Sweeping in the Sacred Grove: the Buddhist Monk in Jin Nong's Painting

Hsü Ginger Cheng-chi *

Abstract: This study explores the issue of self-representation in Jin Nong's Buddhist painting. In focusing mainly on his undated painting entitled "Sweeping under the Pagoda in the Fragrant Woods," this study argues that Jin Nong's portrayal of a nameless and faceless acolyte engaged in mundane chores might have been a means of fashioning his self and public image in his late years. In this painting Jin expresses his hope to be recognized as an eccentric saint of Chan Buddhism, much like the famous Shide and Hanshan, by overlapping Shide's attribute (broom) with that of Hanshan (brush). The interrelatedness of broom and brush is further manifested in his choice of the brushstroke called *feibai*, which then serves as a vehicle to express manifold messages, including a sense of loss. As Jin came to terms with his failure in a life-long pursuit of public recognition by finding solace in Buddhism, his painting of Buddhist subject circulated in the monastic community seems to serve as a marker of his membership in the local gentry society. They also stand as a footnote of the ubiquitous strand of Buddhist culture in Chinese social fabric.

Keywords: Jin Nong, Buddhist painting, enlightenment, Hanshan, Shide, *feibai*

In his late years, Jin Nong 金農 (1687-1763) repeatedly expressed a sense of guilt with regard to his use of paintings as a source of income. In the recorded inscription on his painting of pine trees, he wrote, "Nowadays I am also good at this [subject matter]. However, I have used it in particular to annoy people and to exchange

* Associate Professor, Department of History of Art, University of California, Riverside.
I want to thank Dr. Yun-pung Hsü for being so generous with his time and for sharing his insightful reading into Chan Buddhist text. The comments and suggestions of the anonymous reviewer of the *Taida Journal of Art History* and Emily Chan helped clarify the presentation of my arguments, though I remain solely responsible for any errors and omissions.

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it for cash. Therefore, I am deeply ashamed of myself in front of those monks and clergymen." This is written after Jin Nong praised Zeren 擇仁, a Song monk painter who also specialized in the subject matter of pine branches. According to Jin, Zeren would destroy his own paintings immediately after completion so as to prevent the rich and the powerful from stealing it away with cash. Jin therefore concluded that "Gold was as useless as dirt and sand" to monk Zeren.[1] The inscription on another work of Jin's also alludes to monk, Wen Riguan's 溫日觀 (d. c. 1295) grape vines. Jin revealed similar sentiments, using nearly identical phrasing: "People in the past painted for the purpose of securing their work in their mountain residences so that it would be handed down from generation to generation. However, I used it to beg for cash and am deeply ashamed of myself."[2] In identifying himself with the famous monk painters of the past, Jin not only expressed regret for having depended on painting as a source of income, but also pity for his contemporaries who had adopted the same practice. Jin Nong's self-proclaimed guilt was not uncommon among Chinese literati painters who painted for purposes other than self-cultivation, thereby deviating from the lofty ideal advocated by generations of literati painting theorists. Nor was his practice of using paintings as an economic means iconoclastic. Although researchers have argued that this was a notable trend in late imperial China, especially among painters active in urban centers such as Yangzhou, Jin's outspokenness on the issue of commercializing one's own paintings stood out among his fellow literati.[3] Noteworthy also is that in both of the inscriptions discussed above, Jin compared himself to monk painters of the past, which raises the issue of Jin Nong's Buddhist involvement.

According to biographic information, Jin frequently associated with Buddhist and Daoist monks, and often lodged in monastery hostels during his traveling years. In his late years till his death he also took residence at a Yangzhou monastery named Xifangsi 西方寺 (Temple of the West).[4] Yet while Jin proclaimed himself to be a Buddhist devotee, his adopted style name, Xinchujiaan zhoufanseng 心出家庵粥飯僧

1. Jin Nong, *Dongxin xiansheng zahua tiji,* in *Meishu congshu* (Reprint, Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1975), vol. 11, p. 178.
2. Jin Nong, *Dongxin xiansheng zahua tiji*, p. 190.
3. See case study of different types of artist active in Yangzhou and the commodification of their literary products. Ginger Cheng-chi Hsü, *A Bushel of Pearls: Painting for Sale in Eighteen-Century Yangchow* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2001).
4. According to Cai Qi, Jin Nong died at Xifangsi. Cai Qi, "Hangjun Jin Nong yu Yangzhou Xifangsi," in Zheng Qi and Huang Chucheng, eds., *Yangzhou baguai pinglun ji* (Nanjing: Jiangshu meishu chubanshe, 1989), p. 275.

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(The Rice-Gruel Monk of the Heart-Ordained Monastery), implies that he was ordained only in heart rather than actual social and religious terms. In an inscription, Jin reveals his association with Buddhist establishments and his identification with literati (*wenren* 文人) abiding by monastic rules:

> Ever since my wife passed away, I have lived a life of celibacy. The deaf concubine from before has also been sent away. As a sojourner in Yangzhou, I have obtained room and board at the monastery kitchen for several years now. Every day I have been offered pure vegetarian meals and have thought their taste to be quite rich. In addition to copying sutras, I also occupy myself with painting Buddhist subjects. A frail old man in my seventies, I am not asking for Buddha's blessings. I pray only for peace as I thoroughly enjoy the beautiful mountain sceneries in front of the monasteries in the Jiangnan area.[5]

It is a well-known fact that monasteries in China have always been public places. In addition to offering space for numerous festive and ritualistic ceremonies, monasteries, with their sumptuous buildings, gardens, and decorative art works, stood as places of recreation for both the general public and pilgrims on their journeys. In addition to general knowledge, a wealth of literature —local and monastic gazetteers, commemorative poems, eulogies, travelogues and the like —provide historians today with a vivid picture of the history, scenery and activity surrounding these monasteries. Through these accounts it is gathered that, no matter whom they were patronized by (imperial families or people of limited resources), or where they were situated (near urban center or deep in the mountain wilderness), monasteries offered themselves as places of retreat for clergy and laymen alike: emperors, officials, soldiers, merchants, even vagabonds.

In as early as the Tang dynasty, the function of monasteries as hostelries was a fact widely known among the public.[6] In fiction and dramas of the Ming and Qing

5. Jin Nong, *Dongxin huafo tiji*, in *Meishu congshu*, vol. 2, p. 102.
6. For lay residents of Buddhist communities, see Jacgues Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society: An Economic History from the Fifth to the Tenth Centuries* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp. 223-228. For gentry's uses of monastic space during the late Ming period, see Timothy Brook, *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China* (Cambridge, Mass. & London: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University and the Harvard-Yenching Institute, 1993), pp. 114-126.

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periods, such as *Xixiangji* 西廂記 (Romance of the Western Chamber) and *Jinpingmei* 金瓶梅 (*Golden Lotus*), monasteries served as meeting places for people from all walks of life and notably, both genders. In fact, Jin Nong was merely one among many laymen of the eighteenth century who had stayed in monasteries at one time or another in their lives. For example, Emperor Qianlong (r. 1736-1795) used the Tianning 天寧 temple on the northern outskirts of Yangzhou as his traveling palace (*xinggong* 行宮) when he visited the city during his southern tours. Zheng Xie 鄭燮 (1693-1765) lived in a monastery in his hometown rather than staying at home while preparing for his *jinshi* 進士 (presented scholar) degree examination. In other words, the use of Buddhist temples and monasteries as hostels for the laity was part of the social landscape in China.[7] Jin's taking of residence at Xifangsi, a Chan Buddhist temple in the old town section of Yangzhou, was thus a common practice and not necessarily an indication of devout Buddhist belief.[8]

However, Jin pronounced his Buddhist beliefs, beyond his residence at the monasteries, by producing paintings of Buddhist subjects, including images of Buddha, Bodhisattvas, Bodhidarmas, and Arhats, as well as Chan Buddhist subjects such as Chan eccentrics and still lifes. In addition to the painted image, inscriptions written in his unique calligraphic style contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of his works, offering information beyond the circumstances under which the paintings were produced. Most frequently, Jin would explain the history of the subject matter and the brushwork he had chosen for each work; he was most eloquent in discussing the thought behind these choices. Moreover, he was not reserved in disclosing his personal views or offering advice to his viewers. Instead of short verses or poetic lines, Jin's writing on his Buddhist paintings often came to assume the form of the short essay, providing us with information about his art, his role in the Buddhist community, and his personal experiences near the end of his life. In fact, the inscriptions on his Buddhist subjects have amounted to a collection in their own, entitled *Dongxin huafo tiji* 冬心畫佛題記 (Recorded Inscriptions on Dongxin's Buddhist Paintings). According to Jin himself, his student Luo Ping 羅聘 (1733-1799) was in charge of the project that included recording and compiling, and soliciting an essay as preface from Hang Shijun

7. For temple organization and hostelry function in late imperial China, see Susan Naquin and Evelyn Rawski, *Chinese Society in the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 42.
8. For information on Xifangsi, see *Jiaqing Chongxiu Yangzhou fuzhi,* in *Zhongguo difanzhi jicheng* (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1991), section on temples, juan 28, p. 3b.

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杭世駿 (1696-1773), a renowned scholar and a life-long friend of Jin. While Hang Shijun's preface was not included as part of the collection, Jin approved its publication and opted to preface with a short essay of his own dated to 1762, the year before his death:

> In the beginning, I painted bamboo and took bamboo as my teacher. Then I painted wild plum by the riverbank [as if] I did not know there was Ding Yetang [of the Song dynasty who is known for his painting of wild plum] in this world. Thereafter, I painted the big horses of Dongguli [of Chinese Turkestan], and then switched to various Buddhist icons that I frequently saw in my dreams. After three long years, I have finished one volume of Huafo tiji. Most of the twenty-seven entries in this volume are nonsense. One ought not to measure these paintings with the same rules used for craftsmen. My disciple in Yangzhou, Luo Ping, compiled the volume for me because he worries that they will be lost as I become a frail old man of eighty years ....[9]

To commemorate this celebratory event, Jin carved a new seal claiming yet another style name for himself "Triumph the world as a private citizen" (*buyixiongshi* 布衣雄世).[10]

Adopting painting as his occupation in his sixties, Jin mentioned more than once that Buddhist subjects were a new endeavor after he had exhausted bamboo, the blossoming plum, and horses.[11] As an accomplished poet and calligrapher, experienced antique collector, and a student of textual criticism (*jiaokanxue* 校勘學) scholar He Zhuo 何焯 (1661-1722), Jin was well-equipped to move from one subject matter to another just as an archeologist working in the field.[12] This systematic and methodic study of old paintings came to full fruition in his paintings, precise in citation, but

9. Jin Nong, *Dongxin huafo tiji*, p. 98
10. Qin Zuyong, *Qijia yinba*, in *Meishu congshu*, vol.7, pp. 164-165.
11. In addition to Buddhist subjects, Jin had also collected his inscriptions on paintings as he moved among various subject matters. And the first volume on bamboo was in print as early as 1750 at the age of 64. See Jin's own preface in his Dongxin huazhu tiji, in Meishu congshu, vol. 2, p. 61.
12. Richard Vinograd, *Boundaries of Self: Chinese Portraits, 1600-1900* (New York & London: Cambridge University Press, 1994). For a discussion of Jin's training in evidential scholarship and its relationship with painting, see Ginger Cheng-chi Hsü, *A Bushel of Pearls: Painting for Sale in Eighteenth-Century Yangchow*, pp. 164-184.

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deviating if not subverting the norms of the craft, in their style, execution, or purposes. When Jin maintained that his passion for poetry had yielded to painting in his old age, he meant that painting was his new field of study. It was also his primary means of expression and a tool of self-representation.

Previous studies of Jin's other painted subject matters, focusing on plum blossoms and the drunken Zhong Kui 鍾馗, reveal that Jin manipulated his subjects not only to satisfy the desires and wishes of his viewers, but also to express his personal views and emotions.[13] Paralleling the diversity of the audiences for whom he produced, was the multiplicity of issues in social, political, and intellectual realms that Jin addressed in various modes of presentation. By using Buddhist subjects as his latest, if not his last, artistic endeavor, Jin was able to reconcile those pressing and nagging issues that had troubled him throughout his life. Such concerns, which had been revealed in his previous painted works, included how Jin dealt with his life-long desire for official recognition, how he handled his overwhelming insecurity regarding self-image, and how he balanced the private and public function of his creative works. In focusing mainly on his undated painting entitled "Sweeping under the Pagoda in the Fragrant Woods" (*Xianglin saota tu* 香林掃塔圖), in the collection of Suzhou Museum (Fig. 1), this study argues that both Jin's painted subject along with his execution (i.e. brushwork) carry multiple layers of meaning, metaphorical and representative. In addition to the painted image, Jin's words inscribed on the painting function not only as part of the pictorial design, but also as part of his multiple messages. Filled with Buddhist lore and phrases, as most of his inscriptions on the Buddhist subject were, Jin's message here can be interpreted in both Buddhist and general idiomatic terms. Observing the fusion of religious and common language in his Buddhist works, we see that Jin's Buddhist paintings, in turn, stand as an evidence for the ubiquity of the Buddhist culture in late imperial society. As a piece of his collective work on Buddhist icon paintings, one realizes that it could have functioned as a token of social exchange. Similar to the copying of sutra, the painting could also be considered as a credit of merit in the donation-redemption system of the Buddhist domain. As we learned from his own inscriptions, Jin was involved in the creating of Buddhist icons and copying Buddhist scriptures for both friends and monasteries.[14] By donating his own work to

13. See Ginger Cheng-chi Hsü, "Incarnations of the Blossoming Plum," *Art Orientalis* XXVI (1996), pp. 23-45 and "The Drunken Demon Queller: Chung K'uei in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Painting," *Taida Journal of Art History*, no.3 (1996), pp. 141-175.
14. Jin Nong, *Dongxin huafo tiji*, pp. 101, 102, 104, 105, 106.

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the local monastery, Jin thus presented himself as a member of the gentry society where patronage to local monastery was often used as a marker of cultural and social status.[15]

1. The Switch to Buddhist Subjects

Jin claimed that his change in subject matter from horses to Buddhist images in his late years, was a decision that was forced by the great misery that stemmed from his obsession with the subject of horses. He began this account of his change with an analogy comparing himself to the celebrated northern Song literati painter Li Gonglin 李公麟 (c. 1049-1106): "Longmian jushi [Li Gonglin] painted horses in his middle age. He consequently dropped into a vicious situation and almost turned himself into [a horse that thrust through] the rolling dust. He then destroyed the paintings [of horses] and switched to painting Buddhist images to repent."[16] The phrase that Jin used—"rolling dust" (*gunchen* 滾塵)—can be understood in two threads of allusion. Firstly, it describes the thick cloud of dust raised by a galloping horse, making *gunchenma* 滾塵馬 (dust-rolling horse) a synonym for a horse that was capable of running quickly, and thus raising dust. Reportedly, *Gunchengma* were among many of Zhao Mengfu's (1254-1322) famous paintings of similar subject. Secondly, gunchen can also be considered through the lens of Buddhist literature. *Liuchen* 六塵 ("six *gunas*" in Sanskrit, or "six [kinds] of dust"), for example, means the dusts arising in the mind and through the six senses, and hence represents residues of impurities.[17] In the famous discourse between the sixth Chan patriarch, Huineng 慧能 (638-713), and his opponent, Shenxiu 神秀 (d. 706), *chengai* 塵埃 (dust, dirt) was a focus of discussion. Responding to Shenxiu's idea of using the image of dusts on mirror as a metaphor for worldly impurities obscuring the mind (mirror), Huineng noted: "In the beginning not one thing exists; whereby, is the dust to cling to?"[18] In Chinese literature, idioms

15. Timothy Brook, Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China, p. 327. For various form of literary patronage, p. 181.
16. Jin Nong, Dongxin huafo tiji, p. 101. The same entry is translated slightly differently in Marsha Weidner, ed., Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism, 850-1850 (Lawrence, KS: Spencer Museum of Art: The University of Kansas and University of Hawaii Press, 1994), p. 449.
17. For a definition of liuchen, see William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd., 1937. Reprint, Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1975), p. 134.
18. See translations of both Shenxiu and Huineng's poems in Heinrich Dumoulin, Zen Buddhism: A *History* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1988), vol.1, pp. 132- 133. My translation is slightly different.

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ending with the character *chen*, such as *hongchen* 紅塵 , refer to the "dusty" world or the secular world. Suffice it to say that when Jin claimed that Li Gonglin had almost turned into a *gunchenma*, he also implied that Li, by turning into a horse, had fallen to the "dusty" world. Jin's use of the word *duo* 墮 ("fall") seems to carry negative overtones of depravation.

However, Jin did not fail to acknowledge the positive connotation that horses carried in Chinese culture either. It has been demonstrated in the history of Chinese painting and argued convincingly by art historians of various generations that a fine horse is a metaphor of talent. For example, the lore of Bole 伯樂, who could recognize a *Qianlima* 千里馬 (a horse that can travel a thousand *li* or about 300 miles a day) instantly from a herd, was adopted repeatedly as a political analogy of a wise ruler and the talent appreciated.[19] In one of his inscriptions on a painting of a horse, Jin makes a self-referential remark after citing the tale associated with Bole who had saved a thoroughbred from being used as a mere transport mule: "Now I present the silhouette of a self-pitying horse crying sorrowfully. Is he lamenting the hard labor of a long journey? There is no Bole in this world! Even if I chanced upon him, he would have to say, 'It is too late!' I long for recognition amid the dusty wind of wild deserts no more."[20] Sharing the remorse with generations of unrecognized talents, Jin laments his missed fortune and his wasted talents. In despair, he gives up his hope to be recognized and offered an opportunity to serve a wise ruler.

Whether Li Gonglin needed to paint Buddhist subjects to redeem himself or whether his art works were a response to the trajectory of his political career, are beyond the scope of this study. The point, rather, is that Jin cited Li to reflect his own state of mind, therefore justifying his own action. As usual, Jin was measuring himself up to a man who had made his name in history. Jin continued: "For more than a year I have been painting horses. The four hoofs and the lonely silhouette of a horse appeared in my dreams. I was constantly at a loss. Therefore I have decided to give up making pictures of [horses] neighing sourly amid withering grass in the setting sun."[21] Sparing in words yet rich in literary allusions, Jin's description delineated the morbid image of a lonely, aching, old horse yearning for appreciation as it stands in front of the setting sun, awaiting darkness and the final end that is tragically to come too soon. The shift from painting horses to Buddhist images in this sense, documents an important

19. For presentation of horses in Chinese art, see exhibition catalogue Robert Jr. Harrist, Power and Virtue: the Horse in Chinese Art (New York: China Institute Gallery and China Institute, 1997).
20. Jin Nong, Dongxin huama ti, in Meishu congshu, vol. 2, p. 97.
21. Jin Nong, Dongxin huafo tiji, pp. 101-102.

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transition in Jin's personal life.

Claiming to have freed himself of the burden of striving for worldly success and fames, Jin went on to describe this newfound peace: "Recently I have been worshipping Buddha (*Kongwang* 空王) and called myself the Rice-Gruel Monk of the Heart-Ordained Monastery. I have worked on fine-line drawings of various Buddhas as well as on monochromatic ink Bodhisattva Nagarjuna (*Longshu* 龍樹). Clouds of wisdom (*zhihui yun* 智慧雲) often enshroud me. Today, as the morning rays shine through my door, the taste of winter is clearer than ever. Suddenly, I feel relieved of all my trouble and anger. I therefore paint a respectful frontal view of the "absolutely liberated" *Dazizai* 大自在 Bodhisattva in the fragrant woods (*xianglin* 香林) and send it to those who have taken vows to Buddha."[22] Choosing his words scrupulously, Jin gives expanded meanings to some of the Buddhist terms: emptiness (*kong*), immense freedom (*dazizai*), and wisdom (*zhihui*). In other words, Jin tried to use not only his pictorial images but also words to depict an "inner awakening" late in his life. Through paintings of Buddhist subjects, he attempted to claim that he had liberated himself from materiality, relationships, and most importantly, cravings and aversions.

2. Document of Enlightenment

Among his paintings of Buddhist subjects, *Sweeping under the Pagoda in the Fragrant Woods* (Fig. 1), in which Jin portrays the back view of a Buddhist novice, seems to best represent his self-claim awakening.[23] In this painting, the unidentified fellow, straggly hair reaching his shoulders, robe hanging voluminously, grasps a broom that is as tall as himself close to his chest. The repeated vertical strokes and dabs of ink wash on his upper body accentuate the weight to his robe. In contrast to

22. Jin Nong, Dongxin huafo tiji, p. 102.

23. The painting is reproduced in Zhongguo meishu quanji with the title of Xianglin saota tu 香林掃塔圖. See illustration in , Qingdai huihua, part 3. In Zhongguo meishu quanji, huihua bian (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu Chabanshe, 1988), vol. 11, p. 30. In Zhongguo gudai shuhua tumu, it is recorded as *Xianglin baota tu* 香林抱塔圖 (Holding the Pagoda in the Fragrant Woods). In *Zhongguo Gudai shuhua tumu* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1986-2001), vol. 6, p. 96. Three out of seven editors of *Zhongguo gudai shuhua tumu* questioned the authenticity of this painting. Though having not seen the original painting, I agree with Professor Xue Yongnian, a specialist of Yangzhou painting, who considers this painting authentic. Xue Yongnian, "Yangzhou baguai yu Haipai de huihua yishu," in *Qingdai huihua*, p. 4. See also illustration in Qi Yuan, ed., *Jin Nong shuhua biannian tumu* (Beijing: Beijing renmin meishu chubanshe, 2007), part 2, p. 188.

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the heavy ink color, a few dry ink strokes loosely shape his trousers and shoes below. The brushwork appears as if it was executed in haste with split hairs at the tip of the brush, creating white streaks within each stroke. The sparse and weightless depiction of the lower part of the body creates an appearance of disembodiment, while at the same time offering a visual contrast to the heavier upper body. Dry ink, with darker shades and repeated strokes, was also used to draw the broom, whose bottom spreads out as if flattened against the ground, similar in image to an unfolded and worn-out fan, the elegant accessory of a scholar.

Under helmet-like hair, simple brushstrokes give the impression of the corner of his face, which has no distinguishing features or expression. The anonymous figure, facing to his right, stands immediately under the dominating inscription written on the upper right side of the painting, as if he were submitting to or contemplating the written messages. In his "sutra-writing" (*xiejing* 寫經) style of calligraphy,[24] Jin writes: "Inside the Buddhist gate, sprinkling [water] and sweeping are the first responsibilities. From novice to old monk, everyone gets up early and works diligently. In the fragrant woods there is a pagoda. One sweeps and cleans, and then cleans and sweeps again. Thereafter, *sheIi* 舍利 (*sarira*) shines brightly in one's own hands instead of in the pagoda." The messages in the inscription dwell on the idea of cleansing, a literary elaboration of the painted image. In fact, sprinkling and sweeping is considered a basic daily chore,[25] especially when compared with meditation or administrative tasks in the monastic community. It is usually assigned to lower-level members, especially beginners.[26]

Jin then signs one of his style names, Sufaluo ji sufaluo 蘇伐羅吉蘇伐羅 , or Jin Jijin 金吉金 , since *sufaluo* is the Sanskrit transliteration for *jin* 金 or gold. Jin

24. "Sutra-writing" style refers to Jin's standard or *kai* 楷 script. It derived from a Song copy of the Nirvana Sutra that Jin had acquired during his trip to Shanxi. Zhang Yuming, *Shengshi huafo: Jin Nong zhuan* (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 2001), pp. 348-352. Jin used this style to copy sutra and to inscribe his Buddhist paintings. See also the illustration of the first woodblock-print page of Jin's copy of the Diamond Sutra in Zhang Yuming, *Shengshi huafo: Jin Nong zhuan*, p. 349.

25. "Sweeping the ground" is said to be part of the monastic discipline and has five kinds of merit attributed to it. William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, pp. 350, 307.

26. Reportedly Huineng, the sixth patriarch of Chan Buddhism, was assigned to firewood chopping and grain-hulling shortly after he arrived at the monastery. See Wang Mou-lam trans., "Autobiography," in *Liuzu tanjing*, (Hong Kong: Buddhist Book Distributor, 1982), p. 13.

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had adopted the style name Jijin earlier in his lif,[27] using it to speak for one of his hobby-turned occupations. Jijin literally means the metal vessel used in the ceremony of ancestor worship. It also refers to the study of ancient bronze vessels. Jinjijin literarily therefore also means "vessel made of gold [metal]." Playing with his own family name, Jin was able to maintain one of his identifications as an antiquarian. The readjustment of his name seems to be a gesture signifying his Buddhist faith, while the Sanskrit translation of his family name serves to authenticate his conviction, as it is the original language of the Buddhist scriptures. By calling himself Sufaluo Ji sufaluo, Jin is subtly implying that he was also a precious ritualistic instrument in the Buddhist order. Through the body of his inscription, Jin identifies the faceless person in the picture a novice or low-level Buddhist monk who pauses while performing his daily task of sweeping.

However, in the last sentence of the inscription, the mundane chore of sweeping and cleaning is turned into an act of spiritual cleansing and liberation. Here Jin uses the symbol of *sarira*, the relics left after the cremation of a Buddha or Buddhist saint. It is believed that only those who achieve enlightenment can leave such precious objects after cremation and that the amount is proportional to ones spiritual achievement. This is most readily evident in the popular Buddhist lore maintaining that Sakyamuni had left relics amounting to 84 pecks, for which the Indian King Asōka is said to have built 84,000 stupas to house them. According to the description in the Lotus Sutra, a *sarira* is as round and shinning as a pearl and is so strong that it remains intact even when hit by a metal club. It is generally regarded as a physical manifestation of the level of accomplishment in Buddhahood, where the ultimate goal is to realize or attain the Buddha nature (*foxing* 佛性) and become a Buddha. In his inscription, Jin seems to confirm that through repeatedly "sweeping and cleaning", great progress in Buddahood can be made. And the ultimate goal of Buddha nature is within reach. To put it in another way, in Chan Buddhist terminology, enlightenment (*kaiwu* 開悟) is attainable by effort from within. By bringing out the connection between sarira and stupa in the last line of his inscription, Jin also brings the act of enshrinement into focus. In his eyes, just as the measurement of Buddhahood (sarira) lies in one's own hands, true attainment needs not be canonized nor enshrined. In this inscription, Jin adopts Buddhist terminology to describe a personal "enlightenment", one that can be validated

27. According to Zhang Yuming, Jin Nong adopted Jijin at the age of thirty-one. Zhang Yuming, *Jin dongxin shiming biehao kaoshi*, part 2, *Yangzhou jiaoyu xueyuan xuebao*, vol. 23, no.1 (2005), p. 34.

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by the self rather than the world or state authorities.

As a young prodigy of poetry of the literary circles of the Jiangnan area, Jin went through his life with high hopes to leave his mark on history. He published two literary anthologies and several miscellaneous writings before the age of fifty. In addition, he won a recommendation to sit for the special examination, the *boxue hongci* 博學鴻詞 ("broad learning and vast erudition"), in the first year of the Qianlong emperor's reign (1736), which brought him official recognition on a national scale and the prospect of a political career. However, the elusion of the latter fostered an apparent thread of self-deprecation and resentment for the rest of his life. Like many contemporary men of high education, Jin came to the realizations in his old age, that fame had passed him by and that his aspirations had turned to sources of pain and frustration.[28] And it was the desire for public recognition that continued to torment him. Jin turned to Buddhism for solace. As the old image of crying horses had haunted his mind, the new images of Buddhist personages set him free. His painting of the anonymous disciple seems to be a hopeful affirmation of his own resolution. Because Jin adds no dedication line to his inscription, this painting of a Buddhist acolyte seems to be a message addressed to both the audience and himself alike. It speaks especially to those who were new and anonymous in the Buddhist order like himself. No matter how precious and accomplished he was in the secular world, in the quest of Buddhist faith, Jin was a beginner. And he called himself the "youngest disciple of Buddha."[29] Jin Nong's portrayal of a nameless and faceless acolyte engaged in mundane chores might have been a means of fashioning himself in his late years.

In fact, identifying oneself with a Buddhist or Daoist saint was a common practice in Chinese society. In the eighteenth century, for example, Emperor Qianlong along with many high officials, Confucian scholars, and artists had been portrayed as a Daoist priest as well as a Buddhist deity in paintings.[30] In addition, portraying friend or acquaintance as a Buddhist deity was a practice as prevalent and popular as adding the

28. For biographic account of Jin Nong, see Ginger Cheng-chi Hsü, *A Bushel of Pearls: Painting for Sale in Eighteenth-Century Yangchow*, pp. 163-184.

29. Jin, Nong, *Dongxin huafo tiji*, p. 104. It is also confirmed by his student Luo Ping in his "Dongxin xiansheng huafo ge" 冬心先生畫佛歌 (Ode to Mr. Dongxin's Painting of Buddhist Subject). Luo Ping, *Xiangye caotang shicun* (Yangzhou: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 1962), p. 3a.

30. See discussion in Richard Vinograd, *Boundaries of Self: Chinese Portraits, 1600-1900*, pp. 71-72. For illustration, see Evelyn Rawski & Jessica Rawson, eds., *China: The Three Emperors 1662-1795* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2005), cat. no. 47.

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title of *jushi* 居士 to one's own name or calling oneself "a householder who practices Buddhism or Daoist at home without becoming a monk."[31] In Jin Nog's circle, both Jin Nong and his close friend Ding Jing丁敬 (1695-1765) had been portrayed by Luo Ping 羅聘 as Arhats (Lohans), as was Hua Yan 華嵒 (1682-1756) by his student Zhang Sijiao 張四教.[32] In the case of Luo Ping, Jin's disciple and a lay Buddhist, the adoption of the style name, *Huazhisi seng* 花之寺僧 "Monk of the Flower Temple," could not be a clearer affirmation of his declared Buddhist connection.[33] As Buddhist culture permeated through social life at Jin's time, the common practice of assuming a Buddhist identity, whether in words or pictorial image, seemed to be a fixture of the social scene.

In Jin's own work, one sees the similar practice of portraying a friend as a Buddhist deity. A painting by Jin Nong dated to the twenty-fourth year of the Qianlong reign (1759) depicting the image of Changshoufo 長壽佛 (Buddha of Longevity or Amitābha) is, in fact, a painting of a monk-like figure holding a staff walking in a landscape. (Fig. 2) Jin's dedication at the end of the inscription reveals his intention to overlap the image of his friend with that of a Buddha: " ... I paint the Buddha of Longevity and respectfully send it to *Jushi Mijia* of the Pure Land [school] 淨彌伽居士 for him to worship. *Jushi's* pure countenance and ancient appearance look very much like our Buddha." According to Jin, the painting, while intended as an article for worship, served also as a means of complementing the spiritual attainment of the portrayed. Most interestingly, the recipient, the seventy-six year old Zhang Geng 張庚 (1685-1760), attaches a third represented identity to the Buddha in the painting—that of his mother. In Zhang's seven-character poem inscribed on the lower left corner of the painting, he describes how his life-long wish to become a Buddhist monk was unfulfilled due to his responsibility, as a filial son towards his mother. He continues in describing how he now holds incense and bows to the merciful continence

31. For definitions of *jushi*, see William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, p. 257.

32. See discussion of similar practice in Marsha Weidner, ed., *Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism, 850-1850*, p. 448 and Richard Vinograd, *Boundaries of Self: Chinese Portraits, 1600-1900*, pp. 102-109. For illustrations see Richard Vinograd, *Boundaries of Self: Chinese Portraits, 1600-1900*, figs. 58, 60 and plate 11.

33. For Luo Ping's adoption of this style name, Shi Weiqin, "Guanyu Huazhisi seng—Ba Baixiaji gaoben", *Yilin conglu*, vol. 7 (January 1973), p. 215. From this perspective, Luo's portrayal of his teacher Jin Nong, is not unlike the practice of producing a *chinzō*, a portrait of a Chan master, for ritual use. T. Griffith Foulk and Robert Sharf, "On the ritual use of Chan portraiture in medieval China," in Bernard Faure, ed., *Chan Buddhism in Ritual Context* (London & New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003), p. 120.

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of his mother with regret as his mother had passed away. Thus, while the Buddha of Longevity in the painting had served as an icon for Zhang to worship, he also envisioned his mother's face as he looked at the painting. As Zhang maintained in his third line: "My desire to become Boddhisattva Mijia (or *Megha* in Sanskrit)[34] never came true." Instead of becoming Boddhisattva Mijia, he was only a lay Buddhist named Mijia Jushi, just as Jin Nong was also a Jushi of Xixie [Studio] 昔邪居士.[35] It is clear that in Jin's work, the identification of a Buddhist image could hold multiple meanings. As the identification alternates between Buddhist and laic–from Buddha to Zhang in Jin's description, then back to Buddha as it was first intended for Zhang, then from Buddha to Zhang's mother in Zhang's inscription–the function of this Buddhist image extends beyond that of a religious icon.

Based on the observation above, it is therefore reasonable to assume that the monk in the picture entitled *Sweeping under the Pagoda in the Fragrant Woods* is a self-referential image. This assumption can be confirmed if we further examine this painting in the context of Jin's artistic oeuvre and personal life, especially with reference to his strategies of self-representation. Compared to his painting of the blossoming plum (dated 1759), and his paintings of drunken Zhong Kui, this Buddhist image adds another impression about Jin's self-image near the end of his life.[36] In the same self-deprecating tone tinged with sarcasm, it is more subtle but no less powerful in conveying his aspirations and frustrations in the last few years of his life. It also suggests his sense of relief at having found a channel to ease his worldly concerns, allowing him to find peace with himself at last.

3. Identifying with Shide and Hanshan

A closer look at the disciple in Jin's painting reminds one of Chan Buddhist personage in both Chinese and Japanese painting. The deliberate awkwardness of the modeling, the seeming crudeness of the brushwork, and the choice to render the image monochromatically all link to the style of Chan painting. The topsy-turvy hair, the

34. William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, p. 456.
35. According to Zhang Yuming's research, *Xixie* is a studio name Jin adopted as he lived in Zhishangcun 枝上村 near Tianningsi in Yangzhou. This is a style name Jin adopted around the age of 70. Zhang Yuming, "Jin dongxin shiming biehao kaoshi," pp. 36-37.
36. For Jin's strategies of self-fashioning, see Ginger Cheng-chi Hsü, "Incarnations of the Blossoming Plum," pp. 23-45 and "The Drunken Demon Queller: Chung K'uei in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Painting," pp. 141-175.

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shabby robe, and the contorted shape of the trousers procure the standard image of the *sansheng* 散聖 or "scattered unofficial saints" in Chan Buddhism, particularly the most popular pair, Hanshan 寒山 and Shide 拾得. In addition, the broom further identifies the novice as Shide.

According to the limited literary accounts, Shide was an orphan-cowherd who Fenggan 豐干 (also 封干), the well-learned monk from Guoqingsi 國清寺 of Mt. Tiantai 天臺 , met when he was taking a stroll in the mountains. After Shide was brought back to the monastery as a lost child, he was assigned the task of minding the lamps in the dining hall. However, after he was once found sitting and eating right in front of a statue of Buddha, uttering words of disrespect, he was removed from the more important work in the dining hall and sent to the kitchen. He was put in charge of washing and cleaning. As an errand-boy at the stoves in the kitchen, Shide always offered leftover food kindly wrapped in a bamboo container to the hermit-poet Hanshan, who frequented the monastery. They were often seen engaging in verbal exchanges that were undecipherable to others in the kitchen. Oblivious of others, they laughed and sang with no regard to the time of day or their whereabouts. Both of them had also shown unconventional, if not demented, behavior that had puzzled or even offended others, including official-visitors of the monastery. In addition to legends, both Hanshan and Shide are actually included in a biographic account, entitled *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 (Biographic Accounts of High Monks compiled in the Song Dynasty). Unlike Shide, Hanshan was recorded as a very well-learned scholar and poet of the Tang dynasty who had retired from his official post and resided at a certain Cold Mountain (Hanshan 寒山) in the vicinity of the Guoqingsi.[37]

The combination of history, legend, and religious lore must have provided a foundation for the pictorial presentation of this eccentric pair. In Chinese and Japanese paintings, the two characters have been presented close together (Fig. 3), as well as on separate hanging scrolls. (Fig. 4) In paintings such as The Four Sleepers, they have been presented as the disciples of Fenggan.[38] In some paintings these three

37. Zanning, et al., *Song gaoseng zhuan* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), pp. 484-486. Both Hanshan and Shide are discussed in volume 19 under the section about Fengan. Researcher based mainly on the poems collected under the title of Hanshan shi 寒山詩 (Collected Poems from the Cold Mountain) for Hanshan's identity and biography, see Wu Chi-yu, "A Study of Han-shan," *T'oung Pao* 45 (1957), pp. 392-450. According to Wu's study, Hanshan seems to have been the Buddhist monk Zhiyan 智岩 (577-645).

38. See discussion and illustration of "The Four Sleepers" by Mokuan Reien. Jan Fontein and Money L. Hickman, eds., *Zen Painting and Calligraphy* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1970), pp. 70-73.

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(Hanshan, Shide, and Fenggan) are referred to as the eccentric trio of the Guoqingsi and are portrayed with overlapping images of Arhats or even Daoist figures.[39] The untidy physical appearance of Hanshan and Shide, with their disheveled hair and tattered garments, was in accord with literary descriptions about these two Chan Buddhist saints. In addition, the witty and almost mischievous smiling pictorial images of Hanshan and Shihde also serve well to convey the elements of humor, the unexplainable, and the unexpected in Chan Buddhism. In some of the paintings, one senses a tinge of commonness, even vulgarity, the pictorial description of Shide who was seen "burst into laughter with chopsticks in his hand." [40]

Nevertheless, hidden behind their facetious, even irreverent, guises there was reputedly great wisdom. Shide reportedly was able to straddle the realms of man and transcendent, conscious and unconscious. He was recorded as being able to perform religious miracles. This was once revealed when Shide demonstrated the ability to communicate spiritually with all the clergy in the Guoqingsi through the patron deity.[41] Thereafter, Shide was known in his local area as "a hermit, a sage, and the incarnation of a Bodhisattva," and was conferred by local officials the honorable title of *xianshi* 賢士, "the worthy" or "man of virtue and talent." Similar anecdotes have been associated with Hanshan as well. In fact, both had been considered the incarnations of Bodhisattvas in the Buddhist pantheon: Hanshan as Manjusri (Wenshu 文殊) and Shide as Samantabhadra (Puxian 普賢).[42] From this perspective, the lore of Hanshan and Shide repeatedly reminds one that virtue and talent are not immediately recognizable. One should not be blind or prejudiced by others' common physical appearances or lowly existences. In this sense, the pictorial and verbal descriptions of Hanshan and Shide correspond with a common expression, *dazhi ruoyu* 大智若愚, "men of great wisdom look like fools" or "great wisdom always hides behind clumsiness and awkwardness." As a matter of fact, the author of the preface to the *Hanshashih* 寒山詩 (Collected Poems from the Cold Mountain) identified this quality in Hanshan as well:

39. For discussions of the interchangeability of Daoist and Buddhist images, see Jan Fontein and Money L. Hickman, eds., *Zen Painting and Calligraphy*, p. 8, Marsha Weidner, ed., *Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism, 850-1850*, p. 390, and Teisuke Toda, "Figure Paintings and Ch'an Priest Painters in the Late Yuan," in *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Chinese Painting* (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1970), pp. 391-415.
40. Zanning, et al., *Song gaoseng zhuan*, p. 485.
41. Zanning, et al., *Song gaoseng zhuan*, p. 485.
42. Zanning, et al., *Song gaoseng zhuan*, p. 485.

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"...A sage always conceals his whereabouts." [43]

In his presentation, Jin was very aware of the many layers of meaning that had cumulatively come to be associated with Shide. On a personal level, there were many similarities between artist and subject's lives. Throughout his career, Jin had adopted a variety of occupations and identities, earning him his reputation of eccentricity among his contemporaries.[44] Feeling the need in his younger years to justify his involvement in occupations that were considered low and demeaning for a highly educated man and a traditional Confucian scholar, he had listed a considerable number of "worthies" from the past who had also been involved in menial work.[45] However, Shide, a Chan Buddhist eccentric who also engaged himself physically in low-level manual work and won official recognition later in life, was not included on this list. As a matter of fact, Jin only considered those secular worthies measured by their success in the present world. The spiritual awakening that Jin came to know in his old age seemed to have evaded him in his earlier years. It was not until the last few years of his life that Jin turned to Buddhism, using Buddhist saints such as Shide as the standards to measure true success.

Nonetheless, if Jin had indeed wanted to identify himself as one of the scattered saints of Buddhism, Hanshan, the hermit poet, would seem to be a more appropriate figure of association. On the other hand, in both written and pictorial records, Hanshan and Shide seemed to share many commonalities: appearance, temperament, behavior, and, most importantly, level of spiritual attainment; so many that they could be easily identified as one. This aspect has been pointed out by a Japanese priest of the sixteenth century: "The two recluses are of the same bone and flesh." [46] In terms of iconography, Hanshan and Shide are distinguishable from one another only by their attributes. Hanshan is most often portrayed with a brush in his hand or absorb in reading (Fig. 5), while Shide, the alleged kitchen helper, usually holds a broom in his hands.[47]

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43. Wu Chi-yu, "A Study of Han-shan," p. 412. See also "original preface" to Hanshan, *Hanshan shiji*, in *Siku quanshu* (Wenyuange etition) (Reprint, Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1985), p. 2a.
44. For a discussion of Jin Nong's occupations, see Ginger Cheng-chi Hsü, *A Bushel of Pearls: Painting for Sale in Eighteenth Century Yangchow*, pp. 170-179.
45. Jin Nong, *Dongxin Huazhu tiji*, p. 83. See also translation and discussion in Ginger Cheng-chi Hsü, *A Bushel of Pearls: Painting for Sale in Eighteenth-Century Yangchow*, p. 177.
46. This is the first line of a poem that priest Shun'oku (1529-1611) inscribed on a painting of Hanshan and Shide attributed to Shubun (active 2nd quarter of the 15th century). Jan Fontein and Money L. Hickman, eds., *Zen Painting and Calligraphy*, pp. 121-123.

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(Fig. 4 Left) Just as the image of Buddha was endowed with double identities–both as Buddha of Longevity and *Jushi* Mijia–in Jin Nong's painting dedicated to Zhang Geng (Fig. 2), the image of a singular monk in *Sweeping under the Pagoda in the Fragrant Woods* could also have multiple identities. With the aid of a broom, the monk is identified as Shide as discussed above. And yet, the presentation of the back view of a figure as the main theme of a painting is rather thought provoking, if not puzzling as a Chan riddle. Featureless and expressionless, Jin seems to accentuate the unseen face. Is it indescribable? In this sense, Jin seems to be presenting a visual pun on the topic of "face," that had been discussed by generations of Chan masters and their disciples. For example, in Master Zhuhong's 袾宏 *Changuan cejin* 禪關策進 (Strategic Advance through the Chan Gate), a booklet for beginners and a collection of abridged quotations of Buddhist sutras and cardinal verses from Chan Buddhist masters, there are more than one entries regarding the search for ones own "original face (*benlai mianmu* 本來面目)" or "face before birth (*fumu weishengqian mianmu* 父母未生前面目)". The face is therefore considered a metaphor of the Buddha nature in human. It is indescribable and not restricted to the body or self.[48] This is perhaps why Jin Nong left the face of the Buddhist novice ambiguous. On the one hand, Jin seems to be illustrating Chan master's instruction of "sweeping away the false thoughts so as to obtain ones own true face 掃除妄念認取本來面目." [49] On the other, Jin could be trying to insinuate yet another identity to the monk in addition to that of Shide. By presenting a faceless Shide, Jin seems to be inviting the viewer to flip the image so as to see Shide's real face. And the flipside of Shide could be his inseparable other: Hanshan. This is most evident when we take a closer look at the image of the broom. It is flattened and spread out as if it were a huge brush pressed against the writing ground.

And as we further examine the image of an over-size brush in historical document, we learn that *chuanbi* 椽筆 or "brush with a huge beam-like tube" is a symbol for masterful writing.[50] This relationship of a huge brush and a broom is affirmed in an eighteenth century poem:

47. Shide's literacy is not clear. If indeed the Shide in Chan Buddhist lore can be identified as the one in history and literature, he is credited as the author of several Chan Buddhist verses included in *Hanshan shiji.* Hanshan*, Hanshan shiji*, original preface by Monk Daonan, p. 3b.
48. Zhuhong, *Changuan cejin* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Fojing liutongchu, 1968), pp. 23, 26, 30, 33, 36.
49. Zhuhong, *Changuan cejin*, p. 26.
50. See biography of Wang Xun 王珣 (350-401). *Jinshu,* in *Siku quanshu* (Wenyuange edition), juan. 65, p. 15b.

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Proud bones, like you, rare.
Jutting alone above ranging hills.
Roused by drink and brandishing a huge brush like a broom,
When you write out the tumbled rocks in your breast.[51]

This poem was inscribed by eighteenth century Manchu imperial family member, Dunmin 敦敏 (1729-1786?), on a painting of rocks by Cao Xueqin 曹雪芹 (d. 1762), the author of the famous fiction, *Hongloumeng* 紅樓夢 (Dream of the Red Chamber). Focusing on the subject of rock in his poem, Dunmin complemented the uncompromising character of the painter as he addressed the jutting quality of the depicted rocks. He then comments on the execution of the painting: Just as a broom sweeps the ground clean, a "huge brush like broom" moves to eradiate the unevenness and heaviness of "tumbled rocks" in the painter's breast. In sum, both brooms and brushes were instruments used to clean the dust of the material world, whether stroking the ground or the scroll.

When the brush, the sword of the educated man and a symbol of his power, is seen instead as a broom, the holder is transformed from a man of culture into a commoner. But even though he is depicted sweeping and cleaning with his broom, Shide too, was regarded as a saint. Instead of cultivating the "ink-fields" that Jin and his contemporaries often referred to their literary careers, Shide cultivated the field of the mind, depending on the power of broom rather than brush. It is therefore possible that Jin was trying to fuse Hanshan and Shide into one. Thus the figure can be considered to have a literally two-sided identity. When facing the viewer, he can be identified as Hanshan. And yet when the viewer reinterprets the object Hanshan is holding–from large brush to broom–the "flipside" identity appears.

Considering the notion of brush as a broom and the idea of Hanshan and Shide as part of a single inseparable identity, Jin seems to instill yet another layer of visual pun. As Shide turning his back to the viewer, his inseparable other Hanshan faces the viewer. As Shide turns into Hanshan, his broom turns into a brush. Though as worn-out as the broom is in the picture, as an emblem of culture, it is unmistakably recognizable. It is the tool of making a living, if not a means of expression for generations of literati.

51. Hong Pimou, *Litai tihuashi xuanzhu* (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 1983), p. 144. See translation in John Hay, *Kernel of Energy, Bones of Earth* (New York: China House Gallery, 1985), p. 40.

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Though it might look like a "barren tube with remnant coal (*canmei tuguan* 殘煤禿管)" as Jin once mocked the instrument of his literary career, he was more than proud to pass it down to his students[52] Perhaps this is why the broom in the painting is shown clutched closely to the chest rather than held in the action of sweeping.

4. *Feibai* as a Formal Means

The interrelatedness of the broom and the brush appears a second time when one examines the brushwork of Jin's image of Shide. On the lower part of the body, the artist adopts a calligraphic stroke known as *feibai* 飛白 or "flying white," in which a dry brush is pressed on the paper and then swiftly moved, leaving streaks of white within the strokes, as described above. One could of course argue that Jin is following the abbreviated and impressionistic style of brushwork often associated with Chan painting. Similar brushwork can be seen in a painting entitled *The Second Patriarch Harmonizing His Mind*, in which the outline and crests of the left-hand sleeve are most vigorously and swiftly executed. (Fig. 6) On the other hand, one could understand *feibai* as a type of calligraphic stroke which would make Jin's choice to use *feibai* an example of *shufa ruhua* 書法入畫 or "adopting calligraphy stroke into painting"–one of the keys to understanding Jin's pictorial art. Most importantly, *feibai* serves Jin not only as a formal means of description, but also as a vehicle of expression. In Jin's context, it is a symbol of culture and history since *feibai*, though associated with calligraphers and painters of the classical periods of Han and Tang dynasties, is reportedly rarely seen during Jin's time. By applying *feibai* in his painting, Jin reveals the pride of an erudite scholar while lamenting the loss of a treasured art form.

Among his contemporaries, Jin Nong was known for his extensive knowledge about the historicity of various types of brushwork. As he had devoted to the study of ancient stele, having collected rubbings since youth, he was an experienced connoisseur and practitioner of various calligraphic scripts. His love for calligraphy on stele extended to the distant past, especially to those made before the Tang dynasty. And it was these pieces that formed the basis of his stylistic innovation. As he was most sensitive about the implications of various styles, he applied them most literally in his own works. For example, in a painting of a standing Buddha, Jin uses brush

52. According to Jin's own account on seals, *Canmei tuguan* was the phrase carved on a seal for his student Xiang Jun 項均, dated to 1737. Qin Zuyong, *Qijia yinba,* in *Meishu congshu* (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1975), vol. 7, p. 164.

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strokes that fluctuate and taper off at the ends to delineate the draperies of his robe. (Fig. 7) The angularity created by the bend of the brush simulates knife carvings in woodblocks or stone. With less moisture on his brush, Jin also leaves white streaks or grayish areas within his strokes, creating the effect of rubbings from stone carvings or copies of woodblock impressions. At the end of the inscription, Jin explains: "This painting grows out of my own ideas or *yi* 意, and one should not expect me to be equal to Gu [Kaizhi], Lu [Tanwei], Xie [Lingyun], and Zhang [Sengyao]. Neither should viewers demand [my skill in rendering] brush and ink." Jin continues: " However, after I have scrutinized this painting more than four times, I find that it is indeed filled with an archaic flavor (*guqi* 古氣) of hundreds and thousands of years. It looks as though it were a stone-carved image from Longmen 龍門 ..." Jin was more than conscious of the effects created by his calligraphic strokes, and left no space for viewers to speculate. Through his brush strokes, he deliberately created the effect of carvings and rubbings, thereby procuring an association with images from ancient Buddhist cave temples such as Longmen and the calligraphic style derived from ancient steles.

In another painting of a standing Buddha, Jin chose to use long and delicately tremulous lines repeatedly to depict the draperies. (Fig. 8) The lines flow rhythmically, curving into four rolls at the bottom, which look like four decorative curling cloud patterns or four moving wheels. The elongated Buddha with his fluffy robe appears to be floating and moving, supported by the cloud. The narrowly gauged drapery lines seem to be a reference to the "tightly-folded" drapery of Cao Zhongda 曹仲達, the legendary painter of the Buddhist images of the Northern Qi (550-577).[53] Nevertheless, the long thinning-and-thickening brushstrokes and the whirling and floating robe seem to emulate the style attributed to another legendary painter of Daoist and Buddhist images, Wu Daozi 吳道子 (active early 8th century) of the Tang dynasty. In this painting, Jin alluded to the brushwork of two of the most revered painters of religious subject matters recorded in Chinese art historical writings. More interestingly, he seemed to be trying to reconcile two most distinctive modes of presenting Buddhist icons: the so-called *caoyi chushui* 曹衣出水 (Cao's garments [while clinging to the figure's body] looked as if they had just come out of water) and *wudai dangfeng* 吳帶當風 (Wu's girdles looked as if they were wind-tossed); Jin's draperies appeared

53. Some Ming-Qing texts cite another Buddhist art specialist Cao Buxing 曹不興 or Cao Fuxing 曹弗興 of the Three Kingdoms instead of Cao Zhongda as the creator of the *caoyi chushui* style. Nevertheless, in his *Tuhua jianwen zhi*, Guo Ruoxu cites Cao Zhongda though he is fully aware of the other Cao. See Guo Ruoxu, *Tuhua jianwen zhi,* in *Huashi congshu* (Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1974), p. 156.

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neither clinging nor fluttering[54] Ultimately, through his work, Jin turned those long-lost, yet celebrated brushworks from literary description into pictorial presentation. This was a deliberate intention, as Jin put at the end of a long inscription listing artists from the Six Dynasties to the Southern Song and their paintings of Buddhist icons, "–nowadays we are so far away from the ancient. We can only paint based on our imagination from written record." [55] (Fig. 7) As usual, Jin connected himself with the great painters of religious icons in the past, while boasting of his art-historical knowledge. Experimenting with brushstrokes he had learned from verbal description in books, Jin was also able to combine calligraphic styles that he had seen in stele or in rubbings, ultimately creating several new styles of calligraphy that marks his position among calligraphers of the *Jinshixue* 金石學 or "the study of ancient bronze and stele" school.[56] In recovering work, whether from his own imagination or from artifacts he saw, Jin was essentially pleading to preserve for his culture, a glorious past that was slowly fading. This ambition is also evident in his dealing with yet another calligraphic style, *feibai*, in his painting of Sweeping under the Pagoda in the Fragrant Woods.

Feibai, according to Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠 (812-877), was a style of calligraphy invented by the great official-calligrapher Cai Yong 蔡邕 (133-192), which was a variation of the standard script or *kaishu* 楷書. With regard to the origin of *feibai*, Zhang maintains: "During the Xiping reign (172-177) of the Han dynasty, ... Cai came to the Hongtu Gate which [the emperor] had ordered renovated. While waiting [for an imperial summons] Cai watched a workman finish the characters [on the tablet] with a paintbrush. Greatly inspired, he went home and invented *feibai*." [57] Zhang Yanyuan, the author of *Fashu yaolu* 法書要錄 (Important Records on Calligraphy), further defined *feibai* as the style of the characters inscribed on tablets used in palace architecture: "While the momentum of the brush exceeds ten feet, the characters should be light and not filled." [58] It is not clear whether Cai Yong was inspired by the movement of the paintbrush when the workman wrote the characters or by the process in which the workman filled in the blank spaces between the outlines of the copied characters.

54. See also translations of Guo Ruoxu's text discussing Cao and Wu's brushworks in Susan Bush and Hsio-yen Shih, *Early Chinese Texts on Painting* (Cambridge: Mass.: Harvard-Yenching Institute, 1985), p. 106.
55. The same lines are included in Jin Nong, *Dongxin huafo tiji*, pp. 100-101.
56. For a discussion of Jin's calligraphy, see Fu Shen, *Traces of the Brush: Studies in Chinese Calligraphy* (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1977), pp. 135, 144. See also Zhang Yuming, *Shengshi huafo: Jin Nong zhuan*, pp. 345-353.
57. Zhang Yanyuan, *Fashu yaolu,* in *Siku guanshu*, juan 7, p. 15b.
58. Zhang Yanyuan, *Fashu yaolu,* in *Siku guanshu*, juan 7, p. 15b.

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Nevertheless, it is clear that *feibai* is characterized as a quick-executed calligraphy, with large scale characters, most suitable for names and titles inscribed on public buildings like palaces, government offices, and monasteries. Therefore, this style of calligraphy is initially associated with the broom-like, fast-moving paintbrushes found in the hands of low-ranking artisan-painters. And yet, *feibai* had gained popularity among Tang imperial family members and was most often seen on top of a stele (*beie* 碑額). For example, when Tang Emperor Taizong 唐太宗 (r. 626-649) prepared a commemorative essay for Jinci 晉祠 (Jin Temple) of Shanxi, he wrote the essay itself in running script (*xingshu* 行書) while the nine-character phrase for its date–the twenty-sixth day of the first month, twentieth year of the Zhenguan era 貞觀廿年正月廿六日(646)–put on top of the stele was executed in *feibai* style.[59] (Fig. 9) Although time may have faded the original sharpness of Taizong's elegant characters, the distinct and painstakingly carved white streaks within each stroke are still apparent. Another member of the Tang imperial household, the empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (r. 690-705) also employed *feibai* characters in a memorial essay celebrating a newly built shrine in Henan. The essay itself was carved in the cursive style (*caoshu* 草書). However, the six-character title, *Shengxian taizi zhi bei* 昇仙太子之碑 (Stele of the Ascending Crown Prince), on top of the stele was rendered in extremely ornate and stylized *feibai*, with white spots placed regularly between the outlines of each brushstroke.[60] While very few calligraphic works in the *feibai* style have survived, one learns from Chinese painters that *feibai* had been considered one of the script-styles of calligraphy and that, most notably, it was adopted later in painting. And the verse attributed to Zhao Mengfu: "rocks [should be done] in *feibai*, trees in the large seal script manner (*shi ru feibai mu ru zhou* 石如飛白木如籀)," had become the most quoted advice on brushwork in painting, especially in Ming-Qing texts.[61]

In the eighteenth century, extant calligraphy and paintings in the *feibai* style were rare. Even rubbings from the stele were sparse. In fact, Jin believed that few people had any knowledge of it at all. He reintroduced the style by experimenting with *feibai* in one of his bamboo paintings and citing its stylistic features to previous *feibai* practitioners: "Zhonglang [official title] Cai [Yong] wrote in *feibai*, Zhang Li 張

59. See illustration of the stele in Dai Lancun, ed., *Shudao quanji*, tr. Dai, Lancun (Taipei: Talu shudian, 1979), vol. 7, p. 8, fig. 19. The text is reproduced in *Tang Taizong jinciming,* in *Suitang mingbei* (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 2001), pp. 1-44.

60. For illustration, see *Zhongguo meishu quanji*, vol. 55, p. 5 and *Shudao quanji*, vol. 8, p. 171, fig. 66.

61. For an example of Zhao Mengfu's painting in *feibei* style, see James Cahill, *Hills Beyond a River* (Tokyo & London: Weatherhill, 1976), plate 80 and a discussion of *feibai*, pp. 162-163.

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璘 [otherwise unknown] painted rocks in *feibai*, and Zhang Xuan 張萱 drew bamboo in *feibai*. However, one does not see them regularly nowadays. In the leisure days of Spring, I playfully imitate [their brushwork].”[62] In a short essay dedicated to a friend, Chu Jun 褚峻 , who shared Jin’s passion for calligraphy as well as stele-visiting (*fangbei* 訪碑) and rubbing collecting, Jin further commented on the lost style: “From what I hear, people nowadays hardly study *feibai*.” [63] Jin then elaborated on the beauty and characteristics of *feibai* in six seven-character lines, beginning with a description of proper brushwork: “Employing the brush as if it were a broom but actually not a broom, one should not deviate from the turning and bending [of the brush] 用筆似帚卻非帚，轉折向背毋乖離 .” [64] To describe the movement of the brush and the aesthetic quality it creates, Jin likened them to the “wings of fairy birds brushed lightly over the snow-white waves 雪浪輕張仙鳥翼” and the “icy silk threads emitted accidentally from the silver shuttle 銀機亂吐冰蠶絲.” [65] Jin here refers to the long and delicate wavy strokes of *feibai*, and the sparseness of ink traces like silk threads, creating a most vivid yet unimaginable image of *feibai*. For Jin, *feibai*, little known among his contemporaries, was a token of personal knowledge and an evidence of culture. It was a passion that he could share with only the most erudite like Chu Jun.[66]

In Jin’s own hierarchical view of brushwork, *feibai* must have occupied a high position, as it was connected to the writing styles of the high official, emperor, and empress of the past. In addition, its association with the highly regarded painters Zhang Xuan and Zhao Mengfu further codified *feibai* as one of the most valued calligraphic strokes in painting. The distinction of *feibai* is even more apparent when Jin discussed the type of brushwork and color-wash that was popular among his contemporaries: “Practitioners [of ink and brush] nowadays like to do lotus leaves protruding from the windy pond. [In my opinion] none of the people in this world need to paint. If one insists on doing splashy ink (*pomo* 潑墨) and scribbling with colors (*turan* 塗染), they have no choice but to hang their works in the vegetable market for the viewing of those whose jobs are picking up animal waste and when they pause to

62. Jin Nong, *Dongxin xiansheng zahua tiji*, p. 210.
63. Jin Nong, “Geyang Chu Jun *feibai* ge”, in *Dong xiansheng xuji*, pp. 2a-b. According to Kohara Hironobu, Jin Nong wrote the essay for Chu Jun in 1734. Hironobu Kohara, ed., *Kin Nō*, in *Bunjinga suihen* (Tokyo: Chuō Koronsha, 1986), p. 167.
64. Jin Nong, “Geyang Chu Jun *feibai* ge,” p. 2a.
65. Jin Nong, “Geyang Chu Jun *feibai* ge,” p. 2a.
66. Jin is said to have visited Jinci in 1729 during his trip to Shanxi. Zhang Yuming, *Shengshi huafo: Jin Nong zhuan*, p. 382.

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rest." [67] Bitingly critical, Jin showed no patience for those who followed the fashion and fad of his time (perhaps referring, in particular, to the type of painting sought after by Yangzhou patrons). There is no doubt that he valued writing over painting; Jin favored the preciseness of calligraphic strokes over the graceless splotches of ink and color-washes, and treasured only those brushworks that he believed to contain history and true culture. He despised those visually appealing images made up of ink play and color pigments, believing them to be for the crude and uncultured masses. Yet, in *Sweeping under the Pagoda in the Fragrant Woods*, Jin seems to have violated his hierarchy of values by using *feibai* to delineate the lower part of the body of the Buddhist novice. The once revered and enshrined calligraphic strokes positioned on top of steles fail to occupy a prominent position in the picture. However, we can come to understand that this was a contradiction consciously made. It seems as if Jin used his painting to symbolically illustrate the circumstances of the time, as well as his personal situation.

With the image of a low-life figure, Jin expresses his hope to be recognized as an unofficial or eccentric saint such as Hanshan and Shide. Nonetheless, he cannot help but raise his doubts about viewers with little culture who are also ignorant of the history of painting and writing, not to mention their ability to appreciate such classical brushstroke as *feibai*. If they cannot even tell the traces of a brush from those of a broom, how should one expect them to distinguish between various ink and brush styles? How would it matter if the respected *feibai* brushstrokes were position high or low in the picture? In his presentation of the broom as the transformed image of a brush, Jin further instills a sense of loss. In despair, as the sense of devaluation permeated the pictorial surface, Jin seems to be able to find some solace for himself and for his audience, if one is willing to venture further into Jin's pictorial pun. Looking at an image of a man clutching a broom close to his chest, Jin is most likely depicting yet another idiom *bizhou zizhen* 敝帚自珍 or "My worn-out broom is a treasure only to myself." Even though he once referred to his brush as worn-out as "an empty tube with few hairs that has nothing but some dry ink crumbs clinging [to it]", Jin cherished his brush and the work he made with it. Regardless of whether they had received official recognition or not, Jin himself believed that his literary work would "shine through his own palms emitting rays of bright light," just as the jewel-like sarira within the proverbial pagoda.

67. Jin Nong, *Dongxin huazhu tiji*, p. 81.

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Conclusion

Living in a monastery and practicing the art of painting and writing, Jin fashioned himself both as a monk-artist and a literati patron of Buddhist monasteries. Claiming to be the youngest disciple of Buddha, he was not detached from wordily affairs even late in his life. In the Spring of the year before his death (1762), Jin at the age of seventy-five actually made a last attempt to secure official recognition by presenting his poetry anthology to Emperor Qianlong who was on his third southern inspection tour. Is it possible that this painting was a product inspired by the incident?[68] Adopting one painted subject after another, bamboo, plum blossoms, drunken Zhong Kui, horses, and finally Buddhist subjects, Jin seemed to be moving from hope (bamboo) to yearning (plum), from satirical self-criticism (Zhong Kui) to self-pity (horse) and finally, to self-awakening (Buddhist images). Perpetually tormented by the fear of passing without worldly success, Jin Nong struggled to use his art as a medium of self-representation and as a means of coming to terms with himself. And yet, even with his art and its multiple subject matters, Jin's concern about his life in the present world never ceased. He lived under the reign of an ambition that had driven his life from youth: an ambition concerning not only his personal gain in civil service examinations or name recognition in history books, but also most pressingly, acknowledgement as a dignified man of culture. And in fulfilling this ambition Jin Nong was sadly only partially successful, for the ubiquitous "enemy" that he had battled against throughout his life was, in fact, the demise of a culture of elegance in late imperial China. Jin Nong's struggle was not unique either, for his journey was that of many of his contemporaries. It is the story of men of letters disfranchised from the sacred grove of academic degree holders and governmental positions. Ambivalent yet proud, Jin was most outspoken with his new medium–painting–and ultimately most eloquent with his newfound identity–a faceless and nameless Buddhist practitioner, enlightened and self-fulfilled.

（責任編輯：何碧琪）

68. In a painting dated to the fourth month of 1762 entitled "Leaf-Sweeping Monk 僧人掃葉圖 ", Jin seems to make an even more direct reference to the imperial visit. As Jin's own inscription elaborates on the expression of "sweeping the carriages from the capital", his picture of a broom-clutching monk under a tree is a pointed criticism of those monks who engaged themselves in the reception of high ranking official and deviated from their daily chore of sweeping and cleaning. See illustration in Qi, 2007, I: 319.

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