

Huang Gongwang, *Rivers and Hills Before Rain*, undated, ca. 1340. Handscroll, ink on paper, 26.9 × 106.9 cm. National Museum of China.

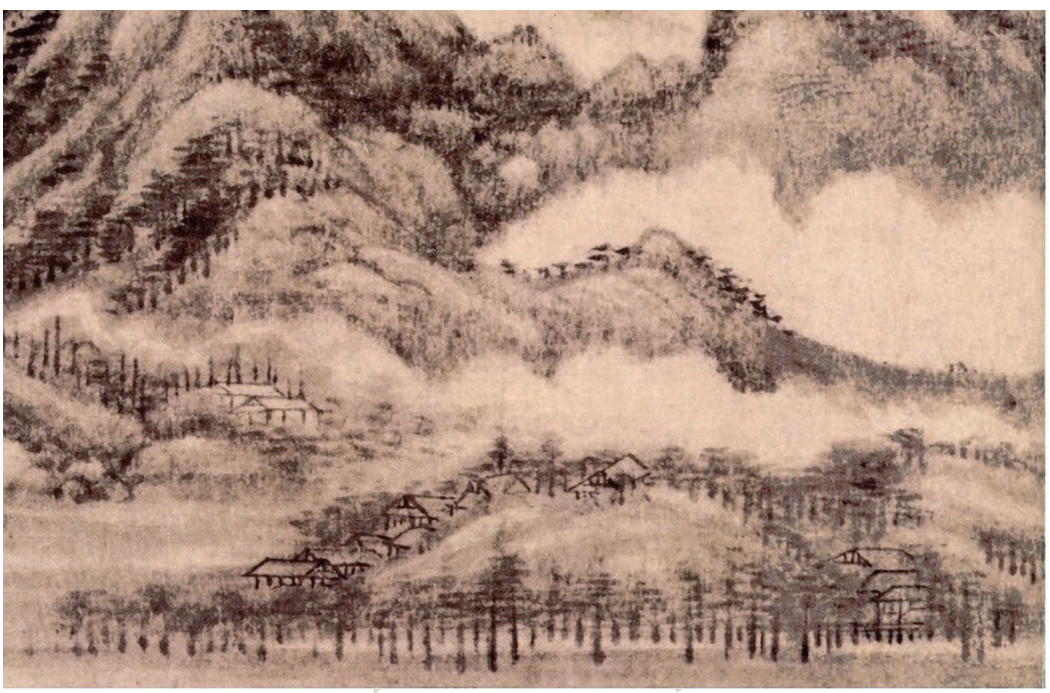


Cao Zhibai, *Rocks and Trees*, undated, ca. 1340. Kidney-shaped fan mounted as hanging scroll, ink and light colors on silk, 27.4 × 27.3 cm. Princeton University Art Museum. Courtesy of the Princeton University Art Museum.

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Detail. The ink technique used to paint the rocks in the foreground of *Rivers and Hills Before Rain*.



Detail of the distant mountains in *Rivers and Hills Before Rain*.

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A Site of Return: Huang Gongwang's *Rivers and Hills Before Rain*

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Abstract: *Rivers and Hills Before Rain*, today in the collection of the National Museum of China, is an ink landscape painting on paper made by Huang Gongwang (1269–1354) around the age of 70. With its composition of two land forms separated by water and its image of cloudy mountains, the handscroll can be seen as typical of literati landscape painting of the late Yuan Dynasty. This study examines the places where Huang Gongwang produced the painting in two stages, analyses his motive for writing the colophon, and the identities and situations of the two collectors. On this basis, it explores the question of site in late Yuan literati landscape painting as exemplified by this artwork. The discussion of site has three aspects: how the painting itself became a place that transcends time and space, allowing the painter to complete its production and inscription in different years and places; how the depicted landscape was recognised as a geographic site of return by different groups of literati; and how, through the adoption of specific styles, techniques and pictorial structures, Huang Gongwang produced an image of landscape as a site of order.

Keywords: Huang Gongwang, *Rivers and Hills Before Rain,* Yuan literati Painting

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Rivers and Hills Before Rain 溪山雨意圖 **(Fig. 1)**, today in the collection of the National Museum of China, is a short (26.9 cm by 106.5 cm) landscape handscroll on paper painted by Huang Gongwang (1269–1354) while he resided in Pingjiang平江 (modern Suzhou 蘇州), ca. 1340.[1] Left without an inscription, it later came into the hands of another collector, at whose request Huang completed the painting and inscribed it in 1344.[2] Given that

1. Huang Gongwang's colophon of the painting, written in 1344, states that it was painted 'several years ago'. Based on this information, scholars have deduced that the painting was first painted when Huang was approximately 70 years old, around 1339 to 1340. For the study, see Fan Yiwen 樊禕雯, "Yuandai Huang Gongwang *Xishan yuyi tu* jiancang kao 元代黃公望《溪山雨意圖》鑒藏考 (Research on Connoisseurship and Collection of Yuan Dynasty Huang Gongwang's Painting *Intimations of Rain Among Mountains and Streams*)," in *Zhongguo guojia bowuguan guankan* 中國國家博物館館刊 (Journal of National Museum of China), no. 11 (2017), p. 43.
2. The present painting was acquired by Sun Yuwen 孫毓汶 (1833–1899) and donated to the National Museum of China (the former Chinese History Museum) by his descendant, Sun Niantai (孫念台). Modern scholars, including Xu Bangda, Chen Yunru, Fan Yiwen, and Bi You, have conducted detailed research on the painting's inscriptions, seals, collections, textual records, and authenticity. According to Xu Bangda's research, four paintings entitled *Rivers and Hills before Rain* are in the textual record, three of which are documented in *Shiqu baoji chubian* 石渠寶笈.初編, but are copies. The present painting is not recorded in *Shiqu baoji chubian*, but is recorded by An Qi (安岐, 1683–?) in *Moyuan huiguan* 墨緣彙觀 and also matches the description of a painting with the same title in *Daguan lu* 大觀錄 by Wu Sheng 吳升 (ca. 1639–1713). Xu concluded that the present painting is an authentic work by Huang Gongwang. For the study, see Xu Bangda 徐邦達, "Huang Gongwang *Xishan yuyi tu* zhenwei si ben kao—*Gushuhua jiankao* zhiyi 黃公望《溪山雨意圖》真偽四本考--《古書畫鑒考》之一 (The Study on the Authenticity of the Four Versions of Huang Gongwang's *Rivers and Hills Before Rain*—Part 1 of *The Connoisseurship Study of Ancient Paintings*)," in *Wenwu* 文物 (Cultural Relics), no. 5 (1973), pp. 23, 62–65. Chen Yunru 陳韻如 has suggested that the present painting is probably the second version documented in *Shiqu baoji chubian*, and that the editor of *Shiqu baoji* at the time did not consider it the best version. Chen has also noted that the painting retains the characteristics that are indicative of Huang Gongwang's earlier works. For the study, see Ho Ch'uan-hsin 何傳馨 ed., *Shanshui hebi: Huang Gongwang yu Fuchun shanju tu tezhan* 黃公望與富春山居圖特展 (Landscape Reunited: Huang Gongwang and "Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains") (Taipei: Guoli gugong bowuyuan 國立故宮博物院 [National Palace Museum], 2011), p. 310. Fan Yiwen, who agrees that the painting is authentic, has shown that it was part of the Qing imperial collection during the period 1745 to 1791 but was removed from the collection around 1791 to 1793. The Liaoning Provincial Museum currently holds a facsimile version of *Rivers and Hills Before Rain*, which is documented in *Shiqu baoji chubian*. Another copy was auctioned by China Guardian, and the third, classified as an 'upper-class second,' is currently unaccounted for. For the study, see Fan Yiwen, "Yuandai Huang Gongwang *Xishan yuyi tu* jiancang kao," pp. 39–65. Bi You's research has confirmed a close match between the present painting and the record.... in *Moyuan huiguan*, as well as in *Shuhua tiba ji* 書畫題跋記. For the study, see Bi You 畢游, "Huang Gongwang *Xishan yuyi tu* ji moben guwenxian zhulu kaolue 黃公望《溪山雨意圖》及摹本古文獻著錄考略 (Research on Ancient Literature about Huang Gongwang's *Intimations of Rain Among Mountains and Streams* and the Copies)," in *Zhongguo guojia bowuguan guankan* 中國國家博物館

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Huang Gongwang painted *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* around his seventieth year, it is a late work. However, it is nearly impossible for informed modern viewers to avoid viewing the painting through the lens of *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains* (*Fuchun shanju tu* 富春山居圖, 1347–1350). The fact that the later handscroll is famous for its formal invention makes it hard to view the earlier scroll as innovative. More recent scholarly discussion of *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* is along similar lines: there is a tendency to treat the painting as ordinary, because it is a pre-*Fuchun Mountains* work by Huang, and therefore is assumed to display a lack of creative ambition, with its stylistic conservatism reflecting the painter's still immature technique. In the perspective of a linear development, the assumption is made that Huang Gongwang was in a stage leading up to *Dwelling in Fuchun Mountains*—at which point he would emerge as a truly original creator, his work having previously been more generic. Although John Hay also inscribes the painting within a developmental framework, he does so in terms that simultaneously point in a different direction:

> Huang Kung-wang's inscription on this early scroll draws attention specifically to the paper, ink and ink stone. Certainly there is a great variety of ink tone and texture in this work which makes it profoundly a painting in the paper style. But this richness has not yet fully expanded into space and although this is predominantly a textural reality, the space is intermediate between a syncretic Sung space and the fully textural space of the 'Fu-ch'un Mountains'.[3]

Hay astutely observes that the distinctiveness of *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* lies in the fact that Huang Gongwang took a divergent approach from *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains* in dealing with the relationship between the materiality of paper, ink, and brush and the virtual world of the painting. This divergence provides a starting point for investigating the painting

館刊 (Journal of National Museum of China), no. 11 (2017), pp. 66–78. The main dissenting view is that of Huang Qiaoqiao, who argues on the basis of the ink technique that the present painting is a Ming or early Qing copy. For the study, see Huang Qiaoqiao 黃喬喬, "Huang Gongwang de 'Xishan'—guanyu Huang Gongwang zaoqi fengge de yanjiu 黃公望的「溪山」—關於黃公望早期風格的研究 (The "Xishan" of Huang Gongwang---a study of Huang Gongwang's early style)," (MA thesis, Zhongyang meishu xueyuan 中央美術學院 [China Central Academy of Fine Arts], 2020). Here, I follow the analysis of Xu Bangda and the prevailing consensus among art historians that the painting preserves essential artistic features of Huang Gongwang's original work, making it an important source for studying his techniques.

3. A. John Hay, "Huang Kung-wang's 'Dwelling in the Fu-ch'un Mountains', The Dimensions of a Landscape," (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1978), p. 213.

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that may prove more fruitful than attributing it a place in a predetermined developmental narrative. To paraphrase Hay, the artist sought to establish a perfectly balanced intermediary space of experience between the materiality of the ink, the brush, and the paper and the virtual pictorial world.

This characteristic of the painting may help to explain why Ni Zan 倪瓚 (1301–1374), in a colophon written in 1374, claims it to be one of Huang's most successful works. More than twenty years after the completion of *Dwelling in Fuchun Mountains*, the earlier work still satisfied the demanding contemporary viewer. The disjunction between modern judgments about the painting and Ni Zan's raises the suspicion that modern commentators have projected onto *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* a mode of comparativist viewing that depends on the epistemological assumption of teleological development toward a fully achieved style. Attempting to see the painting as the painter and viewers of the Yuan dynasty saw it, as this study aims to do, may therefore be a necessary task.

I. Inscribing Time into the Painting

In the autumn of 1344, when he was 76, Huang Gongwang encountered the painting *Rivers and Hills Before Rain*, which he had painted a few years earlier in Pingjiang. At the end of the handscroll, he wrote an inscription **(Fig. 2)**:

> This painting is from years ago when I was temporarily residing in Pingjiang at Guangxiao 光孝 [Monastery]. Lu Mingben 陸明本 brought me two sheets of high-quality paper and, using a Datuo 大沱 ink stone to grind ink made by Guo Zhonghou 郭忠厚, I was inspired and casually painted a work. Before it was completed, the painting was taken away by a *haoshizhe* 好事者. Now, it has come into the possession of Shichang 世長.[4] In the tenth month of the fourth year of Zhizheng 至正 (1344), I came to stay at Xi 溪 and complete its conception. By then, I was already seventy-six years old. As the moonlight began to emerge in the early evening of the third day of the eleventh month, I recorded this.[5]

4. In the original colophon, Huang Gongwang used the characters *fu wei* (復為) to describe Shichang's collecting. This term rarely appears in Huang's colophons referring to the collection of paintings. Therefore, it may be hypothesized that *fu wei* in this context suggests the "reappearance" of the painting within a specific literati circle after a period of "loss."

5. "此是僕數年前寓平江光孝時，陸明本將佳紙二幅用大陀石研郭忠厚墨一時信手作之。此紙未畢已為好事者取去。今復為世長所得。至正四年十月來溪上足其意。時年七十有六。是歲十一月哉生明識。" For the information of the original Chinese colophon, see Ho Ch'uan-hsin ed., *Shanshui hebi: Huang Gongwang yu Fuchun shanju tu tezhan*, p. 310. Translations by the author unless otherwise noted.

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The text begins with the artist's recollections, detailing how, while residing at the Guangxiao Monastery in Pingjiang in years past, he complied with the request of a certain Lu Mingben to create the painting. However, before it could be completed, the work was taken away by a *haoshizhe*.[6] The narrative then switches to the present: the painting has been acquired by Shichang, prompting the painter to visit a place called Xi, in the tenth month 1344 to finish the painting. At that time, Huang Gongwang had reached the age of 76. The colophon was inscribed on the third day of the eleventh month.

The writing style is restrained, adhering to the established conventions of inscriptions, documenting the making process of the painting and how the work passed between various collectors. The owner of the work, Shichang, can be identified as Cao Yong 曹永 (1303–1348), the son of Huang Gongwang's friend Cao Zhibai 曹知白 (1271–1355).[7] Hu Fuhui's research has shown that Cao Yong's family belonged to what in the Ming period would come to be known as the Cao clan 曹族 of Xiaozheng 小蒸, a Huating 華亭 (modern Shanghai 上海) town that during the Yuan period was known informally as Zhenxi 貞溪/貞谿.[8] It was common knowledge among the literati of the time that many of the residents of Zhenxi were scholars and refined literati.[9] Cao Zhibai lived there and built the Cao Garden 曹園

6. Here I follow Jonathan Hay's interpretation. The term *haoshizhe* is generally used by artists in a distancing way to describe an unnamed person of means outside their social circle and social class who is an afficionado of painting, but whose involvement may be felt as bothersome. It is as likely to refer to an art dealer as to a rich or powerful person.
7. For a study of the identity of Shichang, see Fan Yiwen, "Yuandai Huang Gongwang *xishan yuyi tu* jiancang kao," pp. 44, 45.
8. In gazetteers and poems about Xi of Zhenxi, the Chinese characters for "Xi 溪" and "Xi 谿" are can used interchangeably. For an analysis of how literati painters of the Yuan dynasty employed these characters in their inscriptions, see Yang Dianxu 楊典昫, "Chuantong shanshuihua zhong 'Xi (Xi) shan' yixiang shijie 傳統山水畫中「溪（谿）山」意像試解 (A Study on the Interpretation of the Image of 'Xishan' in Traditional Landscape Painting)," in *Meishu wenxian* 美術文獻 (Fine Arts Literature), no. 11 (2022), p. 59. For a study of Cao Zhibai's biography and his residence, see Hu Fuhui 胡富輝, "Cao Zhibai yu Songjiang wenren zhi hudong—yi *Qunfeng xueji tu* wei zhongxin 曹知白與松江文人之互動—以《群峰雪霽圖》為中心 (The Interaction between Cao Zhibai and the Literati of Songjiang - A Study Focusing on *Mountains Covered with Snow*)," (MA thesis, Nanjing shifan daxue 南京師範大學 [Nanjing Normal University], 2021), pp. 5–28.
9. For a description of the Xiaozheng Town 小蒸鎮 (Zhenxi), the record in *Zhede Songjiang fuzhi* is that: "The place Xiaozheng gathers the scenic beauty of the Nine Peaks and Three Waters. Many of its residents are scholars and refined literati, earning it the elegant name—Zhenxi. [小蒸]地挹九峯三泖之勝，居此者多文人韻士，因美其名為貞谿。" See *Zhengde Songjiang fuzhi* 正德松江府志 (1512), Zhongguo difangzhi jicheng, Shanben fangzhi ji, diyibian 中國地方志集成.善本方志輯.第一編 (Collection of Gazetteers of China, Rare Books of Gazetteers, First Section) (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe 鳳凰出版社, 2014), p. 338.

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. Su Changling (蘇昌齡, fl. fourteenth century) and Shao Hengzhen (邵亨貞, 1309–1401) both wrote poems about Cao's residence there, and Shao's poem refers to Cao Zhibai as "the old man of Xi" (Xiweng 溪翁).[10] In a poem by Dong Ji 董紀 (1368–1398) praising Cao Zhibai's paintings, he writes: "The man of Zhenxi is like jade; his poetry and paintings are incomparable in their purity. Even now, the people of Xi 溪上人 do not spit on the water there [*out of respect for Cao Zhibai's integrity*]."[11] In Cao Zhibai's social circle, Zhenxi could be abbreviated as Xi; for example, at a gathering, talking about the travels of Qian Nanjin (錢南金, fl. fourteenth century), a relative of Cao Zhibai, Shao Hengzhen uses "back to Xi 還溪上" to refer to his return to Zhenxi.[12] It can therefore be speculated that Huang Gongwang's "coming to Xi 來溪上" does not refer to the painter's visit to a specific body of water, but rather to a specific site, namely the place where Cao Zhibai lived in reclusion at Zhenxi in Huating, Cao Yong's hometown.

Cao Yong was a man of considerable erudition and versatility from a young age. He was active in literati circles, gaining a reputation for his calligraphy and expertise in appraising rubbings of ancient calligraphy, and was an official until his death.[13] Cao's request to Huang Gongwang to add an inscription to the painting thus seems like a normal collecting event.

10. In the poem "Mulanhua man 木蘭花慢 (Lyric Poem used 'Magnolia Rhyme')", Shao Hengzhen wrote: "Su Changling visited Cao Yunweng's former residence in Zhenxi and composed a lyric poem, expressing his admiration for him. 蘇昌齡過曹雲翁貞溪故居，賦詞致慕蘭之感。" and "On my visit to Xiweng's retreat, I found the scenery no less enchanting than that of Wangchuan. 訪溪翁隱處，渾不減，輞川西。" See Shao Hengzhen 邵亨貞, "Mulanhua man 木蘭花慢 (Lyric Poem used 'Magnolia Rhyme')," *Yishu cixuan* 蟻術詞選, in Ruan Yuan 阮元 ed., *Weiwan biecang* 宛委別藏, Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe 江蘇古籍出版社, 1988), pp. 39, 40.
11. "貞溪人如玉，詩畫清無比。至今溪上人，不唾溪中水。" See Dong Ji 董紀, "Cao Yunxi hua 曹雲西畫 (The Painting of Cao Yunxi)," in *Xijiao xiaoduan ji* 西郊笑端集 (The Complete Collected Writings of the Western Suburb), collected in Chen Gaohua 陳高華 ed., *Yuandai huajia shiliao huibian* 元代畫家史料彙編 (Collection of Historical Records of Yuan Dynasty Painters) (Hangzhou: Hangzhou chubanshe 杭州出版社, 2004), p. 605.
12. In the poem "Huihe lianju 會合聯句 (Composed Poem)," Shao Hengzhen said: "In the first year of Zhizheng (1341), I stayed in Hulin for three months, while Nanjin was studying at the tea monastery. At the beginning of the tenth month, I returned home, and Nanjin also went back to Xishang. That night, we sat together, conversing at length, feeling that such a reunion should not go unrecorded. Thus, we composed a forty-rhyme poem to commemorate this gathering. 至正改元，余寓虎林三閱月，南金授業茶院。孟冬余歸，而南金亦還溪上，夜坐縱談，念不可無述，以紀此會四十韻。"Shao Hengzhen 邵亨貞, *Yishu shixuan* 蟻術詩選, in Ruan Yuan 阮元 ed., *Wanwei biecang* 宛委別藏 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe 江蘇古籍出版社, 1988), p. 145.
13. See the information of the epitaph of Cao Yong in Shao Hengzhen 邵亨貞, *Yechu ji* 野處集 (Siku quanshu zhenben chuji 四庫全書珍本初集, Shanghai shangwu yinying wenyuange ben 上海商務影印文淵閣本, 1935), *juan* 3, pp. 25, 26.

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Why, then, did Huang make so much of Lu Mingben's original request several years earlier? From Wang Meng's 王蒙 (1308–1385) "Preface to *Poems on Visiting Huqiu Hill*" (*You Huqiu shan shi xu* 遊虎丘山詩序), we learn that Lu Mingben was a certain Lu Lun 陸崙, who was part of Wang's social circle around 1340:[14]

> Lu You 陸友 (Youren 友仁, 1290–1338) of Wu Prefecture 吳郡,[15] Lu Lun (Mingben), Zhang Wen 張雯 (Zizhao 子昭, fl. fourteenth century), and Wang Meng 王蒙 (Shuming 叔明) ascended Guxu tai 姑胥臺 together. … Suddenly, Ge Kejiu (葛可久, fl. fourteenth century) also arrived. Mingben casually sat cross-legged on a rock and began discussing Chan with Ge. The two engaged in a heated debate, arguing so passionately that their voices grew loud with laughter and spirited exchanges. If the great master Daosheng (竺道生, 355–434) were aware of this scene from the afterlife, he would likely be rolling on the ground with laughter. Later, Wang Meng recorded the event, and each of them inscribed a poem following a shared rhyme scheme on the

14. Regarding the identity of Lu Mingben, it has been proposed that he was Lu Fu 陸復, who lived in Suzhou. However, Lu Fu lived much later than Huang Gongwang. The earliest information about him is included in *Huashi Huiyao* 畫史會要 by Zhu Mouyin (朱謀垔, 1584–1628), where his information is listed as part of a group of Ming Dynasty painters. See Zhu Mouyin 朱謀垔, *Huashi Huiyao* 畫史會要 (Ming Chongzhen ke Qingchu Zhu Tonghong chong xiu ben 明崇禎刻清初朱統鋐重修本, 1644–1735), *juan* 4, p. 19. Lu Shihua (陸時化, 1714–1779) records that Lu Fu once gave Shen Zhou (沈周, 1427–1509) a long scroll of plum blossoms he painted and that Shen Zhou and Tang Yin (唐寅, 1470–1524) both wrote poems about it. See Lu Shihua 陸時化, *Wu Yue suo jian shuhua lu* 吳越所見書畫錄, punctuation collating works by Xu Deming 徐德明 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 2015), pp. 399–401. In addition, the Palace Museum has collected a painting of *Lu Fu meishua juan* 陸復梅花卷 *(Lu Fu Plum Blossom Scroll*) produced in the seventh year of the Zhengde 正德 reign (1512). The digital information regarding the painting can be accessed through the website of Gugong Minghua Ji 故宮名畫記 (Record of the Famous Paintings in the Collection of the Palace Museum). For the further information, see the painting through the following link:
https://minghuaji.dpm.org.cn/paint/detail?id=51f09d638c304de79ff040e110d7786e (Accessed July 28, 2024)

15. In this essay, Lu You (陸友, 1290–1338) is recorded as "Lu You (Youren) of Wu Prefecture", which is consistent with Lu You's habit of referring to himself in other texts. One possible reason for this is that he was born in Wu Prefecture, but the surname Lu is a common name in the region, and there were also Lu clansmen with the same courtesy name from other regions, such as a certain Lu Youren from the Lu clan in Huating. For a study on this topic, see Shen Jie 盛潔, "*Yanbei zazhi* zuozhe Lu You de biaozi, shengping ji qi shuji kao 《研北雜誌》作者陸友的表字、生平及其書跡考 (The Research on the Author of *Yanbei zazhi*, Lu You's Courtesy Name, Biography and Inscriptions), " in *Meishu xuebao* 美術學報 (Art Journal), no. 5 (2022), pp. 27–34.

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scroll. The date was the 28th day of the second month in the Gengchen 庚辰 year of the Zhiyuan 至元 era (1340).[16]

In addition to participating in this trip to Huqiu outside Suzhou, Lu Lun was also once the recipient, under the name Lu Mingben, of a poem by Ni Zan "Sent to Lu Mingben in Request for Wine":

The willows hang low, the fragrant grass is green; The scenery in Xizhuang西莊 resembles that of Huating.
By day, [you] practice the Senior Subaltern's *Secret Method for Ascending to Perfection* (登真隱決 by Xu Mi 許謐, 305–376); At night, [you] recite Xuwang's *Inner Effulgences of the Yellow Court* (黃庭內景經 by the Primordial Sovereign of Purple Voidness Wei Huacun 紫虛元君魏華存, 252–334)
[Your] name was inscribed on the jade register when you received the Purple Terrace ordination certificate; Now, with more inscriptions appearing on the palace, the moss seems to have grown even more luxuriantly.
Ashamed of my shallow practice in the art of purity and emptiness, I am in search of a hundred bottles of wine brewed from pine resin.[17]

References to the recitation of the specific scriptures and the practice of methods to preserve health convey the image of Lu Lun as a serious and experienced Daoist practitioner. The poem also reveals clearly that Lu Lun was an ordained Daoist, and his philosophical interests extended to Chan Buddhism.

Despite his association with Wang Meng, Ni Zan, Lu You, and Ge Kejiu, Lu Lun appears to have lived in Huating, Cao Yong's hometown and a place of reclusion for Cao's father Cao Zhibai, with some of whose close friends Lu was associated. The Cao Garden

16. "吳郡陸友友仁，陸侖明本，張雯子昭，王蒙叔明，共登姑胥臺……忽葛可久至，明本箕踞石砑對之談禪，互相詆遂錯吋嘯，生公有知，寧不絕倒已而……王蒙遂述其事而各寫分韻詩於後雲時後，至元庚辰二月廿八日也。" See Wang Meng 王蒙, "You Huqiu shan shi xu 遊虎丘山詩序 (Preface to *Poems on Visiting Huqiu Hill*)," Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀, *Youzhi xubian* 遊志續編,in Ruan Yuan 阮元 ed., *Wanwei biecang* 宛委別藏, Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe 江蘇古籍出版社, 1988), pp. 136–139.

17. "楊柳低昂蕙草青，西莊風物似華亭。日修長史登真訣，夜誦虛王內景經。玉牒初標紫臺籍，石苔應長新宮銘。自慙服食清虛甚，為覓鬆肪釀百瓶。" See Ni Zan 倪瓚, "Ji Lu Mingben suojiu 寄陸明本索酒 (Sent to Lu Mingben in Request for Wine)," in *Qingbige ji* 清閟閣集, punctuation collating works by Jiang Xinyou 江興祐 (Hangzhou: Xiling yinshe chubanshe 西泠印社出版社, 2010), p. 154. Thanks to Yudong Wang for pointing out the implications of the text to me.

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built by Cao Zhibai in Zhenxi in Huating functioned as a prominent gathering place for the literati of Jiangnan during that period.[18] Lu Lun's connection to Huating is implied in Ni Zan's poems. In "Sent to Lu Mingben in Request for Wine," Ni writes: "The willows hang low, the fragrant grass is green; /The scenery in Xizhuang resembles that of Huating."[19] The poet presupposes that Lu Lun could empathically envision the willows and orchids of Xizhuang through every blade of grass and tree he knew in Huating. In another poem, Ni compares the literary talent of his friend to that of a celebrated Huating (Yunjian 雲間) scholar of the Western Jin dynasty, Lu Yun 陸雲 (262–303).[20]

The epitaph for Cao Yong written by Shao Hengzhen records that Cao Yong was the only son of Cao Zhibai and that his wife was from the Lu family (陸氏) in Huating.[21] Not only was Cao Yong related to the Lu clan in Huating by marriage, but it is generally agreed that Huang Gongwang's original surname was Lu, though the continuing uncertainties regarding the geographical location of his biological father's family make it impossible to know at present whether he was related to Lu Lun.[22] Whether he had a connection to the Huating Lu clan or not, Huang Gongwang frequently participated in literary gatherings in Huating and maintained close relations with literati who lived there, including Cao Zhibai, Yang Weizhen 楊維楨 (1296–1370), and Wang Feng 王逢 (1319–1388). Huating was the first place he retired to after his release from prison and his departure from officialdom in 1319.[23] Moreover,

18. Hu Fuhui, "Cao Zhibai yu Songjiang wenren zhi hudong—yi *Qunfeng xueji tu* wei zhongxin," pp. 5–28.
19. See Ni Zan 倪瓚, "Ji Lu Mingben suojiu," in *Qingbige ji*, p. 154.
20. In the poem, Ni wrote: "Compose poetic essays like Yunjian Lu and write poems as Yexia Liu. 作賦雲間陸，能詩鄴下劉。" See Ni Zan 倪瓚, "Zeng Liu Daoyi bing si Lu Mingben 贈劉道益並似陸明本 (Sending to Liu Daoyi and also Showing to Lu Mingben)," in *Qingbige ji*, p. 57.
21. For the information, see the epitaph of Cao Yong, in Shao Hengzhen, *Yechu ji, juan* 3, pp. 25, 26.
22. Huang's Lu family origins are recorded in *Lugui bu* 錄鬼簿 (*Register of Ghosts*, ca. 1330) by Zhong Sicheng 鐘嗣成 and in *Nancun chuogeng lu* 南村輟耕錄 (*Retirement to the Countryside*) by Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀 (1329–ca. 1410). For the textual records, see Wen Zhaotong 溫肇桐, *Huang Gongwang shiliao* 黃公望史料 (Shanghai: Shanghai renming meishu chubanshe 上海人民美術出版社, 1963), p. 35.
23. For the activities of Huang Gongwang around 1319, see Zhang Guangbin 張光賓, "Yuan si dajia nianbiao [shang] 元四大家年表 [上] (The Chronology of the Four Great Masters of the Yuan [section 1])," in *Guoli Taiwan daxue meishushi yanjiu jikan* 國立臺灣大學美術史研究集刊 (Taida Journal of Art History), no. 9 (2000), pp. 156–159. For Huang Gongwang's interaction with the literati of the Songjiang area, see Meng Zhaohan 孟召漢,"Huang Gongwang yu Yuanmo Songjiang wenrenquan zhi hudong—yi *Jiuzhu fengcui tu* wei zhongxin 黃公望與元末松江文人圈之互動—以《九珠峰翠圖》為中心 (Huang Gongwang's Interaction with the Songjiang Literati Circle at the End of the Yuan Dynasty: A Study Focusing on the Painting *Nine Pearly Peaks in Green*)," in *Meishu xuebao* 美術學報 (Art Journal), no. 4 (2019), pp. 35–39.

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Huang lived in Huating for a long period between 1341 and 1344. His 1342 inscription to the painting *Iris Epidendrum Studio* (*Zhilanshi tu* 芝蘭室圖) notes that he was then living at the Mysterious True temple (Xuanzhen yuan 玄真院) in Yunjian.[24] In Huating in 1344, about a month before he added the colophon to the painting of *Rivers and Hills Before Rain*, he inscribed a painting by an unidentified artist, providing more information about his recent whereabouts:

> I stayed in Yunjian for three or four years, often depressed. Whenever friends or acquaintances have brought silk or paper and asked for a painting, I have usually been unable to fulfil their wishes, but they have never blamed me. I don't know who painted this, but I find its artistic interest resonant. It came into the possession of Boxin 伯新, who had it mounted and brought it to me, asking for an inscription. As I examined it carefully, I realized that its excellence lies not in the brushwork but in the exceptional quality of the inkwork; this is what makes it good. In the fourth year of Zhizheng (1344), on the 29th day of the eighth month, this inscription was written by Dachi daoren 大痴道人 at the age of seventy-six.[25]

It seems very likely, therefore, that Huang Gongwang was living in Huating at the time he wrote the inscription on *Rivers and Hills Before Rain*, and that rather than Cao bringing the handscroll to him, Huang had been invited to stay at the Cao Garden at Zhenxi, perhaps with the expectation that he would complete the unfinished work.

According to an examination by Xu Bangda, *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* as we see it today includes some additions to the rocks and trees in the foreground made at the time of the inscription.[26] Nonetheless, the specific overlapping relationships between the right part of the picture, the foreground tree on the riverbank, the flat shoals, and the mountain in the distance merge one into the next to create an overall orderly drawing effect. It seems clear that

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24. For the record of the inscription, see it in Wang Keyu 汪砢玉 ed., *Wangshi shanhuwang minghua tiba* 汪氏珊瑚網名畫題跋 (Wucheng Zhangshi ke shiyuan congshu ben 烏程張氏刻適園叢書本, 1913–1917), *juan* 19, p. 5.
25. "僕留雲間三四載，每常落魄，凡親識朋舊出絹楮以徵惡畫，往往不能奉命，而亦不我責也。此本不知為誰所作，意趣頗合，而為伯新所得，裝池而見示，且俾題其上。某切諦之，非筆之工，乃墨之佳，而浥之善耳。至正四年歲八月廿有九日，大癡道人題，時年七衰有六。" See "Dachi *Xishan xiaojing* 大癡溪山小景 (The Inscription of Dachi's *Intimate Scenery of Rivers and Hills*)," in Zhang Chou 張丑, *Qinghe shuhua fang* 清河書畫舫, punctuation collating works by Xu Deming 徐德明 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 2011), p. 573.
26. See Xu Bangda,"Huang Gongwang *Xishan yuyi tu* zhenwei si ben kao—*Gushuhua jiankao* zhiyi," p. 62.

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the painter designed these visual elements at the same time and made a unified consideration about the order in which they were drawn. One may speculate that the unnamed *haoshizhe* took the painting from Huang when it "was not yet finished" because the primary visual subject, basic composition, form, and content of the painting had already been completed, and the work was in a state where it could eventually accommodate a personalized dedication by Huang to a recipient other than Lu Lun.

For Huang Gongwang, allowing a painting to leave his hands and then reencountering it many years later and writing about the history of its creation was not a unique occurrence. On the 15th day of the fourth month in 1342, for example, Wang Meng showed Huang the painting after Dong Yuan' (董源, d. 962) *Summer Mountains* (*Xiashan tu* 夏山圖), that Huang had painted in Suzhou many years before:

> Dong Beiyuan's 董北苑 *Summer Mountain* was once in Mr Wenmin's 文敏公 collection. I had the chance to see it many times, and it is deeply etched in my mind. Later, it was taken away by a *haoshizhe*, and I never saw it again. However, I made great efforts to hold on to the memory, even dreaming about it. One day, while travelling in Gusu 姑蘇 with friends, I tried to recall and recreate its model, exhausting myself, but my work only captured a fragment of its true spirit. Today, this work has come into Mingshu's 明叔 possession and entered his collection. It is worth contemplating its intent and imagining its origins. Now I am very old and my vision is failing; I would not be able to do something like this again. Written by Dachi daoren on the full moon day of early summer, in the Renwu 壬午 year of Zhizheng.[27]

There was a consensus among painters and collectors at the time that a painting could be inscribed by the painter much later, even many years after the completion of the work and multiple transfers of ownership. On the one hand, the deferred or additional inscription "completed" the painting, facilitating transactions and personal collecting. On the other hand, a deferred inscription process forced the painter to reflect on the passage of time.

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27. "董北苑《夏山圖》，曩在文敏公所，時時見之，入目著心。後為好事者取去，不可復見。然而極力追憶，至形夢寐。他日遊姑蘇，與友人作此，追想模範，盡意為之，略得仿佛，掛一漏萬。今歸之明叔，獲在收藏之列，但可觀其意思而想像其根源耳。然而今老甚，目力昏花，又不復能作矣。時至正壬午首夏望日，大癡道人書。" See Wu Sheng 吳升, *Daguan lu* 大觀錄, collected in Lu Fusheng 盧輔聖 ed., *Zhongguo shuhua quanshu* 中國書畫全書 (Encyclopedia of the Premodern Writing on Chinese Calligraphy and Painting), vol. 8 (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe 上海書畫出版社, 1994), p. 489. Regarding Wang Meng's courtesy name, this version of the text records it as 'Mingshu', which may be an error resulting from woodblock printing.

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When adding this inscription, Huang realized that he and the painting existed in two different temporal realms: whereas the painting preserved the memory of Dong Yuan's great work and commemorated a visit to Suzhou with friends, he himself was physically aging, approaching the end of his life. A deferred inscription had different stakes from an inscription written immediately after the completion of a painting. Inscribing a just-completed painting before giving it to Ban Weizhi (班惟志, fl. 1330), Huang writes: "In the third month of spring of the ninth year of Zhizheng (1349), I painted the snow-covered mountains for Yan'gong 彥功. It started snowing heavily when I started painting. Then, it snowed two or three times until the painting was completed — a truly mysterious event. Dachi daoren, at the age of eighty-one, inscribed this text to commemorate the date."[28] The motivation for an artist's immediate inscription on the physical body of the artwork was to preserve the moment and the event through writing. But when there was an insurmountable temporal distance between the painted image and the inscription that the painter wrote, the painter had to use a different writing strategy.

Beginning with the memory of when the painting was made and ending with a description of the current situation, the inscription to *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* is punctuated with words that indicate temporality, including "several years ago," which belongs to personal memory, "year, month, and day," which refer to calendar time, and even "age," which refers to the time of individual biological existence. As far as is known, Huang Gongwang left the earliest record of his age on a work in 1341, when he was 73 years old **(Fig. 3)**.[29] Perhaps it was because death loomed on the horizon of his life that in the eighth, tenth, and eleventh month of 1344, the painter repeatedly inscribed on paintings his age of 76.[30] Unlike recording the date of production of a painting using years and months, when

28. "至正九年春三月，為彥功作雪山，次春雪大作，凡兩三次，直至畢工方止，亦奇事也。大癡道人時年八十有一，書此以記歲月云。" This inscription is from the painting *Jiufeng xueji tu* 九峰雪霽圖 (*Nine Peaks Clearing after Snow*) in the collection of the Palace Museum. For further information on the inscription, visit the painting through the link provided by the Museum: https://www.dpm.org.cn/collection/paint/234602.html (Accessed July 28, 2024).
29. This inscription is from the painting *Tianchi shibi tu* 天池石壁圖 (*Stone Cliff at the Pond of Heaven*) in the collection of the Palace Museum, and it is written when the artist was 73 years old. For further information on the inscription, visit the painting through the link provided by the Palace Museum: https://www.dpm.org.cn/collection/paint/229315.html (Accessed July 28, 2024).
30. Huang Gongwang inscribed *Intimate Scenery of Rivers and Hills* in the eighth month of 1344. He also inscribed *Wu Daozi hongyaxian tu* 吳道子洪崖仙圖 (*Painting of Hongya Immortal*) in the tenth month of the same year, see the record of the inscription in Zhang Chou, *Qinghe shuhua fang*, p. 196. And in the eleventh month of the same year, Huang wrote the inscription for *Rivers and Hills Before Rain*.

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Huang marked the distance between himself and death by recording his age on a painting, he tied his life to the materiality of the artwork. And by adding an inscription to an old painting of his, he associated a time of loss and the names of other people with the material body of the work. This act, which can easily seem merely instrumental, serving only to record the transaction and collecting of paintings or the gathering of literati, turned the painting itself into a site, intentionally or unintentionally. Different temporalities could accumulate in this materialized site, which was constantly open to the present or to future collectors who owned and visited it, while at the same time accommodating the memory of earlier associations with the painting. As for those things that could be spared from the passage of time and enter the space-time of the art object, the writer of the deferred inscription had the last word. Thus, rather than being static or fixed, the site itself can transcend physical space and remain incomplete. Its significance was transformed, rediscovered, and reimagined through the viewer's perception and recollection. Whether Huang Gongwang was recalling Lu Lun and the process of making *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* or describing the painting's transition of ownership as a "lost and found" event, his "reparative" text enables Lu Lun, who never managed to possess the painting, to coexist in the historical world of *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* alongside Cao Yong and the 76-year-old painter himself.

II. Pictorial Place: Geography and Imagination

Lu Lun's desire to own a work by Huang Gongwang, and possibly a work with a specific theme, is reflected in the painting materials he gave to Huang as part of the commission, which are noted in the inscription: two sheets of fine paper, a Datuo inkstone, and an ink stick made by Guo Zhonghou. These were valuable materials. Datuo inkstones were made from a type of rock found in the Datuo River of Guizhou 歸州 and were characterized by their black spots. The book *Stone Compendium of the Cloudy Forest* (雲林石譜, 1133) records that the rock material had a unique regional character.[31] Guo Zhonghou (fl. thirteenth century), meanwhile, was a famous Southern Song ink maker of the Jiading period (嘉定, 1208–1224). Yuan-period literati collected the ink sticks made by his son Guo Qi (郭玘, fl. thirteenth century) and those made by the father were even rarer. One of the men who accompanied Lu Lun to Huqiu in 1340, Lu You, was a famous collector of inksticks and the author of *Ink Chronicles* (*Mo shi* 墨史), in which he presents the ink sticks made by Guo Zhonghou as

31. See Du Wan 杜綰, *Yunlin shipu* 雲林石譜 (1133) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju chubanshe 中華書局, 1985), p. 31.

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valuable antiques.[32] Huang Gongwang's careful listing of these painting materials indicates Lu Lun's original expectations of the quality of the painting. More importantly, these precious materials reflect the actual value of *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* as an artifact. The painting not only shows off the personal skills of the artist, but also the extraordinary visual effects that these precious materials enable. Through the intervention of the *haoshizhe*, the painting was not in the end received by Lu Lun, instead entering a process of market exchange. Although we do not know how many transactions *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* went through and who else tried to own it before it finally became part of Cao Yong's collection, Huang Gongwang's inscription shows that the artist was well aware of the dual nature of his painting as both artwork and commodity.

Rivers and Hills Before Rain employs a composition characteristic of the Yuan dynasty, featuring a body of water separating two lands. The most striking feature of the composition is the unique configuration of the mountains, centered on three main peaks, with dozens of peaks arranged behind them in a line on the same horizontal plane. Thick clouds surge from the foot of the mountains to the mountainside, enveloping them. Although there exist several copies of *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* of variable quality, the memorable mountain image transcends the limitations of the techniques and styles of different painters and claims a kind of "objective existence" as an iconic image. The place that the viewer can quickly identify in the copies is the same geographical site that Huang Gongwang intentionally depicted in the painting. However, the artist's inscription challenges identification of the site. Although Huang notes that he made the painting while living in Pingjiang, he does not specify the particular subject of the painting. The logic of the text implies that he had already left Pingjiang when he completed the handscroll for the second time, at a place called Xi. This difficulty of identifying the depicted site shows that the iconic place we see is not so much revealed as concealed by the painter's words.

In some cases, Huang Gongwang identified in a painting inscription the place he was depicting. Thus we know that *Great Summits of Fuchun* (*Fuchun daling tu* 富春大嶺圖) **(Fig. 4)**, depicts a mountain in Zhejiang 浙江 Province along the Fuchun River 富春江, and *Stone Cliff at the Pond of Heaven* (*Tianchi shibi tu* 天池石壁圖) depicts the Tianchi Mountain 天池山 near Suzhou.[33] But *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* instead exemplifies a second approach

32. See Lu You 陸友, *Mo shi* 墨史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju chubanshe 中華書局, 1985), p. 57.

33. Huang Gongwang inscribed 'Fuchun daling tu 富春大嶺圖' on the painting *Great Peak of Fuchun*. For the detailed information of the inscription see Ho Ch'uan-hsin ed., *Shanshui hebi: Huang Gongwang yu Fuchun shanju tu tezhan*, p. 311. For the inscription of *Stone Cliff at the Pond of Heaven*, access the painting through the link of the Palace Museum: https://www.dpm.org.cn/collection/paint/229315.html (Accessed July 28, 2024).

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taken by the artist, in which the information in the inscription refers to two kinds of place. One is the region or the architectural space where the painter was staying when he made the painting, such as Yunjian, Pingjiang, Gusu, or the southern building of Mount Fuchun, etc. The other reference is to a generic landscape subject that evokes a different world, such as autumn mountains, summer mountains, cloudy mountains, snow-covered mountains, immortal mountains, or rivers and mountains.

This second approach offers significant insights into Huang Gongwang's approach to the concept of place in his painting production. On the one hand, he emphasizes the place where and when he created the work, as well as the circumstances of the making process that give the work its own identity, because the work carries the artist's memories and occupies a specific temporal and spatial position in his life. On the other, the painter suspends an exclusive iconographic identification of the depicted place, thus preserving its non-autobiographical, objective character; the depicted place is not exclusively that of the painter's own experience. Considered prosaically, this combination of explicitly identified and not-identified places speaks to the self-consciousness of the literati painter who makes his living by producing paintings in a particular life situation but is aware that after completion of the work ownership of the painting will sooner or later be transferred. The painter knows that the depicted site in combination with the painting itself as site will create an interpretive field that may even be affected by the intervention of later collectors.

Two elements of Huang Gongwang's approach to constructing non-autobiographical places in his paintings have long since been identified. One element, as with many literati painters of the time, was the forms and the techniques Huang Gongwang learned from ancient paintings. The second element was the landscapes in the real world that the painter observed, where the brushwork he used to depict them was closely related to their geological structure and the changes they underwent in different climates and over time. In the view of Dong Qichang (董其昌, 1555–1636): "Huang Zijiu drew inspiration for his paintings from the natural landscapes of Mount Yu and Tianchi Mountain. 黃子久得之虞山與天池山。"[34] When Dong observed the granite-textured rocky cliffs of the mountains in the region of Wu area, he recognized their close relationship to the mountain image in Huang Gongwang's painting *Stone Cliff at the Pond of Heaven* **(Fig. 5)**:

34. It is from an inscription of Dong Qichang, see "Dong Xuanzai ziti shanshui xiaojing ce 董玄宰自題山水小景冊 (Dong Xuanzai Self-inscribed the Album of Intimate Scenery of Landscape)," in Wang Keyu, *Wangshi shanhuwang minghua tiba, juan* 22, p. 13.

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> A painter first learns from the works of the ancients and later takes nature itself as a teacher. I have seen Tianchi Tu (天池圖) by Huang Zijiu; none of them are the original painting, but all are imitations. Last year, while traveling through the landscapes of Wu area, I leaned on my bamboo staff and arrived at the foot of a rocky cliff. The scenery before me was so breathtaking that I couldn't help but exclaim, 'Master Huangshi 黃石公! My companions did not understand, so I explained: 'Today, I have finally met my true teacher!'[35]

However, while the forms of the mountains and rocks in Huang Gongwang's paintings and their geological features undoubtedly show that these are mountains and waters from his memory, which the painter personally saw, memorized with his eyes, sketched with his brush, and had seen from particular viewpoints, any attempt to further connect the landscape in the painting to a specific real place is destined to be full of uncertainty. Once mountains and waters, whether historical or realistic, concrete or imaginary, are interwoven and developed in a reasonable rhythm in a painting, they become a pictorial place, something that has gained a seeming inevitability in painting terms. As Jonathan Hay points out: "Yuan literati painting translated the idea of the *mingsheng* 名勝 into portable form, allowing the paintings to become potentially famous places of their own, destinations for scholarly attention. … The works reconfigure landscape as a topography of surface and as a site or place in its own right."[36]

Rivers and Hills Before Rain shows numerous mountain peaks in a certain order. Most of Huang's surviving credible works have this characteristic. As a Daoist master, Huang Gongwang placed great value on topography, which can demonstrate the structural relationship between change and order in the natural world.[37] The creation of such a painting involved numerous subjective decisions by the artist and unexpected effects that arose by chance, and it was only over time that they were painted in the most appropriate form. The

35. "畫家初以古人為師，後以造物為師。吾見黃子久天池圖，皆贋本。昨年遊吳中山，策笻石壁下，快心洞目，狂叫曰：「黃石公！」同遊者不測，余曰：「今日遇吾師耳」。" See Dong Qichang 董其昌, *Huachanshi suibi* 畫禪室隨筆, punctuation collating works by Ye Ziqing 葉子卿 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin meishu chubanshe 浙江人民美術出版社, 2016), p. 75.
36. Jonathan Hay, "Lecture Paper 2," in *Rethinking Scholar Painting* (2018), unpublished.
37. For a study of Huang Gongwang's painting practice and his paintings' topography and imagery related to Daoist religious concept, see Shih-shan Susan Huang 黃士珊, "Xie zhenshan zhi xing: cong 'shanshuitu', 'shanshuihua' tan daojiao shanshuiguan zhi shijue xingsu 寫真山之形：從「山水圖」、「山水畫」談道教山水觀之視覺型塑 (Shaping the True Mountains: "Shanshui tu", "Shanshui hua", and Visuality in Daoist Landscape)," in *Gugong xueshu jikan* 故宮學術季刊 (The National Palace Museum Research Quarterly), vol. 31, no. 4 (2014), pp. 153–166. For a study of

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most renowned account of this process can be found in the text he wrote for *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains*:

> In the seventh year of the Zhizheng era (1347), I returned to my retreat in the Fuchun Mountains, accompanied by Wuyongshi 無用師. During my spare time, I picked up my brush in the southern pavilion and started painting this long scroll. I was in high spirits and, before I knew it, I had painted extensively and largely completed the composition. Over the following years, I continued adding details bit by bit, yet even after three or four years, the work remained uncompleted. This was because the painting had always been left in the mountains while I spent most of my time travelling. Now, however, I have deliberately retrieved it and am carrying it with me, hoping to work on it whenever I find the time, morning or evening.[38]

As outlined in the previous discussion, the complexity of *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* is that Huang Gongwang produced it in two places: first in Pingjiang and then, many years later, added an inscription in Zhenxi in Huating. The painting was also highly prized by two collectors from different backgrounds: Lu Lun, a literatus with a Daoist background, and Cao Yong, a scholar-official. Therefore, it is important not only to identify the real-life place or places associated with the painting on the painter's autobiographical map, but also to examine how the landscape is recognised as a site in the viewer's world, how the landscape becomes

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Huang Gongwang's landscape paintings in the context of Daoist concept, see Shih Shou-chien 石守謙, *Cong fengge dao huayi: fansi Zhongguo meishushi* 從風格到畫意：反思中國美術史 (From Style to Huayi: Ruminating on Chinese Art History) (Beijing: Shenhuo. Dushu. Xinzhi sanlian chubanshe 生活・讀書・新知三聯書店 [SDX Joint Publishing Company], 2015), pp. 198, 199. And also see Shih Shou-chien 石守謙, *Shan ming gu ying: Zhongguo shanshuihua he guanzhong de lishi* 山鳴谷應：中國山水畫和觀眾的歷史 (The History of Chinese Landscape Painting and Audience) (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe 上海書畫出版社 [Shanghai Calligraphy and Painting Publishing House], 2019), pp. 137–144. For a study of Huang Gongwang's Daoist practice, see Wang Qiaoling 王巧玲, "Lun Huang Gongwang de quanzhen xiulian ji zhushu gongxian 論黃公望的全真修煉及著述貢獻 (Study on Huang Gongwang's Practice of Quanzhen and His contributions to the Writing of Daoism)," in *Jilin shifan daxue xuebao renwen shehui kexu ban* 吉林師範大學學報（人文社會科學版） (Journal of Jilin Normal University [Humanities & Social Sciences Edition]), no. 3 (2012), pp. 23–25, 97.

38. "至正七年（1347）僕歸富春山居。無用師偕往。暇日於南樓援筆寫成此卷。興之所至。不覺亹亹佈置如許。逐旋填箚。閱三四載未得完備。蓋因留在山中。而雲遊在外故爾。今特取回行李中。早晚得暇當為著筆。……" See Ho Ch'uan-hsin ed., *Shanshui hebi: Huang Gongwang yu Fuchun shanju tu tezhan*, p. 302.

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a pictorial place of its own, and how it attracts its viewers and becomes a destination for the collector and others.

III. The Owner's Situation

The year Huang Gongwang was asked to write an inscription for *Rivers and Hills Before Rain*, Cao Yong was 42 years old. Cao's epitaph shows the complicated path that a Han Chinese literatus from the Jiangnan region had to take in order to find a glimmer of hope for a career within the official system of the Yuan dynasty:

> At the age of twenty, he decided to pursue an official career through divination. Because of his mastery of the Mongolian script, he was appointed as Instructor in Rui'an Prefecture 瑞安州 in the Wenzhou Route 溫州路. At the end of his term, he was promoted to Police Chief of Dubo Town 都博鎮 in Maping County 馬平縣, in the Liuzhou Route 柳州路. Then, impressed by his scholarship, the senior official of the Jiang-Zhe Branch Secretariat 江浙行省 summoned him to serve as a Courier. Just as he was preparing to take up his post, he suddenly fell ill. On the 13th day of the ninth month in the eighth year of the Zhizheng reign (1348), he died in a Qiantang 錢塘 guesthouse at the age of forty-six.[39]

Cai Chunjuan has highlighted the significant growth of Mongolian Script Schools (*Menggu zixue* 蒙古字學), from the 1310s to the 1360s. These government-funded institutions were established to promote the official script, and the local government selected outstanding Han students to study the Phags-pa script at the school. Those who passed the examination could use their knowledge of the script to enter the official system as translators, teachers, or clerks.[40] Cao Yong chose this path and became an education official who entered a local Mongolian Script School in Rui'an Prefecture in the Wenzhou Route, far to the south of Huating,

39. "弱冠筮仕，以蒙古字學進沿檄為溫州路瑞安州學正，秩滿，升授柳州路馬平縣都博鎮巡檢，未上，江浙行省宰臣賢其學問，以宣使辟之，領職且有日，而疾作矣。至正八年九月十三日，歿於錢塘旅舍，春秋四十有六。" For the record of the epitaph of Cao Yong, see Shao Hengzhen, *Yechu ji, juan* 3, pp. 25, 26.

40. Cai Chunjuan 蔡春娟, "Yuandai de menggu zixue 元代的蒙古字學 (The Mongolian Script Schools of the Yuan Dynasty)," in *Zhongguoshi yanjiu* 中國史研究 (Journal of Chinese Historical Studies), no. 2 (2004), pp. 103–122.

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when he was about twenty years old. Typically, an official at such a school would progress through the ranks, becoming an Instructor, Third Class (*Xuelu* 學錄), then Instructor, Second-class (*Xuezheng* 學正), then Prefectural or Superior-Prefectural School Director (*Fuzhou jiaoshou* 府州教授), then Route-level Schools Director (*Lu jiaoshou* 路教授), subsequently assuming a position as local official with a low rank upon the expiration of their term as an educational official.[41] However, following the completion of his term as Instructor in Rui'an, Cao had to relocate to the distant Liuzhou Route (modern Guangxi 廣西), where as a Police Chief (*Xunjian* 巡檢) of Dubo Town he was responsible for maintaining local security and suppressing banditry.

The policy of selecting educational officials as police chiefs was initiated in 1321. According to Shen Wanli's research, because the system was overcrowded the educational official could not usually be promoted straight away after their tenure expired. During the indefinite waiting period, the scholars had no source of income, and it was difficult for them to make a living. Even if the process went smoothly, it often took twenty to thirty years to be promoted to a properly ranked official (*liunei guan* 流內官). Consequently, reassigning educational officers as police officers was a temporary measure adopted by the Yuan government at the time. It served to disguise the overcrowding problem in the educational system and alleviate security issues caused by the deterioration of the political situation. Those who chose the police service saw it as a means of escaping their career predicament, and some of them hoped that at the end of their police tenure, they would have the opportunity to be promoted to a higher-level educational post.[42]

In this policy of reassigning education officials to the police, there was a big difference in treatment between the north and the south. In the words of Su Tianjue (蘇天爵, 1294–1352): "Scholars from the south are transferred to Guanghai 廣海, and scholars from the central places (中州士) are transferred to Jiangnan." 南士調廣海，中州士調江南。[43] Thus,

41. For a study of the post promotion of the educational official of Mongolian script school, see Cai Chunjuan, "Yuandai de menggu zixue," p. 117.
42. Shen Wanli 申萬里, "Yuandai xueguan xuanzhu xunjian kao 元代學官選注巡檢考 (The Selection of Inspector in Yuan Dynasty)," in *Zhongyang minzu daxue xuebao (zhexue shehuikexue ban)* 中央民族大學學報（哲學社會科學版） (Journal of the Central University for Nationalities [Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition]), no. 5 (2005), pp. 73–79.
43. Su Tianjue 蘇天爵, "Song Han Bojing fu Dupu xunjian xu 送韓伯敬赴杜浦巡檢序 (Farewell to Han Bojing as He Takes up the Post as Dupu Police Officer)," in *Zixi wengao* 滋溪文稿, punctuation collating works by Chen Gaohua 陳高華 and Meng Fanqing 孟繁清 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1997), p. 82.

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although scholars from Jiangnan like Cao Yong hoped for a new opportunity through the police service, they often faced a hard life in remote and dangerous areas.[44] Yet, as Wu Cheng (吳澄, 1249–1333) wrote, although they knew the road ahead would be difficult, they dared not give up such an opportunity:

> In recent years, the Ministry of Personnel, concerned about the overcrowded path to official appointments for Confucian scholars, issued a regulation allowing qualified Confucian Instructor officials to be reassigned as police chiefs in various regions instead. However, most of these positions were in remote areas such as Lingnan 嶺南 and the coastal frontiers. It seemed rather unsuitable to send scholars, accustomed to refined manners and dressed in Confucian robes, to suddenly take up horseback riding, archery, and pursuing criminals. Yet, when this policy was introduced, many scholars eagerly accepted the assignments without complaint. Why was this the case? It was because they refused to remain in obscurity for too long. Grateful for this alternative opportunity for advancement, they did not dare complain about hardship or shy away from remote postings![45]

Liuzhou Route, where Cao Yong was appointed, formerly known as the Liuzhou Pacification Commission 柳州安撫司, was established in the 16th year of the Zhiyuan period of the Yuan dynasty (1279). It mainly governed three counties in Guangxi region, a frontier and remote area with a large number of minorities. Fang Tie's research shows that minority rebellions and uprisings had occurred in Guangxi in an uninterrupted sequence since the middle period of the Yuan dynasty. For instance, in the year 1341, the largest uprising was initiated by the Yao people 瑤人, which subsequently led to an escalation of violence in the

44. For a study on the duty of Police Chief working in the remote frontier regions of the Yuan dynasty, see Chen Caiyun 陳彩雲, "Xunjiansi yu Yuan diguo de haijiang zhili 巡檢司與元帝國的海疆治理 (The Xunjiansi Department and the Coastal Management of the Yuan Dynasty)," in *Zhejiang shifan daxue xuebao* (*shehui kexue ban*) 浙江師範大學學報（社會科學版） (Journal of Zhejiang Normal University [Social Sciences]), no. 6 (2018), pp. 96–104.

45. "近年選部患儒選之壅，凡應得儒學教授者，許註各處巡檢，而其地皆嶺海之鄉，邊鄙之境。夫以章甫縫掖之皐緩，一旦使之驅馳弓馬以戢奸捕盜為事，疑若失所宜。然此例一啟，趨之者紛紛曾不以為怨苦，何也？夫既不甘於淹滯，而幸其變通，則又豈敢辭勞避遠哉！" See Wu Cheng 吳澄, "Song Liao Xinzhong xu 送廖信中序 (Farewell to Liao Xinzhong)," *Caolu Wu Wenzheng gong ji* 草廬吳文正公集 (Chongzheng Xian sixun Wan Huang jiaoke ben 崇正縣司訓萬璜校刻本, 1757), *juan* 7, pp. 6, 7.

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Liuzhou Route.[46] Huang Jie (黃玠, 1285–1364) included a farewell poem in his *Bianshan xiaoyin yinlu* 弁山小隱吟錄 (*A Collection of Poems by a Humble Recluse Living in Bianshan Mountain*), which he wrote for Cao Yong when he left for Dubo to take up his post. The poem describes Liuzhou Route as a remote and wild place that could only be reached by crossing mountains and rivers. Military fortresses stood side by side, and the food and beliefs were very different from those of the Han Chinese. Huang also gave Cao Yong guidance on how to survive safely in this remote and barbaric place, including advice on avoiding snakes, and maintaining patience in the face of conflict with the locals. By likening him to the son of the Tang painter Cao Ba 曹霸 (fl. eighth century) and the esteemed minister of the Tang dynasty, Lou Shide 婁師德 (630–699), he reassured Cao that despite the difficulties, his physiognomy suggested that fate would favour him in the future.[47]

Shen Wanli's study shows that men appointed to the police service sought alternative opportunities through connections with local officials, a strategy that Cao Yong employed successfully. During his tenure as police officer of the distant town of Liuzhou, he was assigned by the Jiang-Zhe Branch Secretariat to serve as a Courier 宣使, an official post that ultimately allowed him to return to stay in the Zhejiang region. However, fate was to intervene. Due to illness, he was unable to take up the post and died in 1348 at the age of 46

46. See Fang Tie 方鐵, "Mengyuan dui Guizhou, Guangxi yu Hainan diqu de Tongzhi yu Jingying 蒙元對貴州、廣西與海南地區的統治與經營 (The Rule and Administration of the Mongolian Yuan dynasty in Guizhou, Guangxi and Hainan Regions)," in *Menggu shi yanjiu di qi ji* 蒙古史研究第七輯 (Studia Historica Mongolica,7) (Huhehaote: Neimenggu daxue chubanshe 內蒙古大學出版社 [Inner Mongolia University Press], 2003), pp. 92–124.

47. "General Cao Ba had an excellent son, a man of imposing stature resembling the people of the north. After bidding his parents farewell with deep reverence and carefully holding his appointment decree, he set off for Liuzhou to serve as a local security officer. ... The armed people built many military fortresses and stockades there to control the coastal mountains and seas and maintain social order on the southern border. ... Like a solitary cloud gazing at the crescent moon in the northeast, he travelled across mountains and rivers, enduring great hardship. ... The local cuisine differed vastly from that of the Central Plains, but he had to be cautious — one misstep and he might encounter the venomous snakes' scales. His appearance resembled that of Lou Shide—square-jawed, broad-lipped, exuding an extraordinary presence. The ancients said that those who are tolerant and magnanimous are blessed with lasting fortune. Even when faced with humiliation, they endure without anger… 將軍曹霸有令子，軀幹魁梧如北人。辭親再拜捧黃檄，去作柳州遊僥臣……引弓之民百砦列，控扼嶠海安朱垠……孤雲東北望新月，山川迢遙來苦辛……食朘每與華俗異，慎勿觸手腥蛇鱗。愛君貌似婁師德，故是方口又博唇。古稱容容多後福，唾面自乾可勿嗔……" See the poem in Huang Jie 黃玠, *Bianshan xiaoyin yinlu* 弁山小隱吟錄 (Minguo ershiyi nian Yin Xian Zhangshi yueyuan ke simingchongshu ben 民國二十一年鄞縣張氏約園刻四明叢書本, 1932), *juan* 2, p. 19.

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in a guest house in Qiantang. According to the epitaph of Cao Zhibai by Gong Shitai 貢師泰 (1298–1362), Cao Yong was still officially a Police Chief when he died.[48]

Since the preface to Huang Jie's *Bianshan xiaoyin yinlu* was written in the year of 1345, we can infer that Cao Yong planned to leave for Liuzhou no later than that year, and in any event not long after he asked Huang Gongwang to write the inscription for *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* in Huating in late 1344.[49] One can therefore speculate that Cao invited Huang to Huating to write the inscription after leaving his education post in Wenzhou and prior to leaving for Liuzhou. The context for Cao's request thus included bidding farewell to his parents, leaving his hometown, and moving to a distant region to make a living without any guarantee of when he would return home to Huating. Did he leave the completed *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* at his father's home when he left or—perhaps the more likely possibility—did he take it with him to Liuzhou to remind him of the mountains and waters in his hometown?

IV. A Hometown Landscape

In a study of Huang Gongwang's *Nine Pearly Peaks in Green* (*Jiuzhu fengcui tu* 九珠峰翠圖), Fu Shen describes how a Yuan literati viewer related to the place in the painting. Huang painted a landscape with overlapping peaks, rising clouds between the mountains, and villages facing a body of water at the foot of the mountains **(Fig. 6)**. As the painter left no textual information on the painting, no one knew exactly when it was made or what it depicted.[50] However, when it later became part of Yang Weizhen's collection, the verses Yang left on the painting linked the scenery to an iconic landscape of the place where he had a retreat, the Nine Peaks and Three Waters of Huating (九峰三泖): "The verdant Nine Peaks merge seamlessly with the clouds, while countless homes nestle within the emerald valleys."[51] Fu Shen points out that since Yang Weizhen built his Caoxuan Terrace (Caoxuan Tai 草玄臺) in Yunjian nine years after Huang Gongwang's death, the painter could not have made this painting to depict the landscape around Yang's retreat. Yet, Yang recognised the

48. See "Zhensu xiansheng muzhiming 貞素先生墓志銘 (The Epitaph of Mr.Zhensu)," in Gong Shitai 貢師泰, *Wanzhai ji* 玩齋集 (Literary Collection from the Enjoying Studio), *juan* 10, collected in Chen Gaohua ed., *Yuandai huajia shiliao huibian*, p. 599.

49. See the preface in Huang Jie, *Bianshan xiaoyin yinlu*, pp. 1, 2.

50. According to Shih Shou-chien's study, the painting was completed by Huang Gongwang around 1340–1341. See it in Shih Shou-chien, *Cong fengge dao huayi: fansi Zhongguo meishushi*, p. 183.

51. "九珠峰翠接雲間。無數人家住碧灣。" See Ho Ch'uan-hsin ed., *Shanshui hebi: Huang Gongwang yu Fuchun shanju tu tezhan*, p. 309.

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landscape in the painting as the Nine Peaks of Yunjian because the pictorial image made him feel a similarity with that landscape. Later collectors named the painting *Nine Pearly Peaks in Green* after Yang Weizhen's poem, and the depicted landscape has ever since been identified as the Nine Peaks of Yunjian.[52]

What Yang Weizhen recognized as the landscape of Yunjian may also be found in *Rivers and Hills Before Rain*: the mountains in the form of overlapping peaks, the water surrounding the mountains, and the village at the foot of the mountains. According to the 1288 *Zhiyuan Jiahe Gazetteer* (*Zhiyuan Jiahe zhi* 至元嘉禾志), and the 1512 *Zhengde Songjiang Prefectural Gazetteer* (*Zhengde Songjiang fuzhi* 正德松江府志), the Nine Peaks was the collective name for the dozen peaks that line the Songjiang 松江 (Yunjian/Huating) region. A map in the 1630 *Chongzhen Songjiang Prefecture Gazetteer* (*Chongzhen Songjiang fuzhi* 崇禎松江府志) clearly shows the geographical location of the Nine Peaks, with the peaks depicted horizontally side by side **(Fig. 7)**:[53] Some of these peaks, which are not far from each other, are particularly scenic, including Mount Xiaokun 小昆山, Mount Gan 干山, Mount Hengyun 橫雲山, Mount Ji 機山, Mount Xue 薛山, Mount Chen 辰山, Mount She 佘山, Mount Lubao 陸寶山, and Mount Fenghuang 鳳凰山 **(Fig. 8)**.[54] Among Yuan texts related to this scenic area, "The Nine Peaks Spring Journey (Jiufeng chunyou ji 九峰春遊記)" by Yang Ji (楊基, 1326–1378) recounts a boat trip with friends to visit Mount Zhong 鐘山, Mount Hengyun, Mount Kun, Mount Ji, and Mount Gan.[55]

Gong Shitai's "Record of a Journey to Mount Ji (You Jishan ji 遊機山記)" describes the most prominent visual feature of the Nine Peaks: the mountains form a continuous visual relationship, with a village, Pingyuancun 平原村, standing at the foot of Mount Ji：

52. Fu Shen 傅申, "*Jiuzhu fengcui* tu de jianbie yu xiangguang lizhou: Guoli Gugong bowuyuan weiyi Huang Gongwang lizhou zhenji 《九珠峰翠》圖的鑑別與相關立軸：國立故宮博物院唯一黃公望立軸真蹟 (Identification of *Nine Pearly Peaks in Green* and Related Hanging Scroll Paintings: The Only Authentic Hanging Scroll Painting by Huang Gongwang in the National Palace Museum Collection)," in *Gugong wenwu yuekan* 故宮文物月刊 (The National Palace Museum Monthly of Chinese Art), no. 339 (2011), pp. 40–63.
53. See the map in *Chongzhen Songjiang fuzhi* 崇禎松江府志 (1630) (Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe 書目文獻出版社, 1991), p. 26.
54. For the information of the mountains in the Songjian region, see *Zhiyuan Jiahe zhi* 至元嘉禾志 (1288), Shan Qing 單慶 and Xu Shuo 徐碩 eds., punctuation collating works by Jiaxing difanghzi bangongshi 嘉興市地方志辦公室 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 2010), pp. 27, 28. Also see the information in *Zhengde Songjiang fuzhi* 正德松江府志, pp. 229–233.
55. Yang Ji 楊基, "Jiufeng chunyou ji 九峰春遊記 (The Nine Peaks Spring Journey)," Tao Zongyi, *Youzhi xubian*, in Ruan Yuan ed., *Wanwei biecang*, pp. 189, 190.

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> Huating is surrounded by water, with vast, flat fields and expansive lakes stretching across the landscape, their blue and white hues interwoven. To the southeast, nine mountains wind along the horizon; the most famous of these is Mount Ji. According to legend, during the Jin dynasty, Lu Ji (陸機, 261–303) studied there, which gave the mountain its name. Its slopes are gentle and its geomantic qualities exceptional. The local inhabitants sustain themselves through farming. To the east of the mountain, bamboo groves flourish, while to the west, tall pines and cypresses stand, their deep green foliage forming a serene and picturesque landscape. Many people from the region have sought refuge there to escape turmoil.[56]

Compared to *Nine Pearly Peaks in Green*, which is compositionally a close-up view of mountains painted on a hanging scroll, *Rivers and Hills Before Rain*, painted on a handscroll, adopts the typical composition of a distant view of mountains on the other side of the river.[57] Poems by Cao Yong's relatives and friends describe this view of the Nine Peaks. For example, when Shao Hengzhen took a boat trip with Cao Zhibai past Mount Gan and looked at the scenery of Nine Peaks from a distance, he felt as if he were looking at Wang Shen's (王詵, 1036–ca. 1093) painting *Misty River, Layered Peaks* (*Yanjiang diezhang tu* 煙江疊嶂圖): "By the river, I moored my boat and asked an old fisherman for directions./ As I made my way home in the rain, the path ahead blurred into the evening mist./ Beyond the villages near the Nine Peaks and Three Waters,/ The landscape unfolded like the painting of *Misty River, Layered Peaks*" **(Fig. 9)**.[58]

In *Rivers and Hills Before Rain*, Huang Gongwang depicted the Nine Peaks as "cloudy mountains" (*yunshan* 雲山). Huang Xiaofeng has examined the iconology of cloudy mountain painting as understood by fourteenth-century painters and viewers, taking into account literary metaphors for clouds and cloudy mountains, inscriptions on the paintings, and

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56. "遊機山記：環華亭之治皆水，四望平疇廣澤，紆青繚白，而九山逶迤連起東南，其最勝者則莫若機山，世傳晉陸機讀書其中故以名山，勢墮而委，風氣完密，居人耕種足自給，山之東多箘簬之竹，其西蒼鬆翠柏，蔚然深秀，州人士避地者往往家焉……" See Gong Shitai 貢師泰, "You Jishan ji 遊機山記 (Record of a Journey to Mount Ji)," Tao Zongyi, *Youzhi xubian*, in Ruan Yuan ed., *Wanwei biecang*, pp. 189, 190.
57. Hu Fuhui's research suggests that the hydrological environment of the Three Waters 三泖 has changed over time. In fact, there were more large lakes during the Yuan dynasty. See Hu Fuhui, "Cao Zhibai yu Songjiang wenren zhi hudong—yi *Qunfeng xueji tu* wei zhongxin," p. 41.
58. "弭棹溪邊問老漁，雨中歸路晚糢糊。九峰三泖人家外，髣髴煙江疊嶂圖。" See Shao Hengzhen邵亨貞, "Tong Cao Yunxi fanzhou guo ganshan 同曹雲西泛舟過干山 (Boat trip with Cao Yunxi Past the Ganshan Mountain)," *Yishu shixuan* 蟻術詩選, in Ruan Yuan 阮元 ed., *Wanwei biecang* 宛委別藏, p. 130.

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related literature.[59] He points out that for the viewers of the time, who were mainly officials, cloudy mountain painting had three meanings and functions. First, it was associated with the expression of feelings of farewell. Second, the image could represent one's hometown and family origins, sometimes with connotations of filial piety. Third, cloudy mountains could also be interpreted as the family mountain that was the site of the ancestors' graves.

These various associations provide valuable clues for understanding Cao Yong's interest in *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* as a depiction of the Nine Peaks. A colophon for the painting by Wang Meng's father, Wang Guoqi (王國器, 1284–ca. 1366), does not mention Cao Yong's death or transcendent religious experience, but conveys a mood of appreciation for the painting, suggesting that the poem may have been composed prior to Cao Yong's departure for Liuzhou. After describing the content of the painting and the painter's skilled technique, the poet focuses on the fishing huts and villages in the painting, which are the most iconic earthly retreats. At the end of his poem, Wang offers a metaphor for choosing reclusion, something that a toiling official might look forward to:

> The green mountains do not drift away with the river. A few raindrops remain at the emerald edge of the rain-drenched forest.
> Fishing huts fade into the distance while villages appear and disappear in the mist.
> Dachi daoren painted freely with drunk ink; The autumn scene is so vivid that it rivals the blue sky.
> The worldly dust on the silk robe is washed away, leaving a solitary nest roosting off the drifting clouds.[60]

There was no more nostalgic place for a retreat than an official's hometown. For Cao Yong, it would have been easy to see *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* as a depiction of the Nine Peaks and Three Waters landscape of his hometown, Zhenxi.

This is all the more likely given that the Cao clan of Zhenxi had family tombs in that area. Among the Nine Peaks, the one most closely related to Cao Yong's family was Mount

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59. Huang Xiaofeng 黃小峰, "Cong guanshe dao caotang: shisi shiji 'yunshan tu' de hanyi, yongtu yu bianqian 從官舍到草堂：十四世紀「雲山圖」的含義、用途與變遷 (From Official Residence to Thatched Cottage: the Meaning, Function and Transformation of Cloud-mountain Paintings in the 14th Century) (PhD dissertation, Zhongyang meishu xueyuan 中央美術學院 [Central Academy of Fine Arts], 2008).

60. "青山不趁江流去，數點翠收林際雨。漁屋遠模糊，煙村半有無。大癡飛醉墨，秋與天爭碧。淨洗綺羅塵，一巢棲亂雲。" See an information of the poem in Ho Ch'uan-hsin ed., *Shanshui hebi: Huang Gongwang yu Fuchun shanju tu tezhan*, p. 310.

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Gan, which faces Mount Ji. The epitaphs of Cao Zhibai and Cao Yong both indicate that Mount Gan was where their family tombs were located. Cao Yong's epitaph states that Cao Yong and his wife, Mrs. Lu, were both buried here after their deaths.[61] Yang Weizhen in his "Record of a Journey to Mount Gan" (You Ganshan zhi 遊干山記) describes the shape of the mountain as resembling a proud horse, which is why it is also called 'Tianma Mountain' (Heavenly Horse Mountain 天馬山): "Its shape is like a horse holding its head, with an arched back and shoulders that have accumulated many rocks." [62] This mountain can perhaps be identified in *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* as the central peak of the painting.

When "clouds" and "nine peaks" are combined in the writings of a fourteenth-century literatus, various meanings can be derived from the rhetorical field formed by these two elements: "the nostalgia of a son who misses his parents," "to resign his office and return to his hometown to live in seclusion," and "to return to be buried on the home mountain." The poem "Traveling among the Nine Peaks" (Jiufeng xing 九峰行) by Yang Ji uses these elements to describe the experience of a man from Songjiang who was an official and had to live elsewhere:

> White clouds drift atop the Nine Peaks, as if transformed into the parting son's garments.
> The wanderer longs for his loved ones, yet never returns; the blue sky stretches vast, and the daylight lingers endlessly.
> His father's remains still await burial - how can a son's heart find peace? His unparalleled grief flows in the Heavenly River (i.e., tears), flowing southeast night after night.
> Where does the river go? It flows toward the foot of the Nine Peaks, where it comes to rest.
> The Nine Peaks, like nine green lotus blossoms, has been a resting place for countless souls through the ages.

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61. "In the winter of the same year, on the Jiachen day of the eleventh month, the recluse (Cao Zhibai) escorted the coffin of Cao Yong back to his hometown in Dongyuan, Mount Gan, for burial. He also relocated the remains of Cao Yong's wife, Mrs. Lu, to be interred alongside him, fulfilling the wishes of his mother. The epitaph reads: 'Official rank matters little; morals are the true foundation. Scholarship must be both broad and profound to attain completeness. Forty is the prime of life, yet fate was unkind. His father laid his remains to rest in the famous mountain, ensuring that his legacy would endure for a thousand years.' 其年冬十一月甲辰，處士以君之喪，歸於其鄉之干山東原，徙陸氏骨而合葬焉，從母夫人之兆也。……銘曰：官無雲卑道是先，學必以博約乃全，四十強仕傷天年。有父歸骨名山川，仟載不朽視斯鐫。" For the epitaph of Cao Yong, see Shao Hengzhen, *Yechu ji, juan* 3, p. 26.

62. "其形首昂，脊弓，肩髀礧礌狀馬。" See Yang Weizhen 楊維楨, "You Ganshan zhi 遊干山記 (Record of a Journey to Mount Gan)," Tao Zongyi, *Youzhi xubian*, in Ruan Yuan ed., *Wanwei biecang*, p. 166.

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> In life, a father has a body; in death, only bones remain. When will his remains find their place among the white clouds?
> Could it be that the beauty of Wusong's 吳淞 mountains and waters held him back, leaving this father's burial unfinished and his wishes unfulfilled?
> Now, [the wandering son] has built a hut beside the tomb, resigning from office and choosing to spend the remaining years in Wusong.[63]

The white clouds of the Nine Peaks signify his parents' thoughts of the departing son, which turn into the clothes his mother sews for him. But even after his father's death, the son is unable to return home. Thus, out of grief, the wanderer finally resigns from his official post, returns to his hometown by boat, builds a dwelling by the grave of the deceased father among the Nine Peaks, and spends the rest of his life there in reclusion.

Rivers and Hills before Rain may not have been the only cloudy mountains painting with hometown associations that Huang Gongwang painted. The poem "Inscription for Instructor Wu's Collection of the Farewell Painting of Songjiang by Huang Dachi" 題吳教授所藏黃大痴畫松江送別圖 by Liu Song 劉崧 (1321–1381) shows that a School Director surnamed Wu also acquired a landscape painting by Huang Gongwang, which was likely another cloudy mountains composition with a water scene in a horizontal format:

> This vast mountain, covered in rolling clouds, stretches across the horizon. The boundless water howls in the wind. The sky hangs low and the river extends far into the distance. As the sun sinks towards the horizon, the melancholy of parting intensifies the desolation of this vast scene. Who is the artist behind this painting? None other than Huang Dachi, an elder man from the eastern land of Zhejiang. This old friend of Mr Songjiang drew the appearance of the autumn river with his discerning eyes. The layered mountain ridges and sloping riverbanks extend southeastward. Faint silhouettes of wrinkled peaks appear among the treetops. The misty estuary stretches towards the deep marshes of Chu 楚, while rocky forests encircle the winding Wu embankments. It was from this place that Mr Songjiang returned, fishing rod in hand, hoping to brush the

63. "九峰山頭白雲飛，飛來化為遊子衣。遊子思親去不返，青天漫漫白日晚。父骨未入土，兒心安可休。恨恨天河水，夜夜東南流。東南流嚮何處去，流嚮九峰山下住。九峰九朵青芙蓉，古今纍纍馬鬣封。父生有身死有骨，何當函置白雲中。豈為吳淞山水好，父骨未埋心未了。而今結廬嚮墓傍，休官甘就吳淞老……" See Yang Ji 楊基, "Jiufeng xing 九峰行 (Traveling among the Nine Peaks)," in *Mei'an ji* 眉菴集, punctuation collating works by Yang Shiming 楊世明 and Yang Juan 楊隽 (Chengdu: Bashu shushe 巴蜀書社, 2005), p. 100.

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> dust from the cloudy cliffs. Long winds blew and the rain washed the reeds clean; the river's gleaming water seemed to dampen his clothes. Now he has become a wanderer in Junzhou 筠州, gazing longingly towards Songjiang, where the distant clouds keep him apart. The sorrow of parting lingers in the mist of Yandang Mountain 雁蕩山, while his longing for home has already soared beyond the Hongya 洪崖 cliffs.[64]

When he acquired this painting, the official was about to leave his hometown of Songjiang for Junzhou. In his eyes, the autumn landscape of clouds, mountains, water, and shores in the painting seemed to be a hometown landscape, which aroused his feelings of sorrow.

Similarly, Cao Yong's acquisition of *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* provided him with a portable hometown. The mountain standing on the other side of the water is the family mountain amidst the clouds, facing this side with its great serenity and simplicity to evoke one's awareness of what the end of life can take. Whatever other meanings the painting had for Cao Yong, to looking at the Nine Peaks in the distance could not but remind him that death was the end point of life. No matter how his body floated in the long river of the world, the site of timelessness was always on the other side; that is where a person would eventually arrive; either in life or after death, no other destination called for one's return.

The Nine Peaks also held particular significance for Cao Yong's Huating contemporaries belonging to the Lu clan, including the initiator of the project, Lu Lun. Among the Nine Peaks, Mount Ji was named after Lu Ji, a celebrated scholar of the Western Jin dynasty who once lived there. As his official title was Pingyuan neishi 平原內史, the village at the foot of Mount Ji was called Pingyuan Village. Since Lu Ji's hometown was Huating, it is not surprising that chorography from the Song dynasty (960–1276) to the Yuan dynasty records Mount Ji as the family mountain of the Lu clan. It also informs us that in addition to Mount Ji, Lu ancestors were buried on other mountains of the Nine Peaks as well. According to the 1288 *Jiahe Gazeteer* (*Jiahe zhi*), Mount Kun and Mount Lubao were also burial places of the

64. "是何山莽莽以橫雲，水浩浩而生風。天低江迥日欲落，別意乃在蒼茫中。問君此圖作者誰，浙東老人黃大癡。松江先生舊知己，眼明為寫秋江姿。重坡欹岸東南遠，本末參差見層巘。蒼浦遙連楚澤深，石林盡帶吳堤轉。是時先生從此歸，把釣欲拂雲中磯。長風過雨蒲葦淨，水色淡泡沾人衣。只今又作筠州客，惆悵松江渺雲隔。離思猶迷雁蕩煙，歸心已歷洪崖石。……" See Liu Song 劉崧, "Inscription for Instructor Wu's Collection of the Farewell Painting of Songjiang by Huang Dachi 題吳教授所藏黃大痴畫松江送別圖," in *Liu Chaweng shixuan juansi* 劉槎翁詩選卷四 (The Selection of Poems by Liu Chaweng, vol. 4), collected in Chen Gaohua ed., *Yuandai huajia shiliao huibian*, pp. 587, 588.

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ancestors of the Lu clan.[65] This information confirms that the Nine Peaks was not simply a general place of retreat or a hometown landscape. For members of the Lu clan of Huating, just as for Cao Yong, because their ancestral tombs were located there, it was also the final resting place of one's life.

V. A Site of Transcendence

A poem dedicated to Huang Gongwang by Wang Feng reveals a further special meaning of Mount Ji, or Lu Ji Mountain:

> You have lived in Songjiang for ten years, living in reclusion like an immortal.
> Gibbons and cranes stand by your side like youthful attendants, guarding your practice.
> Old friends have all flown off to the stars [i.e., passed away],
> Leaving only fishermen and woodcutters to share with you this tranquil life between water and clouds.
> At midnight, you play the *sheng*, and peach blossoms are jade-like [in the moonlight];
> In the fullness of spring, you lean on your staff as tender bamboo shoots speckle the ground.

65. For the information of the family tombs and the family mountains of the Lu clan, the 1288 *Jiahe Gazetter* provides the following record: "According to Lu Daozhan's *Records of Wu* (Wudi 吳地記), Mount Kun lies 200 li northeast of Haiyan County, and it is where the Lu family's ancestors were buried. *The Yudi Guangji* records that Kunshan was the burial site of the Lu family's forebears, and later, the brothers Lu Ji and Lu Yun became renowned for their literary talent. People of the time likened them to fine jade emerging from Kun Ridge, which is how the mountain came to be named Kunshan. The tomb of General of Conqueror of the North, Lu Yi, is located at the mountain's summit. 註引陸道瞻《吳地記》曰：海鹽縣東北二百里有崑山，陸氏父祖葬焉。《輿地廣記》云：崑山陸氏之先葬此，後機雲兄弟有辭學，時人以玉出崑岡因名之，徵北將軍陸褘墓在山巔。" "Ji Mountain is located twenty li northwest of the city. According to historical research, was named after Lu Ji. At the foot of the mountain lies Pingyuan Village, so named in honor of Lu Pingyuan (Lu Ji, who once served as Pingyuan neishi). *The Record of Yuanzhi Temple in Qianshan* states that what is referred to as Ji Mountain is, in fact, a collection of multiple mountain ridges. These lands historically are the family mountains of the Lu clan, and thus, they were collectively named Ji Mountain. 機山在府西北二十里，考證因陸機得名，山下有村曰平原，亦因陸平原名之，平原內史即機也。《仟山圓智寺記》云：所謂機山者往往排巒別嶺，槩為陸氏之家山總而名焉。" Mount Lubao is located twenty-five li west of the city. According to historical research, this mountain was originally family mountain of the Lu clan. 陸寶山在府西二十五里，考證本陸氏家山。" See *Zhiyuan Jiahe zhi* 至元嘉禾志, pp. 27, 28.

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> If you were to visit our Elixir Terrace, [you would see that] your name is already known. When will you come to Lu Ji Mountain to live in true reclusion? [66]

For Daoist practitioners who sought to transcend life and death, Mount Ji could be seen as a place where the "true reclusion" of transcendence could be achieved.

One can easily associate the cloudy mountain image that Huang Gongwang created in *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* with a type of cloudy mountain painting of the time that had Daoist associations.[67] For example, Zhang Yu (張羽, 1333–1385), in his "Song of Painting Cloudy Mountains (Hua Yunshan ge 畫雲山歌)," records an ink landscape painting with obvious Daoist connotations that he executed, which depicted a cloudy mountain range on the other side of a river:

> I once ascended to the summit of Mount Lu (廬山), longing to reach the sky and gaze down at the inverted splendors below. White clouds drifted like white robes through the mountains, casting the shadow of spring breezes as they floated by. Translucent clouds shimmered and flowers flickered in and out of view, while the valleys echoed with the roar of cascading torrents. Dreamily, I sat upon a vast sea, with towers of gold and silver glowing in the air. The Perfects of Highest Purity (Shangqing zhenren, 上清真人) laughed as he welcomed his guests, lighting cinnamon branches at night to cook White Stones for sustenance. With a phoenix flute in hand, the immortal played a tune that parted the swirling clouds. Tigers howled and dragons roared. The mountain moon shone brilliantly…

66. 十年淞上籍仙關，猿鶴如童守大還。故舊儘騎箕尾去，漁樵長共水雲閒。吹笙夜半桃花碧，倚杖春深竹筍斑。顧我丹臺名有在，幾時來隱陸機山。In the poem, Wang Feng used the words "qi ji wei 騎箕尾" to describe the passing away of Huang Gongwang's old friends, which is a euphemism for death, but it also means a person who has ascended to heaven as an immortal after death. See the poem "Feng jian Huang Dachi zunshi 奉簡黃大癡尊師 (A Poem Dedicated to Master Huang Dachi)," in Wang Feng 王逢, *Wuxi ji* 梧溪集, punctuation collating works by Li Jun 李軍 (Beijing: Beijing shifan daxue chubanshe, 2016), p. 52.

67. Chen Yunru suggests that the cloudy mountains depicted in *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* is more in keeping with the taste of the contemporary Daoist painters and the viewers with Daoist background. See Chen Yunru 陳韻如, "Huang Gongwang de shuhua jiaoyou huodong yu qi xuetu fengge chutan 黃公望的書畫交遊活動與其雪圖風格初探 (A Preliminary Study of Huang Gongwang's Contacts in Art and His Style of Snowy Landscape Painting),"in *Zhongzhen daxue zhongwen xueshu niankan* 中正大學中文學術年刊 (Chung Cheng Journal of Chinese Studies), no. 16 (2010), p. 209.

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> When melancholy arises, I sit by my north-facing window and sweep ink across the paper. The cloudy mountains I paint by chance resemble those before my eyes. Let my scattered dream chase the autumn wind, in the dream of one night, I flew alone beyond the vast water of the river. Neither dreams nor painted landscapes can bridge the distance to that ethereal realm. Better, then, to compose my verses of return without delay. The immortals are still waiting for me — how can I linger in this impure world, bound by its filth? My delayed return has left the white clouds drifting aimlessly, with nowhere to return. Yet the green mountains mock me, witnessing the withering of my face with age.[68]

In this poem, Zhang Yu links an ink painting of cloudy mountains to a place captured in his memory as a fleeting illusion. This site, rich in Daoist significance, is one he longs to return to.

To return to *Rivers and Hills Before Rain*, Lu Lun, as the initiator of the project and a Daoist priest, may have asked Huang Gongwang to paint the mountains of his hometown, the Nine Peaks, which were also the mountains of Cao Yong's hometown. From the perspective of this Daoist practitioner, however, the cloud-covered mountains were not only the family mountain that recalled him to return and live in reclusion, but also an iconic manifestation of the ultimate destination of his religious practice in the secular world: the complete abandonment of mundane life and entry into the transcendent realm, the return to Dao. For Daoist practitioners in the Yuan dynasty, such as Lu Lun and Huang Gongwang, it may not have been unusual to treat hometown mountain, place of burial, and mountain for Daoist practice as the same site, making it not only an ideal place of final retreat from the earthly world but also a site of transition to the transcendent world of immortals. One longed for final reclusion and at the same time for the end of one's worldly life. The site of death was not feared but welcomed as a known transition in the cycle of cosmic order, because the site of death was transformed into a gateway to the dimension of eternal life. Death and life were intertwined as the elusive paradox hidden in the theme of the transcendent site of reclusion.

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68. "我昔曾遊廬嶽頂，欲上青天凌倒景。山中白雲如白衣，片片飛落春風影。雲晶晶兮花冥冥，萬壑儘送洪濤聲。恍然坐我滄海上，金銀樓觀空中明。上清真人笑迎客，夜然桂枝煮白石。手持鳳管叫雲開，虎咆龍吟山月白。……愁來弄翰北窗裡，貌得雲山偶相似。遂令殘夢逐秋風，一夜孤飛渡江水。夢亦不可到，圖亦不可傳，不如早賦歸來篇。仙之人兮待我還，安能齷齪塵土間，坐令白雲摧絶無所歸，青山笑我凋朱顏。" See Zhang Yu 張雨, "Hua yunshan ge 畫雲山歌 (The Song of Painting Cloudy Mountains)," in Qian Qianyi 錢謙益 ed., *Liechao shiji* 列朝詩集, in Gu Tinglong 顧廷龍 ed., *Shige zongji congkan, Mingshi juan* 詩歌總集叢刊明詩卷 (The Collection of Poetry, The Volume of The Poetry of Ming Dynasty), Shanghai: Shanghai sanlian shudian 上海三聯書店, 1989), p. 132.

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For example, in the tomb of a Quanzhen 全真 Daoist, Feng Daozhen 馮道真 (d. 1265), on the northern wall of the chamber is a mural depicted overlapping mountains covered with clouds and mist, the huts at the foot of the mountains, a river stretching out, with distant mountains on the other side, three boats floating on the river. The title of the painting is written in ink as *Shulin wanzhao* 疏林晚照 (Sparse Woods in the Evening Glow). According to the archaeological report, the landscape has been identified as a depiction of the real scenery of Feng Daozhen's hometown, the Seven Peaks Mountain Range (Qifeng shan 七峰山) **(Fig. 10)**.[69] This was another Daoist site associated with the world of immortals. However, equally important is that the context for creating this mural painting of cloudy mountains was a mortuary one.[70]

In a study of the mural, Shih Shou-chien has explored its religious significance, pointing out that the Daoist who achieves success in Daoist terms is called *xian* 仙 (a transcendent), while the death of such a person is called Daosheng 道升 (ascension to Dao), and the process of ascension is called *gui* 歸 (return).[71] In Daoist practice, the concept of "return" signifies the attainment of ultimate and complete liberation or release, returning to the Dao of emptiness and nature. Despite the absence of visual elements explicitly referring to Daoism, the mural depicts a place where the spirit ultimately dwells and transitions. The title of the mural, 'Sparse Woods in the Evening Glow', resembles a title, *Fishing Village in the Evening Glow* (Yucun xizhao 漁村夕照), inscribed on another painting, *Eight Views of Xiaoxiang*

69. Datong Shi wenwu chenlieguan 大同市文物陳列館 (Datong City Museum), Shanxi yungang wenwu guanlisuo 山西雲岡文物管理所 (Cultural Relics Protection Station, Shanxi Yungang Grottoes), "Shanxi Sheng Datong Shi Yuandai Feng Daozhen mu, Wang Qing mu qingli jianbao 山西省大同市元代馮道真、王青墓清理簡報 (Brief Excavation Report on Feng Daozhen' tomb and Wang Qing' Tomb of The Yuan Dynasty)," in *Wenwu* 文物 (Cultural Relics), no. 10 (1962), p. 41.

70. For a study of mural painting in the tombs of the Yuan dynasty, see Wang Yudong 王玉冬 "Mengyuan shiqi mushi de 'zhuangshihua' qushi yu zhongguo gudai bihua de shuailuo 蒙元時期墓室的「裝飾化」趨勢與中國古代壁畫的衰落 (The Trend of Tomb Decoration and the Decline of Ancient Mural Painting of the Mongolian Yuan Dynasty, China)," in *Meishu xuebao* 美術學報 (Art Journal), no. 4 (2012), pp. 25–34. For a study of the landscape image of mural painting in the tombs of the Yuan dynasty, see Deng Fei 鄧菲, "Shanchuan youyuan—lun Yuandai muzang zhong de shanshui tuxiang 山川悠遠—論元代墓葬中的山水圖像 (Endless Mountains and Rivers - A Study of the Landscape Image of the Mural Painting in the Tombs of the Yuan Dynasty)," in *Meishu xuebao* 美術學報 (Art Journal), no. 4 (2016), pp. 17–29.

71. Shih Shou-chien provided the detailed discussion of the issue, including further evidence, in footnote no. 33. See Shih, Shou-chien 石守謙, *Yidong de taohuayuan: Dongya shijie zhong de shanshuihua* 移動的桃花源：東亞世界中的山水畫 (The Moving Peach Blossom Land: Landscape Painting in the East Asian World) (Beijing: Shenhuo, dushu, xinzhi sanlian shudian 生活・讀書・新知三聯書店 [SDX Joint Publishing Company], 2015), p. 272.

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(Xiaoxiang bajing 瀟湘八景). The latter painting is full of the meaning of "returning home." Moreover, the depiction of the tranquil landscape and the sailing boats in the distance of the mural echoes the theme of the painting *Returning Sails* (Yuanpu guifan, 遠浦歸帆), another painting from the series of *Eight Views of Xiaoxiang*, which more clearly reveals the concept of 'longing to return'.[72] These similarities tend to confirm the implied theme of return in the mural and make it easy to understand why that theme was combined with the depiction of the Seven Peaks of Feng Daozhen's hometown in a mortuary context.

Scholars have also noted the similarity between the highly formalized treatment of clouds in *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* and the cloudy mountain paintings of Gao Kegong (高克恭, 1248–1310).[73] Gao's paintings are usually discussed in the context of scholar-official interactions. However, the inscriptions on Gao's Cloudy Mountain paintings suggest that viewers could also see the site of Cloudy Mountain as a place to which scholar officials who had long been trapped in the secular world longed to return, a place in which to die eventually that awaited them as they approached the end of their lives.[74] For example, one such inscription by Zhang Tianying (張天英, d. 1335) treats the mountain as his former home, located in a heavenly realm, which he had left to pursue an official livelihood, trapped in the dusty, ever-changing secular world. Now, as he approaches the end of his life, he can finally return to that true home and rest in a final peace: "Drunk, I recline upon these verdant peaks, watching the drifting clouds./ Don't be angered that an old fellow like me has arrived at my

72. See Shih Shou-chien, *Yidong de taohuayuan: Dongya shijie zhong de shanshuihua*, pp. 93–95.

73. See Guo Huaiyu 郭懷宇, "Jiangnan shan yu yunshan—Zhongguo guojia bowuguan cang *Xishan yuyi tu* de fengge yiyi 江南山與雲山—中國國家博物館藏《溪山雨意圖》的風格意義 (The Mountains of Jiangnan and the Cloudy Mountains: *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* in the Collection of the National Museum of China and Its Style), *Shuhua shijie* 書畫世界 (The World of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy), no. 5 (2015), pp. 4–18.

74. For a study of the relationship between the Daoism and Gao Kegong's painting practice, see Yang Yuan 楊遠 and Dong Rui 董睿, "Cong yuqing guan bei kan Gao Kegong de shufa yishu he huihua sixiang 從《玉清觀碑》看高克恭的書法藝術和繪畫思想 (A Study of Gao Kegong's Idea of Calligraphy and Painting through the Investigation of *the Stele of the Yuqing Temple*), " in *Wenbo* 文博 (Relics and Museolgy), no. 4 (2006), pp. 30–32.

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twilight years." [75] The poem reveals that even for officials, when faced with the contemplation of death "Cloudy Mountain" became a symbol of a place from which one had come, and to which one would return at the end of one's life. This transcendental place was associated with a celestial realm of timelessness that transcended the ever-changing temporal space of the mundane world.

VI. The Diachronic Temporality of Textural Space

In order to create a pictorial site that brought timelessness and human temporality together on the level of imagery, Huang Gongwang drew on stylistic models that introduce historical time into the depiction. In 1374, thirty years after the completion of *Rivers and Hills Before Rain*, and more than twenty years after the completion of *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains*, Ni Zan wrote a short colophon for the former work: "Old Huang, Zijiu, although not capable of attaining [the heights of] Fangshan 房山 (Gao Kegong) or Oubo 歐波 (Zhao Mengfu, 趙孟頫, 1254–1322), still was far beyond the reach of contemporary painters. This painting is one of his most prized works, which demonstrates his point." [76] In the last year of his life, at the end of a lifetime of seeing paintings, Ni Zan recognized that in this work, which Huang Gongwang painted in the middle of his career, he took two earlier Yuan exponents of classicizing landscape painting as his immediate points of reference. If *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* satisfied the taste of Ni Zan, it is perhaps because it is a belated example of a

75. "In the celestial realm stands the sacred Langgan tree, its branches and leaves transforming a thousand peaks that fall onto the painting silk from the artist's brush. On the summit, the firmament looms barely a foot above, while beneath the cliffs, clouds drift past in an endless procession. I recall the days when I was a guest of the Celestial Emperor (*Tiandi* 天帝), my home nestled deep within the embrace of the white clouds. As the clouds soared alongside a flying dragon, I too clung to the dragon's back, ascending a path woven from clouds. Yet now, the green mountains mock me — why did I not return sooner? They laugh at the dragon lost in the white clouds. The world is ever-changing, without reason or end. What purpose lies in this ceaseless wandering? ……Drunk, I recline upon these verdant peaks, watching the drifting clouds./ Don't be angered that an old fellow like me has arrived at my twilight years. 仙人中有瑯玕樹，吐作千峰落毫素。峰上蒼蒼一尺天，峰下雲行亦無數。因憶曾為天帝客，家在白雲深處住。白雲隨龍飛出山，我亦攀龍躡雲路。青山笑人不早歸，大笑龍為雲所誤。變化無定端，飛揚為誰故……醉臥青山看白雲，莫嗔老子來遲暮。" See Zhang Tianying 張天英, "Ti Gao shangshu qingshan baiyun tu 題高尚書青山白雲圖 (The Inscription of the Cloudy Mountain Painting by Minister Gao)," in Gu Sili 顧嗣立 ed., *Yuanshi xuan san ji* 元詩選三集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1987), p. 384.

76. "黃翁子久，雖不能夢見房山鷗波，要亦非近世畫手可及，此卷尤其得意者。" See Ho Ch'uan-hsin ed., *Shanshui hebi: Huang Gongwang yu Fuchun shanju tu tezhan*, p. 310.

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specific type of Yuan dynasty literati landscape painting with a particular production goal. The painting has "déjà vu" effect.

Rivers and Hills Before Rain deploys a composition of water separating two pieces of land. The distant mountains, almost depicted as the main subject, are located in the upper half of the paper surface and occupy the center of the entire handscroll as an iconic manifestation. The foot of the mountain merges into the area of water implied by the untouched paper. In the lower right-hand corner, the artist created a bank with rocks and trees. It runs almost to the half-way point of the length of the paper, defining a foreground that faces obliquely the mountains on the other side of the water. The trees on the bank are arranged in a rhythmic visual pattern from right to left, alternating in height and gradually descending. On the far right are three pines, the tallest of which almost reach the distant mountains' outline.

The compositional model can be traced back to Zhao Mengfu's handscroll, *Twin Pines, Level Distance* (*Shuangsong pingyuan tu* 雙松平遠圖) **(Fig. 11)**. An obvious connection between the two paintings is the structural relationship between the various visual elements. In both handscrolls, the painters arranged the mountains across the entire paper in the upper part of the surface and reserved the blank surface at the top. In the right half of the composition, both painters drew a foreground and kept the longest contour of the riverbank to the right of the potential central axis of the handscroll. This structural arrangement makes the picture space orderly, with the delineated images mostly concentrated in the right and middle of the picture surface. Both painters reserved most of the empty space for the top and the left half of the picture surface, indicating water and sky. Another noteworthy similarity is that trees in the foreground of both pictures rise as high as the top of the distant mountain. Huang Gongwang painted five groups of trees. Although they are like five groups of chords, the structure of each group of trees in Huang's painting echoes that of the twin pines in the foreground of Zhao Mengfu's handscroll. One tree is consistent with the vertical line of the handscroll, and the other tree is inclined to the left, guiding the direction of the space and gradually expanding toward the level distance. Scholars have pointed out that Zhao Mengfu lived in Hangzhou for long periods, the first from 1299 to 1319 and the second from 1319 to 1322, a period when Huang Gongwang also lived in Hangzhou and had the opportunity to studying painting under Zhao.[77] Consequently, it is unsurprising that *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* is infused with stylistic similarities to the landscape paintings by Zhao, characterized by a classical approach. It is influenced by Zhao's innovative integration of the production concepts of Northern Song

77. For the information, see Ho, Ch'uan-hsin ed., *Shanshui hebi: Huang Gongwang yu Fuchun shanju tu tezhan*, p. 28.

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landscape painting into a brushwork topography of surface that resonates historically.[78]

John Hay has astutely observed that Huang Gongwang used the techniques of two different painting traditions in this work: the riverside in the foreground is rendered using the techniques of the Li Cheng school (李成, ca. 919–967), while the cloudy mountains in the distance adopt the Dong Yuan tradition as filtered through Gao Kegong.[79] These two painting traditions, which originated in the tenth century, both enjoyed significant popularity during the Yuan dynasty. As Huang Gongwang noted in the beginning of his treatise *Secrets of Landscape Depiction* (*Xie shanshui jue* 寫山水訣), the two schools differed in their techniques for painting trees and rocks：“Painters of the present time generally follow the styles of Dung Yuan and Li Cheng. In these two schools the trees and stones are not alike. The student should pay careful attention to this.” [80]

The foreground bank in *Rivers and Hills Before Rain*, composed of large and small rocks and trees of different kinds and heights, brings this part of the painting close to the “trees and rocks” genre. It is striking that Huang’s ink technique here is very similar to that of Cao Yong’s father and Huang’s close friend, Cao Zhibai, a leading painter of the Li Cheng school at the time.[81] Take Cao’s *Rocks and Trees* (*Kushu tuye* 枯樹圖頁) as an example **(Fig. 12)**. *Rocks and Trees* was painted on silk, so the transition of light and shade created by the layering of the brushwork is more delicate, subtle and unified due to the material properties of silk. In *Rivers and Hills Before Rain*, by contrast, the materiality of paper results in a fuzzy

78. For a study of Zhao Mengfu’s classicising landscape paintings, including the painting *Twin Pines, Level Distance*, see Richard Vinograd, “‘River Village: The Pleasures of Fishing’ and Chao Meng-fu’s Li-Kuo Style Landscapes,” in *Artibus Asiae*, vol. 40, no. 2/3(1987), pp. 124–142. For a related study also see Maxwell K. Hearn, “Shifting Paradigms in Yuan Literati Art: The Case of the Li-Guo Tradition,” in *Current Direction in Yuan Painting, Ars Orientalis*, vol. 37 (2009), pp. 98–106. Shane McCausland, *Zhao Mengfu: Calligraphy and Painting for Khubilai’s China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011), pp. 193–263. Regarding the relationship between the Northern Song handscroll paintings and Zhao Mengfu’s painting practice, see Lu Hui-Wen 盧慧紋, “You *Chongjiang diezhang tu* juan tan Zhao Mengfu dui Beisong pingyuan shanshui de jicheng yu chuangxin 由《重江疊嶂圖》卷談趙孟頫對北宋平遠山水的繼承與創新 (Talk about Zhao Mengfu’s Inheriting and Innovating Northern-Song Landscape Painting of Horizontal Schema from *‘Rivers and Peaks’* (Chóng Jiāng Dié Zhàng Tú) in Scroll),” in *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* 故宮博物院院刊 (Palace Museum Journal), no. 6 (2018), pp. 79–98.

79. See A. John Hay, “Huang Kung-wang’s ‘Dwelling in the Fu-ch’un Mountains’, The Dimensions of a Landscape,” p. 212.

80. “近代作畫，多宗董源、李成二家筆法，樹石各不相似，學者當盡心焉。” See Huang Gongwang黃公望, *Xie shanshui jue* 寫山水訣 (Secrets of Landscape Depiction), collected in Chen Gaohua ed., *Yuandai huajia shiliao huibian*, p. 593.

81. For a study of the painting practice, technique and style of Cao Zhibai, see Chu-tsing Li, “Rocks and Trees” and the Art of Ts’ao Chih-po,” in *Artibus Asiae*, vol. 23, no. 3/4 (1960), pp. 153–208.

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visual effect of the superimposed ink and brushwork defining the slope. The most revealing connection is in the treatment of the outline of the rocks. Both painters made a series of ink dots around their outlines. In Cao's *Rocks and Trees*, these tiny dots of ink are transformed into the natural representation of things that the human eye perceives: the moss on the surface of the rock and the shadows cast by the cracks in the stones **(Fig. 13)**. In Huang's handscroll, however, the visual effect of these dots of ink presents two extremes: the lighter dots of ink blur the visual distinction between themselves and the stones, while the darker dots of ink become traces of the brushstroke, no longer blending smoothly with the contours of the stones to reproduce the natural shapes of the moss and cracks. Because the plant fibers of the paper absorb some of the ink, it is impossible to maintain the subtle layering between the different layers of ink and blend them smoothly. As the tonal difference between the ink layers increases, the paper retains more traces of the brushwork and painting process **(Fig. 14)**. Although this brushwork technique is more suitable for painting on silk, Huang Gongwang insisted on using it to paint the slope in the foreground of the paper handscroll. On the one hand, by exploiting the interaction between ink and paper, he transformed the brushwork used to represent the natural shapes, light and shadow of things into a series of more formalised painterly marks that explore the textural space of the paper surface. On the other hand, this technical approach also imbues this foreground section with a sense of the northern tenth-eleventh-century Li Cheng style that contemporaries would recognise.

Opposite the foreground bank is a distant mountain painted in the Dong Yuan manner, but with clouds in reserve whose defined contours are more reminiscent of Gao Kegong's work. The Dong Yuan attributed compositions *Xiao and Xiang Rivers* (*Xiaoxiang tu* 瀟湘圖), *Wintry Groves and Layered Banks* (*Hanlin chongting tu* 寒林重汀), *Waiting for Ferry in Summer Mountains* (*Xiajing shankou daidu tu* 夏景山口待渡圖) **(Fig. 15)** and, as discussed earlier, *Summer Mountains*, were admired, collected, and studied by Yuan scholar painters of the Jiangnan region.[82] In particular, Zhao Mengfu brought *Xiao and Xiang Rivers* back to Wuxing 吳興 in 1295, and it greatly influenced Zhao's painting practice thereafter.[83] The technical core of these Dong Yuan attributions is the use of ink as an active fluid layer

82. For a study of the collection of *Xiao and Xiang Rivers*, see Richard Barnhart, "Marriage of the Lord of the River: A Lost Landscape by Tung Yuan," in *Artibus Asiae, Supplementum*, vol. 27 (1970), pp. 3–5, 7, 9, 11–60.

83. For a study of the relationship between Zhao Mengfu's painting practice and the paintings attributed to Dong Yuan, see Chu-tsing Li, "The Autumn Colors on the Ch'iao and Hua Mountains: A Landscape by Chao Meng-Fu," in *Artibus Asiae. Supplementum*, vol. 21 (1965), pp. 4–7, 9–85, 87, 89–109.

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covering the silk body. This allows the ink, with a certain degree of translucency, together with the silk as a luminous support, to jointly create a visual impression of things. The paintings convey the physical state of emergent solids in a pictorial world filled with fluids such as light, water vapour, moisture, and air. When rendering solid objects such as mountains, trees, and rocks, the artist employing this technique typically creates the forms by covering the silk with a series of watery, atomized lines, dots, and blocks of ink. In the depiction of object groups, the artist utilizes atomized brushwork to dissolve the clear boundaries between elements, resulting in a visual state that is a mixture of different fluids and solids. In the depiction of clouds, the technique involves creating the bodies of clouds and mist by leaving the raw silk surface unpainted **(Fig. 16)**. This approach was adopted by Huang Gongwang in his *Nine Pearly Peaks in Green* to paint the clouds and mist **(Fig. 17)**. This systematic approach, which originated in the Jiangnan region in the tenth century, is the one that Huang Gongwang used to depict the Nine Peaks in *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* also. Huang made sure that the ink color of the outline of the mountains matched the ink color of the body of the mountain, using both light inks and the revealed physical body color of the paper itself; and he used a series of atomized dots and lines of ink to create the visual impression of trees, mountains and clouds blending and eventually merging into a mixture of ink marks of different shades **(Fig. 18)**.

As for the clouds, as Ni Zan noted, Huang Gongwang deliberately created highly formalised clouds reminiscent of Gao Kegong's Cloudy Mountain paintings, especially those painted on silk. These clouds are usually depicted as independent pictorial elements in the lower and middle parts of the mountain body and occupy a large area. In the painting *Cloud-girdled Peaks* (*Yunheng xiuling tu* 雲橫秀嶺圖) **(Fig. 19)**, for example, Gao uses an atomised brushstroke to form the clear shapes of the clouds, distinguishing them from the formless mist. At the same time, he lightly coloured the raw silk in combination with the surface of the silk to suggest the floating body of the clouds, so that although the shape of the clouds has a decorative effect, showing their substantial existence, the body of the clouds still has a fluid and illusionary character **(Fig. 20)**. However, when Huang Gongwang insisted on using a tenth-century ink technique to recreate on paper the formalised clouds of thirteenth-fourteenth century painting on silk, the result was that large portion of untouched paper that suggests the clouds, combined with the highly undulating contours composed of dots of ink, gives the clouds a tangible sense of flatness while retaining the material properties of the paper and ink themselves **(Fig. 21)**. On the one hand, viewers could quickly recognise the characteristics of the Dong Yuan School style, the regional characteristics of the Jiangnan region, and the sense of time associated with distant mountains in the tenth century. On the other hand, the cloud also functioned as an element to convey a sense of textural space.

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The ink and wash techniques of the Dong Yuan school are inherently conducive to creating a blurred visual impression, which is particularly effective under varying light, distance, time, climate and atmospheric conditions. This makes them well suited to creating 'distant views,' 'clouds and mist,' 'the scenery of returning home' and 'the landscape at dusk.' Conversely, the subject of trees and rocks was a fully developed theme used in the Li Cheng tradition with a different set of ink and wash techniques to depict the close-up views of *Xiaojing* (小景).[84] By combining the two approaches in order to create a landscape with both close-up and distant views, Huang Gongwang produces an intermediate space of continuity between the virtual world and textural space, creating a sense of visual stability and reasonableness. In the process, the two contrasting painting techniques come to evoke an anachronic sense of historical time, a time outside history.[85]

VII. Landscape as a Site of Order

It has been observed that the spatial characteristics of *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* reflect three types of distance in landscape painting evoked by Huang Gongwang in *Secrets of Landscape Depiction*: level distance 平遠 (Pingyuan), broad distance 闊遠 (Kuoyuan), and high distance 高遠 (Gaoyuan).[86] The expansive water suggested by the unpainted paper serves to separate the land from the mountains, thereby creating a clear distance between the foreground and background, thus embodying broad distance: "Separating near from far in opposition to each other is called broad distance. 從近隔開相對，謂之闊遠。" [87] Huang also painted several shallows of different lengths in light ink where the water and the foot of the mountain meet. These shallows are arranged diagonally parallel on the surface of the

84. For a study of the issue of *Xiaojing*, see Hui-shu Lee 李慧漱, "Guoxi yu xiaojing 郭熙與小景 (Small Matters: Guo Xi and *Xiaojing*)," in *Songhua guoji xueshu huiyi lunwen ji: Zhejiang daxue yishu yu kaogu yanjiu* (*teji yi*) 宋畫國際學術會議論文集：浙江大學藝術與考古研究（特輯一） (Proceedings of the International Conference on Song Painting: Zhejiang University Journal of Art and Archaeology [Supplementum 1], 2017), pp. 316–356.
85. Thanks to Jonathan Hay for introducing me to the concept of anachronic time. For a study of the "anachronic time" of artwork, see Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance* (New York: Zone Books, 2010). See also a related study in Alexander Nagel, *Medieval Modern: Art Out of Time* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2012).
86. See Zhu Ming 朱敏, "Huang Gongwang *Xishan yuyi tu* juan 黃公望《溪山雨意圖》卷 (The Handscroll Painting *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* of Huang Gongwang), " in *Gugong wenwu yuekan* 故宮文物月刊 (The National Palace Museum Monthly of Chinese Art), no. 338 (2011), pp. 13–17.
87. See Huang Gongwang 黃公望, *Xie shanshui jue* 寫山水訣 (Secrets of Landscape Depiction), collected in Chen Gaohua ed. *Yuandai huajia shiliao huibian*, p. 593.

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scroll, from right to left and from bottom to top, suggesting a continuous ground and a recessive space that embodies level distance: "Continuous uninterrupted linkage [of motifs] starting from the lowest part [of the painting surface] is called level distance. 從下相連不斷，謂之平遠。" [88] Lastly, in *Secrets of Landscape Depiction*, Huang defines high distance as a matter of depicting clouds on the mountainsides and allowing peaks (in *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* painted in light ink) to show through the gaps between the central mountains, representing the high mountains behind: "A distant view beyond the mountains is called high distance ... one deploys clouds half-way up the mountains, in order to show that the mountain is immeasurably high. 從山外遠景，謂之高遠……山腰用雲氣，見得山執高不可測。" [89]

At first sight, the three types of distance summarized by Huang Gongwang in *The Secrets* and used to paint *Rivers and Hills Before Rain* appear to be a legacy of Guo Xi's "three distances 三遠" theory, with the addition of the "broad distance" introduced by the twelfth-century artist Han Zhuo (韓拙). However, judging from the painting itself, Huang undoubtedly adopted Han Zhuo's way of thinking. Richard Edwards has argued that the difference between Guo Xi's and Han Zhuo's concepts of distances lies in their respective ways of dealing with the perceptual relationship between the viewer and things in the painting's virtual world. Facing the pictorial worlds created by early Northern Song dynasty painters, viewers have to mentally adjust their field of vision continuously in order to actualize the landscape completely. In Han Zhuo's theory, however, the viewer is like an earthbound creature standing on equal ground, looking more directly at the coherent landscape before him.[90] As Edwards writes: "In contrast to the old, the new 'distances' claim the validity of the world as lying before us in compelling immediacy—its space, its atmosphere, its physical facts—the directly perceived view." [91] To make a pictorial world consistent with the viewer's empirical perceptual experience, and to allow the viewer's gaze to move smoothly between the material surface of the painting and the virtual world, Han Zhuo recommends using mediating elements that can reconcile the tension between the two; these are usually fluids

88. See Huang Gongwang 黃公望, *Xie shanshui jue* 寫山水訣 (Secrets of Landscape Depiction),collected in Chen Gaohua ed. *Yuandai huajia shiliao huibian*, p. 593.

89. See Huang Gongwang 黃公望, in *Xie shanshui jue* 寫山水訣 (Secrets of Landscape Depiction),collected in Chen Gaohua ed. *Yuandai huajia shiliao huibian*, pp. 593, 594.

90. Richard Edwards, "How Real is Real: The Thirteenth Century Painter's Eye," in *Yishuxue yanju* 藝術學研究 (Journal of Art Studies), no. 12 (2013), pp. 2–41.

91. Richard Edwards, "How Real is Real: The Thirteenth Century Painter's Eye," pp. 5, 6.

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such as water, clouds, mist, etc.[92]

For the viewer of *Rivers and Hills Before Rain*, it is not the whole virtual world that attracts attention, but rather the specific relationship between oneself and the various things in that world. For example, by looking at the trees on the riverbank, the viewer may experience an effect of proximity, as if one were standing on this side of the bank. When the viewer's focus shifts to the mountains, there is a clear sense of distance between the viewer and the mountains due to the vast expanse of water that separates them. Influenced by the sense of distance, the viewer cannot help but feel a sense of humility and awe in the face of the monumental mountains. In this way, the viewer's gaze can touch each object in the pictorial world in turn, echoing the visual logic of Han Zhuo's distance system. This suggests that in *Rivers and Hills Before Rain*, Huang Gongwang was not just evoking the classical styles of Li Cheng and Dong Yuan but was also attempting to create a virtual world with the spatial characteristics of Northern Song handscroll painting. To do so in a literati painting required introducing mediating elements to guide the viewer's gaze back and forth between the surface of the paper and the virtual world, connecting the level distance, broad distance, and high distance. These elements are the pines, the water, and the clouds. What makes them particularly important is that in addition their mediating role, they all have a symbolic function as well.

The pine tree is a common motif in Huang Gongwang's work. Usually, the pine-tree motifs are distinctive in their proportions and positioning. They are located at picture edges, with the branch turning to the center of the space, resisting the ending implied by the framing edge. Huang usually painted them as high as the hill behind, as in *Rivers and Hills Before the Rain*. There, Huang created a visual rhyme between the contours of the branches of the pine trees and the outlines of the mountain in the distance, bringing foreground and background into dialogue **(Fig. 22)**. Writing about the pine trees depicted by Zhao Mengfu in *Twin Pines, Level Distance*, Shih Shou-chien has interpreted them as reviving the moral connotations of the pines in Northern Song paintings, serving as a symbol of the integrity of literati in times of chaos.[93] While these connotations may well apply in *Rivers and Hills Before the Rain* as

92. "I suggest that there are another three distances. When there is a wide stretch of water by the foreground shore and a spacious sweep to distant mountains, this is called "broad distance"; when there are mists and fogs so thick and vast that streams in plains are interrupted and seem to disappear, this is called "hidden distance"; when scenery becomes obliterated in vagueness and mistiness, this is called "obscure distance." For the text of Han Zhuo, see this English translation in Susan Bush and Hsio-yen Shih, *Early Chinese Texts on Painting* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012), p. 170.

93. See Shih Shou-chien, *Cong fengge dao huayi: fansi Zhongguo meishush*, pp. 171, 172.

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well, given that both Huang Gongwang and Lu Lun have the background in Daoist practice, the pines may additionally allude to the symbolism of longevity, as the leaves and cones of the giant pine are used to make an elixir in Daoist medicine.[94]

Clouds, too, play an integral role in the visual order of the painting; Huang masterfully depicted cumulonimbus clouds – large, dense clouds formed from water vapor originating from rivers. These clouds are known to produce lightning, thunder, and rain. In the context of exile literature, floating clouds are often seen as intermediaries that can transcend distance, symbolizing the possibility of returning home, for example, or, in Daoism, journeying to an eternal realm of transcendence.[95] In *Rivers and Hills Before Rain*, the clouds form around the horizontal axis of the painting, drawing the viewer's gaze from right to left and providing access to the distant mountains. While living in Yushan 虞山, Huang Gongwang viewed a landscape painting by Wang Shen on the theme of cloudy mountains, for which he wrote a poem that may also be relevant to *Rivers and Hills Before Rain*:

> After the rain, the sky clears, and the clouds remain an azure blue. The vast sky stretching endlessly above, the air is crisp and clean.
> The frost-kissed maple leaves, burning red, are on the verge of falling. Waterfalls cascade down the mountain streams, echoing with a deep roar.
> Amidst the rugged ridges, the landscape feels boundless. By the rivers and lakes, one's heart is swelled with vast and mighty emotions.
> But tell me, did those who then rested in the clouds still need to flee tyranny as the ancients did under Qin? [96]

Here, Huang invokes an additional association of clouds, with withdrawal from the world to live in reclusion.

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94. "*Bencao jing* states that pine resin is also named *Songfang* 松肪, warm and neutral in nature. Taking it for a long time can make the body lighter, and promote longer life. 本草經曰松脂一名松肪溫中久服輕身延年。" See Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢, *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚, proofreading works by Wang Shaoying 汪紹楹 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1999), p. 1513.

95. See William H. Nienhauser, Jr., "Floating Clouds and Dreams in Liu Tsung-yuan's Yung-chou Exile Writings," in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 106, no. 1 (January–March 1986), p. 169. About a study of clouds in Daoist painting, see Ellen Johnston Laing, "Daoist Qi Clouds and Mist in Later Chinese Painting," in *Orientations*, vol. 29, no. 4 (1998), pp. 32–39.

96. "雨霽雲仍碧，天高氣且清。霜楓紅欲盡，澗瀑落長鳴。岫嶺蒼茫景，江湖浩蕩情。應知臥雲者，奚尚避秦名。" See Huang Gongwang 黃公望 "Ti Wang Jinqing *Wanhe qiuyun tu* 題王晉卿萬壑秋雲圖 (The Inscription of *Ten Thousand Valleys and Autumn Clouds* by Wang Jinqing)" in Gu Sili 顧嗣立 ed., *Yuanshi xuan er ji shang* 元詩選二集上 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1987), p. 738.

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Ultimately, it is the water that, in this painting, balances the tension between level distance and broad distance, soothing the unstable transition between the handscroll surface and the virtual space of the painting, becoming the element that most thoroughly connects this side to the other side. In his study of Huang Gongwang's *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains*, John Hay highlights the purifying function of water. For him, the depiction of empty water in that painting not only represents the clean quality of the water of the Hsin-an River, the main source of the Fuchun River, but can also be traced back to water's cosmological purifying function; he relates it to "the Chinese belief that the adept's perishable body would be left behind as a lifeless husk when his new, imperishable self (embodying his old but 'purified' personality) was ready to hatch out and join the ranks of the immortals." [97] Due to water's multivalent character as a fluid channel, a mobile vehicle, a clean liquid and a solution for purification, it becomes a 'functional place' in the painting that serves to remove worldly dust, providing a transition between the earthly and the eternal world. This interpretation converges with Wang Guoqi's commentary on *Rivers and Hill Before Rain*: "The worldly dust on the silk robe is washed away, leaving a solitary nest roosting off the drifting clouds."

In *Secrets of Landscape Depiction*, Huang Gongwang writes: "In creating paintings, only the one word *li* (理) is the most urgent necessity. 作畫只是個理字最緊要。" [98] In terms of painting technique alone, *li* could be understood here as a systematic principle of painting technique and a rational approach to organizing visual relationships. In *Rivers and Hills Before Rain*, however, it is clear that these technical considerations are the means for the painter to articulate *li* in the deeper, philosophical sense of the cosmological and moral order of being, including the multiple dimensions of time and timelessness discussed earlier in this study. In the pictorial world he created, Huang Gongwang constructed a site of mountain and water that makes this order visible. He unified contrasting historical techniques to generate an intermediate space of continuity between the virtual world and the textural space of the physical painting, integrating the pictorial elements into an ordered world combining three main distances, where the elements guide the viewer to experience sensorially the landscape's sense of order.

（責任編輯：陳卉秀）

97. See A. John Hay, "Huang Kung-wang's 'Dwelling in the Fu-ch'un Mountains', The Dimensions of a Landscape," p. 321.

98. See Huang Gongwang 黃公望, *Xie shanshui jue* 寫山水訣 (Secrets of Landscape Depiction), collected in Chen Gaohua ed. *Yuandai huajia shiliao huibian*, p. 594.

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III. Internet Resources

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Lu Fu meishua juan 陸復梅花卷 (*Lu Fu Plum Blossom Scroll*), The Palace Museum: https://minghuaji.dpm.org.cn/paint/detail?id=51f09d638c304de79ff040e110d7786e (Accessed July 28, 2024).

Tianchi shibi Tu 天池石壁圖 (*Stone Cliff at the Pond of Heaven*), The Palace Museum: https://www.dpm.org.cn/collection/paint/229315.html (Accessed July 28, 2024).

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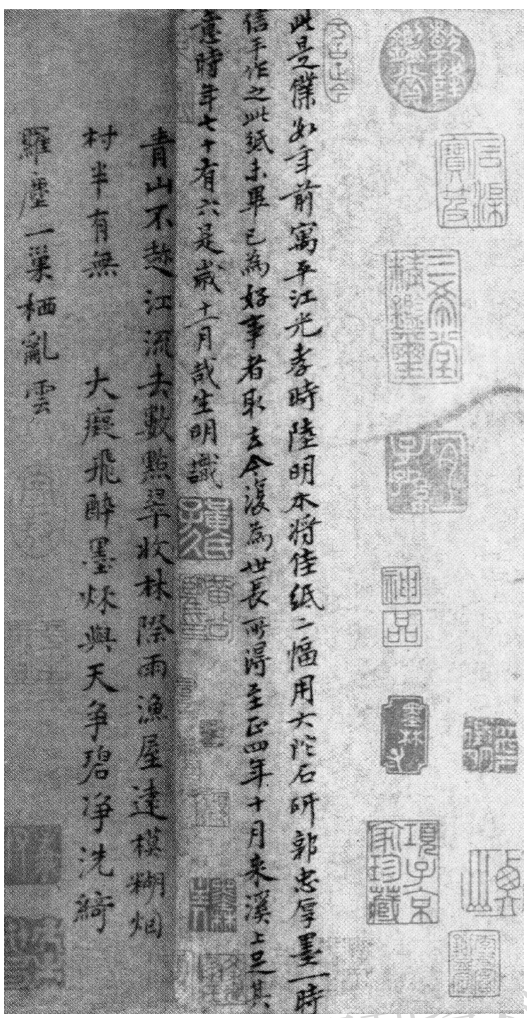


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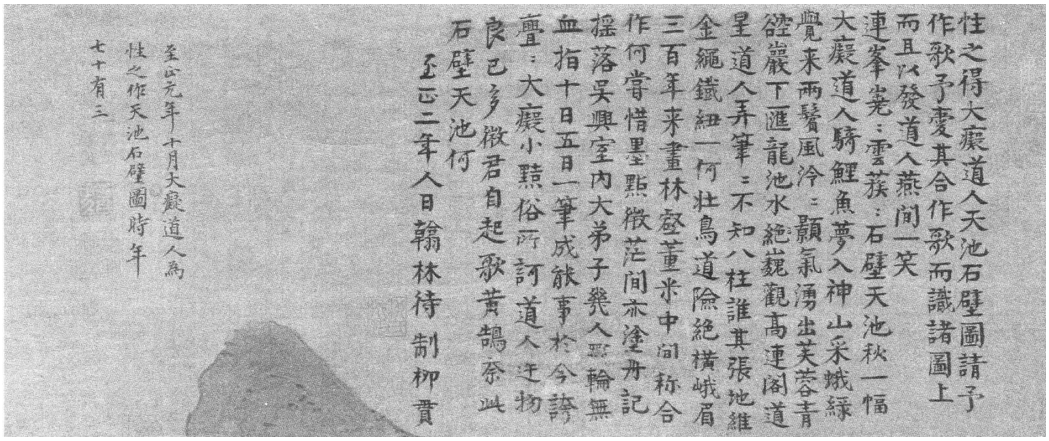


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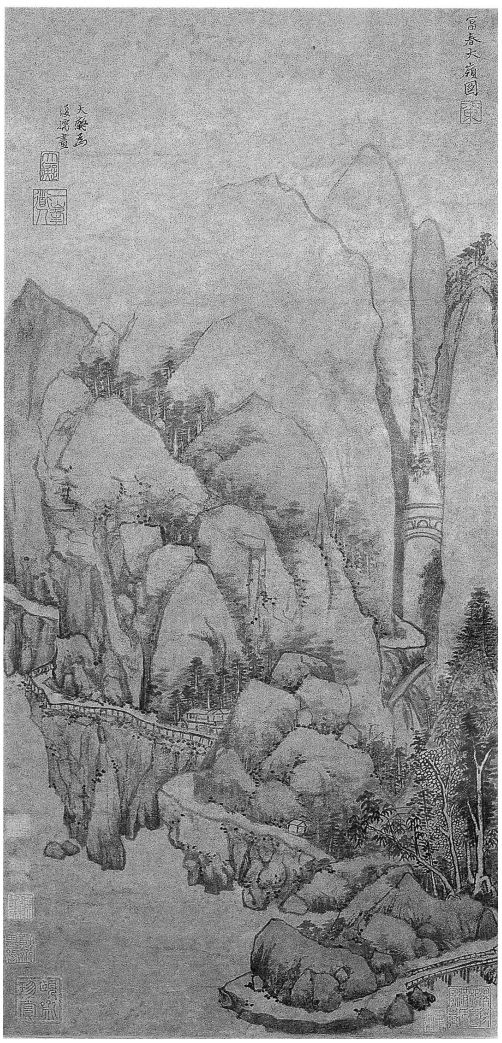


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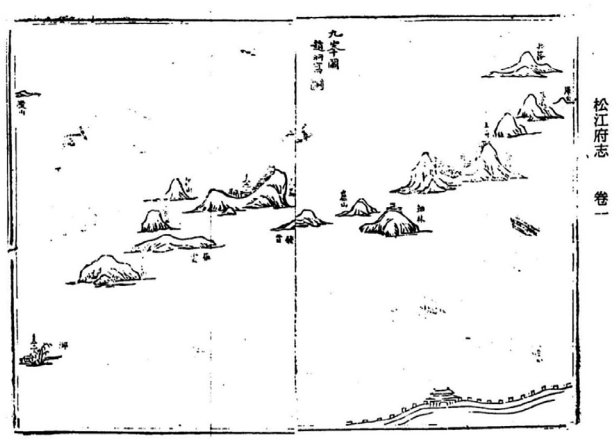


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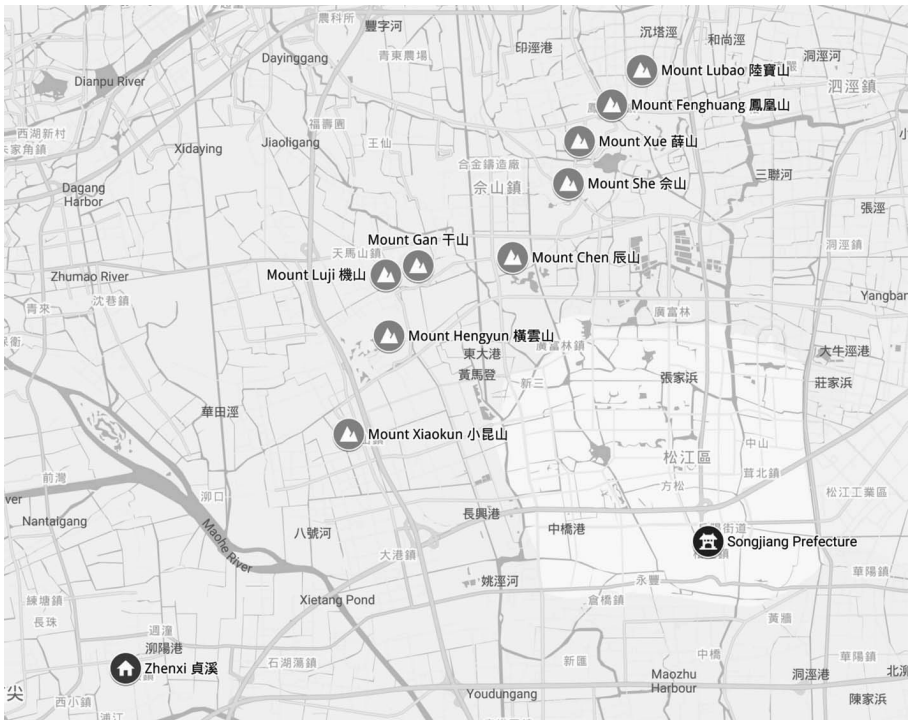


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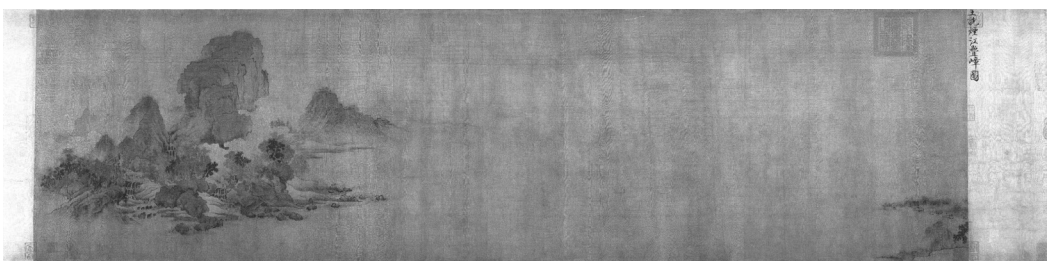


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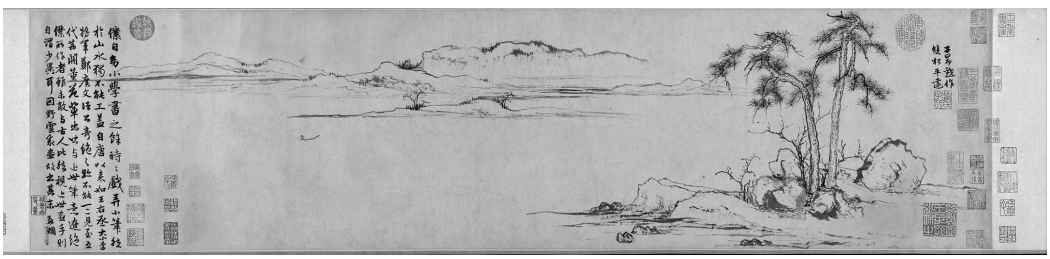


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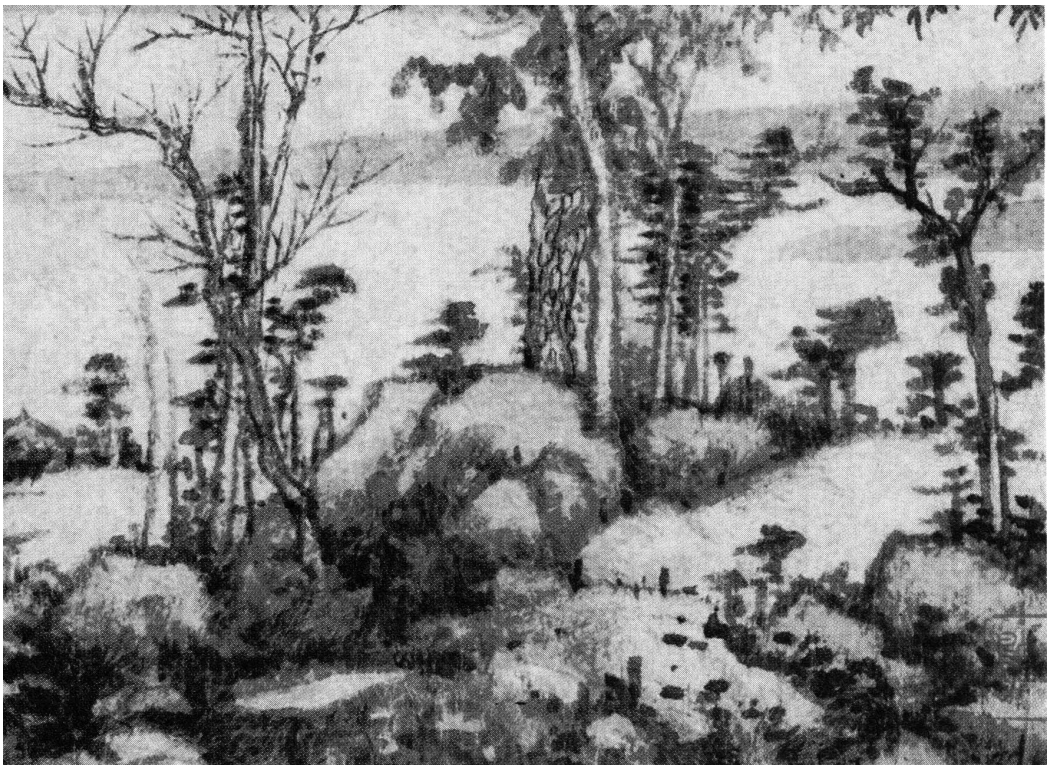


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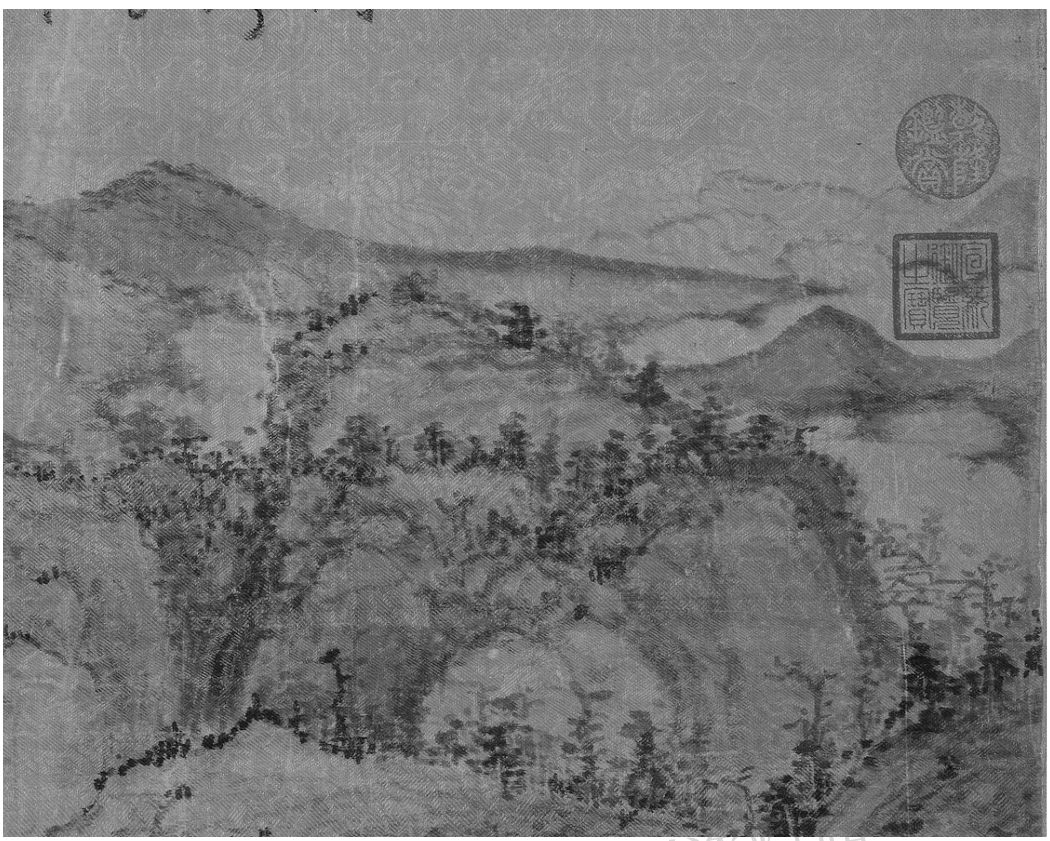


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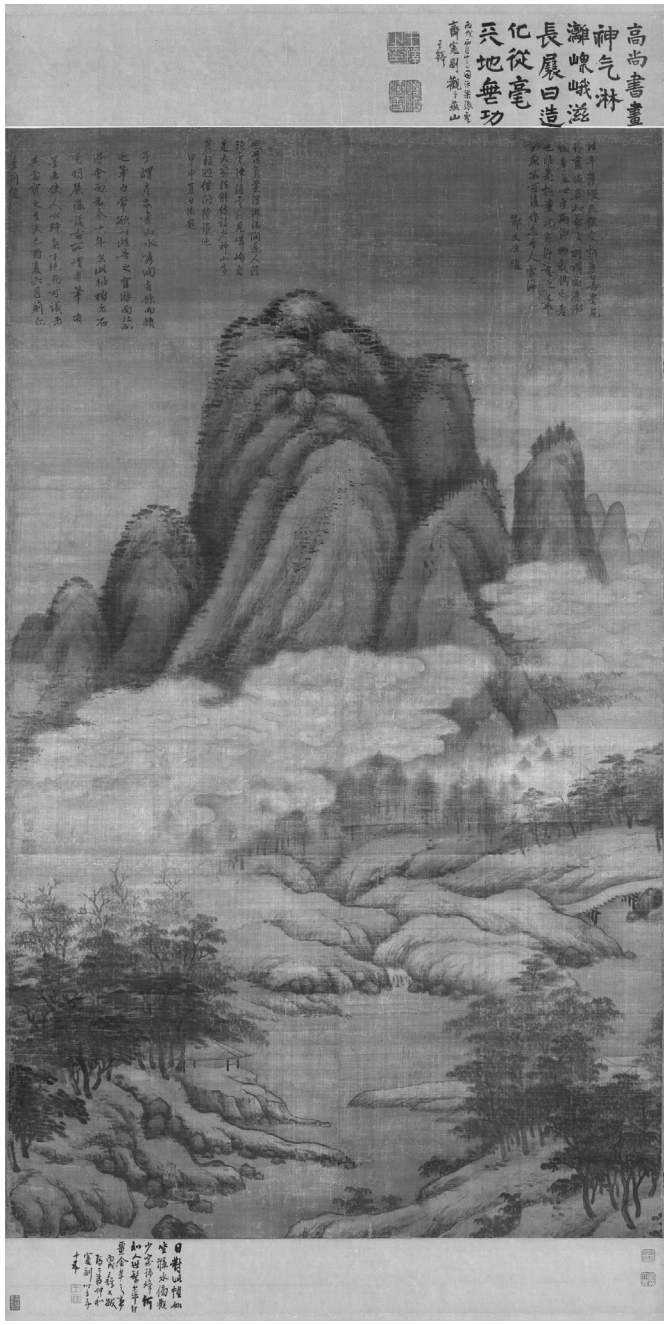


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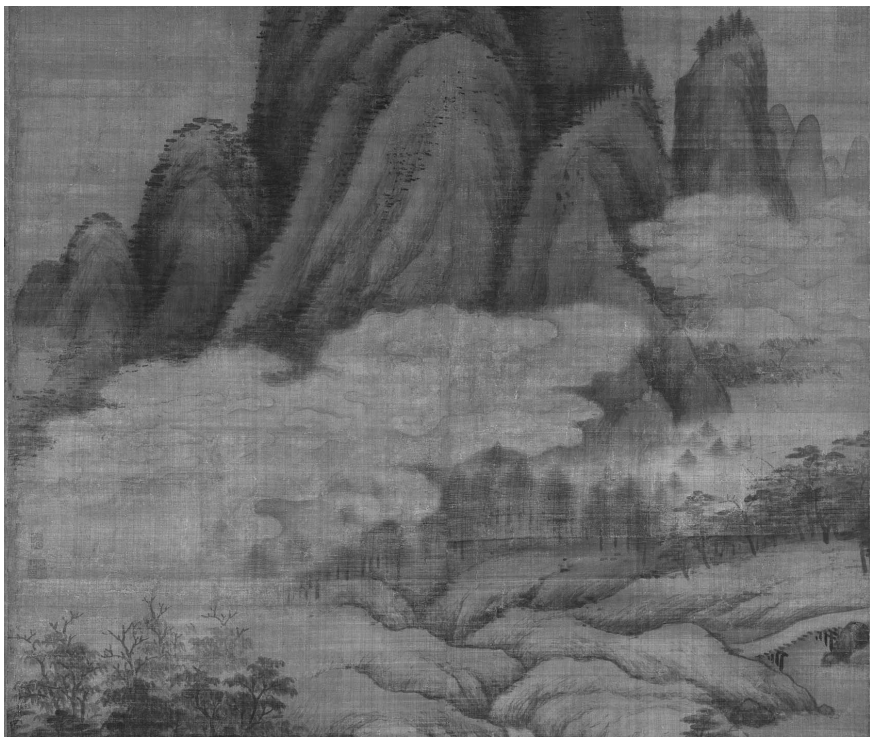


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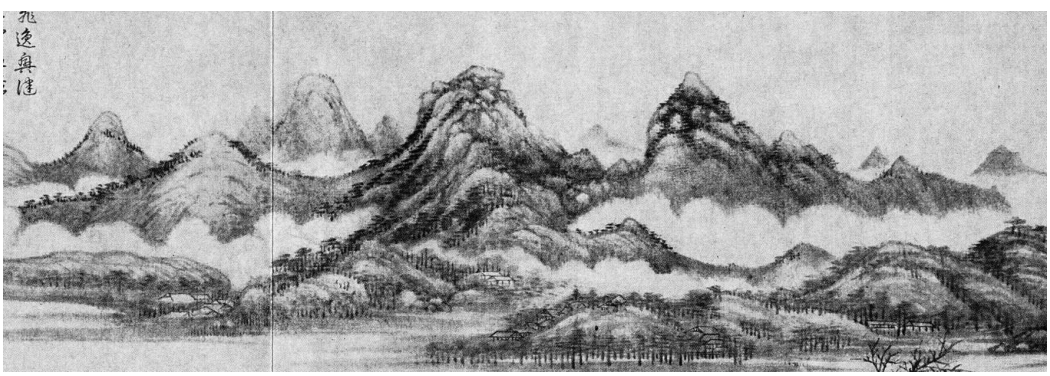


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歸返之地：黃公望的《溪山雨意圖》

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中國國家博物館藏《溪山雨意圖》是黃公望大約在他七十歲前後創作的一幅紙本水墨山水畫。手卷採用一河兩岸式構圖和雲山圖像，可作為元代晚期文人山水畫的典型代表。本文研究黃公望於前後兩個階段製作這幅畫的地點，分析他書寫題跋的動機，以及兩位收藏者的身份與境況，並以此為基礎探討該畫反映的元代晚期文人山水畫的場這一議題。這些問題涉及三個方面：畫作自身如何成為了一個超越時空的場，讓畫家能夠在不同時間和不同地點繪製與題寫它；其中描繪的山水如何在當時被不同的文人群體視作一個歸去的地理化地點；以及黃公望如何通過採用特定的風格技法和圖畫結構製作出一個作為秩序的場的山水形象。

關鍵詞：黃公望、《溪山雨意圖》、元代文人畫

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