

Satire and Situation

Images of the Artist in Late Nineteenth-Century China

RICHARD VINOGRAD

The photograph of a *Hong Kong Artist at Work* (figure 1) made sometime between 1868 and 1872 by the Englishman John Thomson offers a documentary glimpse of the role of the artist and of some of the conditions of artistic production within the later nineteenth-century Chinese cultural horizon.¹ There is information within the frame, and also this side of the lens, in the circumstances of the photographic project. The painter is a kind of portraitist-by-proxy himself, specializing in individual and group portraits, along with harbor scenes, and probably working from photographs to produce oil paintings. There are thus several levels of transposition and substitution implicated in the image, from photograph to painting in the case of the artist displayed at work, and back to photograph through the proxy of the camera in the case of the seemingly objective and effortless photographic print: the artist representing, represented artlessly.

The seeming candor and artlessness of the photograph are of course open to question. The photograph seems to dispense with the standard apparatus of artistic image construction, part cultural and literary stereotype, part iconographic convention, in favor of an immediate glimpse of the artist's labor, thoroughly deromanticized. In fact, the photograph is the product of complex processes and situations. The project of which this image forms a part can be variously construed as documentary, ethnographic, or touristic, and the situation might be candid or staged. The photograph seems to aim not at an explicit portrait but at something more like a register of professional technique, and the implication of a depersonalized record mirrors the activity of the painter at work, distanced from the ordinary relational encounters of portraitist and portrait subject. The status of the subject as specimen has some implications for the claimed



Figure 1. John Thomson (1837-1921), *Hong-Kong Artist at Work*.

status of the (unseen) photographer as privileged observer. Whereas the photographer sees, and represents, seemingly effortlessly and comprehensively, the painter labors at a particular replication. There are implications, respectively, of autonomy and subservience, part technologically based and part culturally determined.

Although Thomson's photograph is an outsider's vision, technically and presentationally untraditional, and seems to disregard customary narratives of the artist's role and identity, it conveys its own implied narratives of position and production. These bear on both the painter and the photographer and have some affinities with representations of painters that appear in the more culturally central milieu of the nineteenth-century Shanghai art world. The artist is a craftsman first, displaying the tools of his craft, brush and mahlstick, in the act of practice. He is in the business of replication, most likely of photographic images in oils, surrounded by examples of his production specialties and by signs of the commercialization of his craft. He is both subservient to his task of replication, and compliant to the photographer's objectifying vision. As represented here the artist is not unlike the image of the painter as faithful limner presented in Qiu Ying's *Spring Morning in the Han Palace* handscroll, except that the Hong Kong artist is cut off from any social relationships other than the indirect ties of the marketplace, marked by the surrounding disembodied images of his diverse clientele.²

Thomson's career embodies a submerged narrative of the photographer as a purveyor of images who travels to distant cities to make his way in the world. It is an account echoed closely, and curiously, in the life of Ren Yi (Bonian, 1840-1895), who moved from his home region of Zhejiang to Suzhou and Shanghai in search of a career. Ren's profile *Portrait of Gao Yongzhi* (figure 2) similarly echoes Thomson's photograph of the Hong Kong painter in its profile presentation of an image of an artist; otherwise, Ren's portrait occupies a distant position on a contemporary grid of mediality, sociality, and cultural space with Thomson's photograph.

Ren Yi's 1877 portrait of the twenty-eight year old painter reflects contact with European representational modes but, unlike Thomson's photographic image of the artist from just a few years before, it is less a representation of artistic performance than an exemplification of it. Functionally, it is primarily a birthday picture, but the sociality of the image extends to its production as a collaboration between Ren



Figure 2.
 Ren Yi (1840-1895) and Hu
 Yuan (1823-1886), *Portrait
 of Gao Yongzhi Beneath a
 Tree*,dated 1877- Shanghai
 Museum. Hanging scroll,
 ink and color on paper,
 130.9 x 48.5 cm.

Yi as portraitist and Hu Yuan (1823-1886) as supplementary painter of setting and scenery. There is a still broader social function for the image as well; it belongs to an extensive series in Ren's oeuvre is documented, and presumably solidified, Ren's relationships with a contemporary community of artists, including images of the painters Hu Yuan, Gao Yong (Gao Yongzhi, 1850-19 21), Sha Fu (1831-1906), Zhang Xiong (1803-1886), Ren Xun (1835-1893), Xugu (1823-1896), and Wu Changshuo (1844-1927).⁴ The signs of Western pictorial impact in the heavy shading of face and robe are counterbalanced and even contradicted by strong traces of dynamic brush-and-ink movements in the rendering of robe contours, pine tree, and rock, whose functions as signs of personal production, rather than reproduction, are at least as crucial as their symbolic import. The need for such assertions of the personal and the social is only increased by the co-presence of Western representational features, and the chief impact of the West in this context may have been as much the stimulation of this kind of reaction as direct influence on representation, although there is substantial evidence of Ren Yi's knowledge of Western pictorial images and techniques and of his practice of preparatory pencil sketches in the Western manner.⁵ Ren Yi's recorded denunciations of Western moral culture, at any rate, are couched in reactive terms, including a protective citation of traditional Confucian familial and social relationships as valued and threatened.⁶

If one major axis of concern for images of nineteenth-century artistic roles lay along a contemporary grid - of foreign cultural intrusion and competition with the reproductive technology of photography - another was bound up with historical precedents and paradigms. Some of the issues involved are addressed by the juxtaposition of related images: Ren Yi's *Portrait of Wu Changshuo Enjoying the Cool Shade of Banana Palms* (figure 3), which seems to correspond in most structural features with a painting of a little more than a century before, Luo Ping's *Portrait of Jin Nong's Noon Nap Beneath Banana Palms* (figure 4). The images have in common seated figures with bared torsos under banana palms, holding round leaf-fans; Ren Yi's knowledge of Luo Ping's precedent composition is documented in Ren's inscription on another painting.⁷ There are some parallels as well in the circumstances of the portraits and relationships between artist and portrait

subject. Both involve teacher-pupil relationships, though with markedly different dynamics. Luo Ping's portrayal of his teacher maintains, on the surface at least, the more traditional portrait situation, with the senior and prestigious sitter painted by the student who is junior in age and status and subservient in role. Ren Yi's portrait of his slightly younger painting student, Wu Changshuo, reverses those age and role relationships; the status relationships are less clear. Wu Changshuo had a reputation in calligraphic and literary accomplishment that Ren Yi lacked, and some of Ren's recorded comments to Wu indicate an awareness of Wu's higher status and some effort on Ren's part to cultivate or flatter him.⁹ In fact, the composition of Ren Yi's portrait of Wu Changshuo beneath banana palms is almost exactly matched in an earlier *Portrait of Zhang Xiong* and in an undated portrait of an unknown subject; thus Ren's image of Wu might be seen as part of a series that functioned as means of cultivating well-known artists and of signaling Ren's relationship to them.¹⁰

Our awareness of Ren's repeated uses of this portrait formula alters our sense of its significance and its relationship to its models. Rather than a unique reference to the portrait and the relationship of Jin Nong and Luo Ping, it appears to be a ready pattern, with an aura of multiple, if not mass, production and an implication of professionalism and commercialization. The existence of multiple versions of this painted portrait type brings up the contemporary presence of photographic portraits as a competitive medium, whether or not any specifically photographic qualities or impact can be discerned in the painted portrait. In this light, Ren Yi's portrait images beneath banana palms take on the qualities of a reproducible template.

Luo Ping's *Portrait of Jin Nong* is more complex than appears on the surface. It harbors an implication of surreptitious capture of the master by his follower in an unguarded moment, in ways that call up the complex interdependencies of teacher and student, particularly in the case of a student who ghost-painted for his teacher as did Luo Ping.¹⁰ Moreover, the portrayal of relaxation and casual attire carried even for contemporary viewers, imputations or recollections of Jin Nong's reputation for homoerotic behavior and an aura of impropriety, far less innocuous than the first impression of an image of an artistic demeanor and disregard of formality.



Figure 3. Ren Yi (1840-1895), Portrait of Wu Changshuo Enjoying the Cool Shade of Banana Palms. Zhejiang Provincial Museum, Hangzhou. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 129.5 x 58.9 cm.

Figure 4. Luo Ping (1733-1799), *Portrait of Jin Nong's Noon Nap Beneath Banana Palms*, inscription dated 1760. Shanghai Museum . Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper.



Thus Ren Yi's *Portrait of Wu Changshuo Enjoying the Cool Shade of Banana Palms* acquires some of its impact and significance from its positioning against both contemporary photographic practice and historical painting sources, irrespective of the differences in Ren's relationships to those pictorial categories. Connections with photographic images of artists such as Thomson's would presumably have been resisted by Ren along with other Westernizing practices but the status of his portrait of Wu Changshuo as one of a standardized series nonetheless draws it into the context of photographic production and reproduction. Ren Yi's connections to Luo Ping's *Portrait of Jin Nong's Noon Nap* were more specific and deliberate, but the portrait of Wu Changshuo has a different impact from its model, in part due to its very situation of belatedness and dependence on the earlier work, but especially because of its qualities of physicality, verging on gross corporeality. Where Luo Ping's portrait of Jin Nong is reticent, even vaguely apparitional in its evocation of the subject's sleeping, dreaming state, Ren's portrait of Wu has an inescapably fleshy, sensual presence. This mode of presentation distinguishes Ren's portrait both from the less visually assertive eighteenth-century artist portrait and from the seeming effortlessness and disembodied character of photographic production. At the same time, the insistent solidity and corporeality of Ren's work may owe something to the need to compete with the vividness and verisimilitude of photographic portraits.

The effect of Ren Yi's presentation of Wu Changshuo is difficult to characterize precisely, in part because it depends so much on the circumstances of the image, in the ways mentioned above and also due to its place in a larger series of portraits of other artist-friends of Ren, and other images of Wu Changshuo in particular. In comparison to *Jin Nong's Noon Nap*, Ren's *Wu Changshuo Enjoying the Shade* moves in the direction of satire, or at least a heightening of the satirical elements implicit in that earlier work to a more blatant and inescapable level. *Jin Nong's Noon Nap* supports an initial reception in terms of the sitter's assumption of a conventional, rustic persona in an environment of relaxed retreat, although the extended implications of the image are if anything subversive of the image of the artist as an exemplar of high-minded refinement. Ren Yi's related portrait of Wu Changshuo seems deliberately to cast the artist in terms of an appetitive, embodied sensuality that distances the image at the outset

from most of the conventional associations of cultivated artistic identity in the Chinese portrait tradition. The invocation of Luo Ping's precedent image of Jin Nang thus seems more a matter of parody than paradigm.

The outspoken sense of physicality, corporeality, and embodiment that pervades so many nineteenth-century artist portraits, both in imagistic terms and reflected in the contents of accompanying textual inscriptions, is worth some further consideration. By and large, earlier artist portraits rather de-emphasized the body in pictorial terms, with summary treatments of all but the portrait head, sometimes reflecting a technical practice of leaving the painting of heads and bodies of portrait figures to different specialists. Most earlier artist-portraits convey standards of formal harmony of the portrait figure or active enjoyment of the sitter's surroundings, but there are some examples which manifest qualities of bodily tension, distortion, or ungainliness that foreshadow the directions of nineteenth-century portraiture. Chen Hongshou's (1599-1652) self-portraits, with their tense concealment or contortions embodying mental states, or Kuncan's (1612-1675 or earlier) self-image as an alienated, tree-dwelling Chan eccentric, or Luo Ping's image of Jin Nang as an ungainly *luohan* are prominent, but unusual, cases.¹¹ Whereas earlier artist-portraits of this type embody deep-seated anxieties and alienations, the late nineteenth-century artists, especially as they are represented by Ren Yi, are rendered rather as appetitive and discomfited, with accompanying inscriptions often conveying a tone of complaint. The critical thrust of the portraits seems to become reflexively directed at the artist-subjects, more than at the surrounding culture.

Some features of that redirection are indicated in the juxtaposition of another pair of portraits, Jin Nong's *Self Portrait* of 1760 (figure 5), and another of Ren Yi's images of the artist Gao Yong, *Gao Yongzhi as a Calligraphy Beggar* (figure 6). Despite the evident similarities between images of standing figures in profile, holding long staffs, the portraits are separated by a wide gulf in presentation and emphasis. Jin Nong's self-portrayal is nearly disembodied, with his long robe outlined by a tentative line, conveying little sense of the body beneath. It is embedded in a textual matrix of art-historical references, so that Jin Nong's present identity is further fragmented in a series of distant historical reflections and comparisons.¹² Gao Yong, on the other hand, is portrayed with an uneasily contained muscular intensity, tightly gripping his staff,

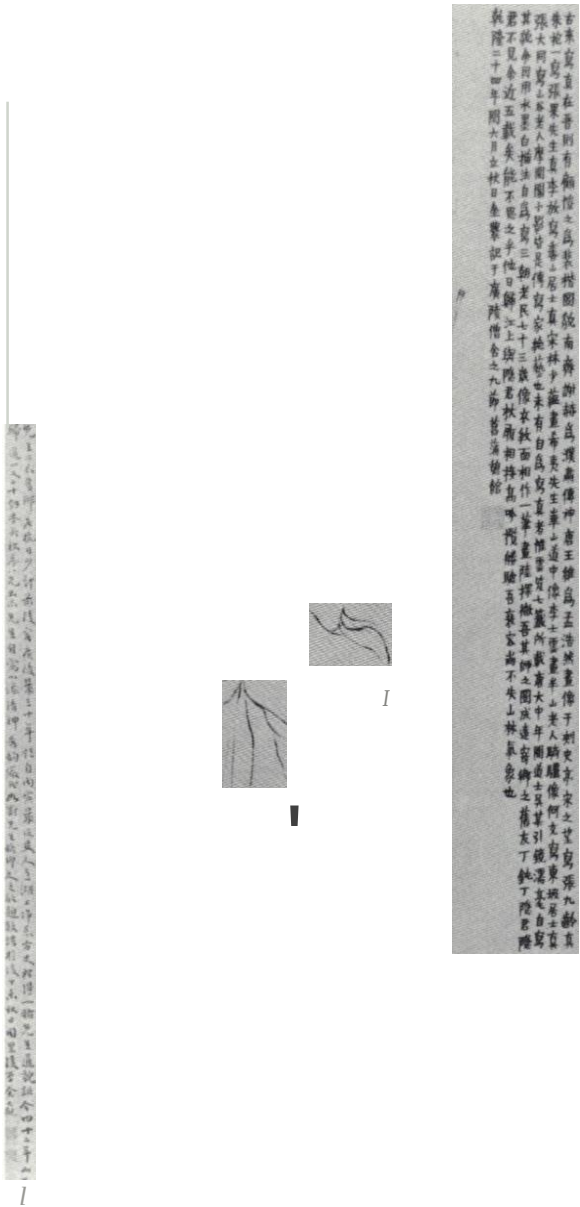


Figure 5.
Jin Nong (1687-1764),
*Self Portrait: Walking with
a Staff*, dated 1759. Palace
Museum , Beijing. Hang-
ing scroll, ink on paper.

his tunic billowing with dynamic folds suggestive of the energy beneath, and with the concrete tools of artistic production at his feet.

Ren Yi's portrait of Gao Yong as a calligraphy beggar also raises the issue of satire or parody in representation. The 1887 portrait of Gao Yong bears a long inscription by the painter Xugu, added in the same year at the request of artist and subject, which provides some evidence of the contemporary climate of reception for such an image. Moreover, because the text is based on a longer composition written by Xugu for Wu Changshuo, it may offer some broader illumination on questions of tone in portraits of artists as beggars or in otherwise straitened circumstances. The inscription, translated in part, reads:

Yongzhi is a Department Magistrate and an excellent man; he is skilled in calligraphy and partial to it, calling himself 'the calligraphy beggar.' He enjoined Ren Bonian to paint a small portrait of him, with his hair like a bramblebush, with rent clothes and raising an open basket in which are stored brushes and inkstones. It conveys an extremely poverty-stricken, cramped and restrained demeanor; seeing it makes one suddenly laugh uncontrollably. It's only an entertainment, without having rousing qualities. I also use an entertainment to inscribe it: 'In Wu City the pan-pipe sound is music for a fine day; why so much trouble to study calligraphy and bear calligraphy debts? Calligraphy debts are without respect, and evading them is not easy; everywhere everyone knows the calligraphy beggar. With wild hair and rough clothes he captures the idea of calligraphy; carnal eyes straight forward, not yet willing to sell ... Diligently practicing calligraphy day after day is called a disease of immaturity; loving one's own outlined characters, isn't that excessive? Seeing me discuss calligraphy, heart all at once intoxicated; the skill is itching, to take it in the fingers and manipulate [the brush] is like scratching the itch.'¹

Xugu's text suggests that the portrait conception was first a source of entertainment and laughter, and his own poem is likewise a playful entertainment. The most obvious source of humor in the depiction is the contrast with Gao Yong's actual circumstances; Gao was by all accounts a prosperous figure, well connected and with a large art collection.¹ His portrayal as a calligraphy beggar may have been satirical on several levels: a parody of artist's traditionally exaggerated



Figure 6.
Ren Yi (1840-1895), *Portrait of the Painter Gao Yongzhi (1850-1921) as a Calligraphy Beggar*, dated 1887. Palace Museum, Beijing. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper.

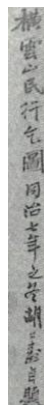


Figure 7. Ren Yi
(1840 -1895), *Portrait of the
Hengyun Mountain Man
(the painter Hu Yuan) as a
Traveling Beggar*, dated
1868. Central Academy of
Fine Arts, Beijing. Hanging
scroll, ink and colors on
paper, 147 x 42 cm.



complaints about the difficulties of their lot; a reference to Gao Yong's obsession with calligraphy, which verges on an impoverishing addiction, even if a cultural one; and, in a thorough reversal of traditional values, a comment on the contemporary absurdity of one who refuses to sell his artistic product. Each of those subjects of satire had, of course, a more serious counterpart: the relentlessly commercial environment for artistic production in late nineteenth-century Shanghai; the genuine financial pressures faced by many artists, at least episodically; and the widespread addiction to opium which claimed Ren Yi among its victims. This image had a considerably earlier precedent in Ren Yi's related profile portrait, dated 1868, of his friend and painting collaborator Hu Yuan as a beggar (figure 7).¹⁸ Since Hu was also a prosperous painter well-connected to banking circles in Shanghai, some satirical intent also seems likely, although the early portrait may have reflected some genuine distress having to do with Hu's repeated examination failures.¹⁹ The later beggar-portrait, of Gao Yong, moves in the direction of a more pronounced physicality; by the late 1880s, a commitment to art is cast primarily in terms of an appetite.

The taste for satire was well-established in the nineteenth-century literary sphere, following the rise of the genre in the previous century.²⁰ Some of the most acute observations of pervasive corruption in late nineteenth-century society appears in the writings of Wu Woyao (1866-1901), whose vignettes of late Qing urban life focus on events in Shanghai, Suzhou, Nanjing, and Tianjin around the time of Ren Yi's late career, from the mid 1880s to the late 1890s.²¹ His stories are populated by officials, scholars, merchants, courtesans, and artists, involved with themes of bribery, swindle, sexual infatuation, and opium addiction. Stories of forgery and venality among artists and art dealers are especially relevant to our understanding of the context of late Qing portraiture, and some artists active in Shanghai are mentioned by name, including Ren Xiong's son Ren Yu (1854-1901) and Ren Yi's collaborator Hu Yuan.²² Poorly educated poets who pass themselves off as painters in newspaper advertisements and who farm out paintings to professional artists for profit, sometimes mismatching recycled poems to inappropriate paintings, are one subject of Wu's ridicule.²³ This type calls to mind the professional painter of reproductions documented in Thomson's photograph. The predilection

of salt-merchant collectors of antiques for damaged works and notable seals, making them easy targets for forgery and fraud, is another subject of satire.²¹ The high prices paid for portrait paintings in contrast to other genres such as flowers and birds is mentioned in another vignette, shedding some further light on motivations for the popularity of the genre in the nineteenth century.²² And ~~only~~ artists active in Shanghai are criticized for their notoriously bad character, ranging from the outright chicanery, opium addiction, and boastfulness of the portraitist Ren Yu, to the excessive money-consciousness of Hu Yuan.²³ Ren Yi's portrait of Hu Yuan as a beggar dates from a couple of decades before the time Wu Woyao was writing about, but our sense of the sincerity of that pictorial persona is influenced by those later literary characterizations.

The case of Hu Yuan points up the importance of situation and circumstance for understanding the tone and significance of imagery. Satire and parody depend on some stable foil - norms of value, morality, and behavior - to play against for full effect. The situation of late nineteenth-century China, and especially of sites of immigration, economic dynamism, and multiculturalisms such as Shanghai, offered a rich urban spectacle of diverse social behaviors and mores, but very little stability, and thus satire and ridicule are often double-edged, and often reflexively self-directed. The roles of official, scholar, artist, and merchant had at least a long-term, culturally well-established set of values and expectations attached to them, however, and it is no accident that these types are so important in Wu Woyao's satirical vignettes. Some of those roles figure prominently in another of Ren Yi's portraits of Wu Changshuo, his *Portrait of the Poverty-Stricken Official* of 1888 (figure 8). Wu's poem and introduction on the subject of the painting make it clear that his roles were the occasion for self-ridicule:

I sought [Ren] Bonian to depict this portrait image, titling it *Portrait of the Poverty-Stricken Official*. Wearing a summer hat, clothed in thin silk ceremonial long gown, uprightly standing with hands folded in a bow of greeting, his appearance can be sneered at. Those who are well acquainted with me will all point to it saying: 'This indeed is Wu Kutie (Changshuo).' I accordingly inscribed a poem to describe its intent, and in order to ridicule myself:



Figure 8. Ren Yi (1840-1895), *Portrait of Wu Changshuo as a Poverty-Stricken Official*, dated 1888. Zhejiang Provincial Museum, Hangzhou. Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 164.2 x 77.6 cm.

Prominent officials dwell in the official hall;
 minor government servants walk in the summer heat.
 Putting on the official's belt, hastening to the outside gate of the
 yamen (public office and official residence);
 during the hottest days of June, sweat falls like rain.
 Summoned with a call, only then does one dare enter;
 mind and spirit are first fainthearted, and stop.
 Asked to reveal what I have seen; wanting to answer, but afraid
 of provoking disputes.
 Self-conscious of my poverty-stricken intellectual's demeanor;
 fearing to infuriate the great prefectural official.
 Timorously forced to prevarications;
 respectfully hang my hands and hunch my body in a bow...
 In depicting this what was his (Ren Yi's) purpose?
 He pitied my government-servant's feelings of bitter sorrow...
 Following the multitude, compel myself to hasten; hang
 my head and yield to classes and groups...
 Brushing away dust on the wall and hanging my portrait;
 drink to it with weak spirits and strained wine.
 Facing the shadow-image and draining the goblet countless
 times; immovable - I myself am guest and host at once.
 For the time being make the intoxicated military official look;
 grasp the cup - you sir, and you!"

Wu Changshuo's poetic self-ridicule, and the related portrait image, are remarkable in being self-instigated. Still more noteworthy is the possibility that the image was, in effect, an imaginative forecasting of indignities and complaints he had not yet experienced as an official, as Shan Guolin's research would suggest.²⁵ In that case, the poem and painting would have involved a kind of double-level satire: self-ridicule of Wu Changshuo's official ambitions, and an exposure of the degraded lot of office-holders in the late Qing. Both poem and portrait painting suggest the gulf between emblem and actuality. Wu is portrayed wearing his emblems of rank uncomfortably and a bit absurdly, and they are described as a sweat-producing burden. The painted portrait embodies a direct counterpart of the poetic self-ridicule, in the self-confrontation with the portrait image hung on the wall described at the end of Wu's poem. This portrayal may have taken, as a point of departure and contrast, another image



Figure 9. Ren Xiong
(1823-1857), *Self Portrait*.
Palace Museum, Beijing .
Hanging scroll, ink and
color on paper, 177x79cm.

of self-confrontation: Ren Xiong's monumental *Self Portrait* (figure 9) from about three decades earlier. Despite the vast differences in tone and impact between the two portraits, they share some unusual structural and presentational features that suggest a possible intended reference to the earlier work. Both portraits are of impressive size, dominated by a purely frontal figure, standing in striking isolation without any indication of setting or background. Both figures clasp their hands in front of their torsos and are shown with feet splayed apart, legs separated by firm vertical folds of cloth. Ren Xiong's confrontation was with his image in a mirror, as noted in his bold inscription, and his self-portrayal is the paradigm of physical embodiment in nineteenth-century portraiture. Despite the angry, muscular presence of his self-portrait, however, the inscription reveals him beset with anxieties and doubts:

In the vast world -what lies before my eyes? I smile and bow and go around flattering people [in hope of] extending connections, but aware of what affairs? In the great confusion, what is there to hold on to and rely on? ...What is more pitiful is that even though the mirror [shows] my black eyebrows exchanged [for white] and worldly dust covering my white head, I am still completely like a racing steed without plans. What is even more of a pitiable impediment is that the historians have not recorded even a single, light word about me... [But] who is the ignorant one? Who is the virtuous sage? I already am completely without any idea. In the flash of a glance, all I can see is a boundless void.²

The political and social circumstances that engendered Ren Xiong's anxieties were not unrelated to the sources of Wu Changshuo's dissatisfactions. However, just as Wu Changshuo's frontal figure is pictorially diminished in comparison to Ren Xiong's, pushed farther back in space and smaller in scale, folded in on himself rather than aggressively confronting his uncertainties as does Ren Xiong's self-image, so Wu's complaints over poverty and discomfort seem diminished in comparison to the scale of Ren Xiong's elemental confusions about his place in the world and in history.

If Ren Xiong retained existential uncertainties about his position in the world, Ren Yi seems to have been content with the diminished role he formulated in his portrait images of other artists. Ren Yi's inscription at the lower left of his *Three Friends* group portrait

不須對目自三人自
有鬢眉自寫真脫
去頭巾衣掃塔似
俞清老談社應

光緒甲申三月 錦堂弟
索題山陰任淵編年畫也
中坐者曾鳳奇 錦堂左
向坐僧羊石向坐時僧衣甚
有所有託耶 鍾壽

三三

丙戌秋八月 錦堂弟生此
見蘇東坡 石芝錄九



鍾壽
光緒甲申三月
錦堂弟

hanging scroll of 1884 (figure 10) records his satisfaction at being invited to join his patrons in the depiction : '[Zhu] Jintang and [Zeng] Fengji, the two sirs, charged me to sketch their portraits, and moreover allowed me to sit among them, calling it *The Three Friends* - fortunate indeed, fortunate indeed.'²⁷ Ren's rather fawning pleasure at being invited to join his subjects masks a fundamental irony of his situation : the artist is raised to a position of at least conditional social equality with his sitters (albeit with calculations of position and status carefully maintained), but he (and his self-portrait image) also becomes, among the piles of paintings owned by his host, the collector/fan shop owner Zhu Jintang, an object on display, not so different from the array of images for sale and reproduction in the studio of Thomson's artist at work (figure 1).

Figure 10.

Ren Yi (1840 -1895), *Three Friends- Self Portrait with Zeng Fengji and Zhu Jintang* , dated 1884.
 Palace Museum, Beijing.
 Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper.

Notes

1. See John Thomson, *China and Its People in Early Photographs: An Unabridged Reprint of the Classic 1873-74* (New York, 1982), 1: Plate 4. See also Richard Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self: Chinese Portraits - 1600-1900* (New York, 1992), 141-142.
2. See Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self*, colorplate 4 and pages 15-16 for Qiu Ying's painting.
3. For a recent discussion of Ren Yi's biography, see Hans van der Meyden, 'The Life and Works of Ren Bonian (1840-1896): An Attempt to Strip the Artist's Biography of Some Apocryphal Fabrications,' *Oriental Art*, XXXVIII, number 1 (Spring 1992), 27-40.
4. For reproductions and discussions of several of these portraits, see Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self*, 130-155.
5. See Ding Xiyuan, *Ren Bonian* (Shanghai, 1989), *nianpu*, 43-44; also the discussion in van der Meyden, 'The Life and Works of Ren Bonian,' 33-34.
6. Discussed and translated in Claudia Brown and Ju-hsi Chou, *Transcending Turmoil: Painting at the Close of China's Empire 1796-1911* (Phoenix, 1992), 181-182.
7. See Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self*, 132.
8. See Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self*, 132.
9. Reproduced and discussed in Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self*, 132-135, figures 67 and 68.
10. See the extended discussion of this painting in Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self*, 92-100.
11. Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self*, colorplates 6 and 8, and figures 32 and 60.
12. Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self*, n 6-n 8.
13. Ding, *Ren Bonian*, *nianpu*, 82-83.
14. Brown and Chou, *Transcending Turmoil*, 179-180.
15. Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self*, 146-149, figure 78.
16. Brown and Chou, *Transcending Turmoil*, 126-128, 179-180.
17. See Timothy C. Wong, *Wu Ching-tzu* (Boston, 1978); and Margery C. Anneberg, 'The Chinese Novel of the Nineteenth Century and Late Ch'ing Period: A Short Literary and Social History with Special Reference to the *Kuan-ch'ang hsien-hsing chi*' (MA Thesis: University of Washington, 1952).
18. Michael Wai-mai Lau, *Wu Woyao (1866-1910): A Writer of Fiction of the Late Ch'ing Period*, (PhD dissertation: Harvard University, 1968).

19. See the translation of Wu Woyao's vignettes by Shih Shun Liu, *Vignettes from the Late Ch'ing: Bizarre Happenings Eyewitnessed over Two Decades* (Hong Kong, 1975).
20. Liu, *Vignettes from the Late Ch'ing*, 36.
21. Liu, *Vignettes from the Late Ch'ing*, 199-201.
22. Liu, *Vignettes from the Late Ch'ing*, 168.
23. Liu, *Vignettes from the Late Ch'ing*, 168-170. See also Brown and Chou, *Transcending Turmoil*, 193-194.
24. A Chinese transcription of the poem and inscription appear in Ding, *Ren Bonian*, *nianpu*, 91-92. The long poetic inscription visible on the main body of the painting to the viewer's left of the figure of Wu Changshuo is by his and Ren Yi's contemporary Yang Xian (1819-1896).
25. See Shan Guolin and others, editors, *Haishang Minghua[jia]jingpin[ji]* (Masterworks of Shanghai School Painters from the Shanghai Museum Collection) (Hong Kong, 1991), 306; for another account of Wu's official service during Ren Yi's lifetime, see van der Meyden, 'The Life and Works of Ren Bonian', 34.
26. See Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self*, 128-130 for a full rendering and discussion of this inscription and portrait.
27. See the text in Ding, *Ren Bonian, nianpu*, 62; also the discussion in Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self*, 143-144, figure 74.