

Huang Zeng 黃增 (ca. 1706 - ca. 1772)

The Ding-Xin Rustic House

丁辛老屋圖

*Ding xin laowu tu*

(Alternative title: *Wang Guyuan xiaoying* 王穀原小影 [Portrait of Wang Youzeng])

Painting

Date 1755

Hanging scroll; ink and light colour on paper; 265.7 cm x 68.9 cm (scroll sheet); 160.5 cm x 51.3 cm (painting)

The Mactaggart Art Collection. Access # 2004.19.35

Gift of Sandy and Cécile Mactaggart



#### ARTIST'S INSCRIPTION & SIGNATURE

(6 columns in cursive script)

In the intercalary fourth month of the *jia xu* year (1754) in the Qianlong reign, Master [Wang] Guyuan rented a house in the capital [Beijing] and named it the Ding-Xin Rustic House (*Ding xin laowu*) as his summer retreat. In the autumn, however, he had to return south for some emergency. He requested me to draw this painting. [When he was living there,] that humble house was desolate and silent. He closed his door to visitors without having the trail cleaned but hummed his poems alone. No people in red dust can live in his way. In the fourth month of the *yi hai* year (1755), Huang Zeng of Changzhou records on the boat passing by Huaiyin.

乾隆甲戌閏四月，/ 穀原先生於都下賃一室，名之曰 / 丁辛老屋，以爲逃夏之所。入秋，取 / 急南歸，屬增寫此圖。蕭然蓬戶，/ 卻掃獨吟，輒紅中無此客也。乙 / 亥四月，長洲黃增識於淮陰舟次。

#### ARTIST'S SEALS

*Huang Zeng* 黃/增, square intaglio

*Fangchuan* 方/川, square relief

#### COLOPHONS

Zhang Sike 張四科 (b. 1711)

(6 columns in regular script)

Since the farewell by Lake South

Several failures have occurred in the civil service examinations

In red dust

No visitor comes to the thatched abode any day

Against cushion, he has not woken up from dream yet

The pond is clear among spring flowers

The mat is pleasant in the midnight moonlight

All at this desolated and leisure place

Behind the door, he is thinking of lines

So dedicated. Could not he pause?

He eventually succeeds with a high rank

Yet, who knows that libraries

Become desperately inaccessible as in the horizon

The salary is too low to support [his family]

And often he has to ask loan  
Drinking until the late afternoon  
And wanting female singers at midnight  
Both simply are what happened in past  
Now he devotes himself to early laws  
Beneath the lamp-light beside the window, in the same style

This song, on the tune of the *Hu zhong tian* (the Haven in the Pot), was created on  
Master Guyuan's request. His corrections will be appreciated. Zhang Sike of  
Yuchuan [records].

南湖別後，任鄉書丁倒，軟紅塵裏，盡日茆堂無客到，欹枕夢歸猶未。池 /  
淨花辰，簟涼月午，盡是蕭閑地。閉門覓句，苦吟何似無已？誰道甲第 /  
雲高，西山書秘，悵望如天際。俸粟一囊長不飽，空自頻呼庚癸，飲過申時，  
歌徵子夜，都付當年事。繡殘令乙，燈窗風味如此。 / 右調壺中天，題應 /  
穀原老先生命，即請 點定 漁川張四科

Wang Chang 王昶 (1725-1806)

(7 columns in regular script)

House in rain under luxuriant acacias  
Fence in mist with short bamboo around  
The humble study is very small  
Place rocks in order, plant flowers  
Inspect spring water, taste tea  
More often he hums poems with hair disheveled  
Ignoring red dust in the capital

Just on his bamboo mat and in his plantain robe  
Not worried about hot weather at all  
He lives like a worthy, in a humble abode by lake  
With a moss-covered trail partly stretching into pleasant shadow

In those days, after his return from his office  
He closed the door and all windows  
And did not consider him just living next to the Palace  
He drafted imperial decrees and polished official dispatches  
He kept an ear out for watches until leaving for court audience  
Both of which should be better than vagrancy along rivers and lakes  
However, the capital has become distant in his retrospection  
His tears wet his blue robe  
Playing balloon-guitar, he murmurs to the moon  
Fortunately, his home remains in good condition  
Though he will have to look after  
His land, and to fix his fence

On the tune of the *Xi yuchun man* (Cherishing the rest of spring, slow), [this song was created] for my fifth older cousin Master Guyuan. His advice and corrections are really appreciated. [Wang] Chang of Qingpu, his younger cousin, drafts.

雨屋疎槐，煙籬短篠，隱約蕭齋十笏。剔石栽花，分泉試菴，長 / 是唵商散髮。一任京華軟紅，竹簟蕉衣，那愁炎暍。似鴛鴦、湖畔柴扉，蘚逕半臨清樾。想幾日、畫省歸來，掩關蹋壁，不信家鄰 / 珠闕。試箋眎草，聽漏含香，也勝江湖飄忽。回首春明路遙，淚濕 / □[青]衫，琵琶怨月。幸故園無

恙，且須料理，礮田鹿藿。 / 厶[惜]餘春慢，為 / 口[穀]原五兄老先生題，并請 教正。厶[青]浦愚弟昶藁。<sup>1</sup>

Jiang Shiquan 蔣士銓 (1725-1784), [dated 1756]

(10 columns in semi-cursive script)

So desolated and quiet

Who is practicing cultivation of health?

Who is reckoning the calendar?

Listen, wheels are running outside the door like thunders

As expected, a place at the dry height is hard to find

He has to temporarily live in the market place

Where he shares his abode with swallows

There is no need to consider geomancy

Surrounded by hibiscus fence, his thatched hut

Locates in the west city, and is painted here

With one corner under the hill

After his resignation, he keeps his door close

And just sweeps fallen leaves away and listens to cicadas singing

While having many burdens removed

Otherwise, when would he become an official of reputation?

Regretful is both north snow and [south] hot

<sup>1</sup> Wang Chang, *Chuntong tang ji*, Qin hua lou ci 琴畫樓詞, “Xi yuchun man: ti Shouming Ding-xin laowu tu” 惜餘春慢，題受銘丁辛老屋圖, 27:1a. *Ti shi zhai hua, fen quan shi chuan* 剔石栽花，分泉試葬 was changed into *fen quan shi chuan, ti shi zhai hua* in the printed edition, *yi ren jinghua ruanhong* 一任京華軟紅 in to *fu jin jinghua ruanhong* 拂盡京華軟紅, *huishou chunming lu yao* 回首春明路遙 into *zhi wo chunming lu yao* 祇我春明路遙.

Thrown into the flowing water  
Ten thousand chapters of books are stored in three rooms  
Which still allow him to look up and down  
And accommodate his body – that is enough  
Younger and inferior, I am simply worried about our style  
To be abandoned in red dust

On the tune of the *Jie lianhuan* (Unlocking interlocking links), Jiang Shiquan of  
Qianshan writes this song down on Senior Master Guyuan's request.

△[寂]然如此，問誰守庚申，誰論甲 / 子。聽 △[門]外轂走驚雷，料爽塏難 /  
求，且居塵市，共燕分巢。何用較干 / 支戊巳。△[把]槿籬艸屋，移畫城西，  
一角 / 山底。退食閉門而已。但掃葉聽蟬， / 可除多累。待成名宦何年。  
歎朔 / 雪炎，拋擲流水，萬卷三間，容俯 / 仰，閒身足矣。甲辰雌，只愁老  
我風，軟 / 紅堆裡。<sup>2</sup> 調寄解連環。 / 穀原老前輩命鉛山蔣士銓題。

Wang Youzeng 王又曾, dated 1756

(8 columns in semi-cursive script)

Both the Venus and Dipper have become illusive  
In February and March dew and light sleet moisten my yard  
The tree caresses the magnolia  
My door is hidden in the market place  
In June and July it looks like a mansion with a pond  
The screen is lift up

<sup>2</sup> Jiang Shiquan, *Zhongya tang shiji*, 516. The *jiao* 較 was changed into *ze* 擇 in the manuscript, and *paozhi* 拋擲 into *paoqi* 拋棄.

Expecting to plan gourds on a *chen* day  
I have lichen removed  
How could I rely on the pendant to ward off evil?  
Hardship of half a year has made me irresolute in red dust  
  
I build a humble house as a swallow does  
Without working on the *wu* and *ji* days  
Luxurious carved beams are not my favorite  
I cultivate and protect myself as a Daoist does  
And hums poems in my village like an early poet  
Both are my hobbies in my leisure time  
I do not want to consult my horoscope  
But set up my mat  
Beside the north window as I am indolent  
I study the *Book of Changes* and grind red ink [to make notes]  
And enjoy my cold and late breakfast  
  
I stay [in Yuzhang] from the third lunar month to the fifth  
Into the clear river are willow catkins thrown  
I see off late night and stay up until early morning  
I remain awake from the late afternoon through next morning  
Always humming alone my poems on sorrows  
My prime of life has passed in silence  
It was ridiculous to run in a crazy morning for the court audience at noon  
On a donkey temporarily hired for a short ride

I could not return until midnight  
And had my name removed from the official enrollment  
  
Breeze through the bamboo grove prompts weaving  
Neither of us expects soldier's tents  
But inspects the ancient stone inscriptions in leisure  
We are close like brothers  
I am much older than you  
Yet among many others I am inferior to you [in talent]  
I feel comfortable to learn gardening  
And cultivate myself following the Daoist immortal  
Practicing diligently behind the closed door  
I would like to fix my house and to stretch creepers  
Hope it will not rain in the night

In the summer of the *bing zi* year (1756), I temporarily stayed in a Buddhist temple in Nanchang. Mr. Jiang, the Secretariat Drafter, wrote a colophon on my painting of *the Ding-Xin Rustic House*, with extremely fine and elegant wording. Following his style, I create today for fun the above two songs on the tune of the *Qi tian le* (Heavenly Happiness). It is the festival of the seventh day of the seventh lunar month (August 2, 1756) at night. Wouldn't the Spinster Maid laugh at my slavish imitation [of Mr. Jiang's style]? Youzeng creates this colophon for himself and records.

長庚太乙都成幻，壬寅露霏庭院。樹拂辛夷，門藏亥市，渾似庚辛池館。丁  
簾自捲，待辰日栽瓜，/ 掃除荒蘚。剛卯何憑，半年辛苦輾紅輾。營巢信



同紫燕，怕教迎戊己，雕梁難戀。道士庚申，詩 / 人丁卯，并作閒中消遣。年庚漫算，但壬癸平鋪，北窓人倦。玩易研朱，愛涼遲卯飮。壬癸，席名，見湘東備錄。 /

羈栖上巳還端午，玉河盡拋香絮。錢亥迎寅，過申犯卯，搃是孤吟愁賦。丁年暗度，咲午陞晨趨， / 短驢纔僱。子夜歸來，姓名底用挂朝簿。竹風漸催織紵，料來無甲帳，閒讐辛鼓。丙午同生， / 庚寅我降。雌子甲辰無數。安心學圃，任六甲靈飛，閉閤勤課。補屋牽蘿，甲申休夜雨。 /<sup>3</sup>

丙子長夏，寓豫章僧舍。蔣舍人大兄見題丁辛老屋圖，詞極精雅。戲仿其體，賦齊天樂兩闕。是日正七夕 / 良宵，乃作東家傲顰，得毋為織女所咲否？又曾自題並識。

# Min Hua 閔華

(4 columns in cursive script)

This retired scholar was once known as Slipshod  
As a poet he leisurely names himself Gardner  
He worked hard to build a house of three rooms  
Even without any precious items  
He enjoys his library at midnight  
Beautiful birds arrive immediately after the vernal equinox  
The lotus flower blossoms soon after the summer solstice  
Who could be honorable to drink with him in north?  
[Here,] to entertain his true friends  
He hires silver nails to play harpsichord

<sup>3</sup> Wang Youzeng, *Ding-xin laowu ji*, “Ziti Ding-xin laowu tu” 自題丁辛老屋圖, 20:18a–b. The *pa jiao ying wu ji* 怕教迎戊己 was changed into *ye zhi fang wu ji* 也知防戊己 in the printed edition, *diaoliang nan lian* 雕梁難戀 into *diaoliang ning lian* 雕梁寧戀, *xingming di yong* 姓名底用 into *xingming na yong* 姓名那用, *biguan qinke* 閉閤勤課 into *biguan shui yu* 閉閤誰語. The *cizi* 雌子 was written as *ci le* 雌了 on the painting; corrected following Wang's collection.

On the tune of the *Jiangyue huang chongshan* (the Moon shining over the River and Mountains), this song was created to present to Master Guyuan, my older fellow student, for his smile. Min Hua, Poet of Mulberry Leaf [, records].

居士舊名鴻乙，詩人閒號園丁，辛勤營得屋三楹。無壬貨，/ 丙夜擁書城。  
系鳥來時五戊，荷花開處三庚，誰何尊癸 / 與同傾。酬知己，銀甲用彈箏。  
調寄江月晃重山，題奉 / 穀原學長先生一粲。 楮葉詞人閑華。

Shen Dacheng 沈大成, dated 1758

(11 columns in semi-cursive script)

Red dust strikes people

The dirty doggy and muddy carriage make me sad

Yet his room is full of the spirit of pine and rock

Noon breeze occasionally knocks at the bamboo door open

Though in gauze cap, boiling water for tea amuses himself enough

He writes in this humble place like a hermit

Isolating himself with ruts swiped away in the capital

Nobody can follow his life style

He serves his father, smiling and humming poems

Looks back at the capital, there just remain a few things

Lake South is beautiful, in mornings and evenings

Homeland sceneries are pleasant as always

One end of the acacia pod bridge sees autumn rain pouring

In the isolated abode, the short lampstand senses true friends  
understanding

Now, under trees a new abode has been built

In which he will cultivate his mind as Vimalakīrti had done

In the early autumn of the *wu yin* year (1758) in my lodge in Yangzhou, I present  
those poems to Master Guyuan. Shen Dacheng of Yunjian [records].

□□□△[輓紅塵土]撲人來，瓦狗泥車劇可 / □[哀]，□□△[一室獨]饒松  
石意，午風時欵竹 / □□[扉開]。△[紗]帽煎茶足自娛，癸辛論 / □  
□□△[著比潛夫]。蕭然掃軌長安市，此種 / 風流不可摹。循陔粲粲稱  
吟身，回首△[脩]門跡半陳。一片南湖朝莫 / △[好]，△[家]山風物自宜  
人。皂莢橋頭 / 秋△△[雨深]，短檠孤館感知音。於今因 / △△[樹堪]  
為屋，好向維摩證宿心。 / 戊寅初秋蕪城客舍為 / 穀原老先生題。雲間沈  
大成。<sup>4</sup>

Jin Nong 金農 (1687-1764), dated 1758

(6 columns in regular script)

Former secretary in the Ministry of Punishment Master [Wang] Guyuan visited  
me in my temporary residence in Yangzhou, where he showed me this painting of  
the *Ding-Xin Rustic House* created in the capital in the *jia xu* year (1754) and  
asked me to write a colophon on it. Several colophons have been written on it and  
they all were from celebrated hands. I am old and deaf and feel embarrassed [at  
this juxtaposition], yet, to meet his request, I will make a song not on any  
established tune but on one that I created by myself. When they read my song [on

<sup>4</sup> Shen Dacheng, *Xuefu zhai shiji*, “Wang Guyuan bibu Ding-xin laowu tu” 王穀原比部丁辛老屋圖，  
15:1a–b. The *wa gou ni che* 瓦狗泥車 was changed into *zhongri quchi* 終日馳驅, and *suxin* 宿心 into  
*shuxin* 夙心 in the printed edition.

this painting], wouldn't a few young poets who strictly follow established tunes  
laugh at me for scribbling it?

No place for his summer retreat  
But he rents a house under tall trees  
Where he lives in as in his own permanent residence  
The capital is lovely  
Especially Mount West outside the city  
Features colors that other mounts lack  
I can imagine, Master Wang, burning herbs  
Changes into his summer clothes after court audience  
And hums his poems alone  
With pleasant breeze caressing his mat  
He is reading various books

In the seventh month of the *wu yin* year (1758), Jin Nong of Hangzhou Prefecture  
writes down at the age of seventy-two.

穀原比部先生見訪揚州客舍，出甲戌歲在京師所寫丁辛老屋圖乞題。圖中/  
題作，皆屬名彥。予慙衰賸，不復按譜填曲，遂自度新詞一闕，以塞其請。  
目/前△[倚]聲三五少年，守縛前規者，能不嗤我漫為長短句乎？/這△[暑]  
無方，長林之下僦△[居]，有如結宅。愛帝城，城外西山，不比他山顏色。  
想見王/郎△[熏]香，朝罷換生衣，蕭然吟客，涼風滿席，定甲乙丙丁編集。  
/戊寅七月，七十二翁杭郡金農筆記。

Zhang Geng 張庚 (1685-1760) [, dated 1759]

(7 columns in semi-cursive script)

He rents three rooms to live in

Where he studies Fuxi's hexagrams  
His intention is profound, and who can understand?  
Concentrating on [the sages'] injunction  
Concentrating on his own cultivation  
He lives alone in [green] creepers and ... (textual corruption)  
He asks the skilled painter  
To draw windows and sceneries  
He remains cautious of [any moral errors]  
He has his pure pose of that day recorded  
And his portrait painted  
  
He intends to live isolated holding volumes  
Reading books and singing poems while playing zither  
Makes him comfortable with his current life  
The spring sunshine is just marvelous  
And ... just ... (textual corruption)  
We could not say it is not a scenario of delights  
Again, the cup is full of wine  
.... (textual corruption) Me  
Let's drink to our contents  
It is worth celebrating  
Watching ... (textual corruption)  
Yet, everything is in perfect order

Master Guyuan [rented a house] in the capital and named it the Ding-Xin Rustic House. It is hard to know... [After] reading his own colophon and that by the Secretariat Drafter Jiang [Shiquan] of Yangxian, I created for him this song on the tune of the *Yanshan ting* (The Mount Yan Pavilion). His advice and corrections will be appreciated. Zhang Geng, Retired Scholar of Miji, [records].

僦居三椽，勝采羲爻，幽寄誰能省。著意丁寧，著意更新，獨處 / 𠂇[綠?] 蘿絲炯(?)。妙手丹青，倩補出、軒窗風景。虛警。記爾日清姿，更 / 圖小影。便擬抱卷深棲，誦讀絃歌，自安時命。春陽正好，方 / 𠂇𠂇𠂇，莫道未為佳境。酒復盈樽，𠂇𠂇我，放懷歡飲。堪慶。看 / 𠂇𠂇，𠂇般盡整。 /

𠂇[穀] 𠂇[原] 𠂇𠂇[先生] 𠂇𠂇勝都下，邸舍曰丁辛老屋，莫測𠂇𠂇𠂇𠂇讀自題，𠂇[陽]羨蔣舍人詞，以 / 𠂇𠂇，為賦燕山亭一闋，請正。𠂇𠂇𠂇[彌伽居]士張庚

Qian Chenqun 錢陳群 (1686-1774) [, dated 1759]

(6 columns in cursive script)

Guyuan, former Secretary in the Ministry of Punishment, rented a house of several rooms in Beijing to live in. After court audience, he had nothing to do but to read in his residence. He requested Huang Zheng of Changzhou to create this painting of the Ding-Xin Rustic House. Some of his comrades have created poems on it. With the two characters *ding* and *xin* as rhymes, I created two stanzas. Recently Guyuan returned home [from Beijing] to serve his father. As his old house locates at a damp and low place, he had a new one constructed of several rooms. He was short of money and wrote several poems to record this hardship. From his poems, those talents would understand that the poor scholar, even though enrolled as an official, has difficulties in building his humble

residence. Yet wealthy people, in having their gardens constructed, would have them rebuilt if they are not as satisfying as expected; those men would never been self-satisfied with their properties. If Guyuan's descendants read his poems, they would realize that those of older generation like me could tell the difficulties that Guyuan have had in his early career and could reminder the young generation of the significance of simple food like coarse wheaten meal. His new residence has been completed recently, and I am writing these two poems down to celebrate. Venerable Zhang [Geng] is good at poetry, yet I dare to present one in my own style. Why not?

To live in the capital unsurprisingly is not easy  
 It is hard to build a humble house as a swallow does  
 Short of grains and firewood, yet he does not care  
 Bare-headed, he just fingers his beard  
  
 Your new house is really small beside the old rear hall  
 On its west side, a pavilion is possible with timbers  
 As funny as a clever woman who can cook a meal without rice  
 As strong as those five ancient fighters who opened up the way

Qian Chenqun, Retired Scholar under the Aromatic Tree [, records]

穀原比部△[于]□[都]下□[賃]數椽以居，朝回無事，讀書其中。屬長洲黃增為丁辛老屋畧。時同志各為詩題之。予用丁辛二字為韻，/得二絕句。穀□[原]近□□[以養]親里居，所居室苦湫庳，構新居數楹。殊費拮据，次章嘲及，使才彥讀之，知貧士雖通籍，謀△[一]/巢之難。而□[富]室△[營]治園圃，稍不如志，即更為之，不少自足。又使穀原子孫讀之，知老輩如香樹

者，為能道穀原始有 / 之難，無忘滹沱麥飴意也。即日新居成，以是詩落之，張老善頌，後又存一格調，何如？ /

長安居自大非易，燕子營巢極苦辛。少米無柴都不管，科頭且作撚髭人。  
子舍如窩傍後聽，西偏架木可為亭。 / 笑他巧婦能炊飯，絕似蠶叢運五丁。<sup>5</sup>  
香樹居士錢陳羣

COLOPHON WRITERS' SEALS

Jiang Shiquan 蔣士銓

*Tiaosheng* 荅/生, square intaglio

*Quan* 銓, square intaglio

Jin Nong 金農

*Jin shi Shoumen* 金氏/壽門, square relief

Min Hua 閔華

*Lianfeng* 廉/風, square intaglio

*Yujing* 玉/井, square intaglio

Qian Chenqun 錢陳群

*Chenquan* 陳/群, square intaglio

*Ji zhai* 集/齋, square relief

Shen Dacheng 沈大成

*xuezi* 學/子, linked-square relief

Wang Chang 王昶

*Zheng xue zhai* 鄭學齋, tall rectangular relief

*Qinde* 琴/德, linked-square relief and intaglio

<sup>5</sup> Qian Chenqun, *Xiangshu zhai shi xuji*, 12:14a–b. The *dou buguan* 都不管 was changed into *duo buguan* 多不管 in the printed edition.



Wang Youzeng 王又曾

*Youzeng* 又曾, split oval relief

*Wang jushi zuo* 王居/士作, square intaglio

Zhang Geng 張庚

[Illegible], square relief

Zhang Sike 張四科

*Zhang Sike* 張/四科, square intaglio

*Yuchuan* 漁/川, square relief

#### COLLECTORS' SEALS

Jiang Zuyi 蔣祖詒 (1902-1973)

*Miyun lou* 密均/樓, square relief

Li Hongqiu 李鴻球 (1899-1978)

*Haitang shuwu* 海棠/書屋, square intaglio

*Liuyang Li Hongqiu zi Yunqing jiancang* 瀏陽/李鴻球/字韻清/鑒藏, square intaglio

Unidentified

*yi cun er cun zhi yu san gan liang gan zhi zhu* 一寸二寸之/魚三竿/兩竿之竹, square intaglio

*Liuchuang miqie zhi yin* 柳窗/祕篋/之印, square relief

[Illegible], square intaglio

#### CATALOGUED

Li Hongqiu, *Jianhua lou shuhua lu* 劍花樓書畫錄, 2.146

## NOTE

A PORTRAIT of the poet Wang Youzeng (1706-1762) by skilled painter Huang Zeng that is textually expanded by Huang's friends in their rhymed colophons on it, this item represents a more realistic world of literati in the eighteenth century. In this world, the symbiotic mutualistic relationship between cultural competence, socio-economic status and political capital that a gentry family was supposed to follow did not function well on the civil service examination market, but merchandized literary skills made minimum physical survival possible in a society of high commercialization.

Native of Xiushui (in today's Jiaxing, Zhejiang Province), Wang Youzeng was born in a common gentry family, whose history prior to his generation was scarcely recorded. He was the only one who earned degrees in his generation. It was not until April 1751 that he was offered a provincial examination title (*juren* degree) thanks to the Qianlong emperor's (r. 1736-1796) appreciation of his literary talent. After his internship of three years in the Grand Secretariat, he succeeded in the metropolitan examination in Beijing in June 1754 and then was appointed a secretary in the Ministry of Punishment.<sup>6</sup> Obviously he did not enjoy this appointment as he was not interested in legal affairs. In early August, he decided to resign with the excuse of supporting his parents in his hometown. During these two months in Beijing, he had lived in a house that he rented and named as *Ding-xin laowu* (the Ding-Xin Rustic House). Before leaving, he requested artist Huang Zeng (ca. 1706 - ca. 1772) to make a painting of his temporary residence. In May 1755 Huang completed this painting. Wang Youzeng arrived home in the winter of 1754, and in 1755-1759 he managed to construct a new house next to the old. He named

<sup>6</sup> *Gaozong Chun Huangdi shilu*, 384.50-2; 463.1006-1; Zhao Erxun et al, *Qing shi gao*, 485.13384.

the new one after his temporary residence in Beijing, that is, the *Ding-Xin Rustic House*. It was completed just before his death in 1762.<sup>7</sup> Serious financial hardship and poverty made impractical his studying home but forced him to make a living by selling his literary skills in the Yangzi delta.<sup>8</sup>

Wang Youzeng brought this painting with him in travelling, as the above colophons were written in different places. He invited friends of literary and artistic reputations to write on it, though not all colophons were transcribed onto this current piece.<sup>9</sup> The painting, together with the inscription and colophons, represents a typical form of “pictures of activities of pleasure” (*xingle tu* 行樂圖), a traditional genre of Chinese portraiture illustrating the painted figure’s life style and daily activities that became popular in the late fifteenth century.<sup>10</sup> It provides different angles of viewing the painted figure from the painter, the figure himself, and the colophon writers who describe their common friend based on their understandings of him and readings of the painting. Its visual and textual syntaxes make possible to fully reveal the painted figure’s cultural and social identities and his *mentalité*.

The painter Huang Zeng represented Wang Youzeng not as an official focusing on his duties but as a poet dedicated to poetry. In the painting, he is contemplating while fingering his goatee, not in official gown and cap but in common robe and bare-headed. In the fenced front yard, a lad is swiping the trail. The gate is closed and along the fence are flowers and bamboo. Behind Wang is a thatched abode in which only a desk and a stool are visible. The abode is adjacent to two tall trees and a few rocks. The misty forest

<sup>7</sup> Wang Chang, *Chuntong tang ji*, “Wan Shouming” 挽受銘, 8:15b–16a.

<sup>8</sup> Wu Tailai, *Yanshan tang ji*, “Ding-xin laowu ji xu” 丁辛老屋集序, ??

<sup>9</sup> For example, Cheng Jinfang, *Mianxing tang shiji*, “Ti Wang Guyuan Ding-xin shuwu tu” 題王穀原丁辛書屋圖 (1755), 9:14b.

<sup>10</sup> Clunas, *Empire of Great Brightness*, 137–159.

behind the abode and the mountain in distant illuminate how isolated this residence is from the city center. According to Huang Zeng, what he painted was Wang's temporary residence in Beijing where Wang served in the Ministry of Punishment.

Wang's friends evidently noticed those details in the painting, as they mentioned in their colophons even though most of them perhaps did not visit his abode. While his friends stressed his literary life in Beijing, Wang confessed that he was not comfortable with his official duties at all. Because his salary was too low to support him and his family, he had to ask loans quite often. He could not access rich libraries as before (see Zhang Sike's colophon). He was bored of court audience and legal administration, and eventually decided to resign with the excuse of supporting his parents (see Wang Youzeng's colophon). His resignation made his family finance worse and not all his family members were happy with his decision (see Wang Chang's colophon).

His devotion to literary life in spite of poverty, however, is highlighted more than his family life in the colophons, mainly because the tension between the literati ideal and the socio-economic reality lent him and his like an aesthetic device to admire their economic status and to justify their literary presence in a tragic way. Until his political career began in 1754, Wang Youzeng had been devoted to studying and the civil service examinations for decades as the majority of other scholars had done, without realizing that he was not interested in political practice but in poetry. His long-term preparations were intended to earn social and political prestige that requested investments from his family, clan and lineage. His success in the civil service examinations as a return was expected to protect and strengthen his family, clan and lineage with his political resource.

Wang Youzeng obviously failed in such a “social reproduction of gentry elites.”<sup>11</sup> As a court official in the rank of 6a, his annual salary totalled about 102.6 taels including regular salary and allowance, without any licit or illicit extra income from his appointment.<sup>12</sup> No record has been found about his landownership and mercantile activities as he actually had never planned for getting a living even when he had opportunities in his official post, but he described in his poems how his wife and sons often suffered lacking of food and clothes.<sup>13</sup> He was trained in classical literacy and literary skills at the powerful Qian family school in his village, and because of poverty his son Wang Fu 王復 (1747-1797) had to start his scholarly career in Yangzhou with one of Wang Youzeng’s friends’ patronage.<sup>14</sup>

His literary community, however, seemed proud of his poetic achievement at the cost of his family life. Most of time he was travelling to make a living with his literary skills and as a result his gentry leadership that he was supposed to assume in his locale after his resignation seemed absent from his writings. Instead he did not hesitate to show his interest in non-Confucian lifestyle. As he admitted in his colophon, he practiced the Daoist method of nourishing life. In another portrait without any setting of landscape, he even pretended to be a lay Buddhist sitting in meditation.<sup>15</sup>

Wang Youzeng’s hesitance in making choices between literature, politics, Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism, together with his preference of literary pursuit

<sup>11</sup> Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China*, 240–256.

<sup>12</sup> Chang, *The Income of the Chinese Gentry*, 11–42, esp. 35.

<sup>13</sup> Wang Youzeng, *Ding-xin laowu ji*, “Ji nei si sou” 寄內四篇, 8:11b–12a.

<sup>14</sup> Wu Yi, *Shoutang wenchao*, “Yanshi xian zhixian Wang jun xingshi jilue” 偃師縣知縣王君行實輯略, 8:15a–b.

<sup>15</sup> Zhang Sike, *Baoxian tang ji*, “Wei Wang bibu Youzeng ti Longqiu yanzuo tu” 為王比部又曾題龍湫宴坐圖, with a note saying “only his pose of sitting in meditation [painted], without setting of landscape.” 2:4a; Wang Youzeng, *Ding-xin laowu ji*, “Zi ti Longqiu yanzuo xiao jing” 自題龍湫宴坐小景, 8:15a–b.

over money and family life, was not ideal but typical for late imperial Chinese literati. In Wang's ages, qualified students surviving the civil service examinations had outnumbered the court's limited demand of officials and other government staffs. Many candidates were on the waiting list, while much more had to return to their local communities. In most of his life, Wang Youzeng actually had kept traveling. Even though he successfully maintained his close relationship with powerful gentry families in his locale, his little involvement into local affairs call for further investigations of how individual literati fulfilled their responsibilities in local socio-economic life. In terms of economic status, Wang Youzeng and his family perhaps were among lower gentry. In spite of his deep involvement into his local literary community, Wang tried to politically, economically and intellectually "marginalize" himself out of the reality in his portrait of activities of pleasure.

Huang Zeng was a professional painter excelling at portraiture and landscape. He was summoned in 1768 to the court, where he made a portrait of the Qianlong emperor to celebrate his sixtieth birthday in 1770. He resigned from the court service in 1772.<sup>16</sup> It remains unknown how Wang Youzeng and Huang Zeng got to know each other, yet as early as 1749 Wang Youzeng was invited to write a colophon to Huang Zeng's self-portrait.<sup>17</sup>

The collectors of this painting prior to the twentieth century cannot be identified because of limited materials. In the twentieth century, Jiang Zuyi (1902-1973) and Li

<sup>16</sup> Lu Fusheng, *Zhongguo shuhua quanshu, Moxiang ju hua shi* 墨香居畫識, 10:717A-B, and *Guochao yuan hua lu* 國朝院畫錄, 11:757A.

<sup>17</sup> Wang Youzeng, *Ding-xin laowu ji*, "Changzhou Huang Fangchuan shu ti zi hua qiujing xiaozhao er shou" 長洲黃方川屬題自畫秋景小照二首, 8:15b.

Hongqiu (1899-1978) successively held it and one of them brought it to Taiwan from Shanghai. Li described it in the catalog of his collection.

#### REFERENCE MATTER

Li Hongqiu 李鴻球. *Jianhua Lou Shuhua Lu* 劍花樓書畫錄. Taipei: Dazhong shuju, 1974.

(Lianbin Dai; updated 25 July 25, 2016)