

The Political Landscapes of Kung Hsien, in Painting and Poetry

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There is an ancient Chinese curse which says, "May you live in interesting times," a curse upon one's enemy, for in imperial China "interesting times" meant periods of political change, marked by the rising and falling of dynasties and by the spilling of much human blood. Kung Hsien 龔賢 was a painter and poet who lived and died in such times, times in which political turmoil dominated and stamped the character of an entire generation.

Kung Hsien was born in about 1620,¹ died in 1689, and spent most of his years in Nanking.² He was a member of China's literate elite, a poet, painter, calligrapher, seal-carver, musician, publisher, and research-scholar.³ Though he once collected his major writings into a personal anthology, this work now seems to be lost,⁴ and what we can learn of him must be drawn from a few dozen brief poems and letters by him, from a handful of letters and poems written to him by friends, from inscriptions on his paintings, and from his paintings themselves.⁵

¹ Using the artist's postscript to his twenty-leaf album published as *Kung Pan-ch'ien shan-shui ching-p'in* 龔半千山水精品 (Changsha: Shang-wu yin-shu kuan, 1939), one arrives at a birthdate of 1618 or shortly thereafter; his postscript to a handscroll, dated 1682, recorded in Huang Pin-hung 黃賓虹, *Huang Pin-hung hua-yü lu* 黃賓虹畫語錄 (Shanghai: Shanghai shu-chü, 1961), pp. 185-186, indicates a birthdate of 1620.

² Kung Hsien was born in K'un-shan 崑山. He also lived for short periods in Yangzhou, for at least four years in the mid-1660s, then in 1682 and again in 1687.

³ Kung Hsien published a volume known as the *Chung-wan T'ang shih-chi* 中晚唐詩紀 [Poems of the Middle and Late T'ang], as well as researching the poetry of the early post-Han period. He published an edition of his friends' letters, known as the *Pan-mou-yüan ch'ih-tu* 半畝園尺牘 [Half-acre Garden Letters], and he prepared a collection of his friends' poetry, which may never have been published. He also produced a volume of his own poems, the *Pan-mou-yüan shih-ts'ao* 半畝園詩草 [A Draft Edition of Poems from the Half-acre Garden], and he supervised the printing of his own collected writings, the *Hsiang-ts'ao-t'ang chi* 香草堂集 [Collection from the Hall of Fragrant Grass]. Of these works, only the *Chung-wan T'ang shih-chi* seems to be extant today.

⁴ The *Hsiang-ts'ao-t'ang chi*; Huang Pin-hung, p. 189, records his having seen a rare wood-block edition of this work, but what has become of this copy is now uncertain.

⁵ Kung Hsien has become the subject of more significant research in the past decade than in all the preceding twenty-eight decades since his death. Liu Kang-chi 劉綱紀, *Kung Hsien* 龔賢 (Shanghai: Shanghai jen-min mei-shu ch'u-pan she, 1962), offered the first new insights into Kung Hsien's biography and included a brief look at Kung Hsien's painting and aesthetic writings; surprisingly, especially for a Marxist historian, Liu made no attempt to relate his biographical studies to Kung Hsien's painting, no attempt to examine the politics of his art. In 1969, Kansas City's Nelson Gallery devoted a major exhibition entirely to the art of Kung Hsien, with a catalogue by Mare Wilson, *Kung Hsien: Theoretist and Technician in Painting* (Kansas City: The Nelson

Kung Hsien's life was shaped by the phenomenon of late Ming dynastic decline, culminating in the conquest of China by the Manchus. In 1644 and 1645, these foreigners swept down from the north across a once mighty nation that throughout Kung Hsien's early years had drifted closer and closer to internal political collapse. It is apparent from Kung Hsien's writings that he was deeply involved in the politics of the passing regime, the Ming (1368–1644), and perhaps in the early underground resistance to the new, conquering dynasty, the Ch'ing (1644–1911). He was, at least indirectly, involved with the powerful, conservative political faction of the late Ming known as the Fu-she 復社, or Society for the Revival of Antiquity; this group reacted to the political corruption and cultural flamboyance of their day by promoting a rededication of the scholar class to the traditional basis of moral and intellectual values, directing their arts and letters toward the goal of Confucian reform.⁶ Subsequently, with the failure of these efforts and the advent of the Manchus, Kung Hsien and numerous Fu-she purists joined other loyalist-scholars known as *i-min* 遺民, or "left-over people," who would not transfer their political allegiance from the native Ming to the alien Ch'ing, refusing to serve in the government of their foreign conqueror.⁷ Forced by their loyalty into the political background and onto the fringe of scholarly society, these *i-min* became a source of constant, though guarded, dissent against the Ch'ing, as they continued their drive for Confucian intellectual reform, which they hoped would lead the way toward future political liberation. Kung Hsien's poems and paintings gave voice and image to this resistance.

Kung Hsien's dissent was expressed in many forms, as, for example, the literary and studio names that he took for himself (his *tzu* and *hao*), all of which labeled him as uncompromising in his loyalty to the Ming and to his Confucian ideals. Most of these names play on his own given name, Hsien 賢, meaning a "man of virtue." His *hao*, Yeh-i 野遺, alludes to a line from the *Shu ching* 書經 or *Classic of History*, "yeh wu i hsien" 野無遺賢, "In the wilderness (away from court), no neglected men of virtue."⁸ This phrase arises from a passage in the text where China's great and ancient sovereigns Shun and Yü set forth their prescription

Gallery and Atkins Museum, 1969). In the spring of 1970, the magazine *Oriental Art* (n.s. xvi) published two articles, by Professor James Cahill of the University of California ("The Early Styles of Kung Hsien") and by William Wu ("Kung Hsien's Style and His Sketchbooks"), which successfully developed a chronological framework for Kung Hsien's styles. In all of these articles, however, the artist and his world are isolated from his art, style is divorced from content; my hope here is to bring both the artist and his arts on stage at the same time, to examine the social aspects of his poetry and painting.

⁶ Among Kung Hsien's few close friends were these Fu-she members: Chou Liang-kung 周亮工, Fang Wen 方文, Yang Wen-ts'ung 楊文聰, Ch'eng Cheng-k'uei 程正揆, Wang Yu-ting 王猷定, Liang I-chang 梁以樟, Kung Ting-tz'u 龔鼎孳, and Kung Ting-fan 龔鼎蕃; his friend Ku Meng-yu 顧夢遊 was also known for his sympathy for this organization and its ideals, though like Kung Hsien he was not recorded in the unofficial (and surely incomplete) listings of its members. See Wu Ying-chi 吳應箕, "Fu-she hsing-shih" 復社姓氏, and Wu Ming-tao 吳銘道, "Fu-she hsing-shih pu-lu" 復社姓氏補錄, in *Kuei-ch'ih hsien-sheng che i-shu* 貴池先生哲遺書 (Taipei: I-wen yin-shu kuan, 1920), Vol. 10.

⁷ In his own lifetime, Kung Hsien's poems were included in a politically daring anthology of poems by 400 Ming loyalists, Cho Erh-k'an 卓爾堪, *Ming-mo ssu-pai-chia i-min shih* 明末四百家遺民詩 (Shanghai: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1960); the list of contributors to this anthology reads like a catalogue of the prominent Chiang-nan *i-min*, including Chu Ta 朱耆, Fu Shan 傅山, Tai Pen-hsiao 戴本孝, Ku Meng-yu, Huang Chou-hsing 黃周星, T'ang Yen-sheng 湯燕生, Hu Chieh 胡介, Ch'en Hung-shou 陳洪綬, Hu Yü-k'un 胡玉昆, Wang Yu-ting, Fang I-chih 方以智, Fang Wen, Hsiao Yün-ts'ung 蕭雲從, Fei Mi 費密, Ku Yen-wu 顧炎武, Cha Shih-piao 查士標, Ch'ü Ta-chün 屈大均, Chang Feng 張風, and Lü Ch'ien 呂潛. Included among Kung Hsien's poems are two *chüeh-chü* commemorating the savage ten-day massacre unleashed at Yangchou, in 1645, by invading Manchu troops.

⁸ *Shang-shu* 尚書, in *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an* 四部叢刊 (Shanghai: Shang-wu yin-shu kuan, 1936), 1.2.2 (Ta Yü), 1. A seal frequently used by Kung Hsien on his paintings, "Yeh-i Hsien" 野遺賢, closely parallels this phrase.

for good government, when the sovereign will struggle to rule with justice, when “good words will nowhere be hidden, in the wilderness will be no neglected men of virtue, and the myriad states will enjoy repose.” But Kung Hsien enjoyed no such time of social repose, living instead in “interesting times” when contrary to ancient scripture the wilderness (*yeh* 野) was filled with castaway (*i* 遺) men of virtue (*hsien* 賢) such as himself. His *tzu*, Pan-ch’ien 半千 or “Five Hundred,” was drawn from *The Mencius*; in it, he likened himself to one of that virtuous group which comes forth in time of dynastic deterioration (500 years or more years after the commencement of the reign) to assist in the rise of a true sovereign—a reference that was no doubt directed against the Manchu claim to sovereignty in China.⁹ The name of Kung Hsien’s studio, the Hsiang-ts’ao-t’ang 香草堂 or Hall of Fragrant Grass, referred to the theme of irrepressible loyalty, which in the text of the *Shuo-yüan* 說苑 was likened to fragrant grass growing without restraint in the marshy wilderness.¹⁰ Even the seals impressed on some of his paintings proclaimed Kung Hsien’s loyalty to the fallen Ming.¹¹

Everywhere in his writings we see his penchant for observing things in a political light and for advocating Confucian values: in a letter to a friend, Kung Hsien chided him for reading contemporary, popular literature, as opposed to the Confucian classics and histories, and he urged his friend to cast aside all those books written after the T’ang period (618–906);¹²

⁹ This is derived from *The Mencius* 孟子 (II.ii.13), “五百年必有王者興,” wherein Mencius expressed dissatisfaction that in five hundred years Heaven had not yet sent forth a true royal sovereign to impose a new moral and political order upon the chaotic Warring States, though he himself stood ready to assist. (I am grateful to Professor Jao Tsung-i for this reference.) While Kung Hsien’s adoption of this “five hundred” stated his opposition to the Ch’ing, it was, too, a personal lament that no sovereign existed to recognize his own high moral stature.

The shift from *wu-pai* 五百 to *pan-ch’ien* 半千 for the term “500” had already occurred in the case of Yüan Yü-ch’ing 員餘慶, whose pupil, the T’ang Prince I-fang 義方, often praised him, saying, “In 500 years’ time there comes one virtuous man [*hsien*] and you are the one” (五百年一賢者生, 子宜當之); Yüan’s name was thereupon changed to Yüan Pan-ch’ien. Note, too, the shift here from *wang* 王 to *hsien* 賢, which thus links the phrase to Kung Hsien’s own name. *Chiu T’ang shu* 舊唐書 (Shanghai: Shang-wu yin-shu kuan, 1931), 140. *chung*.3b (*lieh-chuan* 190).

¹⁰ Liu Hsiang 劉向, *Shuo-yüan* 說苑, in *Ssu-pu pei-yao* 四部備要 (Taipei: Chung-hua shu-chü yin-hang, 1955), xxvi.16.3a. This *Shuo-yüan* verse relates in part to the *Analects*, v.27.

A further such example is Kung Hsien’s *hao*, An-chieh 安節, drawn from the *I-ching* 易經, chapter 60, which speaks favorably of his retirement to the political background, advising him to be content (*an* 安) in his *chieh* 節 (in the regulations or limitations prescribed for virtuous behavior); see the passage indicated for throwing six in the fourth line.

¹¹ Referring to the white cotton gown of the learned commoner, in contrast to the colored silks worn by officials, one of his seals reads “Chiang-tung pu-i” 江東布衣, The Commoner (“cloth robe”) of Chiang-tung (Nanking); Lu Hsin-yüan 陸心源 (ed.), *Jang-li-kuan kuo-yen lu* 穰梨館過眼錄 (Wu-hsing Wu-shih, 1892), 36.22a–b. Another seal made his point even more clear: “Ta pu-i” 大布衣, The Great Commoner, proclaiming a reversal of ordinary values, placing the lowest political rank on the highest moral order (album of twelve paired leaves of painting and calligraphy, entitled “Landscapes and Studies of Trees,” on loan to The Art Museum, Princeton University, leaf number 3, illustrated in Wilson, 10c). There are other seals to be found on his pictures reading “Ch’en Hsien” 臣賢, which would normally have indicated that Hsien was a governmental servant painting in behalf of the emperor or a superior official. The likely explanation, however, of this “Ch’en Hsien” is that Kung Hsien “used the designation *ch’en* to indicate his loyalty to the fallen Ming, meaning that he considered himself a ‘servant’ of that dynasty.” (Wilson, p. 10; this seal appears somewhat frequently, including dated paintings ranging from 1655 to 1684.)

¹² Kung Hsien, “Yü Chang Shih-yü” 與張侍御, in Chou Liang-kung 周亮工 (ed.), *Lai-ku-t’ang ch’ih-tu* 賴古堂尺牘新鈔三選: 結鄰集 (Shanghai: P’ei-yeh shan-fang, 1936), 15.324–325. This conservative attitude toward literature, which became popular after the early 16th century critic Li Meng-yang, was a fundamental tenet of many Fu-she literary critics. A similar attitude is expressed in Kung Hsien’s preference for earlier models in painting, especially the Five Dynasties artist Tung Yüan, in

in dating paintings, he conspicuously shunned the use of Ch'ing reign dates;¹³ and more than once he recorded his racial antagonism to the Manchus—"What are these things, these camels," he wrote, "bursting into the home of the Han?" (橐駝爾何物，臨入漢家營。)¹⁴ A close friend of Kung Hsien wrote, "Only with [those] . . . loyal to the past does he keep company and satisfy himself."¹⁵ A stubborn idealist, he was described as "difficult to get along with,"¹⁶ and when his contemporaries spoke of him as "eccentric,"¹⁷ it was to his uncompromisingly conservative, one might even say reactionary, views and behavior that they referred. Keeping these views in mind, let us turn now, first to his poetry and then to his painting, using a few examples of each, to illustrate the political character of his landscape arts.¹⁸

The first ten years of Manchu rule found Kung Hsien in hiding for political reasons, though those reasons remain unclear in detail.¹⁹ One after another of his poems refers to his decade in exile, drifting aimlessly over the rivers and lakes of south China, a prisoner of the waves. That situation is described in these lines of poetry:

*In my small boat I set out at dawn;
The sandy shore melts into the void.
From beyond the wild mist comes the clamor of human voices,
Like cocks crowing in the distant blue.
In humble clothing I fled my country;
Now, white-haired, I am still drifting without direction.
I did not read the tale of Ching K'o—
I am embarrassed to have become a one-sword hero.²⁰*

扁舟當曉發，沙岸杳然空。人語蠻烟外，雞鳴海色中。
短衣曾去國，白首尚飄蓬。不讀荆軻傳，羞爲一劍雄。

This poem, like all of Kung Hsien's published poetry, is undated; and rather than our

contrast to the relatively recent Yüan models that were generally more popular in his own day; for this viewpoint, see especially Kung Hsien's inscriptions on his 1674 handscroll in the Nelson Gallery, on his 1689 hanging scroll in the Honolulu Academy of Arts, and on his hanging scroll in the Cheng Te-k'un collection.

¹³ There exist only two inscriptions referring to the K'ang-hsi reign. A long inscription was written in 1669 for his close friend and patron, Chou Liang-kung, a former Fu-she member who reputedly used his high office under the Ch'ing to protect other former members of the sometimes persecuted society; perhaps, Kung Hsien's mention of the dynasty in this case registers his understanding sympathy for Chou's motivation in serving the Ch'ing. From a collective album in the National Palace Museum, Taipei; published as *Chou Li-yüan Tu-hua-lou shu-hua chi-ts'ui* 周櫟園讀畫樓書畫集粹 (Peking: Ku-kung po-wu-yüan, 1931); recorded in *Ku-kung shu-hua lu* 故宮書畫錄 (Taipei: Ku-kung po-wu-yüan, 1956), *hsia*.6.246-247. A second such inscription, in the Abe Collection, is dated 1683; *Chugoku kaiga* 中國繪畫 (Osaka: Osaka Municipal Museum, 1975), Volumes I and II, number 125.

¹⁴ Kung Hsien, "Teng t'iao shang-hsin ch'u" 登眺傷心處, in Cho Erh-k'an, 8.330.

¹⁵ Chou Liang-kung, *Tu-hua lu* 讀畫錄 (Shanghai: Shanghai yin-shu kuan, 1936), 2.23.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ The selection made here necessarily reflects the more politically expressive of Kung Hsien's works and not the entire range of his art, much of it made to satisfy the bland taste of patrons; moreover, especially after the early 1670s, his work seems less and less to reflect the serious didactic intent of his earlier years (a date, it should be noted, prior to the events of the 1670s, when the defeat of Wu San-kuei's insurrection and the *Po-hsüeh hung-tz'u* examination put an end to any realistic hopes of reviving the Ming).

¹⁹ In his poem, "Deciding to Return Home," he wrote: "To my old property, which survived the turmoil, I returned home from ten years' flight." (故業亂餘在，逃亡十載還。) Kung Hsien, "I kuei-lai" 擬歸來, in Chu Hsü-tseng, 34.4b. Whether he first fled in 1644, with the Ming puppet court's persecution of the Fu-she in Nanking, or in 1645 with the arrival of Manchu soldiers, is still uncertain.

²⁰ Kung Hsien, "Pien chou" 扁舟, in Cho Erh-k'an, 8.330; Chu Hsü-tseng, 34.1a-b; and other sources.

being able to interpret it within a known biographical context, it is the substance from which his biography must be molded. As in much of his surviving poetry, we find here a few clear elements of autobiographical reference placed in a vague landscape setting which appears, at first, to serve only as a stage and to contribute little to our understanding. Most explicit in this poem is the third couplet, where we are told that the boating excursion of the first lines was in fact his flight to safety and that although his hair has turned white with the passing years, he is still marooned in exile. Somewhat less explicit is his reference to Ching K'ō, a famous "one-sword" assassin (today he might have become a "lone gun") whose attempt to rid ancient China of the ruthless King of Ch'in in 227 B.C. endeared him to subsequent generations of Confucian scholars—although the failure of this attempt cost him his life. It is thus suggested that the cause of Kung Hsien's flight was some overly-daring political venture whose failure has left him stranded in exile, drifting in his small boat, a captive of the flowing river.²¹

It is only on looking back from the latter half of the poem that we can appreciate the use to which landscape has been put in the initial lines, where the poet "sets out" with the river as his highway and the landscape itself offers hope of escape and refuge. In the second line we witness the disintegration of this landscape structure: "The sandy shore melts into the void." And the third and fourth lines find him isolated by "wild mists" from the audible but no longer visible events of the distant shore.²² This disintegration is paralleled, and thus interpreted for us, by the third couplet, where the poet specifically tells us of his hasty flight leading to a seemingly endless exile. Thus, the very first two lines encapsulate the entire theme of the poem: the poet's experience of flight which turns into exile, where landscape and distance at first offer hope of refuge and freedom but later become a trap for the aimless wanderer. The world of nature in this poem is utilized for its expressive force; its varied elements have been selected and arranged to dramatize the feelings of the poet, to give universal scope to the author's autobiographical theme.

Ten years of difficult wandering left deep scars on Kung Hsien's personality, perhaps accounting largely for the unfriendly social manner that characterized his later years. "By thirty," he wrote, "I had begun a family, / And already had many children, / But I ran from rebels and fled from soldiers, / Who sent me scurrying like a startled bird. . . . Now, I fear the encroachment of human affairs; / Even if I die of starvation I'll not go out again, / As I look back on all the events which scalded me." (壯歲始有家，兒童已森森。避賊還避兵，奔騰如驚禽。 . . . 頗畏人事侵，饑死不再出，回首皆湯燖。)²³ When finally able to return to Nanking from a decade in exile, Kung Hsien took up a life of self-imposed isolation. Refusing to recognize the legitimacy of Manchu rule and unwilling to serve as a government official, the lofty pro-

²¹ A similar admission of complicity in some unspecified, overly "ambitious" affair, leading to his exile, appears in Kung Hsien's autobiographical poem, the "Half-acre Garden," bitterly describing his years of forced travel: ". . . I've said to myself that my humble lot / Must surely be known to Heaven. / Who would have thought that Heaven / Would only laugh without control? / It laughed at me as it would at a tired horse / That dared to have the ambition of a far-ranging swan. . . . Rebuking me as mad and blind, / Heaven punished me and sent me off into the distant hills. / I sought out nourishment in a barren land, / Where ice and frost ruined the robes I wore. / My skin stretched over nothing but bones: / My temples were scorched and my throat grew numb. . . ." (私謂此薄分，蒼公必鑒臨。孰知彼蒼者，大笑如不任。笑我疲馬足，敢具冥鴻心。 . . . 責我太狂瞽，罰我走嶽嶽。覓食不毛地，冰霜壞衣襟。皮寬止裏骨，鬢焦喉亦暗。 . . .) Kung Hsien, "Pan-mou-yüan" 半畝園, in Chu Hsü-tseng, 34.1b. This "barren land" of "ice and frost" is the north of China, including the Mt. T'ai region, to which his endless travels led him.

²² The expression "wild mist" (*man-yen* 蠻烟) is perhaps a pun that might also be understood as "barbarian smoke," rising from the war flames kindled by invading Manchu troops.

²³ Kung Hsien, "Pan-mou-yüan," in Chu Hsü-tseng, 34.1b.

fession for which he had most likely been prepared throughout his youth,²⁴ he was forced instead to earn a humble living through the sale of his poems and paintings.²⁵

But, as we have seen, poetry for Kung Hsien was more than a means of livelihood. It was also a means of political commentary and communication, occasionally bordering on the seditious, protesting the conditions of his impoverished role, and justifying his continuing loyalty to the fallen Ming dynasty. More often than not, Kung Hsien's political themes are cast in forms of nature, used metaphorically as in the first example, or used as pun and symbol in such poems as the following, "In the Evening, Traveling East below the Yen-tzu Jetty":

*The river and sky have suddenly merged together,
An isolated boat drifts between them.
The distant peaks are already about to disappear;
The evening sun, too, cannot be retrieved.
With self-pity for being a "constant traveler,"
My changing feelings turn toward the sorrows of home;
Just sobering up from the wine of parting—
A white gull beneath the azure mist.*²⁶

江天忽無際，一舸在中流。遠岫已將沒，夕陽猶未收。
自憐爲客慣，轉覺到家愁。別酒初醒處，蒼烟下白鷗。

This poem, on a first reading, might be taken as an idyllic ode to an evening upon the river, but an analysis of the traditional landscape symbolism of the poem reveals something deeper and darker. The first line, "The river and sky have suddenly merged together," reveals a confusion in the fundamental order of nature. The element of Heaven, above, has become confused with the earth below, clearly symbolizing a nation in chaos. The "evening sun which cannot be retrieved" may be the fallen Ming emperor, whose imperial radiance has vanished forever. So too may the "distant peaks about to disappear" stand for the Chinese scholar class, or perhaps for the entire Confucian cultural heritage, now threatened by foreign domination.²⁷ And trapped in the midst of these overturned elements is the poet himself, personified by the line, "An isolated boat drifts between them." The third couplet makes the poem more personal, the term "constant traveler" often being used by Kung Hsien in reference

²⁴ Although Kung Hsien never passed the official examinations for public office during the Ming, the possibility that he prepared for these examinations might be inferred from a passage in his poem, "Half-acre Garden": "Alas, alas, the days of my youth,/ In my learning, sadly, I reached no depth./ I know that I had no pervasive talent:/ How could this suffice for glory and rank?" (嗚嗟少年日，識事苦不深。自知非通才，奚足承華簪。) Kung Hsien, "Pan-mou-yüan," in Chu Hsü-tseng, 34.1b.

²⁵ Kung Hsien's professionalism is admitted in an album postscript, dated 1682: "I recall that at the age of thirteen I was able to paint. Fifty years later, I am exerting myself in the 'inkstone field' [a cliché, meaning to live by the profits of one's brush]. I plow in the morning and harvest in the evening, making barely enough to support myself." (憶余年十三便能畫，垂五十年而力硯田。朝耕暮穫，僅足餬口。) (Recorded in Huang Pin-hung, p. 185.) In one of his poems, lamenting his old age and poverty, Kung Hsien wrote, "when my purse is empty, I produce scrolls of poetry," leaving little doubt that poetry and calligraphy also became for him a basic source of income; Kung Hsien, "Hu Chieh tsai kuo Han-shang" 胡介再過邗上, in Chu Hsü-tseng, 34.3a-b, and other sources. Indications of the role of patron to Kung Hsien played by such wealthy friends as Chou Liang-kung and K'ung Shang-jen may also be found; see Kung Hsien's inscription in a collective album painted for Chou, in the National Palace Museum in Taipei, cited in n. 13; see also K'ung Shang-jen 孔尚任, "Ta Kung Pan-ch'ien" 答龔半千, *Hu-hai chi* 湖海集 (Taipei: Shih-chieh shu-chü yin-hang, 1964), 11.242, also in *K'ung Shang-jen shih-wen chi* 孔尚任詩文集 (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü ch'u-pan, 1962), 7.510.

²⁶ Kung Hsien, "Wan ch'u Yen-tzu chi tung hsia" 晚出燕子磯東下, in Cho Erh-k'an, 8.331, and other sources.

²⁷ The images of the emperor as the sun or as the greatest among mountain peaks, and of his high officials as lesser peaks gathered around him, are perhaps too ancient to trace. An early source which makes this political

to his years of forced wandering, away from his home. In the final lines, Kung Hsien's "Just sobering up from the wine of parting" might signify that he is still waking up to the painful realization that China has parted forever with its native Ming dynasty. The white gull is a standard reference to the scholar in exile or retirement; its white feathers recall the plain cloth robes worn in China by scholars without office, in contrast to the colored silks of the official. In this case, the white gull is Kung Hsien himself. Mist and smoke, fallen low upon the earth, obscuring forms and creating patterns of separation and isolation, have long been used in Chinese literature to symbolize political discord and factionalism.²⁸ Finally, the "azure mist" is possibly a pun on the "blue cloud" of official status, and might give to this line the parting lament that its author may never fly to the (official) heights of which he is capable. Here, then, is a self-portrayal of the artist as a victim of what we might truly refer to as "interesting times" in China, and yet much of the "interest" here lies concealed far beneath the surface of this outwardly bland landscape setting.

"Outwardly bland," perhaps even "ugly," are descriptions that might characterize this grove of willows (Fig. 1), painted by Kung Hsien and stylistically datable to about the mid-1650s (collection unknown).²⁹ In the course of a long and complicated political poem, written above the painting, Kung Hsien spoke of a "world gone corrupt": "... How wild and desolate is this place! It doesn't even enter the official register. A thousand plain willows grow here, / With the wind of Heaven always overhead." (此土何荒荒，不入公家籍。朴柳千株生，天風永爲宇。) Establishing possible parallels between the rule of the Ch'ing in his own day and the tyrannical rule of the Ch'in in the distant past, the poem reveals that the theme of the painting is the recurring hardship of Chinese politics and that conditions are now as harsh as the soil of this landscape. This is further indicated by the season, early winter we are told, with the implication that the harshest cold is yet to come. And yet it is precisely because of their ability to survive such cold desolation that we come to appreciate the inner strength of these plain trees and to understand that they symbolize others who have not entered the official register: the "wintry scholars" living in reclusion, the *i-min*. These loyalists, like Kung Hsien and countless other scholars in particularly harsh political times, responded to the chilling corruption and chaos of their day by returning in private to the sources of their ethical Way and retreating from forces that could not be confronted but which could, with inner strength and patience, be endured and outlived. This symbolism is given further definition by the name of this type of tree, the *huang-liu* 荒柳, the "wild" or "uncultivated willow"; the fact that the

symbolism quite explicit is the *Kuan-tzu* 管子 text, attributed to Kuan Chung of the 7th century B.C. but possibly dating from the 3rd century B.C.: "If the sun and the moon do not shine, it is not because Heaven itself has changed. The sun and moon illumine and survey all things. But when there are many clouds in the heavens which cover over everything, the sun and moon cannot shine through. The ruler of men is like the sun and moon. If the various ministers commit many wicked deeds and institute selfish [schemes], thereby concealing the ruler, the ruler is then unable to illumine and survey his subjects nor are their sentiments able to reach the ruler. Therefore wickedness and depravity daily increase and the ruler of men becomes ever more obscured. If a mountain, being high, becomes invisible, it is not because earth itself has changed. A mountain is the highest of things. If earth's defiles [leading to a mountain] have become overgrown and difficult [of access], the mountain can no longer be seen [i.e., accessible to men]. The ruler of men is like the mountain. When parties and cliques are formed on the left and right so that they block off their ruler, he can no longer be seen [by his subjects]." W. Allyn Rickett (trans.), *Kuan-tzu, A Repository of Early Chinese Thought* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1965), I, pp. 149-150.

²⁸ Note, for example, the function of clouds mentioned in the preceding footnote.

²⁹ This scroll is published in *Shen-chou ta-kuan hsü-pien* 神州大觀續編 (Shanghai: Shen-chou kuo-kuang she, 1927), IV, plate 4, and in *Mei-chan t'e-k'an* 美展特刊 (Shanghai: Ch'eng-i she, 1929), I, plate 38.

willow was uncultivated stood not for the recluse's own lack of refinement but for the fact that he was not being nurtured, made use of, or cultivated by the government.

The painting of willows was by no means new. In the art of the Southern Sung period (1127–1260), for example, no single pictorial element better captured the elegance and leisure which the cultural elite of that troubled time so longed for, and the willow itself was sometimes taken to represent the refined, beautiful, or even promiscuous woman. But in his instructional manuals, where his painting of willows was singled out for special attention, Kung Hsien warned sternly against the painting of elegant "springtime" willows, saying that only the uncultivated willow, hoary and aged, was to be portrayed.³⁰ These two types were not to be confused, for the former represented a vain concern with beauty, while his own willows were designed to personify the rugged virtues of the loyalist-recluse.³¹ Indirect reference to these two willow types is made in the ninth couplet of the poem inscribed over this painting, which reads: "The frost is still severe at Pa-shang,/ When happiness has returned to the Chang-t'ai." (壩上凌威嚴，章臺復惋悅。) Both of these sites were famous for their willows. At the Chang-t'ai, in Ch'ang-an, grew elegant willows of great beauty; in T'ang times, the Chang-t'ai area was a gay quarter famous for its courtesans, for whom these willows were something of a trademark;³² centuries earlier, the original Chang Tower (*t'ai*) of Ch'ang-an had been a

³⁰ See Kung Hsien's so-called "Hsi Sketchbook": "In painting trees, only the willow is extremely difficult, and only the uncultivated willow or withered willow can be painted. One should strenuously avoid elegant, feminine willows like those along the stone banks of Lake T'ai." (畫樹惟柳最難，惟荒柳枯柳可畫，最忌嬈娜娉婷，如太湖石畔之物。) Reproduced as *Hsi T'ieh-sheng shu-mu shan shih hua-fa ts'e* 奚鐵生樹木山石畫法冊 (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1919); recorded in Yü Chien-hua 俞劍華 (ed.) *Chung-kuo hua-lun lei-pien* 中國畫論類編 (Peking: Chung-kuo ku-tien i-shu ch'u-pan she, 1957), II.795.

And elsewhere: "One cannot paint any kind of willow, only the uncultivated willow. . . . This kind of willow belongs only to shallow sandy banks, to secluded roadways, short grass, and wintry mists, or to a watery abode. . . . Whenever you paint a willow tree, first paint just an old tree with a short trunk and long branches, and be sure not to paint your conception of the willow. After several such trees have been completed, then add the twigs rising from the branches, just a few brushstrokes with a downward bend and no more. If you begin to paint according to the willow pre-conceived in your mind and heart, then the brushstroke will not have extended itself fully before starting to bend back, and all you will have will be a springtime willow like the so-called scenery for beautiful ladies." (柳不可畫，惟荒柳可畫。 . . . 荒柳所附惟淺沙、僻路、短草、寒煙、宿水而已。 . . . 凡畫柳先只畫短身長枝古樹，絕不作畫柳想。幾樹皆成，然後更枝上引條，惟折下數筆而已。若起先便作畫柳想頭與胸中，筆未上而先折下，便成春柳，所謂美人景也。) Kung Hsien, *Ch'ai-chang hua-shuo* 柴丈畫說, in Yü Chien-hua, II.790.

³¹ Two of the poem's couplets further reinforce the moral identity of this willow grove. In the first of these, the willows are likened to two of China's most ancient recluses, Ch'ao Fu and Hsü Yu, and are substituted for a more common symbol of scholarly virtue, the pine and cedar: "These woods already have a Ch'ao Fu and Hsü Yu, / Why must they also have pines and cedar?" (林木有巢由，寧須松與栢。)

The succeeding couplet discusses the willows in terms of hidden virtue: "They would gladly serve as stove-wood, / Glorious without strings and lacquer." (甘爲爨下材，榮被非絲漆。) Alluded to here is Ts'ai Yung 蔡邕, who recognized the fine quality of a piece of stove-wood and preserved enough of it, adding strings and lacquer, for a *ch'in* (zither) still charred at one end (聞爨桐而知良材，因以爲焦尾之琴; recorded in *Hou Han shu*, "Ts'ai Yung chuan" 後漢書，蔡邕傳). This incident is later referred to in Su Shih's 蘇軾 "Tz'u-yün Chu Kuang-t'ing 'Hsi yü' shih" 次韻朱光庭善雨詩: "In his decrepit home, always clutching his umbrella; / Though lacking fuel, he longs for a 'stove-ch'in.'" (破屋常持傘，無薪欲爨琴。) In the case of Ts'ai Yung and Su Shih, we are dealing with inner qualities not readily visible, virtue hidden by rusticity; in Su Shih's poem, the recluse longs for the lute, not for firewood, for virtue rather than comfort. Kung Hsien takes this one step further: no need to turn the wood into a lute to reveal its glory, no need to add strings and lacquer, which are but lesser parts. Should the wood remain unadorned, the willows not valued, or the *i-min* not favored, their virtue would remain undiminished.

³² The elegant willow has lent its graceful form to numerous erotic expressions, such as the slender "willow waist" and "willow eyebrows" of the beautiful courtesan, and the "flowering willow" or prostitute. The term *chang-t'ai* came to be synonymous with the brothel.

detached palace of the autocratic Ch'in court. Pa-shang, famous for its more rugged willows, was the place where Liu Pang 劉邦, en route to becoming the first Han emperor, received as captive the last Ch'in emperor and abolished the anti-Confucian code of law of the Ch'in. Thus, the contrasts that Kung Hsien's poem touches upon include not merely two types of trees but two dynasties: the anti-Confucian Ch'in and the Confucian Han; and two seasons: springtime, associated here with moral corruption, and winter, identified with the lofty virtue of the scholar-recluse.³³ The connotations for his own time are such that these painted willows might well have been considered seditious.

Kung Hsien's uncultivated willow trees, repeated on many occasions, were really a belated addition to a vocabulary of politically symbolic motifs developed in the early Yüan dynasty by such thirteenth century artists as Cheng Ssu-hsiao 鄭思肖 and Kung K'ai 龔開. Like Kung Hsien, these artists lived during a generation which saw China completely overrun by foreigners, in their case by the Mongols of Kublai Khan, and like Kung Hsien they found themselves unwilling to serve their foreign conqueror. Drawing from poetic and painterly traditions, these artists developed themes which symbolized the *i-min* of their own time, whose loyalty to the fallen Sung left them without a means of livelihood and without a public voice. In private, Cheng Ssu-hsiao painted such orchids as these (Fig. 2), whose sweet fragrance had for many centuries, in poetry, stood for the scholar's pure loyalty. Significantly, Cheng Ssu-hsiao is said to have painted only the orchids themselves and never the ground from which they grew, symbolizing the fact that the Mongols had stolen the ground from beneath the feet of China's scholar class. Kung K'ai painted several themes which reflected his opposition to the Yüan government, most famous of which was "the lean horse" (Fig. 3). Long before the thirteenth century, the horse had come to represent the Chinese empire flourishing in the midst of its "barbarian" neighbors. The noble steeds of the imperial stables were said to be capable of traveling a thousand miles without rest. Now, with China annexed to the Mongol empire, Kung K'ai has painted this horse, fallen upon hard times, its head held low and its ribs protruding.³⁴

These motifs, and others like them, share with Kung Hsien's uncultivated willows a reliance upon poetry for their exegesis and for the dramatization of their meaning. The paintings themselves are each reduced to a simple image, a basic embodiment of scholarly virtue, cool and impersonal compared to the emotional poetry that often accompanied such paintings. Cheng Ssu-hsiao and Kung K'ai lived in the period which saw the first full fruition of Sung literati aesthetic theory; the reduction of descriptive effort and the reliance on calligraphic expression, the notion that a painting must have idea and that less says more, and the linking of painting with poetry were all hallmarks of Yüan literati painting. Yet painting had come a long way by the mid-seventeenth century, in the direction of an ever-increasing complexity. For Kung Hsien to settle into the traditions of Cheng Ssu-hsiao and Kung K'ai would have been an anachronism, a neglect of his creative potential. As we shall see, Kung Hsien was able to effectively transfer to his painted landscapes much more of the expressive

³³ Also worth noting is the association, in early literature, of Pa-shang with the custom of breaking willow branches between parting friends, each party retaining one half (e.g., see the *San fu huang t'u's* 三輔黃圖 reference to Pa-ch'iao 灞橋). This custom is referred to, and opposed, in Kung Hsien's final lines, "Do not string together your feelings of separation/ Do not let the travelers break your branches" (不綰別離情，休使行人折); in effect, Kung Hsien urges his scholars not to partake in lonely sentiment and instead to remain forbearing and aloof.

³⁴ Cf. Chu-tsing Li, "The Freer 'Sheep and Goat' and Chao Meng-fu's Horse Paintings," *Artibus Asiae*, xxx (1968), pp. 279-346; Wai-kam Ho, "China under the Mongols," in Sherman Lee and Wai-kam Ho, *Chinese Art under the Mongols* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1968), pp. 73-112.

complexity of his poems than were his Yüan counterparts.

The next two paintings come from an album dated 1671, now in the Nelson Gallery in Kansas City.³⁵ In the first of these (Fig. 4), the viewer's attention is carried first in one direction and then in another, along a disconnected series of rocks that form a bridge to a distant pavilion. The emptiness of the scene is relieved only by a handful of willow trees, barren of foliage. The building stands empty and remote; it seems to hover in timeless suspension, pointed off toward distances unseen. One travels this route only to be trapped by the isolation of the goal or to ponder the absence of view and prospect. The only object of contemplation is the willow grove, whose implications we now know; it speaks of patient isolation and thus, for the time being, symbolically blocks the return route from use. The trap is complete and the inner tensions are clearly established: looking toward the willows, we are reminded of why Kung Hsien has put us here, of the high moral standards that underlie his loyalty to the Ming, and of the ideals of reclusion by which he lived; looking toward the yawning void, in the other direction, we are reminded of the isolation itself, of the hardships and lonely frustrations that are spelled out in his poetry.

In the second painting of this pair (Fig. 5), a fragile willow, a remarkable example of endurance, is bent almost horizontal at the waist, growing out of low marsh-grass in the middle of a wide lake or river. Its trunk, drawn with constantly changing pressure of the brush, reveals a continual, although futile struggle toward vertical growth. As a willow, it expresses Kung Hsien's more lofty intentions; and yet, cut off from the land, isolated in a hostile environment, it also reminds us of his lonely years in watery exile, "a traveler of the waves."³⁶ Beyond the distant shore, at the top of the page, the horizon line has been curiously lowered to reveal a partially-hidden, pastel-colored building. Like an unblinking eye, it seems to observe the subtle drama of survival being slowly enacted below. Perhaps it is the home of an immortal, perhaps a frontier pass; each appears recurrently in Kung Hsien's paintings, and in his inscriptions, and both remind us that we have traversed far from the ordinary world, bringing us to the outer frontiers of the society. In these two willow paintings, and in several others like them, the artist inserts a barrier between the motif itself and the world at large, the willows being surrounded by water, mist, and void. A dual theme is presented through this, the traditional moral theme of steadfast, virtue (symbolized by the tree itself) being complemented by the painter's autobiographical theme of entrapment in a hostile environment, in the unrelenting grasp of political affairs.

Barren trees, lonely pavilions, and empty boats and houses in a "land of marsh-grass, duckweed, and artemesia"³⁷—the land of the dispossessed: these are the recurrent symbols of

³⁵ This album has been published under the title *Kung Pan-ch'ien hsi-pi hua-ts'e* 龔半千細筆畫冊 (Shanghai: Yu-cheng shu-chü, 1921); it appears also in *Shina nanga taisei* 支那南畫大成 (Tokyo: Kobunsha, 1935-1937), *hsü*. I, plates 62-71 and *hsü*. V, plate 232; the two leaves discussed here appear in Wilson, plates 8r and 8j, and in Victoria Contag, *Chinese Masters of the Seventeenth Century* (Rutland, Vermont: Charles Tuttle, 1970), plates 66-67, among other places.

³⁶ "I regret that I became a traveler of the waves./ For how bitter was my return home./ I'd only made a few friends./ Once parted, it was forever." Kung Hsien, "Huai Shan Yang-tzu, Hu-tzu, Yen-tzu" 懷山陽子胡子閻子, in Chu Hsü-tseng, 34.3b.

³⁷ Kung Hsien, inscription on an undated fan painting: "How many homes are there in this land of marsh-grass, duckweed, and artemesia?/ A flock of wild ducks, gulls, and egrets covers the sky./ Don't bother the man at leisure in his thatched pavilion./ Leave alone the man who has moored his empty boat." (幾家蘆荇蒺藜地，一片鳧鷖鷺鷥天。不礙泊人支草閣，儘教漁父泊空船。) Illustrated in *Ming-jen shu-hua shan-chi* 名人書畫扇集 (Shanghai: Wen-ming shu-chü, 1914-1915), xLi, plate 4; *Min Shin meika semmen taikan* 明清名家扇面大觀 (Kobe: Semmen kan, 1915), iii, plate 44; *Li-tai ming hua ching-p'in hsüan-chi* 歷代名畫精品選集 (n.p.), II, plate 20.

Kung Hsien's political landscapes. Their recurrence alone is enough to speak of the artist's conscious intent; were it not enough, his poems are available to help us explicate his vision. In his poetic inscriptions, we find the completion of the artist's idea. Where his painting depicts only empty skies, his poem envisions "a sky covered with a flock of wild ducks, gulls, and egrets," that is to say, with wandering scholars;³⁸ where we see a simple frontier pass, he sees a decaying monument with "broken tiles and a bell sunken into the earth," the image of an unguarded nation, its solemn monuments and rituals no longer preserved;³⁹ above a stone building, "an immortal's home," he describes a "bright (*ming* 明) moon shining on vermilion clouds," perhaps a covert reference to the lingering glow of the royal family (surnamed Chu 朱, or vermilion) of the Ming dynasty.⁴⁰ In his empty boats, he sees fishermen who are scholars; in his buildings are scholars who long for home. To the uninitiated, these poems act as a guide; to the initiated, the paintings offer their own clear message.

The height of Kung Hsien's dramatic abilities is attained in this final example, entitled *A Thousand Peaks and Myriad Ravines* (Fig. 6), datable on the basis of style to the late 1660s and presently in the Drenowatz collection in Zürich.⁴¹ Here the full complexity of poetry is matched by landscape painting. In its overall design, this landscape is structured along parallel sets of forms—mountain ridges, a river, a footpath, natural bridges, and a natural dike—that criss-cross each other diagonally and provide the painting with a tightly-woven basis of organization. The powerfully receding forms of this landscape create an illusion of monumental height and distance, punctuated by sudden elevations and drop-offs along the ridges and by towering waterfalls that spill into unseen chasms. There are no people to be seen, but the presence of man-made structures—a thatched hut and a partially concealed temple complex—establishes clearly the vastness in scale of the landscape.

One of the first things that we learn when we begin to travel about in this landscape is that one cannot penetrate to any great depth before encountering a series of obstacles to continued movement. The very ridges, dikes, and bridges that have given rise to this monumental space have also made it discontinuous. Only through a series of leaps can one explore the landscape in its entirety. The pattern is one of constant interruption, the compositional lines forever being broken and intersected. There is no horizon in the distance; there is no Heaven above. The space in the far distance seems to disintegrate before our eyes and to curl back toward us rather than receding away naturally. We may also notice that the light which plays across these plateaus and turret-shaped peaks seems not to come from any external source, but glows rather from within the objects themselves, ever changing as our eye sweeps across them. This lighting scheme at once illuminates the scene and directs the eye into a confusing paradox of solids and voids. There is a constantly changing tension between these rhythms of light and dark, which initiate an explosive sense of organic movement, and the tightly interlocking structure of the landscape composition that restricts everything to its accorded place.

Among the possible symbolic elements of this landscape allegory are the elimination of

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Kung Hsien, inscription from the final leaf of a sixteen-leaf album, dated 1688; the entire album is published in *Shina nanga taisei*, xiv, plates 85–100, and *hsü*, v, plates 230–231, and (except for the postscript) in *Chugoku meigashu* 中國名畫集 (Tokyo: Ryubundo, 1935), iv, plates 77–92; this particular leaf is also reproduced in Wu, plate 14.

⁴⁰ Kung Hsien, inscription on a hanging scroll, dated 1688, in the Ching Yüan Chai collection, Berkeley; illustrated in Wilson, plate 17.

⁴¹ This scroll is frequently reproduced, as in James Cahill, *Fantastics and Eccentrics in Chinese Painting* (New York: Asia House Gallery, 1967), pp. 70–72.

sky above and the total absence of people: the elimination of sky might indicate that Heaven has withheld its imperial mandate, that China has no rightful ruler; the absence of people could designate a conquered land, scorched and unfit for Chinese habitation. The chaotic terrain in which no single peak stands out to rule the others reinforces the concept of a nation without a ruler.⁴² The low-lying, twisting bands of mist or smoke could similarly designate a period of political division. Only the hovel of a hermit and the temple of the priest remain to house those faithful to the former regime. The image of a conquered nation seems lodged in every hidden corner of this landscape, where the foreground trees hang withered, where no path offers a secure passageway, where explosive forms and unyielding structures seem to create a sinister menace to the outside viewer, and where man himself seems to have been driven from the face of the earth. Several of these same elements, the isolated dwelling, the boiling clouds and the lowering horizon, are brought together in a poem by Kung Hsien, inscribed on another painting, now lost but coincidentally bearing the same title as this one; his poem reads:

*A thousand peaks and myriad ravines, with an isolated dwelling;
White stones are the grain which brew up purple evening clouds.
It is as if you were fleeing [the emperor] Yao, but still could
not get away,
Or like one in flight from the [tyrannical] Ch'in [emperor],
facing a cloudy horizon.⁴³*

千山萬壑一人家，白石爲糧釀紫霞。
尚爾逃堯猶未出，避秦若箇向雲涯。

In this poem, Kung Hsien describes the essential theme of the painting before us: the artist's flight across the shattered political landscape of China and his frightening inability to escape the harsh political realities of his time.

Whereas the Yüan artist Cheng Ssu-hsiao treated the theme of "conquered land" by removing the soil from the roots of his orchids, isolating them from the impurity of the Mongols, the conquered earth portrayed here by Kung Hsien is scorched and desolate, outspokenly dismal, its impurities held forth for all to look upon. And whereas Cheng depicted an abstract virtue in purely impersonal terms, Kung Hsien has brought this impersonal ideal together with personal realities in a complex but thoroughly unified image. There is an uncompromising political candor in this landscape that would have been unthinkable in thirteenth or fourteenth century painting; perhaps only in the late Ming-early Ch'ing interim, an unsurpassed period of restless invention in Chinese painting, could such a complex statement have been so clearly articulated.⁴⁴

The Chinese have long referred to landscape painting as "silent poetry," and with such paintings as these it become easy to understand why. Yet it is necessary to caution that the pursuit of such interpretations should not lead us beyond the artist's real intention. In the

⁴² That this should not ordinarily be the case is made clear in Kung Hsien's *Pan-ch'ien k'o-t'u hua-shuo*: "Whether the mountains number 1,000 or 10,000/ Among them must be a ruler./ Looking up to him are the lords/ And reverently posed high officials." (千峯萬峯，中有主宰，昂然者君，拱立巨采。) *Yü Chien-hua*, II, 800.

⁴³ Kung Hsien, inscription in an undated album, leaf 3, catalogued in Shao Sung-nien 邵松年 (ed.), *Ku-yüan ts'ui-lu* 古緣萃錄 (Shanghai: Hung-wen shu-chü, 1908), 8.7b; also recorded in Li Chün-chih 李濬之 (ed.), *Ch'ing hua-chia shih shih* 清畫家詩史 (n.p., 1930), *chia.hsia*.37a.

⁴⁴ Cf. James Cahill (ed.), *The Restless Landscape: Chinese Paintings of the Late Ming Period* (Berkeley: University Art Museum, 1971) for the artistic milieu from which Kung Hsien emerged, discussing such diverse stylistic sources of his art as Chao Tso 趙左, Tung Ch'i-ch'ang 董其昌, Sheng Mao-yeh 盛茂暉, and Fan Ch'i 樊圻.



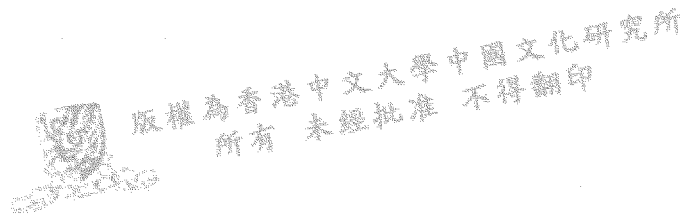
龔賢的書畫與政治

(中文摘要)



畫家和詩人龔賢的藝術和處世態度是在明末清初的動蕩時代中培養出來的。雖然他的傳記沒有流傳，從他的詩文、書信和題跋都可知道他極為關心國事。因為他曾參加政治活動，在清初的十年中他不得不離開他的故鄉南京，流寓於華南各地。回南京後，他過着隱居的生活，以賣畫和詩文為生。他的交遊大都限於和他有共同理想的朋友。龔賢的詩和畫都顯示出他對傳統觀念的堅定信賴和他對遺民命運的嘆惋。

龔賢的詩，於結構方面很巧妙地應用時間和空間感，在文字方面則較多用比喻和諧聲(雙關)語。他的詩大都是寫景之作，但是很多山水題材如荒徑、落日、枯柳、孤舟、空亭、廢壘、衰草、寒雲等，以及這些景物構成的圖畫，都隱喻著朝代的興替、君主的賢愚、時勢的變革、遺民的忠貞、和亡國的悲痛。龔賢的畫同樣地以山水為比喻，並往往題詩以增強滄桑之感。在研討會中，作者將會舉出幾幅龔賢的畫作為實例討論。



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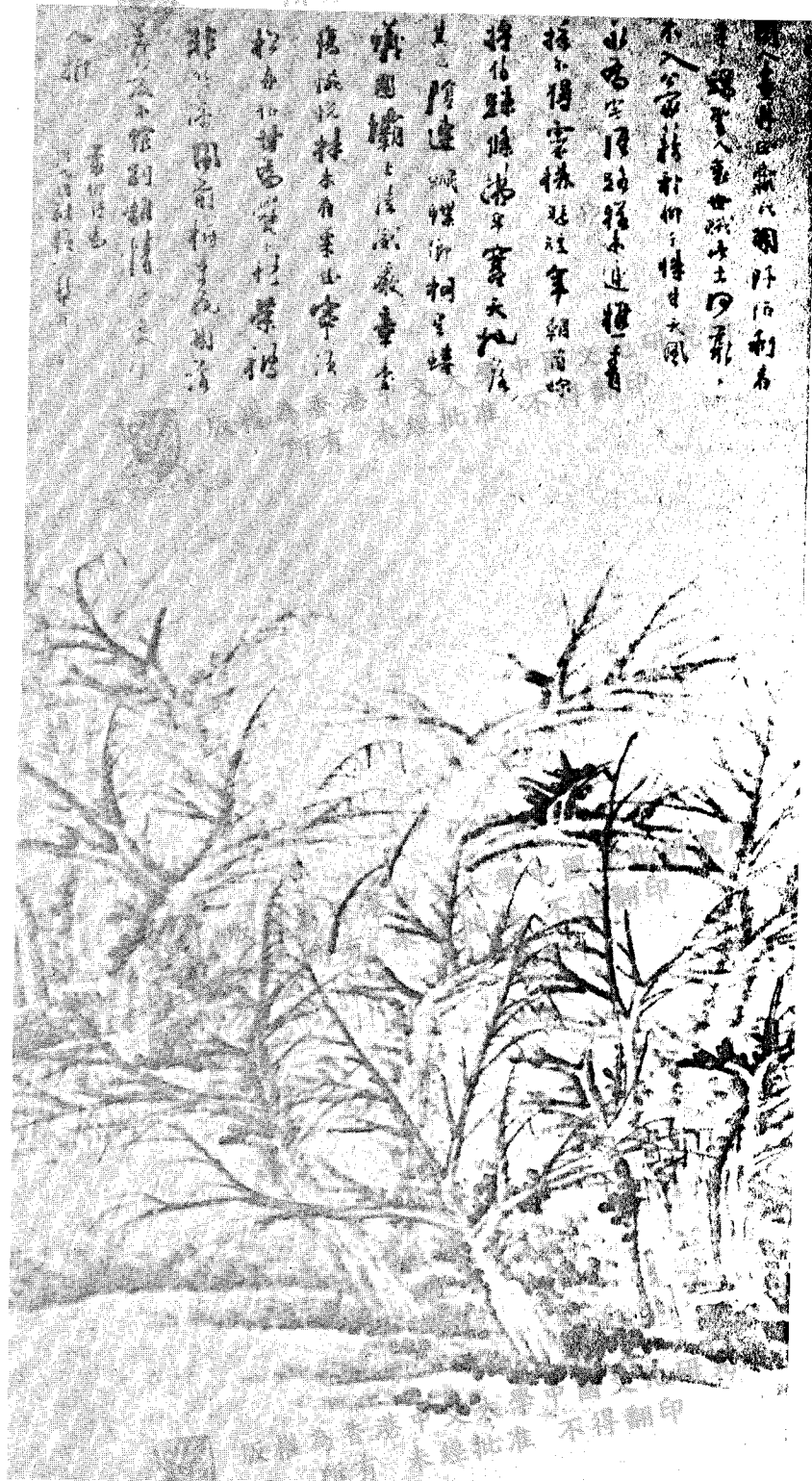


Figure 1. Kung Hsien, *Uncultivated Willows in Early Winter*.

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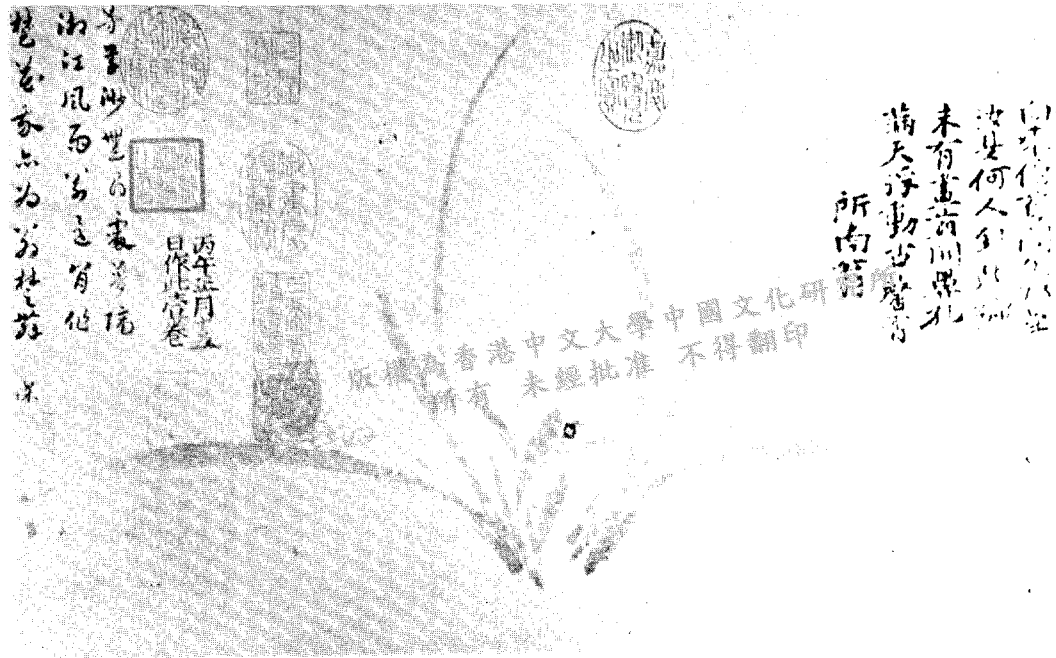


Figure 2. Cheng Ssu-hsiao, *Ink Orchid*.

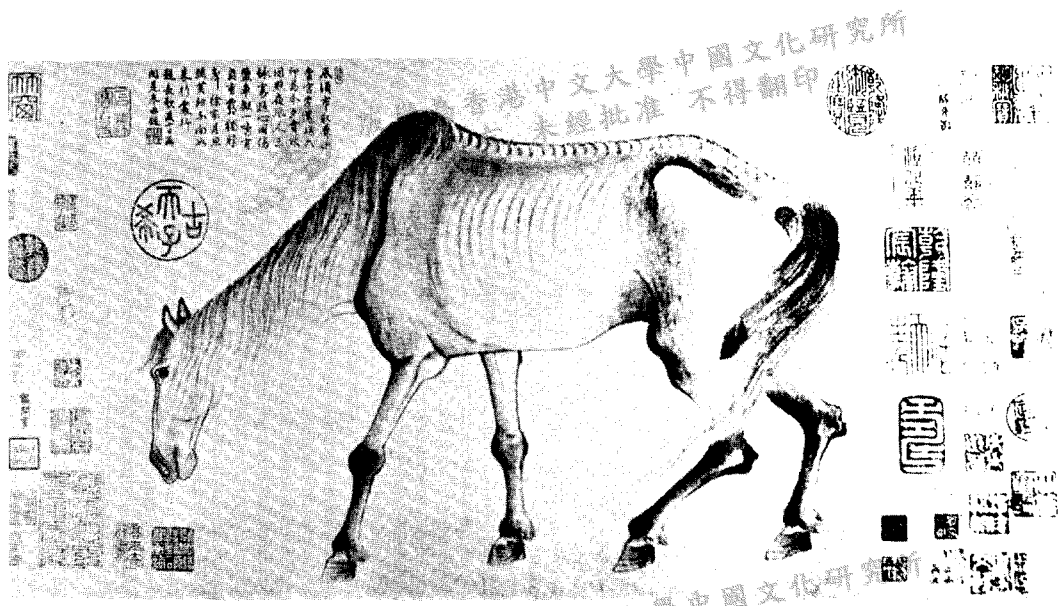


Figure 3. Kung K'ai, *Lean Horse*.

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Figure 4. Kung Hsien, Leaf from an album of ten leaves, dated 1671.



Figure 5. Kung Hsien, Leaf from an album of ten leaves, dated 1671.

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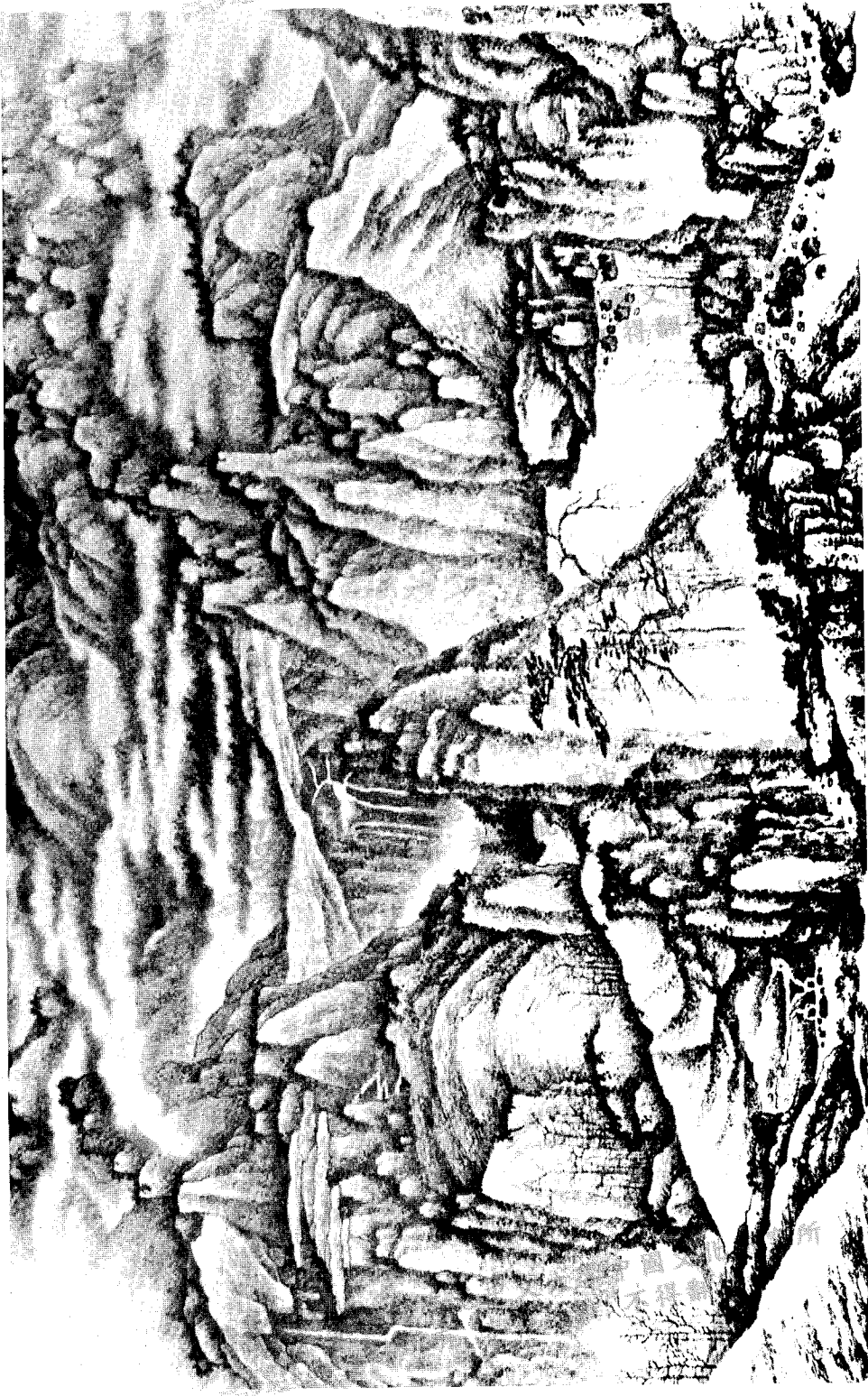


Figure 6. Kung Hsien, *A Thousand Peaks and Myriad Ravines*.