucian artistic expression in the Tang Dynasty: The case of *The Wangchuan River Hanging Scroll* by Wang Wei (699-759)

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Resumen. Wang Wei es el mejor ejemplo paradigmático del sincretismo artístico religioso que caracteriza a la dinastía Tang. Durante esta dinastía se produce una síntesis de tres religiones, taoísmo, confucianismo y budismo, en la que se intercambian y mezclan elementos artísticos con expresiones doctrinales. Esta nueva síntesis, que da origen a la expresión china *San jiao he yi* 三教合一 (“tres enseñanzas hacen una”), creó un valioso conjunto de manifestaciones artísticas que toman forma en las obras de Wang Wei. En este artículo analizamos un rollo vertical de Wang Wei que forma parte del patrimonio inventariado en la Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Es un paisaje titulado “la villa junto al río Wang”, y retrata una escena en un jardín chino por excelencia. Es un raro ejemplo de rollo vertical, en el que aparecen 24 sellos antiguos, verificados uno a uno a partir de diferentes fuentes. Cuatro pertenecen al canciller Jia Sidao (s. XIII), incluido el famoso sello Chang, y ocho al catálogo de sellos de los emperadores Qianlong y Jiaqing (siglo XVIII y principios del XIX). Tres no han sido identificados y uno está muy borroso. El contenido de este rollo aparece citado en la lista de 126 pinturas atribuidas a Wang Wei en el catálogo Xuanhe patrocinado por el emperador Song Huizong en el año 1120. En el siglo XXI aparece como un homenaje secular, “obra impresionante de Wang Wei”, conservada en la Universidad Complutense de Madrid. **Palabras clave:** Wang Wei rollo; Wangchuan Villa; Wang Río; Mo Jie; Dinastía Tang paisaje; experiencia Shanshui; experiencia paisaje taoísta; experiencia paisaje budista; experiencia paisaje confuciano.

[es] La expresión artística taoísta, budista y confuciana en la dinastía Tang: El caso del rollo vertical del río Wangchuan de Wang Wei (699-759)

Abstract. Wang Wei is the best paradigmatic exemplar of the religious artistic syncretism that characterizes the Tang dynasty. During this dynasty there is a synthesis of three religions, Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism, in which elements of artistic and doctrinal expression are exchanged and mixed. This new synthesis, that gives birth to the Chinese expression *San jiao he yi* 三教合一 («Three teachings make one»), created a valuable set of artistic expressions that take shape in Wang Wei's work. In this article we analyze a hanging scroll that belongs to the patrimonial inventory of the Complutense University of Madrid. It is a landscape of the Wang Chuan Villa and River, and portrays a scene in a quintessential Chinese garden. It is a very rare example of vertical scroll that includes 24 ancient seals, checked one by one from different sources. Four of them may be attributed to Jia Sidao (13th century), including the famous *Chang seal*, and eight belong to the catalog of the Qianlong and Jiaqing emperors (18th and early 19th centuries). Three are unidentified and one blurred. Among the 126 paintings attributed to Wang Wei in the Xuanhe catalogue sponsored by the emperor Song Huizong and published in 1120 appears mentioned the content of this scroll. In the 21st century the scroll appears as a secular tribute, an “impressive work of Wang Wei”, preserved in the Complutense University of Madrid.

Keywords: Wang Wei hanging scroll; Wangchuan Villa; Wangchuan River; Mo Jie; Tang dynasty landscape; Shanshui experience; Taoist landscape experience; Buddhist landscape experience; Confucian landscape experience; Jia Sidao; Qianlong Emperor.

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摘要: 王维是唐代宗教题材绘画艺术的杰出代表, 宗教题材艺术成果的大量涌现是唐代绘画艺术的一个重要特点。唐代社会氛围开放, 文化间交流与互鉴频繁, 其中大量的艺术思想和审美取向来源于儒、释、道等传统文化, 在王维的作品中这种不同文化相互交融的特点十分明显。在本篇研究中, 我们从马德里康普顿斯大学现存的一幅中国画轴展开。它是一幅表现山川、河流及中式建筑的风景画, 描绘了一个典型中国式的场景。这是一幅留存至今且十分珍贵的中国竖版卷轴。画轴上包含了24个古代印章图案, 其中4个印章图案属于南宋时期的宰相贾似道(13世纪), 值得注意的是一个长方形的印章比较罕见。8个来自清代乾隆和嘉庆皇帝时期(18世纪和19世纪初)的印章图案。遗憾的是, 4个印章图案目前还无法辨认, 暂不得知是出自哪个历史人物之手。在由宋徽宗资助并于1120年出版的《宣和画谱》中, 收入了126幅王维的优秀作品, 这幅由马德里康普顿斯大学收藏的卷轴也在其中被提到。

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1. Introduction

The ground zero of this article is as follows: in the patrimonial inventory of the Complutense University of Madrid there is a large Chinese hanging scroll, in which (in the peculiar scribe's script style, Lishu, 隸書) it is strongly stated, in the upper left corner (figure 1), succinctly, "impressive work of Wang Wei".

The motif is outstanding because this scroll delineates a landscape scene portrayed in a quintessential Chinese garden, notorious since the year 748. The original version does not currently exist because it was probably destroyed during the Huichang persecution of Buddhism (841 to 845), but recreations were sponsored by emperors, ministers, high ranking mandarins, also generals as well as cultural and economic elites. It became mythic this iconography among connoisseurs, known that masterpiece by reputation among the few who were aware³. Scarce are the replicas that have survived and are in museums or private collections in the 21st century; almost all in the handscroll format, that is horizontal, and entails that are manually unrolled from right to left and must be watched slowly, stop-motion. They range from five to ten meters in length.

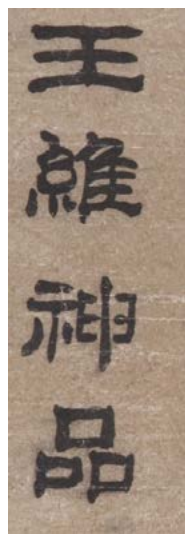


Figure 1. Inscription: "Impressive work of Wang Wei"

In Korea this painter, this landscape, and its recreations by Korean painters, created a state of artistic opinion century after century among cultural elites. Eun-joo Jeong⁴, at the Academy of Korean Studies did the follow up on authors and scrolls (Chinese or Korean) that are copies of or tributes to Wang Wei and his cottage.

The scroll explored in this article (Figure 2, landscape attributed to Wang Wei) is vertical, and once it

is hanged on, it must be unrolled with great care, the lower end strap with onyx or wooden weights on each side. It must be observed calmly a) from the right lower border of the painting (access), b) (levitation) that is, rising from bottom to top of the steep distance that is the highest summit of the mountain, (quite often a symbol of the emperor and Wang Wei was a High Mandarin in the court), c) the depth of the distance which can be captured by following the bed of the river to the right of the scroll, and d) the level distance that can be seen by the left of the scroll where the buildings peek away.

The visual appeal emerges if both eyes are ready to pursue details of brushstrokes expressiveness (one by one, each one may be identified centuries afterwards), and get a bottom-up overview, from the banks of the river to the steep mountains that fade to air, that is, material energy, Qi, 氣 as well as the experience of emptiness.



Figure 2. The CUC 6071 hanging scroll "Impressive work of Wang Wei"

³ Calvin, L. & Brush-Walmsley, D. (1968). *Wang Wei: painter and poet*. Tuttle.

⁴ Jeong, E. (2019). Wang Wei's Original "Wang Chuan tu" and Its Re-creation. *Korean journal of art history*, 302 (06), 199-236. <http://dx.doi.org/10.31065/ahak.302.302.201906.008>

Over time, the appearance of Chinese scrolls changes. Unpainted areas become the color of coffee with milk. The more famous and revered, the more bruised and manipulated. Pundits and collectors leave their recognition mark on seals that redden with cinnabar comments in black ink. Motionless does not remain if considered as an exceptional and valuable work. Visually it flows at the mercy of insistent red vivid and long-lasting marks. Fans talk about letting themselves be seen centuries later⁵.

In Western art history these Chinese imprints come to be what is known as traceability or provenance. In this case the golden silk mounting panel, the seals of two prominent collectors (two Chinese emperors), two relevant inscriptions (that of a chancellor, the other a Buddhist pseudonym), as well as twenty-two connoisseurs accrued through multiple changes of ownership, transform the present hanging scroll into a composite object.

These criteria have been used by McCausland⁶ and his 16 contributors⁷ to determine to what extent the Admonitions scroll that they scrutinized was a masterpiece from the Tang dynasty, a copy from the Song dynasty or a parody that combines early painting styles. Other (rather heartwarming) classification categories were highlighted by Zhu Jingxuan (朱景玄, 806~40): “the divine”, “the marvelous”, “the competent”, and “the untrammelled”⁸ are ethereal.

This is a brief list of painters who considered themselves part-time disciples of Wang Wei at specific moments in their life: Zhu Jingxuan (朱景玄, 806~840) Guo Zhongshu (郭忠恕, 929~977), Li Gonglin (公麟, 1049-1106), Huizong (徽宗, 1082-1135), Sang Qi (商琦, 1264-1324), Tang Di (唐棣, 1296 ~ 1364), Zhao Mengfu (趙孟頫, 1254 ~ 1322), Wang Meng (王蒙, 1308 ~ 1385), Shen Zhou (沈周, 1427~1509), Weng Zhengming (明代文徵明, 1470~1599), Qiu Ying (仇英, 1494-1552), Song Xu (宋旭, 1525 ~1606), Don Qichang (董其昌, 1555-1636), Wang Shimin (1592-1680), Chen Hongshou (仇英, 1599~1652), Wang Jian (王鑾, 1598-1677), Wang Yuanqi (王原祁, 1642~1715), Huang Yi (黃易, 1744-1802) and Su Renshan (蘇仁山, 1814-1849). They paid tribute to him, the influencer that marked them. Maybe one of them is the unknown artist who took care of reproducing or recreating what is now the stimulus to our query in this article.

The appearance in Spain of a landscape scroll attributed to Wang Wei may cause amazement, and this inquest may be a scoop. Wang Wei's signature or seal is missing.

2. Wang Wei: Confucian Mandarin or Buddhist hermit?

Wang Wei (王微, 415~453) and Wang Wei (王維, 699~759 or 701~761, depending on the source) are both scholars and artists, acclaimed by the landscapes they painted. In Chinese the ideograms are different, although they shared the same form in Pinyin.

The first Wang Wei wrote a book, that may be translated as *Notes on Painting* (Xu hua) and his approach has been labeled as “Landscape Daoism”⁹. He advocated transcendence: “to look at the autumn clouds makes the soul soar as a bird, to feel the wind of spring makes the thoughts go far and wide”¹⁰. At the precise moment each brushstroke is drawn it looks genuine, authentic.

The focus of this article is on the second Wang Wei (王維), well known in Western libraries and bookshops because a large proportion of his 400 accredited poems have been translated and annotated in Western Languages.

His most brilliant poem, Deer's Park, “鹿柴, Lu Zhai” is a quatrain of five ideograms per verse included in the Wang River poems, (also translated as Wheel-Rim River, or Wheel River), annotated and published by Eliot Weinberger¹¹ with an epilogue by Octavio Paz. There are 21 renditions in English, 9 in French, 4 in German and 3 in Spanish. Those who see through Buddhist glasses bring a Zen background to the fore in their analysis and suggestions. Those who maintain a Taoist outlook emphasize attunement with nature as they hear the sunset. “By eliminating the individual controlling mind of the poet, the experience becomes universal and immediate to the reader”¹², through the translator, even if it is from the 8th century classic Chinese to contemporary Chinese.

Wang Wei is a genuine representative of the artistic syncretism that took place during the Tang dynasty. Taoism and Confucianism were born in China around the fifth century B.C.E., while Buddhism arrived in China via the Silk Road around the first century, although its consolidation took place around the seventh century. During the Tang dynasty a synthesis of the three religions took place, in which artistic influences were mixed and ideological differences were dissolved. This new synthesis gives birth to the Chinese expression *San jiao he yi* 三教合一 (“Three teachings make one”). Taoist art is part of the education of Confucian literati, and the Confucian classics are the subject of study for young Taoists. On the other hand, the cultural rise of Buddhism during the Tang dynasty will be the amalgam of the unification

⁵ Han, B.G. (2017): *Shanzhai: deconstruction in Chinese*, (untimely meditations). MIT Press.

⁶ McCausland, S. (2003b). *First masterpiece of Chinese paintings: the admonitions scroll*. London: British Museum.

⁷ McCausland, S. (2003a). *Gu Kaichi and the admonitions scroll*. London: British Museum and Percival David Foundation.

⁸ Wong, A.Y. (2009). What is a 'Masterpiece? Historiographical Anxieties and Classifications of Chinese Painting in the Modern Period, in J. Jiu, *Writing Modern Chinese Art: Historiographical Explorations*, (pp. 95-105). University of Washington Press, p. 104.

⁹ Bush, S. (2004) *The Essay on painting by Wang Wei (415-453) in context*, in Zong-qi Cai, *Chinese Aesthetics: The Ordering of Literature, the Arts, and the Universe in the Six Dynasties*, (pp. 60-80). University of Hawaii Press, p. 60.

¹⁰ Sirén, O. (2005). *The Chinese on the art of painting: texts by the painter-critics, from the Han through the Ch'ing Dynasties*. Dover, p. 17.

¹¹ Weinberger, E. & Paz, O. (1987). 19 ways of looking at Wang Wei (how a Chinese poem is translated). Moyer Bell.

¹² Weinberger, E. & Paz, O. *19 ways*, 6.

of the three artistic and cultural traditions. In fact, Emperor Xuanzong (685-762), a contemporary of Wang Wei, is the author of several classical commentaries on Buddhist, Taoist and Confucian works. The sometimes random and sometimes confusing interactions of the three traditions end up generating a valuable set of artistic expressions that take shape in Tang painting and poetry in general, and in Wang Wei's work in particular¹³.

Son of a Mandarin with high office in the court and with 11 imperial ministers among his ancestors, Wang Wei obtained the highest rank in the exams for the imperial civil service when he was 21 years old. Despite occupying a large number of bureaucratic positions during his life, he always alternated these stages with others of spiritual retreat or mourning for deceased relatives, particularly for his mother, who initiated him in the practice of Buddhism. His expertise in music was conspicuous, and so he was appointed assistant director of musicians. He played several instruments such as guzheng and quqin (both variations of zither), pipa (lute), and xun (flute). His knowledge of calligraphy and painting was also great, and it is this proficiency that is the subject of this article.

He learned drawing in his childhood and showed good hands with portraits during his adolescence and then he portrayed some Buddhists of eminence to please, among others, his mother¹⁴. At the age of 40 Wang Wei bought the manor of the poet Song Zhiwen (宋之问, 656-712) whose tragic vital circumstances ended up in his suicide¹⁵. Here is a sample of his verses: "Last night's rains illuminate blue-green peaks/ and gobble up red gullies the cloudless rainbow". They were probably written there. "Since it was not far from the capital, the neighborhood consisted of the villas of many influential people"¹⁶. This is what is illustrated in this CUC 6071 scroll.

It is not by chance that, even in the 21st century, hot and humid are the summers, with frequent, sudden thunderstorms. Temperatures in July ranges from 22C to 32C in July, 5C average temperature in January. The rest of the year is mostly dry days. In that scenario he considered himself a recluse or a hermit and, with that purpose, he put miles between himself and the hectic life in the court (promotions and dismissals) or military rebellions (with deposed or triumphant emperors). His life was at risk as a direct or indirect consequence of his status and that of his brother: Chief Executive Officers Mandarin. This proliferous and delightful enclosure was the antidote, and this fact is noteworthy for in the purpose of this article. "The poet-painter Wang Wei (677-759), in the eyes of later scholarly art critics exemplified the ideal

of a gentleman-scholar-painter, who painted solely for the nourishment of his own spirit and who, by preserving, socially, a strict amateur standing produced works that were all the more desirable to the collectors"¹⁷.

Posthumously, Wang Wei was recognized as the *Great Pioneer* of the highly valued Southern School that included mainly literati or scholars: their hobby was evolving into landscape painting. They were high level mandarins who, in their leisure time, found relief from social demands via painting and calligraphy. "Literati painting is an art of personal expression: one paints without restraint, frankly and directly conveying one's feelings and sense of self on the painting surface"¹⁸. They painted the way they wrote, entertaining themselves with monochrome ink brushstrokes and their target was yoking creativity and entertainment. They used to know each other, and keep track of each other works because they used to play the role of hosts and guests, respectively, in their gardens and villas. They were an elite circle of influencers. Their education emphasized self-development, discipline, and virtue¹⁹.

Another prolific group existed. They were trained in the guild system those of the Northern school, and the learned (in a teacher and student credence) common subjects and techniques. They used to work as full-time artisans in workshops, specialized in copying shared models as well as composition and draftsmanship. They were skillful in brush techniques and experienced in the use of color, and craft production was one of their aptitudes²⁰.

It is a traditional distinction (during the Tang dynasty) which gave rise to misunderstandings when it was retaken centuries later by the painter and calligrapher Don Qichang (董其昌, 1555-1636) from Shanghai (dynasty Ming). It is misleading because it emerges from the world of Zen Buddhism that distinguishes exaggeratedly between gradual (Northern) and sudden awakening (Southern school). Wang Wei was a Zen practitioner of the Northern Zen lineage but is mentioned as the helmsman of the Southern school of landscape painters. Zen practitioners and painting practitioners do not overlap.

In 1120 it was compiled the Xuanhe Painting Catalogue sponsored by Huizong (徽宗, 1082-1135), namely the last emperor of the Song dynasty. An annotated translation has been made by McNair²¹. It included 6,396 scrolls divided into ten categories and organized and safe throughout the imperial chambers

¹³ González España, Pilar, "(2014) Sincretismo filosófico en la obra de Wang Wei", [Philosophical Syncretism in Wang Wei works], *Dialógica* 8, pp. 22-43.

¹⁴ Calvin, L. & Brush-Walmsley, D. *Wang Wei*.

¹⁵ Tanaka, A. (2012). A study of the classical landscape at the Wang River Villa of Wang Wei, *Intercultural understanding*, 2, 53-57.

¹⁶ Tanaka, A. A study of the classical landscape, 54.

¹⁷ Wen, F. (1962a) The problem of forgeries in Chinese painting, 1/2. *Artibus Asiae*, 25, 95-119, 104.

¹⁸ Wang, Y. (2000). Looking at Chinese painting: a comprehensive guide to the philosophy, technique, and history of Chinese painting. Nighensa, 151.

¹⁹ Sirén, O. The Chinese on the art of painting.

²⁰ Foong, P. (2015). The efficacious landscape: on the authorities of painting at the Northern Song Court. Harvard University.

²¹ McNair, A. (2019). Xuanhe catalogue of paintings: an annotated translation. Ithaca, NY. East Asia Program, Cornell University.

and warehouses. The name *Wang Wei* is quoted thirteen times, most often on a comparative basis.

The existence of a scroll devoted to the Wang River is mentioned, incidentally, in page 182. In page 186 two scrolls in the collection of Li Gonglin (1049-1106) are mentioned as copies and the titles have nothing to do with CUC6071. A brief biography appears in pages 226 to 228, and there 126 paintings of Wang Wei are listed, 53 landscapes and 73 humans, birds, or floral forms. Only 3 are endorsed as being copies.

It is particularly remarkable that McNair in his list describes one scroll as “Mountain Villa”, and another as “Mountain Dwelling”²². In the same vein, amongst the landscapes Calvin and Brush Walmsley (1968) bring out two scrolls, one they translate as “Landscape View of Wang Ch’uan and Chuang Villa” and the other “Wang Ch’uan scroll”²³. The subject of the present scroll CUC 6071 may be assigned to “Landscape View of Wang Ch’uan and Chuang Villa” because it includes the river and the villa. The translation *Mountain Dwelling* may be also appropriate because from the river to the peaks what appears is the villa and other buildings up the mountain, on the left side of the scroll.

After reviewing the chronicles of mandarins and literati in official visit from the 9th to the 11th century, Sullivan²⁴ summarizes what was seen physically or graphically and the type of activities of the cultivated persons that have been brought in. “The waters of the Wang circled round below the house. On the state, with its bamboo-covered islets and flowered banks, his friends might wander along paths, or drift up and down in boats, play the lute and compose poems, and whistle all the long”²⁵. What you see in this CUC 6071 scroll highlights the physical and spiritual features of the scene along with its *raison d’être* in Wang Wei’s set of priorities.

From the Korean perspective, Jeong²⁶ deals with the riverfront villa as it can be seen from her lists in Tables 1 and 2, which provide an overview of their location. Buckley & Bickford²⁷ and Buckley²⁸ do not include a detailed list but allude to 126 paintings by Wang Wei in their catalogue.

“Huizong himself looked on the making of copies as a positive act. He obtained a painting, ancient or modern, he would make a close copy, thus accumulating reproductions. Consequently, his home had many famous paintings, and was lacking nothing”.

This phrase comes from the technical introduction written by Li Gonglin (李公麟, 1049-1106) to the catalogue²⁹.

In a similar mood the appraisal of the emeritus professor of Art History at Yale University, Barnhart points out that “his own government collection was the largest ever formed. Huizong himself best demonstrated the utility of his insistence on mastering the past. His copies of earlier figure paintings from his collection are the very measure of this practice”³⁰.

To some extent, those who plagiarize know more about the original painting, in particular, and its author, than the experts. The latter are encouraged by rivalry, as in a duel: there is no doubt about their competence, their talent in know-how and know what. Both intimate days or weeks with the same master because they try to convince an expectant and receptive audience. Etymologically in Chinese, *zhēn jì* (真跡) means *true footprint*, and in the contemporary use it is translated as *authentic, genuine*.

Sullivan suggested another perspective: “Wang Wei probably painted the Wang-ch’uan many times, for with its varied scenery, its hills and streams, lakeside pavilions, cottages, and bamboo groves, it was a world in miniature, able to furnish him with an inexhaustible supply of themes”³¹. Birch was far more accurate: “among all his works it was the painting of the Wang-ch’uan that filled his mind”³². What is described appears in this CUC 6071 scroll. “Of the twenty Wangchuan sites, thirteen include buildings or fenced enclosures and are the most characteristic and essential motifs of Wang’s painting”³³.

3. The Wangchuan Villa by the Wang River (Wheel River)

On the slopes of the Zhongnan Mountains (in which Taoist hermits and Buddhist monks have dwelt for centuries), and about 45 kilometers south of Xi’an, the imperial capital, there was the rambling country residence of Wang Wei, a mythical milestone, century after century, in Chinese, Korean and Japanese garden-themed paintings.

Three years mourning the death of the mother was in those days a standard practice among Buddhist practitioners and so, from 746 to 748, Wang Wei paid homage and built the Qingyuan Si, a temple with seven monks, “with good reputation” and trained, devoted to remembering her mother in their recita-

²² McNair, A. *Xuanhe catalogue of paintings*, 228.

²³ Calvin, L. & Brush-Walmsley, D. *Wang Wei*.

²⁴ Sullivan, M. (1980) *Chinese landscape painting, the Sui and Tang dynasties*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

²⁵ Sullivan, M. *Chinese landscape painting*, 59.

²⁶ Jeong, E. (2019). *Wang Wei’s Original “Wang Chuan tu” and Its Re-creation*. *Korean journal of art history*, 302 (06), 199-236. <http://dx.doi.org/10.31065/ahak.302.302.201906.008>

²⁷ Buckley E. & Bickford, M. (2006). *Emperor Huizong and Late Northern Song China: the politics of culture and the culture of politics*. Harvard University Asia Center.

²⁸ Buckley E., P. (2008). *Accumulating culture: the collections of emperor Huizong*. University of Washington Press.

²⁹ Buckley E., P. *Accumulating culture*, 273.

³⁰ Barnhart, R.M. (1997). The five dynasties (907-960) and the Song Period (960-1279), in Yang et al. *Three thousand years of Chinese Painting* (pp. 87-137). Yale University and Foreign Language Press, 123.

³¹ Sullivan, M. *Chinese landscape painting*, 60.

³² Birch, C. (1965). *Anthology of Chinese literature, from early times to the fourteenth century*. N.Y. Grove press, 235.

³³ Harrist, R.E. (1998). *Painting and private life in eleventh-century China: mountain villa by Li Gonglin*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 76-77.

tions³⁴. There he painted, in the walls, beloved scenic sites of the surroundings. It was a mural, known as Wangchan tu, in the tower depicting his mother's grave, and the prior handed a copy on a silky handscroll to the imperial counselor Li Xijun (李栖筠, 719~776).

The art critic *Zhu Jingxuan* (朱景玄, 806~840) reported that, in the West Pagoda precinct of Qianfu Si in Xi'an, he saw those sceneries on a screen³⁵. The painter and calligrapher Guo Zhongshu (郭忠恕, 929~977), as well as, a century later, the above mentioned, Li Gonglin, antiquarian and painter made also a duplicate.

Buddhism was considered a foreign religion by the emperor Wuzong (唐武宗, 814-846) and during the years 841 to 846 about 4.600 monasteries and 40.000 hermitages were confiscated (to pay war debts) and afterwards destroyed (Wong, 1999). Thus, the mural, the screen and the initial copies were no longer in sight. About 100 calligraphies and paintings of Wang Wei ended up in the hands of the general Chu Zhaofu (楚昭輔, 911~979) as a reward for services rendered. *Deers Park* is the title of the poem mentioned in section 2, and also the name of the place where he was buried, a few steps from the tomb of his mother.

In the absence of a wall that could accommodate a mural, handscrolls were better suited to depict "a specific section of landscape that unfolds itself before the eyes of the beholder. The range of landscape painting was thus decisively widened"³⁶. Horizontal scrolls are brought out only on special occasions, and are unrolled in small gatherings of like-minded colleagues. The paintings or the calligraphies are meant to be viewed in sections. Slowly opening, from right to left, with both hands, shared curiosity may be transformed into a visual journey where space and time overlap and, if beholders pay full attention to what they see, the cognitive and emotional outcome gives rise to what in the West is known as an epiphany. Aware of this flash were those literati decided to depict a copy or produce inspired variants to their liking. "There are 30 copies by later artists. The compositions provide a journey through a spectacular garden filled with sites designed to encourage quiet contemplation"³⁷.

Rarely it is mentioned that the Wangchuan Villa had another profile, it was an economically productive manor as it is highlighted by Wang Wei in his poem "a farmhouse on the Wei River: "in the slant of the sun on the countryside/ cattle and sheep trail home along the lane;/ and a rugged old man in a thatch door/ leans on a staff and thinks of his son, the

herd boy. /There are whirring pheasants, full wheatears, /silk-worms asleep, pared mulberry-leaves. / And the farmers, returning with hoes on their shoulders, / hail one another familiarly. / No wonder I long for the simple life/ and am sighing the old song, *Oh, to go Back Again*"³⁸. It is displayed in the lower left of Figure 2. "These sites ranged from large parks covering considerable acreage and dotted with pavilions, rockeries and ponds, to rustic retreats of one or two buildings set on small plots of land"³⁹.

For 21st century readers, accustomed to the multimedia, what has been depicted is an uncommon occurrence. Ten centuries ago, direct access to a museum quality painting was a glimpse into the other world. Wang Wei's scroll was a delicacy: it had magical powers.

3.1. Examples of handscrolls similar to that of *Wang Chuan Villa and River*

At the Art Institute of Chicago, Center for Art of East Asia, there are two handscrolls of the Villa. The first one is a version in color by an unknown artist, for its style and format dated between 1201-1250. The endorsing signature of Li Gonglin (mentioned above) is, after the Institute criteria, spurious: there is a century of difference. Wang's original mural has not been preserved, but there is a congruence between what he described in his 20 poems and what appears in the scroll (5.54 m long and 26 cm wide).

The second one is a black and white rubbing version, that is a hand scroll of 8.25 m long and 31.8 cm wide, by an unknown artist in 13th century, that simulates a bird flight visit from one to the other side of the river, illustrating small landscape corners of the taste of Wang Wei and his mother. At the beginning, the title and a literary prologue on the history of art, and at the end, lyrical poetry and comments. In other words, calligraphy. In the Art Museum of Princeton University there is a handscroll (9.34 m long, 30 cm wide) that is the printing, on paper, of a composition that is a reproduction by painter Guo Zhongshu (郭忠恕, 929-977), scholar and calligrapher in the court that, when he was a teenager, was tested face to face by the emperor and his aides: he had shown great potential and reliability. In 1613 such a replica was etched in stone by Shen Guohua 沈國華 and this printing was used by Wang Yuanqi (王原祁, 1642-1715) in 1617 to make his own version of the manor.

At the Freer Art Gallery in Washington (the National Museum of Asian Art) there is a handscroll (4.38 m long and 31 cm wide) that is a shortest version in color of the above-mentioned handscroll in the Art Museum of Princeton university. Traditionally attributed to Guo Zhongsu it has only drawings

³⁴ Jeong, E. (2019). Wang Wei's Original "Wang Chuan tu" and Its Re-creation. *Korean journal of art history*, 302 (06), 199-236, 203.

³⁵ Hung, W. (1997). The origins of Chinese painting (Paleolithic Period to Tang Dynasty), in Yang et al. *Three thousand years of Chinese Painting* (pp. 15-85). Yale University and Foreign Language Press.

³⁶ Cohn, W. (1951). *Chinese painting*. Phaidon, 52.

³⁷ Jeong, E. (2019). Wang Wei's Original "Wang Chuan tu" and Its Re-creation. *Korean journal of art history*, 302 (06), 199-236, 199.

³⁸ Bynner, W. (1981). *The Chinese translations*. N.Y. Farrar, Straus, Giroux.

³⁹ Harrist, R.E. (1998). *Painting and private life in eleventh-century China: mountain villa by Li Gonglin*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 46-47.

and names of the specific scenic features. At the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York there are two handscrolls that reproduce somehow Wang Wei's mural of his Wang Chuan Villa.

The first one (4.92 m long and 31 cm wide) was made by a 16th century unidentified artist, and done in the style of the above-mentioned Guo Zhongshu. However, the influence of the painter Wen Zhengming (1470-1559, 文徵明) is detected in the architectural forms depicted that are not those of 8th century. There are two pages and a half of comments. After the Metropolitan Museum criteria, it is an imaginary recreation.

The second one is the handscroll painted in 1711 by the above-mentioned Wang Yuanqi. It is 10.55 m. long and 36 cm wide. He makes clear that, using the 20 poems of Wang Wei, a) he composed the scroll but squeezing his own ideas, b) purposely he did not a precise duplicate because he is a literati and not a street painter, c) he worked on it during his leisure time, d) he did manage to tune in to the eloquent aims and mindset present in the brushstrokes of Wang Wei, that is, "painting in poetry and poetry in painting", e) and, by all means, he did practice the secret formula that connects breath with movement and movement with life and life with motion, because what is intended is "capturing the true composition of the universe". This is what appears in the Metropolitan Museum specs sheet on this scroll.

In his colophon the painter Huang Yi (黃易, 1744-1802) stressed that Wang Yuanqi "grasped the breath (qi) and the resonance (yun)" of his predecessors. Simply stated, he breathed in tune with them.

In the scroll, Wang Yuanqi mentions that he was decided to follow in Wang Wei's footsteps. Lacking a reliable reproduction at hand, he spent several years ruminating his options until he acquired a stone engraving (dated 1617) and obtained a printed version of the Wang Chuan Villa. He painted the landscape with his own ideas shining through. It's not a copy [xingsi], but a recreation. He was following the authentic footprint of his master. Han⁴⁰ outlines this process as a continuous creation.

It is not in the West but at the National Palace Museum of Taiwan it is exhibited a silky handscroll, of 4.90m and 29cm wide, that combines black ink and colors. Considering the quality of the brushstroke it was done by an unknown artist of the Ming (1368-1644) or the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), according to the script that guides follow.

3.2. Examples of hanging scrolls type of Wang Chuan Villa and River

Habits and customs make their survival viable. Hanging scrolls are, in many ways, the most intimate form of Chinese traditional painting; they are food for the soul where two or three friends come together and their heads grazing to appreciate the cinematic un-

folding of the composition as they hang out, one by one, attuned with those transitions conceived by the painter or calligrapher. A gathering of literati without antiques was a gathering without culture. Once the contemplative tasting session ends this type of scrolls vanish, usually placed in safe keeping, because the owner rolls it up carefully and it is preserved in an "ad hoc" sheath for months or years.

"Enjoying antiques" painted by Du Jin (杜堇, 1465~1509) is an illustrative example of such a hanging scroll at the National Palace Museum in Taipei. Another, at the Palace Museum in Beijing "Appreciating antiquities in the bamboo garden", is a leaf on silk by Qiu Ying (仇英, 1494~1552). For the cultivated elderly it is a pleasure to buy antiquities and learn about the vestiges of the cultural past, a kind of esoteric enjoyment and transmission.

Hanging scrolls are more fragile as weeks, if not months, may pass exposed, vertically, to the visitors' view. Body distance is required, and in one or two minutes the observer may get an overview if viewed, from the bottom up, to their chin level at least. The upstream perspective is at stake because the suspension loop is far away of their eyebrows, and by default, two or more meters above. And it is not a mystery that the upper part is called *heaven*, and *earth* the lower one. It is a kind of exoteric enjoyment and transmission.

"Most of the recreations are in the form of a handscroll, and there are very few old compositions in the form of hanging scrolls, and they appear to have been made after the Song Dynasty" remarks the Korean senior researcher Jeong⁴¹.

In fact, in her table 2, she identifies 28 handscrolls where the subject is the Wang Chuan Villa, his mother's favorite spots that were represented on the mural, and 3 hanging scrolls where the Villa, the Zhongnan mountains (終南山) and the river are depicted together, vertically and in harmony. It is the Chinese conception of landscape, that is, *shān shuǐ*, 山水, = mountain – water = aqueous mountain: both, face up, face down.

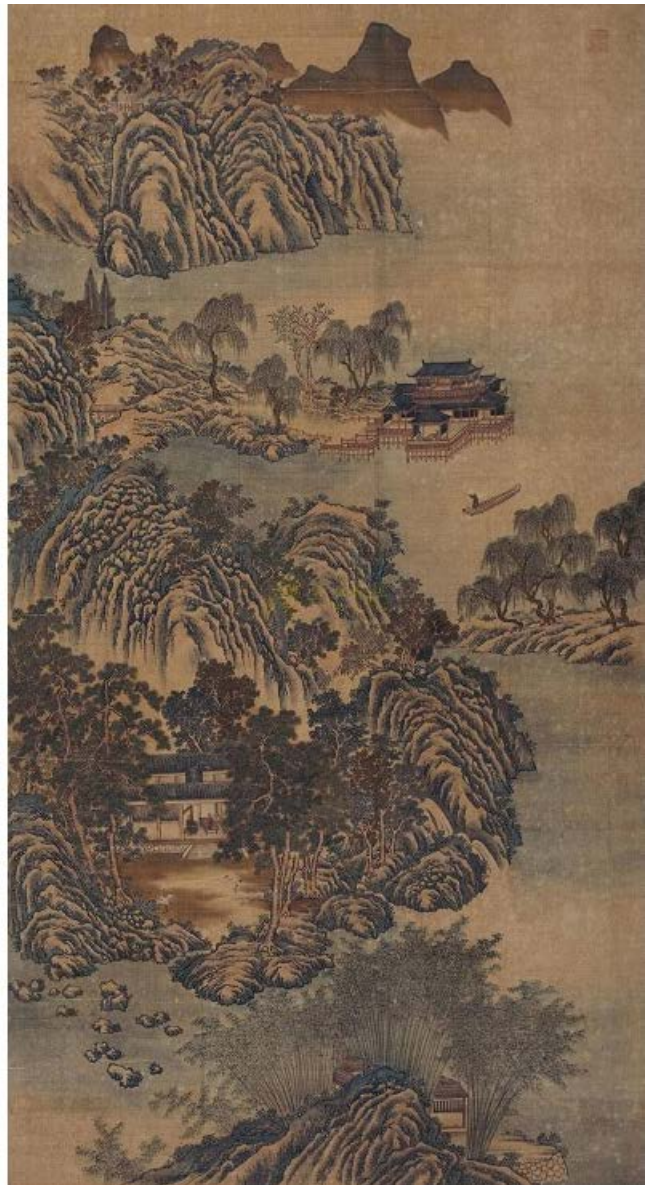
3.2.1. Hanging scrolls by Qiu Ying

Two hanging scrolls by Qiu Ying (1494-1552), equal size, 143x77cm in a private collection: the photos were obtained, fortuitously, by Jeong⁴² via the Chinese website www.baidu.com. These two landscapes (Figure 3) have disappeared there, substituted by other pictures with human figures and low resolution. There are structural similarities: in Figure 3a, the upward profiles of the mountains and the house as appears in the 10th century handscroll painting of Guo Zhongshu (910-977) rubbed and printed at the Art Museum in Princeton University. In what concerns Figure 3b there are similarities in the inlets and headlands along the river, that is in the level distance. These are polychromous scrolls.

⁴⁰ Han, B.G. (2017): *Shanzhai: deconstruction in Chinese*, (untimely meditations). MIT Press.

⁴¹ Jeong, E. (2019). *Wang Wei's Original*, 229.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 230.



Figures 3a and 3b. Qiu Ying scrolls Wang Chuan Villa, Qiu Ying, private collection

In figure 3a, in the lower part, the villa of Wang Wei and four fishermen sailing. Ascending in the scroll, four suburbia where there is water. The mountaintop is hinged as if they were cervical vertebrae. The suggestion is organic. In the lower part of figure 3b to the right a monk, in black, we may contemplate the waterway. On his left there is a hut, the inlet, and the manor house of Wang Wei. Faraway there is a fisherman that glides in front of a monastery at the edge of the water and on that peninsula two pagodas facing the peaks of mountains. Organic verticality.

From February to September 2020, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) programmed an exhibition devoted to Qiu Ying, but the rooms were temporarily closed because of the Covid. Nevertheless, the catalog was published⁴³, and a 54' video is available on their website. These two scrolls were conspicuously absent among the 45 pieces exhibited.

⁴³ Little, S. (2020). *Where the truth lies: the art of Qiu Ying*. Prestel.

Two other handscrolls are missed, apparently they are in a private collection.

3.2.2. *Wang Chuan in mists and clouds*

Landscapes were the preferred theme cultivated by Xiè Shichén, 謝時臣 (1487 – after 1567) in his trips and long stays. He was a prolific painter initially under the influence of Shen Zhou (1427-1509) This fact will be discussed in detail below because, in their continuous training progress, Wang Wei was the pioneer for both of them. The outcome was a hanging scroll entitled *Wang Chuan in mists and clouds* (often translated as *Rainy day in Wangchuan*). It is in the catalogue of the Ichikawa Beian Collection at the Tokyo National Museum.

In figure 4, the head of the observer and the bottom of the hanging scroll are at the same height, ready to fly with one's eyes into the far distance and, at the same time, to take in the view below from an external location. The perspective is, therefore, that

of a bird (in the classical terminology) or of a radio-controlled spy drone (in the 21st century jargon). That is, far different from the linear perspective that prevails in the Western history of art.

A fisherman with a net can be glimpsed in the river (bottom). Wang Wei and the poet Pei Di (each one contributed 20 poems included in the book *Wangchuan ji*) talking or watching, the waterfall at their feet, sitting both at the lookout, with an assistant at a safe distance, nearby two trees to the right. Emerging between the mist two pavilions of at least two stories. At the height of the signature and seal we can see three mountain peaks known as Zhongnan. There, during the second half of the 20th century and the first two decades of the 21st century, Taoist and Zen Buddhist hermits have taken up residence in huts abandoned by those who preceded them century after century. Interested readers can find at least three videos filmed by pilgrims who have followed in the footsteps of Bill Porter, pseudonym Red Pine, journalist specialized in Zen and Chinese Taoism.

Between July to September 2008 this scroll was exhibited along with other scrolls of the Ichikawa Beian Collection.



Figure 4: Wang Chuan in mists and clouds, Xie Shi Chen Tokyo National Museum

3.2.3. *Album leaf by Don Qichang*

In the Nelson Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City there is an album leaf painted by the aforementioned Don Qichang, in the manner of Wang Wei. As a part of his continuous training, he decided to practice landscapes painting following the strikes of the Old Masters during the 1621-1624. He was then 66 to 69 years old. It is an ink and color version on paper. The comment by Wen is just a reliable statement of facts: “the founding fathers of the landscape tradition are known only by paintings attributed to them rather than by authenticated works, or they are known through later copies”⁴⁴.

3.2.4. *“Snow over rivers and mountains”*

This scroll was painted in 1668 by the aforementioned Wang Shimmin at the age of 76. It may be watched at the National Palace Museum in Taipei. High mandarin himself, and grandson of a prime minister, in 1624 he was promoted, and, in the court, he managed to have in his hands two scrolls attributed to Wang Wei and, thus, he dared to paint his own version. Other painters had no such a privilege, as they had to get to know Wang Wei’s works through other channels.

Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting was an initiative of a Chinese publisher, Li Yu (李漁, 1610-1680), intended to provide examples with which students could practice on their own. The landscape painter Wang Gai (1677~1705) conceived sketches as learning tools that would make the whole process easier. It was published between 1679 and 1701 and, based in the Shanghai facsimile edition of 1887-1888, it was edited and translated, complete with nuances, in English⁴⁵ as well as in other languages, at least partially. There is a large section devoted to landscapes, and an example after Wang Wei (colophon and seal reproduced), in the form of a paper folding fan, is included. A copy of the first edition was exhibited, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in 2017 to 2019 and it has been carefully pondered and commented by Bennett⁴⁶ as well as Park: “we also know that it was not the only how-to-paint guide produced in China. At least, two dozen were published prior to this, and an equal number between the 17th and the 19th century”⁴⁷. Figure 5 is an example on how to draw landscapes keeping in mind Wang Wei’s style.

⁴⁴ Wen, F. (1999). Riverbank in M. K. Hearn & Wen, F., *Along the riverbank: Chinese paintings from the C.C. Wang Family Collection*. (pp. 2-57) N.Y.: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 3.

⁴⁵ Sze, M.M. (1978). *The Mustard seed garden manual of painting*. Princeton University press.

⁴⁶ Bennett, Steffani (2010). *The Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting A Reevaluation of the First Edition*.

⁴⁷ Park, J.P. (2014) Classic or Cliché: the Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting in modern context, *Orientalism*, 46 (5), 96-102.



Figure 5. Landscapes after Wang Wei style in the Mustard Seed Garden Manual

3.2.5. *The Riverbank*

The Riverbank is a hanging scroll attributed to Dong Yuan (董源, 934~962) occasionally on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Darkened by age, it requires above average visual acuity to discern not only details in the rounded hills and earthen slopes, but also the eight collectors' seals, one of them still unidentified. It is taller, although wider than the hanging scroll examined in this article.

In the catalogue of the 1999's exhibition, Hearn and Zhang⁴⁸ account that the artist's signature appears undated in one column in standard script, and none of the artist's particular seals show up. However, in the section devoted to this painting, Hearn acknowledges that the signature is partially eroded and that "the presence of a signature in a Chinese painting is never a guarantee of its authorship, as signatures were often added long after the painting was made, but the antique style of the writing makes it equally inadvisable to ignore"⁴⁹.

Controversy emerged because in 1998 two Chinese painters, Kwong Lum and Jia Chen, with residence in New York and active in the art world in China as well as in the USA, reacted to the recently acquired Riverbank painting (see above) arguing that "it should be attributed to the well-known Tang Dynasty (618-907) pastoral poet and painter, Wang Wei. It is his masterpiece *On the Wangchuan River*, a huge hanging scroll, portraying his picturesque Wangchuan Mountain-Villa amid imposing Northwestern mountains and rivers in present-day Lantian County, Shaanxi Province"⁵⁰.

⁴⁸ Hearn, M. K. & Zhang, Y. (1999). Catalogue in M. K. Hearn & Wen F. *Along the riverbank: Chinese paintings from the C.C. Wang Family Collection*. (147-161) N.Y.: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 147.

⁴⁹ Hearn, M. K. (1999). *Along the riverbank* in M. K. Hearn & Wen, F. *Along the riverbank: Chinese paintings from the C.C. Wang Family Collection*. (pp. 59-144) N.Y.: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 72.

⁵⁰ Lum, K. & Chen, J. (1998) II. Accusations of forgery: who painted "the Riverbank" (attributed to Dong Yuan) The recovery of the Tang dynasty painting: master Wang Wei's ink-wash creation "on the

Lum started collecting ancient Chinese artwork when he was nine years old following the footsteps of his art master Ding Yanyong (丁衍庸, 1902-1978). Once again, the controversy between artists, art curators and art historians rise up. Professionals in each group have their priorities and scenarios to avoid or confront each other.

For the purpose of obtaining a third opinion on the hanging scroll CUC 6071 scroll in the heritage of the Complutense University discussed in this article, Lum was contacted by email on January 24th, 2022, and several shots of Figure 2 were sent to him. Three messages were exchanged until February 13th. The convenience of an on-site evaluation of the scroll was agreed, although it is pending on funding.

4. Hanging scroll CUC 6071 Characteristics

It is a two-color mounting hanging scroll. Golden silk in the Heaven section (64%, 44x82cm) and 36% (25x82) the Earth section. It complies the 2/3 and 1/3 proportion, which is the classic pattern. The 1% variation is the consequence of a full remounting treatment of old silk mounts (sometime in China during the twentieth century) planned for its maintenance. Golden silk was the standard during the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) because the Chinese sound *huang* may be associated to yellow or emperor. At the same time Buddhist monks in ceremonies use "a slightly different shade of yellow and the dead were also buried this color"⁵¹. Symbols imprinted on the silk are Buddhist in origin.

The separating mounting (159x7 cm each lateral, 10x 82 the top and bottom fragments) and the Buddhist pattern is the same in both sections. Traditionally this color has been associated to grey cloths and grey houses, the standard in towns and cities, and so suggesting humbleness and unpretentiousness. This is the mood that is suggested to this landscape observer.

The painting section is 132x67 cm. It is made of rice paper with size because it facilitates the fixing of the ink. It is resistant to scratches, but there are some of them, tiny and horizontal ones. They are the imprint of unrolling and rolling the scroll against the wall. Inspected and judged the back side, refurbished, is in working order.

The milk and coffee color of the paper on the painted surface is characteristic of the presence of lignin. In the West, lignin is eliminated in the paper manufacturing process. The consequence is that it retains the white color. On the other hand, in China the presence of lignin leads to the gradual darkening of paper year after year. This is the way it looks the CUC 6071 scroll.

Altogether the scroll is 225cm high by 82cm wide, that is longer but not as large as Riverbank scroll. "Monumental landscape painting began its decline at

Wangchuan River" in *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, 11 (3), 439-449, 440-441.

⁵¹ Fang, J.P. (2004). Symbols and rebuses in Chinese art: figures, bugs, beasts, and flowers. *Ten Speed*.

the end of the Shenzong reign, in the late eleventh century. Ironically, it was through the efforts of Emperor Huizong to improve the quality of painting through the establishment of an Institute of Painting in 1104 that the art of monumental landscape painting was brought to an end⁵².

In the back side of the upper stave, the cataloguer of scrolls wrote with cursive script “Tang (dynasty), Wang Wei, Shanshui (hills – water), Hall” as may be verified in Figure 6. Upon seeing and examining this scroll’s photos Akira Tanaka, professor of architecture in the Mukogawa Women University (Japan) and author of a paper devoted to clarifying the meaning of villa architecture in China⁵³ commented via email (April 23rd, 2023): “On the right side, there is “water” and “pavilion” facing the water. There also appears to be a “fence” and “bamboo”. The building and bridge in the foreground may be the “approach” to the villa. These are the elements described in poems. This painting seems to illustrate all the elements of the Wangchuan Villa, and the parts of the scene are gathered together to make a whole. The parts are not fragments, but continuous. This structure is common to the poems and the paintings seems to illustrate the landscape of Wang Wei’s poems. In other words, they seem to translate the content of the poem into a painting”. It is what is expected in a hanging scroll because the initial paintings were sections of a mural.

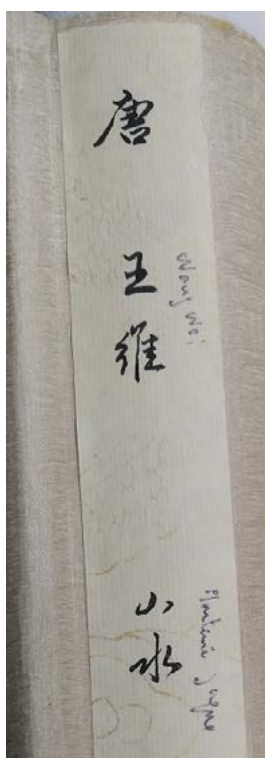


Figure 6: cursive script by the cataloguer of Wang Wei attributed scroll CUC 6071

⁵² Wen, F. (1999). Riverbank in M. K. Hearn & Wen, F., *Along the riverbank: Chinese paintings from the C.C. Wang Family Collection*. (pp. 2-57) N.Y.: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 27.

⁵³ Tanaka, A. (2012). A study of the classical landscape at the Wang River Villa of Wang Wei.

5. Impressive work of Wang Wei

This appraisal heading was written in the clerical script modality, enhanced during the Tang dynasty, which is characterized by, “refined brushes playing with variations that are at the root of capriciously elongated horizontal elements”⁵⁴. There are look-alike clerical fonts between those of this hanging scroll and the typography of the Tang emperor Xuangzong (685-762), contemporary of Wang Wei, to whom he served as a minister. The comparison is feasible because, at the summit of Taishan (Tai Mountain), he ordered, in 726 the engraving of his praise address, and it required 1,008 characters, in 24 columns and 51 ideograms in each that can be examined from different perspectives online since that Taishan was elected to the World Heritage List in 1987. “Particularly noteworthy is Xuanzong’s affection for, and personal mastery of, clerical script. His personal participation gave the art a big boost”⁵⁵.

It has been the paradise of 72 imperial pilgrimages during the last two and a half millennia, and also the Wonderland of clerical scripts made by high mandarins and abbots. An estimate of 6.000 sites of inscriptions in cliffs, stones, and tablets have been already surveyed. It has also become an immortal stone handbook of poems.

Ten centuries afterwards the clerical script modality gradually came into fashion again during the Qing dynasty. For instance, Emperor Qianlong (1711-1799) on ten occasions ascended up the mountain, carving 140 poems and 130 stone inscriptions. And one of the main seals of this emperor and his son appears also stamped in this CUC 6071 hanging scroll examined in this paper. In other words, the monumental calligraphy highlights the eloquent revelation of the meaning. An emblematic example of the sudden interest is the fluent shift during the reign of Emperor Qianlong: “the Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou became very well known as proficient calligraphers in clerical script”⁵⁶.

In the Chinese tradition, contemplating an outstanding scroll required a three-day fasting before unrolling the scroll to dive into it. Here is what the poet Qin Guan wrote down in 1087 as a colophon in a handscroll: “That summer I fell ill with an intestinal disorder and lay propped up in bed. My good friend Gao Fuzhong brought Mojie’s Wangchuan Villa to show to me. He said, “study this and it will cure your illness”. Because I fundamentally am a man of rivers and sea, obtaining this painting gave me great pleasure. I at once had two boys unroll it at my side as I studied it at my pillow. Wild with excitement, as is I

⁵⁴ Fadon-Salazar, P. (2002). [Brief history Chinese Calligraphy] *Breve historia de la caligrafía china*. Historia Viva, 44.

⁵⁵ Guantian, Z. (2008) An epoch of eminent calligraphers: the Sui, Tang and five dynasties, in Ouyang, Z. & Wen F., *Chinese calligraphy* (pp. 189-239). Yale University Press.

⁵⁶ Dun, H. (2008) Two schools of calligraphy join hands: Tiepai and Beipai in the Qing dynasty, in Ouyang & Wen, *Chinese calligraphy* (pp. 339-377). Yale University Press, 340.

were with Mojie himself, I entered Wangchuan”. It follows a list of segments he cordially toured (Bamboo Grove Lodge, Clear Bamboo Range, Deer Enclosure, Dogwood Bank, Gold Powder Spring, Grained Apricot Lodge, Huazi Hill, Lacquer Three Garden, Lake Yi, Luan Family Shallows, Magnolia Bank and Enclosure, Meng Wall Cove, Sophora Path, Southern and Northern Hillocks, White Rock Rapids, Willow Waves,) and ends unequivocally “I forgot that my body was bound in Runan, and in a few days my illness was cured”⁵⁷.

*What does such a high reverence, impressive work of Wang Wei, entail? Is this scroll the original, and that praise recognizes its value? The answer is No. Is it a great copy, a masterpiece made at the Academy of Artists sponsored by the emperor? At first glance this praise is an input, a tip, not a commandment. “A fair number of the paintings after Wang Wei are faithful reproductions, representing to a credible degree the spirit of this master, but no pretending being originals. Done by outstanding artists, these copies themselves can be considered masterpieces”⁵⁸. With this caveat in mind, this CUC 6071 scroll can be considered a *treasure map* to explore and shed light on what it hides. There were demarcation criteria in the process of authenticating masterpieces (also known by forgers): “1. The material (silk or paper) of the painting. 2. The artist’s inscriptions, signatures, and seals. 3. Colophons written by critics of preceding periods, which are found either on the painting proper, on some attached papers, or on the mounting. 4. Previous collectors’ seals. 5. Records of the painting in ancient catalogues, if available. 6. The painting itself”⁵⁹. These criteria have been pondered in this paper.*

Was this a way of boasting about having access to an original and reliable painting document? It was not a simple matter. In the tradition of literati artists, the transition from administrative calligraphy (their daily work) to creative painting (done in their leisure time) required incompatible schedules or strategies in the optimized management of agendas. Thus, learning was conditioned to copying scrolls collected by colleagues with similar status or lobbying to get such a favor or honor. The reliable copy also worked as a sign of respect for the teacher. Disciples praise and worship a work by copying it. The copy was considered a personal reverence⁶⁰.

Is the painter so great that he cannot be distinguished from the master who inspires him? There are two possible answers: the painter just copies the original, or produces a new version according to his taste and convenience. Both options are considered in this article. “Various types of copying included tracing, accurate reproduction by drawing free-hand, and making individual interpretations though in the

style of the imitated artist. Still another method was to copy the original on the upper of two thin layers of paper, applying enough ink to soak through to the one beneath”⁶¹.

6. Colophon, signature, and seals

This is the erudite translation of the colophon. The first three verses emphasize the dynamic mountain + water (=shān shuǐ, 山水) and greenery. That is, here is a fresh landscape: “Spacious and gleaming the sunny mountain side/ Jade is the river that flows downstream/ Green are the crowns of the trees”.

The second section highlights the Buddhist mood of Wang Wei passing through. “He used to settle in here when he wandered these places/ quiet spots, accommodating atmosphere/ detached from the troublesome affairs of this world/ tried not to fall into the temptation to go back”.

The final verse alludes to his springtime encounters with the younger poet Pei Di, accomplice and confidant: together (but not scrambled) produced 20 matched poems each one and translated, centuries afterwards, to Western languages also: “Attentive to the footsteps of a soulmate with whom to share/ the desire to say goodbye at ease/ to secular commitments”.

Whoever wrote this colophon was aware of what happened. It is not a foolish manuscript. It hits the bull’s-eye. The writer knows what is talking about.

In this context the name and seals of Jia Sidao make sense because he collected a lot of lost art and Wang Wei poems at his stately home. He could buy, gather, or show too much interest in an artwork that might be given, because he had resources and authority: his sister opened him the doors to be appointed chancellor of two emperors, father, and son. In the eyes of posterity, his reputation as chancellor is demeaning because he fled the battlefield he commanded.

Just to the left and right of the appraisal heading there are two gourd shaped seals, one rectangular and the name of the colophon’s attributed author: *Jiǎ Sidào* 賈似道 (1213-1275). “The presence of Jia’s [seal] impression usually commands instant respect because it links the provenance of the work of art with an eminent collection and immediately dates it to the Southern Song Dynasty or earlier”⁶².

A fundamental element for the identification of this scroll is the analysis of the seals that appear on it. Throughout the history of Chinese art there has been a long tradition of using seals for personal identification, in many cases including the personal signature of the author, cataloguer or collector. The seals therefore play an important role in determining the au-

⁵⁷ Harrist, R.E. *Painting and private life*.

⁵⁸ Calvin, L. & Brush-Walmsley, D. *Wang Wei*, 138.

⁵⁹ Wen, F. (1962a) *The problem of forgeries in Chinese painting*, 98.

⁶⁰ Han, B.G. (2017): *Shanzhai: deconstruction in Chinese*.

⁶¹ Calvin, L. & Brush-Walmsley, D. *op. cit.*, 139.

⁶² Wang, C.C. & Yang, K. (1988). The mystery of the “Chang” seal, *Ars Orientalis*, 18, 151-160. Freer Gallery of Art, The Smithsonian Institution and Department of the History of Art, University of Michigan, 151.

thenticity of this scroll. One way to proceed is to collect a reliable set of seal impressions that appear on well-known paintings whose authenticity is beyond doubt, and to compare them in a methodical study with those that appear on this scroll. For this purpose, we have photographed in high resolution each one of the seals of the scroll, in RAW format, without modifying the quality of the images through image processing programs. We have compared manually and through programs such as Google Lens the seals of the scroll with the seals contained in the reference works cited in the bibliography. These works are catalogs of major collections and exhibitions, as well as reference works in the area of art collecting seals in China. Manual comparison has yielded more consistent results than searching through programs that incorporate artificial intelligence image recognition routines, such as Google Lens. The usefulness of this program for the recognition and comparison of works of art is remarkable. However, the comparison and recognition of Chinese art collection seals leaves much to be desired. Therefore, the results included correspond almost entirely to a methodical search by traditional means. Given the age of the scroll and its state of preservation, 3 out of 24 ancient seals could not be identified. One was discarded because it was blurred by the black ink from the brush overlapping the red ink from the seal. Another was partially identified on several scrolls. This means that 19 seals are identified as described in Appendix I and in the bibliographic references.

The literature on seals in Western languages is not very extensive. The most reliable reference sources are found in two classic reference works by Contag and Wang, *Seals of Chinese Painters and Collectors of the Ming and Ch'ing* (1940; revised ed. Hong Kong, 1966), which contains an extensive collection of notable historical seals, and a compilation of seals published by the National Palace Museum of Taiwan under the title *Signatures and Seals on Painting and Calligraphy*, Hong Kong, 1964). Other reference works for the preparation of the cataloging are due to the Museum's senior curator, Na Chih-liang.

In contrast to these more scholarly approaches, The Work of T.C. Lai traces the historical and aesthetic relevance of Chinese collector's seals, starting with their use for political purposes by emperors in antiquity and continuing with their literary and cataloging use by the literati of the Yuan, Ming, and Ching dynasties.

A total of 24 ancient seals appears on the scroll. Four of them belong to Jia Sidao, including the famous Chang seal. Another outstanding set of seal impressions corresponds to those from the catalog of the Qianlong Emperor. It is known that seal impressions on silk are particularly subject to fading, so it is easy to lose them. In this case they are printed on paper. Exhibition catalogues and books in English or French dedicated to Chinese paintings as well as images of scrolls on the museums' websites have been used as reliable sources of contrast. These appears in

the references section. In the appendix we show the results of this process of recognition of the seals identified in the scroll. We also indicate the sources where we have found the same seals in works of recognized authenticity.

7. Mo Jie, 摩诃 Courtesy Name, Pseudonym

The concept of *alter ego* is not only a notion but a way to tangle with the boredom of always being the same person. It is a fictitious name that, elegantly, matches the sum of roles and attitudes acquired or encouraged over the years lived. In Chinese it is known as *courtesy name*, *zì*, 字, and in the Western culture as pseudonym.

Wang Wei "significantly chose as his artistic name the characters Mo Jie, analogous to the sinized form of the name Vimalakirti, Weimojie, of the half-legendary Indian sage who attained the highest religious status as lay adept"⁶³. Only once, in the catalogue of paintings amassed by the emperor Huizong up to 1120, Mo Jie appears⁶⁴. His portraits and figure paintings "consisted chiefly of Buddhist deities and included, at least, four full length portraits of Vimalakirti, his patron saint from whom he took his familiar name"⁶⁵. This was the sequel of his Buddhist profile. There is also an intended parallelism because mandarin was his high status as public official in the Chinese empire. The Confucian concept of the Gentleman, *Junzi* 君子, matches the mythical character of Vimalakirti. In other words, a two-sided religious profile in his office or in his vacation home.



Figure 7: Mo Jie, courtesy name of Wang Wei, in scroll CUC 6071

⁶³ Brinker, H., Kanazawa, H. & Leisinger, A. (1996). *Zen masters of meditation in images and writings*. Artibus Asiae Pub, Supplement 40, 137.

⁶⁴ McNair, A. Xuanhe catalogue of paintings, 226.

⁶⁵ Calvin, L. & Brush-Walmsley, D. *Wang Wei*, 96.

The courtesy name appears, surreptitiously, in this CUC 6071 UCM scroll in the middle, but just on the left side, glimpsed between punctilious brushstrokes in the slope of the mountain. The observer's eyes must be wide open to catch the minutiae. This was intended by the calligrapher, in writing, laterally, straight up, Mo Jie. "Some courtesy names on Chinese paintings often appeared on the side of landscapes. But the handwriting is very crude, and copied" was the comment of Dr. Eunjoo Jeong, of the Academy of Korean Studies in an email message exchanged on January 28th, 2022". Wherever there is a painter who knows the trade well, there are also apprentices around him who do what they can.

8. The CUC 6071 scroll and the Wu - Suzhou School

Now that other relevant aspects have been addressed in this section, we will try to clarify which school is this scroll related to. The artistic framework is the Southern School, composed of literati painters, *wenrenhua* (文人畫), that connects directly this scroll with its pioneer, Wang Wei.

In the list of paintings compiled by Calvin & Brush-Walmsley⁶⁶, included in the Xuanhe catalogue compiled and sponsored in 1120 by the emperor Song Huizong, there are seven landscapes. The subject of one painting has a direct connection with the scroll CUC 6071.

The title of the indirect handscroll is the "Wang River Villa", that is, Wang Chuan Tu, 王維輞川圖, that may be considered the background for the 1617 copy (after stone engraving) in the collection of the Princeton University Art Museum⁶⁷.

The one that is directly related is titled "Landscape View of Wang Chuan and Chuan Villa" and it may be considered the background for this CUC 6071 vertical scroll that remains until now undated. Structurally it shares similarity with those painted by Qiu Ying and shown in Figures 3a and b. The classical three distances in landscape paintings in China are present in these three scrolls. These three scrolls belong to private collections, and they are not easily accessible. By searching hard, it is possible to find photographs with inaccurate dates, titles, or authors.

In search of similarities between this CUC 6071 scroll and scrolls of literati masters such as Dong Yuan (董源) and Juran (巨然), both from the 10th century, Mi Fu (米芾, 1051-1107), the Four Masters of the Yuan dynasty (元四家) and the Wu School, also known as the Suzhou School (1450-1550) it became clear a nexus with the subjective and expressive treatment of landscapes by the four masters and the Suzhou school. It should be noted that about 1,400 km separate Xian (where it was located the villa of Wang Wei, in the foothills of the Zhongnan moun-

tains) and Shanghai (nearby the Suzhou school). Absence or distance do not count when the brush and ink are handy.

A typical example of this subjective and expressive treatment of a landscape is what Shen Zhou, the author of the painting that appears in Figure 8 b, conceived: he overstated the steep slope upward to suggest the expertise and overwhelming greatness of his admired teacher. At the bottom of the scroll, there is a tiny human figure, that could be, for instance, himself. This scroll was a present to honor him and illustrates, metaphorically, what happens when a low self-esteem prevails in a beginner's mind. In the Zen tradition the mountain symbolizes the master, as clouds symbolize amorphous disciples that may shaped.

The Suzhou school was, rather, a private club of mandarins fond of their practice of painting, and of voracious scholars and critics of art history as well. They were aware of their respective findings, developments, and readings. However, they weren't too eager to welcome onlookers in transit, nor casual fans. They had on display inscriptions and colophons which suggest and tell.

Shen Zhou (1427-1509) is usually cited as the patriarch or founder of the school. Born into a wealthy family, he lived comfortably taking care of his mother as a justification and his hobby, that required dedication, led him to master calligraphy, painting and poetry, while living cloistered, without leaving his estate. He was delighted to follow in Wang's cultural footsteps. His father, Sheng Heng (1407-1477) and his uncle were painters, and his grandfather Shen Cheng (1376-1463) was a Mandarin with financial resources and government contacts.

The chance of copying all the famous masters of the past [Yuan] dynasty without exception was at Shen Zhou's fingertips. His copies are very like, some of them even superior to the originals⁶⁸. High were the probabilities of accessing paintings (originals or copies) of Wang Wei collected by the de-throned Huizong (1082-1135) or by Jia Sidao (1213-1275). The distance between Hangzhou (the imperial capital where Sidao resided as chancellor and where he died (convicted and executed with the death penalty) and Su Zhou are 164 km. Jidao worked for the Song dynasty and his defeat welcomed the Yuan dynasty. "Under the Mongol Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), when many educated Chinese were barred from government service, the model of the Song literati retreat evolved into a full-blown alternative culture as this disenfranchised elite transformed their states into sites for literary gatherings and other cultural pursuits"⁶⁹.

The lending and reproduction of works of art between mandarins was an added value. Shen Zhou was highly influenced by the Four Great Masters of Yuan. "In the years before he reached forty, he made a detail

⁶⁶ Calvin, L. & Brush-Walmsley, D. *Wang Wei*.

⁶⁷ <https://artmuseum.princeton.edu/collections/objects/41417>

⁶⁸ Sirén, O. *The Chinese on the art of painting*.

⁶⁹ Hearn, M.K. *Cultivated landscapes*. 5.

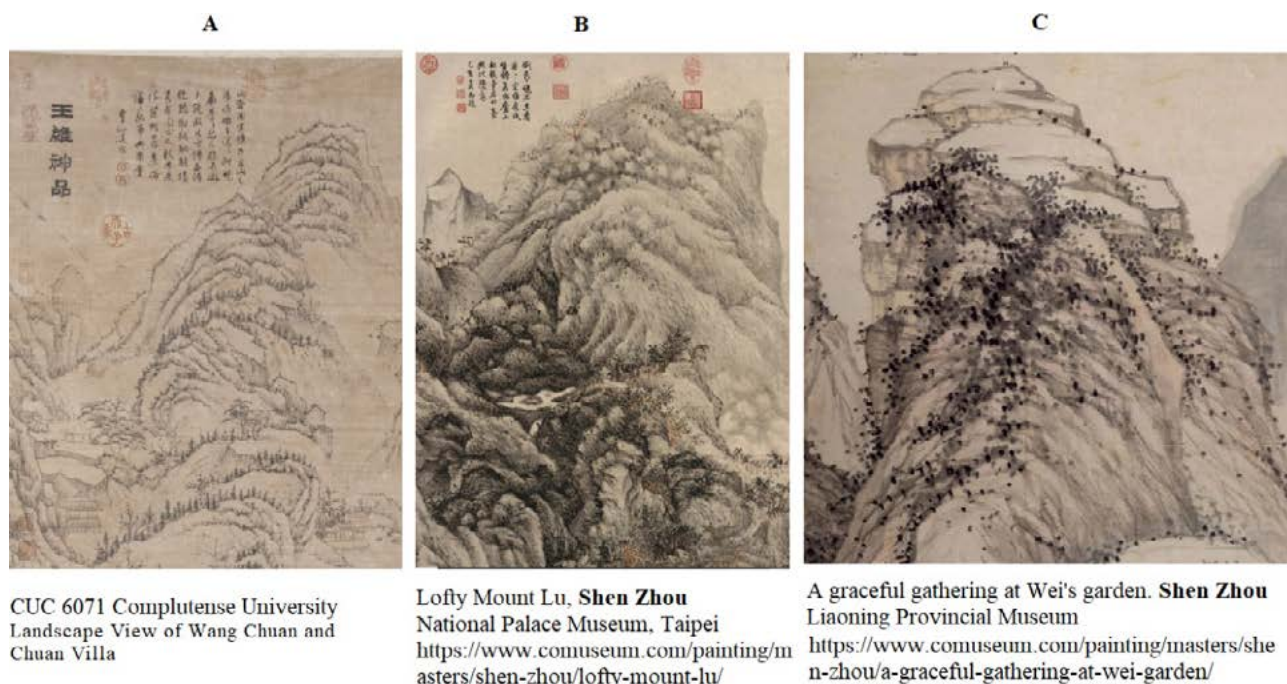


Figure 8. The same ascending mountain, contrast with two scrolls of Shen Zhouquien

study of all four, imitating their brushwork until he felt at ease with it⁷⁰.

In this historical and artistic context, the caption “Impressive Work of Wang Wei” is a warning for those with a clear sense of what they intended to do by getting involved. Literati and elite came to be synonymous.

Figure 8 illustrates how the anonymous painter of CUC 6071 and Shen Zhou resolved the steep slope of rocks, peaks, mountain range, shrubs, trees, reliefs, streams, troughs, waterfalls. “Mountains are given added mass through the application of broad strokes of light wash, with more densely inked areas suggestive of shadowy crevices. The foreground slope and clusters of trees stand out from the background - a calculated effect to heighten further the feeling of atmospheric distortion. The darkest ink is reserved for foliage dots, accents that serve to emphasize the pale luminosity of the scene⁷¹.

The Shen Zhou scroll *Lofty Mount Lu* is exhibited at the National Palace Museum in Taipei, and *A Graceful Gathering at Wei's Garden* at the Liaoning Provincial Museum.

Those who know, at least, one of the Chinese or English versions of the *Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting* (the *芥子園畫譜* Chieh Tzu Yüan Hua Chuan) may indicate their familiarity with Figure 5 and 8. But let's not forget that just over 200-250 years have gone by between the above-mentioned Wu Suzhou School and the publication of the first edition of the manual in 1679. There is a section devoted to mountains and rocks and Wang Wei comments and

sketches are mentioned repeatedly to clarify. “Brushstrokes like veins of a lotus leaf⁷². “On a high peak the veins are at the base and the limbs are spread out: the base is thick and strong, encircled by numerous peaks with rounded summits⁷³. Only literati painters had access to originals, and only owners and collectors could enjoy with friends and painters what they had acquired or inherited.

In figures 8 B and C it is possible to appraise how a single author resolves similar slope of rocks, peaks, mountain range, shrubs, trees, streams in different ways. Dong Yuan (c934-c962) and Juran (10th century, both literati “often painted small trees on the summit of mountains. [They] did not indicate branches but simply dotted in the trees, using only one kind of dotting. This was a secret method⁷⁴.

In figure 8 A “trees in the distance [were] painted by means of small flat dotting with light ink” (p. 175). As long as the lines are painted the mountain chain dissolves. By contrast in B and C the blackness of the dots succeeds in bringing to light the stream and the striking unstable trees. “Sanshui is not a landscape creation of a view, the point of interest is not the display of a particular scene at a certain place, at a certain time, but the expression of the artist's experience and his feelings for nature⁷⁵. Thus, there is not so much realism in these mountains.

Figure 9 illustrates how the anonymous painter of CUC 6071 and Shen Zhou resolved how to catch and hold the attention of the visitor that enters the lower scene looking up and down from the lower separating

⁷⁰ Yang, X, Barnhart, R.M., Nie, Cahill, J, Lang S. & Hung, W. (1997). *Three thousand years of Chinese Painting*. Yale University and Foreign Language Press, 217.

⁷¹ Hearn, M.K., op. cit., 13.

⁷² Sze, M.M. *The Mustard seed garden manual of painting*, 198.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 204.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 175.

⁷⁵ Law, S. S. (2016). *Reading Chinese Painting: beyond forms and colors, a comparative approach to art appreciation*. Shanghai Press, 77.



Figure 9. Trees that accommodate the visitor, contrast with two scrolls of Shen Zhou

mounting in grey silk. Above the neck the watcher prays down. Inside the Wang Wei property in A with its trees-lined entrance. “In painting trees, Wang Wei often used the method called double contour or outline (*shuang kou*). Even when drawing the ends of vines or the tips of branches, he did not neglect a single detail”⁷⁶. Shen Zhou in B and C follows that pattern. The first hanging scroll is exhibited at the National Palace Museum in Taipei and the second at the Nelson Atkins Museum of Art.

Another aspect to be highlighted is that in the scroll CUC 6071 people stand out for being absent. The famous poem by Wang Wei, the Deer Park, suggest an evocative indication. This is the translation of the poet and zen priest Gary Snyder “Empty mountains: no one to be seen/ Yet –hear- human sounds and echoes/ Returning sunlight enters the dark woods/ again shining on the green moss, above”⁷⁷. The key goes into the first ideogram, 空, *kōng*, that has affective (but not so much cognitive) connotations when consciousness (no one in sight but their omnipresence is heard) and insight emerge (time shines by going in and staying for a few seconds.) and the landscape turns out to be an epiphany, marvelous an agate green stone by the sunset.

An alternative landing was the use of the Google’s program to find affinities between the images in its database and the drawing that recognizes Wang’s mastery, that is the scroll CUC 6071. These are the names and titles identified: Shen Zou (Anchorage in the raining night, 1477, Metropolitan Art Museum), Ni Zan (Six Gentlemen, 1345, Shanghai Museum; Trees in a river valley in Yü Shan, private collection NYC), Don Quichang (the Qinbiang mountains, 1617, Cleveland Museum of Art; Sleep mountains and silent waters, 1632, Kimbell Art Museum), Wang

Shimmin Landscape on a sunny spring day 1656, Long Museum West Bund; *Cloud Capped Mountains and Misty Riverside*, 1658, Shanghai Museum).

Summarizing, CUC 6071 and the Wu – Suzhou School’s style fit like a mitt and a hand. “It is similar to the landscape painting style of Shēn Zhōu” commented on January 19th, 2022, via email prof. Eun-joo Jeong from the Academy of Korean studies. Shēn Zhōu also mentioned in passing Mr. Kwong Lum, Chinese artist and art collector and Kwong Lam Museum of Art in Jiangmen, China. Both are mentioned in the reference section as each of them published a paper on a specific work attributed to Wang Wei.

“Landscape View of Wang Ch’uan and Chuang Villa” is the most appropriate title for this hanging scroll because it is included in the 1120 Xuanhe catalog of artworks collected by the emperor Huizong.

9. Final remarks

What is the purpose of this inquiry? Very easy, to make it known that the heritage of the Complutense university includes a Chinese hanging scroll that is a landscape honoring the poet and artist Wang Wei. It seems to be an antique copy of the “Landscape view of Wang Ch’uan and Chuang Villa” scroll that appears listed among the 126 paintings attributed to Wang Wei in the 11th century Xuanhe catalogue sponsored and made public by the emperor Song Huizong.

If the four seals of Jia Sidao are considered reliable, then the content drawn on this scroll is pre-13th century (hypothesis 1), and also because, in the 8th century, sizable hanging scrolls were occasional among literati and in demand during the 10th century⁷⁸. If these seals are deemed spurious then the con-

⁷⁶ Sze, M.M. op. Cit., 167.

⁷⁷ Weinberger, E. & Paz, O. 19 ways of looking at Wang Wei.

⁷⁸ Sullivan, M. (1980) Chinese landscape painting.

tent has affinities with the Wu school and the city of Suzhou (hypothesis 2), since during the 15th and 16th centuries it was the focal point of commercial activity and high mandarins' intrigues. Cultural elites came to the fore and copying of classical works flourished, not only because apprentices learned to copy under the guidance of masters, but also by cultivating the self-esteem of the nouveau riche who wanted to boast of their cultured and successful ancestors. This entailed the visibility of students who distinguished themselves by creating impressive scrolls for those who occupied positions above the common people⁷⁹. The consequence was the rise of the Wu School culture, and so this scroll was housed in the collections that the Qianlong Emperor cherished.

Throughout the 20th and 21st century, both in the West and in China, the accreditation and discrediting of masterpieces have been a game of cards between museums experts, calligraphers and painters who know their craft well and have spent many hours studying the masters they admire, representatives of investors who do not know much about art but know the art of doing business, and finally politicians who make decisions recommended by trusted friends. None of this is our profession. We are university professors used to doing research with the resources at our disposal.

The removal of the last Chinese emperor, Aisin-Gioro Puyi (1906-1967) took place in 1912, and then he was 6 years old, that is the highest decision maker with no experience in shopping and sales. When he was 18 years he was informed, suddenly, one day that he was allowed three hours to give up everything he had enjoyed since birth. Paintings, porcelains, sculptures, and jewels, started to wander and get away. Several hundred (maybe thousands) eunuchs serving in the palace were dismissed, so that the gates were open, unchecked. He regained the throne and lost it again. Political and military turmoil ended in civil war and a selection of emperors' masterpieces ended up in Taipei. Decades later, during the cultural revolution hanging and handscrolls were

trapped in new homes and closets, some of them friendly, indifferent a few, and destructive too many. Artists and experts in Chinese classical art were sent to tend the cattle and treat the pigs for re-education. Abroad, there were those who appreciated what the Communist Party leaders hated. In Spain, three Asian art museums can be found in Catholic monasteries. Chinese religious art works of art are cared for. This contextualizes the existence of this scroll at the Complutense University of Madrid. It illustrates the ideal launched by Wang Wei and backed by literati artists: "the most important elements in painting, according to this thinking, were not formal accuracy, technical virtuosity, or sophistication, but rather a suggestive poetic effect and a vibrant and natural expression in accordance with the creative power of nature"⁸⁰.

The heart of this scroll is in the ascending perspective. At first glance it is a civilized space. The inhabitants are safe from danger and can tune in with Tao and nature. "On the one hand, these are safe places where the person can achieve immortality, attain enlightenment or surrender to aesthetic contemplation"⁸¹. There was as well the dark side, which is, "the threat of hidden and out-of-control forces, manifested in the form of evil spirits, demons or ancestors full of anger that constituted a continuous threat"⁸². That is the non-landscape. Thus, the settlement of Taoist or Buddhist monasteries was sponsored by the emperor and courtiers. "In turn, the monks helped the government to control the area in front of local worship services outside of orthodoxy, while performing rituals to bring luck and benedictions to the dynasty"⁸³. In other words, at the time and mindset of Wang Wei, the distinction between natural and supernatural was blurred. He was a Confucian mandarin in the court and a Buddhist and Taoist hermit who civilized the *shanshui*, doing so at its long moments of leisure and emotional tuning. Up the mountain glimpsed the ethereal immortals in their cozy grottoes and also Buddhist masters and disciples enlightened and dazzled by daybreak. The teacher is the solid mountain refreshed by the gassy clouds decided to practice.

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⁸¹ Mezcuca-López, J. A. (2014). La experiencia del paisaje de China, "shanshui" o cultura del paisaje en la dinastía Song. Madrid: Abada, 45.

⁸² Mezcuca-López, J. A. La experiencia del paisaje de China, 44.

⁸³ Ibid., 55.

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11. Appendix: seals of the Qianlong emperor and Jia Sidao identified on the scroll

As can be seen, many of the seals appear to be from the Qianlong Emperor’s own seal collection. His seals appear on many works of calligraphers and artists who produced their works in past dynasties. These seals represent membership in their collections, but above all it was a form of recognition, a seal of quality of the work. A total of 1800 seals have been catalogued, of which 500 were used very frequently. This eagerness for certification also obeys to a personal motivation, since before ascending to the throne he was fond of designing and carving stamps. There is a catalog that compiles almost all the seals of the emperor, and it is called Bao Tau (宝藪). Also appearing on the scroll are four seals corresponding to Jia Sidao, including the famous Chang seal.

Emperor Qianlong, who lived from 1711 to 1799, was a devout Buddhist who followed the Vajrayana teachings of the Yellow Hat lineage of Tibetan Buddhism. His allegiance to this Buddhist sect was both political - as his association with the Tibetan lamas helped legitimize his rule beyond the heart of China

- and religious - as Qianlong was also deeply spiritual. Indeed, the emperor had himself depicted in several Buddhist paintings as the Buddhist deity Manjusri, the bodhisattva of wisdom and a very central figure in Tibetan Buddhism, seated at the center of the Buddhist universe, a powerful statement not only of his embrace of the faith, but of his key place as a chakravartin, or Buddhist universal ruler.

Before ascending the throne, he used humbler expressions on his seals. They did not have the laudatory character of later ones and he kept a low profile. Examples from this era are “the seal of the fourth emperor”, “Hongli books”, “Jushi of Changhun”. There are some seals that are business cards of the emperor, but there are others that are so-called “seals of thanks” or “Special seals of appreciation of emperor Qianlong” 鉴赏专用章 (Jiànshǎng zhuānyòng zhāng). The multiplication of the emperor’s seals is due to the need to classify his collection of pictorial and calligraphic works. Therefore, the seals have not only the character of a mark of ownership, but of proof of the aesthetic qualities of each particular work. Hence the abundance and proliferation of the emperor’s collection of seals.



	FIGURE	OBSERVATIONS AND CATALOGED REFERENCES
1		<p>Seal of emperor Qianlong McCausland, (2011) <i>Zhao Mengfu</i>, fig 1.11, p. 42, Filial Woman Cao E. Stele, Huang (2019, 54-55), <i>Early snow on the river</i>, Zhao Gan, Palace Museum, Taipei.</p>
2		<p>The inscription belongs to Emperor Qianlong of the Qing dynasty of China (1644-1912). The four-character round seal reads Gu Xi Tian Zi (古希天子) Guxi is 70th birthday. Tianzi is textually “son of heaven,” and refers to the emperor’s birthday. In this case, it textually means “70th birthday of the son of heaven”. The most eulogistic content seals correspond to the last stage of his life, primarily from his accession to the throne. It appears also in the work: <i>Guanyin, Bodhisattva of Compassion</i>, China, 18th century, gold ink on indigo dyed paper mounted as a hanging scroll, image 25 “x16 1/8”, scroll 72x23”; Scripps College, Claremont, CA. Gift of Dr. William Bacon Pettus, 0322.</p>





	FIGURE	OBSERVATIONS AND CATALOGED REFERENCES
3		<p>Seal of Jia Sidao</p> <p>It appears in Yang et alii, (1997), figures 136, Zhao Mengfu, Mounted Official, as well as in Ouyang & Wen (2008), in figures 5.3 Cai Xiang, 5.6 Su Shi, and 5.15 Mi Fu. Also in Wang (2000), figure 24, Chao Meng Fu.</p>
4		<p>Qianlong emperor's special appreciation seal.</p> <p>It appears in <i>Poem on the Hall of Pines and Wind</i>. National Palace Museum, Taipei</p>
5		<p>This is the so-called “Qianlong Emperor’s Sight Treasure”, Or also “Qianlong Royal Sight Treasure”.</p> <p>乾隆御覽之宝 Qiánlóng yù lǎn zhī bǎo</p> <p>It falls under the category of special appreciation seal 鉴赏专用章.</p> <p>It also appears in Huang (2019), p. 66-67, <i>Wintery Sparrows</i>, Cui Bai. Palace Museum Beijing.</p>
6		<p>It also appears in:</p> <p>Xin et al. (1997). <i>Three thousand years of Chinese painting</i>, figures 136, 143, 178,</p> <p>Ouyang & Wen F. (2008), <i>Chinese Calligraphy</i>, figures 2.23, 4.28, 5.3, 5.15, 5.26, 5.79, 10.5,</p> <p>McCausland, (2011) Zhao Mengfu, figures 1.40, 1.41 y 2.11</p>





	FIGURE	OBSERVATIONS AND CATALOGED REFERENCES
7		<p>Seal belonging to Jia Sidao. (1213-1275), it appears in the Taiwan museum “sengquan”. Also appears in <i>Poem on the Hall of Pines and Wind</i>. National Palace Museum Taipei.</p> <p>Huang, (2019), p. 66-67, <i>Winter Sparrows</i>, Cui Bai. Palace Museum Beijing.</p> <p>Copy of the admonitions scroll, Gu Kaizhi, The British Museum of London.</p>
8		<p>It appears in:</p> <p>McCausland, (2011) <i>Zhao Mengfu</i>, figures 1.12, 1.23, 1.32, 2.4, 2.11, 2.16, 3.9, 3.21, 3.30, 4.13, 4.40</p> <p>Contag & Wang (1966) p. 582 seals 30 & 31.</p> <p>18 songs of a nomad flute: the story of Lady Wenji, The Met.</p> <p>Zhao Chang, Butterflies sketched from life, The Palace Museum, Beijing</p>
9		<p>Qianlong emperor's special seal of appreciation.</p> <p>It reads: “Treasures of the imperial study hall”. 御书房鉴藏宝 Yù shūfāng jiàn cáng bǎo</p>
10		<p>It appears in:</p> <p>Yang et al. (1997) fig. 15.3 Li Sheng y 15.8. Ni Zan.</p> <p>Ouyang & Wen (2008), <i>Chinese Calligraphy</i>, figures 5.33 and 5.50</p> <p>McCausland, (2011) <i>Zhao Mengfu</i>, figures 2.4 Horse & Groom and 2.8 Han Gan, Night Shining White.</p> <p>Contag & Wang (1966) p. 583 seals 40 & 41,</p>





	FIGURE	OBSERVATIONS AND CATALOGED REFERENCES
11		<p>It appears in:</p> <p>CP Taiwan 2.4, 1.42, 1.46, 1.47, 1.48, Billeter (2005), p. 222. Yang et al. (1997). figures 1.36, 5.16, 5.33. Ouyang & Wen (2008) figures 5.16, 5.33, 6.17. McCausland, (2011) <i>Zhao Mengfu</i>, figures 1.23, 2.3, 2.4, 2.8, 2.11 y 4.21 Wang (2000) figures 1.42, 1.46, 1.47, 2.4,</p>
12		<p>Qianlong emperor's special seal of appreciation. This seal is combined with the following seal as the emperor Qianlong's seal of gratitude. Seal of Sanxitang Jingjian 三希堂精鑒玺 Sān xī táng jīng jiàn xǐ yí zǐ sūn These two seals are the connoisseur seals of the famous Qianlong emperor. The two seals are used together. The positions of these two seals are basically fixed when they are stamped, usually at the bottom right of the work, with the "Sanxitang Jingjian Seal" at the top and the "Yizisun" seal at the bottom.</p>
13		<p>This is the second part of the previous Seal of Sanxitang Jingjian .It depicts the text 宜子孙, meaning "suitable descendants (Yí zǐ sūn). It appears in several sources: Contag & Wang (1966) p. 583 seal 38 y 39, p. 578 I Tzu- Sun. Chou (2015) figures 4 p. 3, 16 p. 13, 17 p.35, 1 p. 30-31, p. 118 Ren Renfa, 143 Yao Yanging, 144 Yao Yanging, 151 Wang Yuan, 208 Wang Fu, 271 Wen Zhengming, 277 Wen Zhengming, 296 Wu Bin, 308 Don Qichang, 310 Don Qichang. Zhao Chang, Butterflies sketched from life, The Palace Museum, Beijing</p>
14		<p>Unidentified.</p>





	FIGURE	OBSERVATIONS AND CATALOGED REFERENCES
15		<p>Seal of Jia Sidao.(1213-1275), it appears in Poem on the Hall of Pines and Wind. National Palace Museum Taipei</p> <p>Huang (2019), Cui Bai Winter Sparrows, p. 66-67, Palace Museum, Beijing</p> <p>Copy of the admonitions scroll, Gu Kaizhi, The British Museum of London.</p>
16		Unidentified.
17		Unidentified.
18		<p>It appears in:</p> <p>McCausland, (2011) <i>Zhao Mengfu</i>, fig. 4.32 p. 322</p> <p>Contag & Wang (1966) p. 621-2 (incomplete)</p>







	FIGURE	OBSERVATIONS AND CATALOGED REFERENCES
19		<p>It appears in:</p> <p>McCausland, (2011) Zhao Mengfu, figures 2.11 <i>Man Riding</i> Palace Museum Beijing y 2.24 <i>Portrait of Laozi</i> Palace Museum Beijing</p>
20		<p>Unidentified.</p>
21		<p>It appears partially in:</p> <p>Ouyangi & Wen (2008), <i>Chinese Calligraphy</i>, plate 31 Mi Fu and 32 Zhao Mengfu.</p> <p>H. Chang (1955) partially in plates IX p. 87, complete in plate XVI p. 167 & 168, plate XXIII p. 210-212, plate XXVI p. 237, plate XXXII p. 302, plate XXXIII in p. 307 and 313</p>
22		<p>It appears in</p> <p>Contag & Wang (1966) <i>Seals of Chinese painters and collectors of the Ming and Ch'ing periods</i>, p. 530, K'ung Kuang-t'ao, and in p. 620 – 2 P'an Chên-wei.</p>

	FIGURE	OBSERVATIONS AND CATALOGED REFERENCES
23		<p>Qianlong emperor's special seal of appreciation.</p>
24		<p>This is the very famous Chang seal of Jia Sidao</p> <p>It appears in the work <i>Preparing Tea</i> by Tang Yin (Dinastía Ming). The Palace Museum, Beijing, and International Arts Council.</p> <p>Wang & Yang (1988) analyses in depth this seal among other Sidao's seals.</p> <p>National Palace Museum Taipei, Huang Tingjian <i>Poem on the Hall of Pines and Wind</i>.</p>