Faces of China

Portrait Painting of the Ming and Qing Dynasties (1368–1912)

For the Museum für Asiatische Kunst,
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, edited by Klaas Ruitenbeek

With Contributions by Annette Bügener, Ka Bo Tsang,
Klaas Ruitenbeek, Monica Klasing Chen, Shao-Lan Hertel,
Uta Rahman-Steinert, Wen-chien Cheng, Yao Ning, Yu Hui

Museum für
Asiatische Kunst
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

MICHAEL IMHOF VERLAG

Contents

Foreword by the Director General 7

Acknowledgements..... 8

Notes to the Reader..... 10

Chronology..... 11

ESSAYS

Klaas Ruitenbeek
Faces of China: Portrait Painting of the Ming and Qing Dynasties (1368–1912) 12

Wen-chien Cheng
The Chinese Portrait Collection at the Royal Ontario Museum: Reconsidering the Portraiture Status of Ancestor Portraits 20

Yao Ning
Reshaping Portraiture: The Emergence of Chinese Literati Portraiture 35

Annette Bügener
Heroes in Life and in Death: Military Portraits..... 47

Yu Hui
Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Portraits of Urban Residents 58

Klaas Ruitenbeek
Albums of Faces: Small-Size Portraits from Painters' Studios..... 63

Monica Klasing Chen
Translating Practical Knowledge: Three Theories of Portraiture from the Mid-Qing Dynasty 75

CATALOGUE

Introduction: Literati and Ancestors..... 86

Imperial Portraits 94

Portraits of Officials 110

Military Portraits: The Hall of Purple Radiance..... 132

The World of Literati 152

Self-Portraits 206

Portraits and Religion 216

Celebrating the Family..... 228

Worshipping the Ancestors..... 240

The Portrait Painter and his Workshop..... 268

Notes to the Catalogue Section..... 302

SECRET FORMULA FOR PAINTING PORTRAITS

Monica Klasing Chen
Introduction to the Translation of the *Secret Formula for Painting Portraits* by Ding Gao and Ding Yicheng 316

Ding Gao and Ding Yichen
Secret Formula for Painting Portraits
Translated by Monica Klasing Chen, with contributions by Birgitta Augustin and Koos Kuiper 319

Chinese Character Index 352

Bibliography..... 358

Picture Credits..... 367

Imprint..... 368

Uploaded with permission of the Museum für Asiatische Kunst

Monica Klasing Chen

Translating Practical Knowledge

Three Theories for Portraiture Written During the Mid-Qing Dynasty

Most portraits painted in China from the Song (960–1279) to the Qing (1644–1912) dynasty either had a ritual function, being depictions of ancestors or revered masters used in worship, or a social function, meant to represent an individual and his or her virtues and pastimes.[1] Thus, the great majority of the portraits made use of naturalistic painting techniques, so that family members, followers or friends could easily recognise the sitter.[2] To meet this demand and create convincing representations, standardised practices and conventions for painting were transmitted and disseminated.

This article analyses recorded practices for portraiture and their transmission. It studies three treatises on portraiture that were published within a span of eighty years during the Qing dynasty, between 1742 and 1818, to determine how the social environment of the Qing led painters to be innovative both in regard to the content of their theories and the format in which they presented that content. It aims to understand what motivated the authors of these treatises to put their ideas to paper, and how these different motivations shaped their theories. Knowledge transmission and the desire to condense information for easy memorisation are the guiding principles of these texts; both are closely related to the social context in which the treatises were written.

The analysis of these theories focuses on the vocabulary and the analogies that were employed by these three Qing authors to describe the steps involved in portraiture, as well as practical tricks. It argues that these were consciously chosen, and that each author drew from a different pool of available knowledge, namely physiognomy, calligraphy and landscape painting, to construct his own theory on portraiture. The authors' previous experiences and knowledge not only manifested themselves in their choices of words and figurative descriptions, but also shaped their views on portraiture and the techniques they transmitted. At the same time, the knowledge they referred to played a major role in helping the reader to understand new information through association. In other words, their efforts to adapt theories from other fields for portraiture can be seen as a means to articulate practical matters that would otherwise be difficult to describe and grasp. Thus, the analogies in their texts functioned as tools that helped them to develop new didactic approaches to the traditional field of portraiture.

This process of appropriation and adaptation can be understood as a translation exercise. The desire to describe the steps of portraiture in detail and to transmit practical knowledge beyond theory led the authors to reflect on their own knowledge and experience, each choosing the vocabulary from a field that seemed most suitable to describe portraiture practices. The resulting treatises are translations between fields of knowledge, relying both on selection—the appropriation of the suitable ideas—and on adaptation—the attempt to convey new meaning in a different context. As such, they are the outcome of a process of conceptualising portraiture practices, in which the existing knowledge chosen by the authors possesses considerable agency in moulding the understanding of portraiture itself.

Early Portraiture Theories

Unlike in physiognomy, calligraphy and landscape painting, the fields of knowledge the authors made reference to, written treatises on portraiture developed rather late in China. Portraiture was seldom practiced by scholars before the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), and no authoritative vocabulary had been consolidated to discuss this practice.[3] Knowledge was surely transmitted orally, but this meant that the choice of words and metaphors employed to describe steps and details of the practice were more susceptible to change. It was only during the Ming dynasty, especially during the late 16th century, that knowledge of portraiture practices was consolidated to some degree.[4] In order to fully understand how this differed from Qing developments, a brief introduction to the sources that were published up to the Qing is necessary.

Uploaded with permission of the Museum für Asiatische Kunst

Fig. 1. Graph from a physiognomy handbook indicating the Five Mountains and Four Rivers. *The Complete Compilation on the Wondrous Art of Physiognomy* (*Shenxiang quanbian*). Between 1465 and 1620. juan 2, 18b.

The earliest extant text on portraiture was written by the late Yuan scholar Wang Yi, active during the 14th century. Wang claims that "Whoever paints a portrait must be thoroughly familiar with the rules of physiognomy."[5] The "rules of physiognomy" require that the face be divided into Five Mountains (*wuyue*) and Four Rivers (*sidu*) (fig. 1). The Five Mountains are the forehead, chin, nose, right cheekbone and left cheekbone; the Four Rivers are the ears, eyes, mouth and nostrils. These parts and the relation between them is what a painter must be aware of and should strive to remember when analysing the face of the sitter:

> Only during a lively conversation will they show their original and genuine character. Then I remain quiet and try to grasp them, noting them in my memory. With my eyes closed, it is as if I had them before my eyes; when I put down the brush, it is as if the image were already there.[6]

Thus, Wang Yi takes the Five Mountains and Four Rivers as his analytical tools for memorising the features and proportions of a face. By breaking the face down into parts, the painter can better remember the relation between these parts. Furthermore, Wang Yi introduces a correct sequence of steps for painting a portrait by employing other terms from physiognomy. In the sequence he describes, Wang starts every portrait by painting the sitter's nose, and finishes his draft with the outline of the face.

During the Ming period, knowledge on portraiture probably reached more readers through daily-use encyclopaedias, in which Wang Yi's text was also reproduced. Many such daily-use encyclopaedias contained a section entitled "Painting manuals" (*huapu men*), in which another method that relied on elements from physiognomy was explained.[7] This method is presented with an image and a four-character mnemonic rhyme (fig. 2). It reads:

> Horizontally, divide into five eyes;
> Vertically, measure three planes.
> [Consider] the eight directions [heaven] and the four quadrates [earth],
> and you will thoroughly comprehend the entire cosmos![8]

The image that accompanies the rhyme allows the reader to grasp its meaning: At the height of the eyes, the eye serves as the measure for the width of the face, which can be estimated with five eye-measures. The second line makes reference to the same three planes a physiognomist would use to read a client's face. The first plane starts at the hairline and stretches down to the point between the eyebrows; the second plane is

Uploaded with permission of the Museum für Asiatische Kunst

Fig. 2. Illustration from the *Newly Edited and Thoroughly Enlarged Complete Book of the Ten Thousand Treasures from the Exquisite and Intricate of the Forest of Scholars for Practical Use by All under Heaven* (*Xinban quanbu tianxia bianyong wenlin miaojin wanbao quanshu*). 1612: *juan* 12, 6b.

Fig. 3. Graph of the Three Planes, Five Parts, Four Earthly Sections and Three Heavenly Sections. From Ding Gao's *Secret Formula for Painting Portraits* (*Xiezhen mijue*). 1818: *juan* 1, 3b.

measured from this point to below the nose; and the last plane continues down to end below the chin. The division into three planes is based on the popular belief that the human face mirrors the cosmic order. In physiognomy, the upper plane stands for heaven, the central plane for man and the lower one for earth. This belief in the correlation between the face and the cosmos is directly reaffirmed in the two last lines of the verse. The concluding statement that one will thus "thoroughly comprehend the cosmos" asserts that the formula given in the two first lines is all one has to know to master portraiture.

In these early texts, memorisation still played an important role in retaining a sitter's features and establishing correct proportions before beginning a painting. To aid memorisation, texts relied on rhymes, the creation of sequences of steps and condensed content, as well as the vocabulary chosen from physiognomy that provided the reader with the necessary analytical tools. Even though these aids could have been regarded as tools necessary only for a craftsman who relied on oral transmission to obtain his knowledge, Chinese scholars commonly used similar techniques. Scholars and students would rely on simple rhymes and memorised texts or develop writing exercises based on sequencing and condensing content to memorise, for example, passages from classical texts.[9]

Qing painters writing on portraiture recognised the pitfalls of memorisation, which could lead to stiff and lifeless paintings, but did not want to do away with it completely. The three authors discussed below perceived a tension between establishing rules that could easily be memorised, and avoiding rules to capture the true essence of a sitter. One of

Uploaded with permission of the Museum für Asiatische Kunst

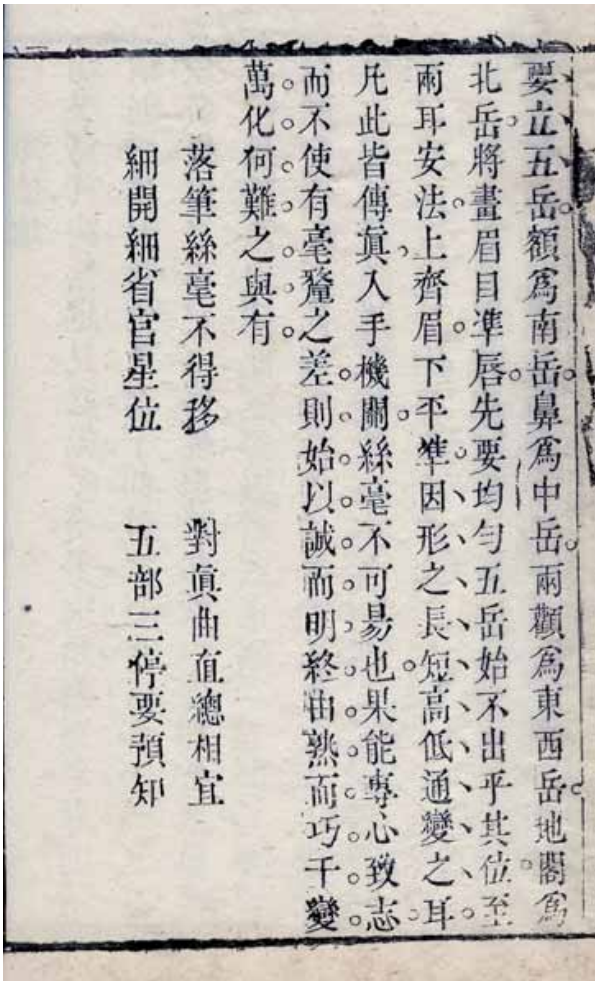
要立五岳額爲南岳鼻爲中岳兩顴爲東西岳地閣爲
北岳將畫眉目準唇先要均勻五岳始不出乎其位至
兩耳安法上齊眉下平準因形之長短高低通變之耳
凡此皆傳眞入手機關絲毫不可易也果能專心致志
而不使有毫釐之差則始以誠而明終由熟而巧千變
萬化何難之與有
落筆絲毫不得移　對眞曲直總相宜
細開細省官星位　五部三停要預知

Fig. 4. Mnemonic rhyme at the end of the section "On Composition". From Ding Gao's *Secret Formula for Painting Portraits* (*Xiezhen mijue*). 1818: *juan* 1, 3a.

their major concerns was that portrait painters had to adapt their practice according to the sitter and the size of the portrait. They needed to capture the sitter's expression, transmit the changes of volume through shading, and convey an individual's constant character even though his mood was constantly changing. They required a set of rules that could easily be memorised and that allowed for changes.[10] Thus, in their theories, each of the three authors tried to strike a balance between fixed rules and free drawing. Qing authors aimed not only to present useful vocabulary to analyse the face, but also to introduce comprehensive notions that would turn portraiture theories into cohesive systems. In addition, their translation efforts also helped them to project a positive social image of themselves.

The Physiognomy Approach

Ding Gao (d. 1761) and his son, Ding Yicheng (1743– after 1823), relied heavily on notions from physiognomy to compose their treatise, the *Secret Formula for Painting Portraits* (*Xiezhen mijue*).[11] However, their undertaking goes beyond the earlier texts discussed above, making physiognomy and its cosmological understanding the material that ties the practical steps of painting together. Their theory could best be described as the physiognomy approach to portraiture.

The illustrations in the treatise make the connection with traditional physiognomy treatises evident (fig. 3). The treatise opens with a discussion on the planes of the face, explaining in detail the divisions that were also given in the previous texts: Three Planes (*santing*), Five Parts (*wubu*), Four Earthly Sections (*disi*), and the additional Three Heavenly Sections (*tiansan*). However, this physiognomy vocabulary was borrowed for its specificity and does not necessarily carry the original meaning associated with each of the parts when reading a face. In accordance with popular memorisation techniques, every section explaining the various components of the face or compositional steps is always summarised in the end in a mnemonic rhyme (fig. 4). After an explanation in prose on the divisions of the face, they write:

> When lowering the brush, miss not by a hair, of lines curved and straight, each must match their pair.
> Carefully examine the position of all parts, and of the five parts and three planes one must first be aware![12]

Like Wang Yi, the authors urge the reader to know the divisions by heart and identify them correctly on the sitter before painting. However, they give further pointers to the reader so he can remember the steps for painting, constructing a microcosm within the face.

Contrary to existing traditions in which the nose is the starting point when painting a portrait, the Dings start the portrait by drawing the out-

Uploaded with permission of the Museum für Asiatische Kunst

line of the face, called the Circle of Primordial Chaos (*hunyuanjuan*).[13] The painter is thus given the task of constructing or ordering the face on paper. This circle is like the primordial chaos before the division of heaven and earth, and creating this division is the first step the painter has to take. Heaven and earth are separated by placing the Sun and the Moon (the eyes) into the chaos, thus establishing heaven above and the earth below. The nose is then placed, and these three serve as reference points for the other parts (figs. 5 and 6).

Most striking is that the technique for adding shades and leaving out highlights also becomes part of this cosmic vision and division of the face. Scholar painters, who preferred expressive painting styles, did not value shading in painting. Thus, writing about shading in their theory was a hard task in itself, but because the techniques are included in the cosmological system, they cease to be artificial and stiff and become something organic to the painting.[14] Adding washes is described as distinguishing Yin and Yang, thus bringing out the appearance. Only by relying on Yin and Yang can the brush represent the myriad images. In the cosmological system of the Dings, graded washes are regarded as Yang and flat washes as Yin, used to construct volume, just as Yin and Yang generate everything in the universe. Thus it is the painter's task to use his brush with graded and flat washes to make the variations within the face visible, bringing out what would not be visible with the use of only contours. It is the painter's task to create distinctions within the chaos.

The process of cosmic creation, in which the primordial chaos divides itself into the myriad things, was broadly known in Qing society. Physiognomy theories were also structured according to the principles of cosmic creation, since it was believed that the human face was a mirror of the cosmic order. By using this as a reference for the composition of the portrait on paper, the authors take an existing structure embedded in the reader's mind and build new knowledge upon it. Yet, the function of the system and of the vocabulary had changed, no longer aiming at *reading* alone, as would have been done by a fate reader, but also at *creating* and *composing*.

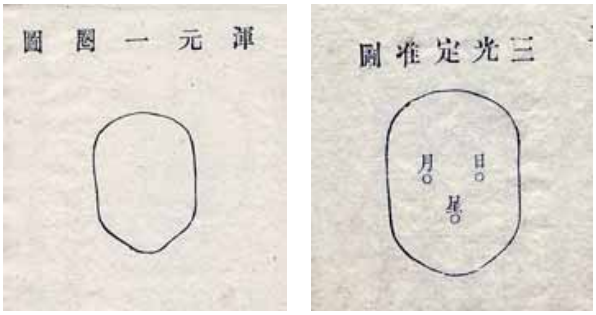

Fig. 5 and 6. Illustrations of the Circle of Primordial Chaos and the positions for placing the Three Lights. From Ding Gao's *Secret Formula for Painting Portraits* (*Xiezhen mijue*). 1818: *juan* 1, 5a and 5b.

The Calligraphy Approach

Jiang Ji's (1714–1787) *Secret Essentials for Transmitting the Spirit* (*Chuanshen miyao*),[15] with a preface dated to 1742, was published seventy-six years before Ding Gao's treatise was printed by his son in 1818. Jiang's method was based on establishing a system of proportions within the individual face, taking the nose as its standard measure. By relying solely on proportions to measure the distance and size of the other parts of the face, Jiang uses an approach that is similar to that of composing Chinese characters. Thus, his theory could be called a calligraphy approach to portraiture. Although he does not explicitly draw a connection to this field of knowledge, his debt to calligraphic theories becomes clear when his entire work is taken into account.

This treatise focuses on strengthening the ability to grasp the proportions of the face visually. To do this, the most important step is to train the eye to draw the nose, which plays a central role in the composition process. The painter starts with the two nostrils then paints the stroke below the nose tip and finally the two nose wings. Jiang remarks: "Take the tip of the nose as measure of ten to define the height of the nose[16] Then, again take the nose as measure of ten to make sure the breadth of the tip is correct."[17]

The nose can be taken as vertical and horizontal measure, while the tip gives a bigger horizontal measure.[18] These two measures function like rulers that are newly defined for every portrait. With these established, the painter employs straight lines only to measure across the face. The painter measures the correct position of other parts by prolonging the ending point of lines in the face upwards or downwards, or measuring with a straight line from the central fold. Thus, Jiang makes relative measures his structuring standard. The painter starts a painting with the

Uploaded with permission of the Museum für Asiatische Kunst

Fig. 7. Instructions for calligraphy from the *Xinban quanbu tianxia bianyong wenlin miaojin wanbao quanshu.* 1612: *juan* 11, 27b.

sitter's nose, and once this is fixed on paper, it defines and regulates all the following variations, based on proportions measured in 'noses'.

In the field of calligraphy there is a similar approach to composition. In manuals of the Ming, the required inner coherence of the proportions within the written character was graphically represented (fig. 7). One divides the character into horizontal sections that should be evenly distributed according to the number of horizontal lines a character may contain, while the same can be done with its vertical lines, depending on the character. Jiang Ji, who himself wrote didactic manuals for learning calligraphy and was the son of a renowned calligrapher, stressed in his texts on calligraphy that it is important to create a relation between the lines of a character and maintain proportions.[19] In these didactic manuals, he also presents the theory that one has a Host stroke and Guest strokes within a character, and that the latter should be placed in accordance with the Host.[20]

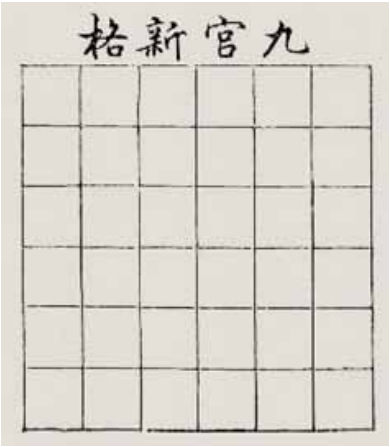

Fig. 8. Graph of the "New Method of the Nine Palaces" (*Jiugong xinge*), 1b, by Jiang Ji. From the *Nine Secret Records on Engaging with the Arts by the Jiang Clan* (*Jiangshi youyi milu jiuzhong*).

In the appendix to his treatise on portraiture, Jiang introduces the scheme of the Nine Palaces for rescaling portraits (fig. 8). Jiang transposes this practice from calligraphy to portraiture.[21] A similar grid system composed of nine squares to rescale characters in calligraphy had been in use at least since the Yuan dynasty (early 14th cent.).[22] In one of his treatises on calligraphy, Jiang also describes a "New method of the Nine Palaces", a grid of 36 squares based on this older scheme. These schemes helped calligraphers to maintain the inner proportions of a written character by paying attention to the blank areas between the strokes and their fixed positions within the grid. Thus, Jiang applies two techniques from calligraphy used to compose, maintain internal proportions and rescale characters to portrait painting. Proportion and internal measures become the structuring ideas of his portraiture practice.

The Landscape Approach

Shen Zongqian (ca 1720–1803) was an acclaimed portrait and landscape painter. In 1781, he published his painting manual, *Jiezhou's Compilation on the Study of Painting* (*Jiezhou xuehua bian*),[23] written in prose for his students. It deals mainly with landscape painting, but also contains a section on portraiture. His vocabulary for describing practical steps of portraiture comes from landscape painting, in which ink gradations, modulated lines and texture strokes feature prominently. His theory could be described as the landscape approach to portraiture.

The lack of structuring schemata in his treatise is what makes it stand out from the two treatises discussed above. Shen presents practical methods for composition, only to criticise them. He attacks the well-known method of the "three planes and five parts" because he believes faces vary according to age and mood, changing every moment, and that these changes cannot be described by a single rule. Instead, he introduces the method of the eight characters (*you* 由, *jia* 甲, *tian* 田, *shen* 申, *yong* 用, *bai* 白, *mu* 目 and *si* 四)[24] as a more accurate method that provides a general rule for the outline of faces, but respects the differences among faces (fig. 9). However, this method, which is probably derived

Uploaded with permission of the Museum für Asiatische Kunst

from physiognomy,[25] is intentionally allocated a marginal position in relation to his main argument.

Instead of focusing on fixed standards, the notion Shen emphasises in his treatise is that of change. According to him, it is change that makes portraits look alive. He believes that the methods of fixed proportions do not suit good painters. Instead, "one must seek the rule outside the rule. Add change and variation within variation, seeking the path of change."[26] This so-called Lively Method (*huofa*) corresponds, he believes, with the varying moods of people, and therefore cannot be subsumed under one rule. To anyone acquainted with landscape painting theory, this kind of discourse that values variation must have sounded very familiar. In landscape painting, nothing can be static: the height of trees and mountains must vary, and the composition must convey a rhythm.[27] However, it is not only in this general view on portraiture that Shen makes references to landscape painting. He instructs the student to paint the texture of the skin of elderly people with the strokes used to paint dry tree branches. He goes further by comparing portraiture itself to landscape painting, in which the painter has to respect the four seasons, and at the same time bear in mind that the seasons do not represent the constant vital energy of nature. The same is true when it comes to a person's varying moods, which do not correspond to the constant spirit of that person. The spirit only manifests itself through the changing appearance, so the painter must observe the sitter for a while before painting in order to grasp the constant features lying below the variations.

Shen sees both portraiture and landscape painting as ways to depict natural changes. In his instructions, he puts emphasis on the practical use of ink, just as landscape painting theories do. He introduces the system of ink-gradations, which can be regarded as basic knowledge that every landscape painter would possess. Ink-tones are scaled from one to ten, ten being the darkest, like the ink used for the pupils of the eyes, and one being the lightest. For example, for the grooves in the face of an old person or the lines that demarcate the eyes or the nostrils, one should use ink of density level seven, while the elevation of the bone under the eyebrows should only be brought out by applying ink in the dilution scale

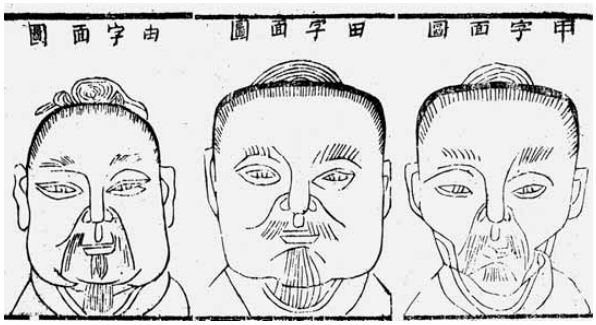

Fig. 9. Illustrations from *Fathoming the Truth of the Principles of Physiognomy* (*Xiangli hengzhen*), a compilation on physiognomy published in 1833, pages 1a, 3a, 4b of *juan* 2.

of one or two, the lightest ink. These techniques, which were helpful for landscape painters, would also help the portrait painter to capture nature's changes.[28]

In the section on landscape painting that precedes his portraiture theory, Shen emphasises the notion that painting is a method for cultivating one's spirit, and believes it to be an efficient measure for avoiding vulgarity. The same is true for portraiture. Shen argues that, when a painter is limited by standard rules, he creates portraits that emanate vulgarity. He seeks to make the practice of painting into a tool for self-cultivation, rejecting fixed formulas and stressing the importance of variation achieved by proper brushwork and appropriate use of ink. The underlying idea is that the practice of grasping nature's variations nurtures the mind of the painter, keeping him distant from worldly affairs.

The Author's Social Image

Statements recorded by the authors or their close friends explain the motivation lying behind the composition of their work and reveal that knowledge transmission might not have been their only goal. The Dings proudly displayed their knowledge and aimed to reach a large public, presenting their family tradition with easy-to-follow rules and standards. When the treatise was first published, the preface stated that it was meant as an instructional volume that could promote moral behaviour. By reading it, students could "do away with the vulgarity that lowly teachers transmitted", and that "with it, the benevolent man and filial son will, without being aware of it, develop the ambition to honour and respect his ancestors."[29] By disclosing secret knowledge that had been transmitted from generation to generation, the Dings show their good-natured concern with helping others perform their filial duties.

Uploaded with permission of the Museum für Asiatische Kunst

Filial piety also played an important role for Jiang Ji. He claims to have written his treatise while seeking to depict his own deceased mother. He began painting portraits of her after being dissatisfied with a portrait painted by an artisan, painting only portraits of his mother. However, he could not be satisfied with the result and gave up the craft, never painting a portrait of anyone else. When a friend asked him about his notes on portraiture, Jiang Ji wept and told him it was compiled with this purpose in mind, for his personal research and the quest to portray his mother. This account, which is included in the preface to his work, depicts Jiang Ji as a scholar of high morality who is most invested in showing his filial devotion toward his deceased mother. Since the Ming dynasty, such displays of filial piety had become crucial in shaping a scholar's own identity and social image.[30] His work was only published later by his son, an event that could also be perceived as a display of filial piety on the part of a son honouring his father.[31] Yet, Jiang Ji's claims seem to be true, as no portrait by Jiang Ji is known today and no entry referencing a portrait painted by him could be found.[32]

Shen Zongqian, who was a professional painter and revered during his time for his art, used his treatise to portray himself as a cultivated and virtuous man.[33] He wrote the treatise for his students, with the major claim that it was useful to counter "vulgar learning". Thus, he seeks to present the content of his treatise as the material that would garner himself and his students social prestige. He employs an elitist approach to painting by claiming that only those who are morally worthy are allowed to paint, but he also gives the reader directions on how to become worthy. Shen insists that every scholar should wish to depart from the world of dust and vulgarity and cultivate himself through painting.

According to these statements, the transmission of painting techniques was not the only purpose of writing portraiture theories. By writing these texts, the authors also aimed to transmit virtues that they believed would benefit society and ensure social harmony. The practice of accumulating merit by performing good deeds, such as disseminating useful knowledge, became widespread during the Ming dynasty.[34] Authors could improve their social image by promoting Confucian virtues and ritualised behaviour. All three authors introduced here presented themselves as moral paragons by showing how portraiture practice could become a virtuous activity related to filial piety and self-cultivation.

Conclusion

The efforts invested by the Qing authors in translating portraiture theories into cohesive systems reflect their understanding of knowledge. Knowledge of portraiture should be acquired through reflection and reasoning, and the reader of these theories should be committed and engaged, with a predisposition for moral cultivation and aspirations to benefit society. Rote memorisation, valued in past theories, was allotted a secondary role, and thus traditional approaches could be re-appropriated and practical techniques gain new flexibility. Memory still played an important role when remembering the sitter's features and following the correct steps for painting, but the steps were connected within a system. The reader should, above all, *understand* the content, being thus given more freedom to employ and reuse this knowledge.[35]

This new perception of knowledge also allowed scholars to project a positive image of themselves. While their painting theories functioned as moral guides, the authors also portrayed themselves as moral paragons, being cultivated, discerning and virtuous men. The three theories prompt the readers to reflect on portraiture to bring out their virtues, while the authors' own efforts to value reason by making analogies to other fields also serves the reader as an example of how to avoid being vulgar and coarse. Once the act of reflecting on practical matters was perceived as the means to keep the mind free of undesired thoughts, knowledge transmission and morality were bound together. Painting portraits was no longer perceived as an artisan's craft, but rather as a worthy activity for an aspiring scholar, and portraiture theories became tool kits to help readers become virtuous men and women by avoiding vulgarity and being filial.

Uploaded with permission of the Museum für Asiatische Kunst

1 Portraits of scholars in their studies became common during the Song dynasty. Although depictions of specific individuals survive from the Han dynasty (-206 to 220), these do not seem to focus on capturing accurate facial features to identify the individual. Portraits that clearly make reference to the real features of a person became common during the Tang dynasty (618– 907), such as portraits of Buddhist masters or emperors. See Seckel 1997–2005 (1): 43–76. For a brief and general introduction to the early development of portraiture in China, see Ching 2016.

2 Not every portrait relied on the realistic verisimilitude of facial features to identify a sitter. Writing inscriptions, such as eulogies or poems, or including representative objects in the portrait were oft-used techniques to identify the sitter.

3 The earliest known account on portraiture techniques by Wang Yi (fl. 14th cent.) was recorded by his friend, Tao Zongyi (1329–1410), in his *Records Compiled after Retiring from Farming* (*Chuogeng lu* 輟耕錄), written ca 1366. The earliest extant copy of the *Chuogeng lu* is an early Ming print. In Tao Zongyi's *Records Compiled after Retiring from Farming*, the title of Wang Yi's text is *Secret Formula for Painting Portraits* (*Xiexiang mijue* 寫像秘訣). However, the title might have been chosen by Tao, who recorded the text. The compilers of the *Complete Books in the Four Treasuries* (*Siku quanshu* 四庫全書) comment that techniques for portraiture were usually transmitted orally and that portraiture was a craft scholars would seldom engage in (丹青之家，多以口訣相傳，幾以為非士大夫之藝). Yu 1989 (2): 870. Vinograd argues that during the Ming dynasty the expressive qualities of portraiture started to be explored in depth by scholars, while, from the Tang to the Song, it was mainly artisans who painted portraits. See Vinograd 1992: 29. The demand for portraits and group portraits during social gatherings grew during the Ming. Due to increased social mobility, scholars and merchants began to negotiate their positions by publicising their moral values and social connections. Portraiture became one of the means to do this. See Clunas 1997: 213.

4 Especially during the Wanli reign (1573–1620), the printing industry developed rapidly and cheap books became available to consumers. On the development of the printing industry during the Ming dynasty, see Chia 2007:143–196.

5 凡寫像須通曉相法. Tao (n. d.): *juan* 11, 2b. Siggstedt 1992 provides an overview of the relationship between portraiture and physiognomy.

6 彼方叫嘯談話之間，本真性情發見。我則靜而求之，點識于心。閉目如在目前，放筆如在筆底. Tao: *juan* 11, 2b.

7 In the *Secret Essentials of Portraiture* (*Chuanzhen miyao* 傳真祕要), published at the end of the 16th century, Weng Ang also uses this method taken from physiognomy for structuring the face. For a brief summary of the contents of Weng Ang's treatise, see Kobayashi 2017: 497–506. A copy of the treatise can be consulted in the National Archives of Japan, vol. 28 of the collectanea *Baijia mingshu* 百家名書. The division of *san ting wu bu* 三停五部, also commonly found in the encyclopaedias, is illustrated on page 8a. In a compilation on painting techniques entitled *Zhaoshi jiafa biji* 趙氏家法筆記, which was erroneously attributed to Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322) and was most likely published during the Ming dynasty, similar steps for portraiture are recorded and physiognomy terms are used to describe the subdivisions of the face in the section titled *Chuanshen xinfa* 傳神心法, 36b–40b.

8 In the Chinese original, the last character of lines two and four (*ming* 明 and *ting* 停) rhyme, yet this rhyme could not be reproduced in translation. In popular belief, *xuanwu*, the black turtle, represented the cosmos. The turtle's shell, with its round top and a flat bottom, resembled the Chinese understanding of a domed heaven and flat earth. See Allan 1991: 104. Similarly, the eight heavenly winds that blow from the cardinal directions stand for the round heaven and the four quadrates for the earth. In similar encyclopaedias published during the Ming, the third line of the rhyme reads *luxie sizheng* 六斜四正, in which the Six Diagonals also stand for heaven, as a reference to the six pairs of earthly branches, which would be ordered in a circle and be connected through diagonals going across the circle. The eight directions or winds are usually referred to as *bafang* 八方 and *bafeng* 八風, but it is not entirely clear why the character *fa* 髮 is used here. *Fa* most likely carries the meaning of "root" (*gen* 根) here, as reference to the eight basic trigrams of the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing*). These were ordered in a circle on the eight directions to determine the annual cycle determined by the changing winds.

9 Children would be given texts in rhymes that could be easily memorised when being taught to read. When learning to write calligraphy in new scripts, such as grass or seal script, students could rely on texts they already knew by heart in the new script to easily recognise characters they might otherwise not have been able to identify. Memorising consecutive passages or the consecutive summarising of the contents of a passage in writing were two other techniques used by scholars. See Wang 1990: 489; Chen Hu 陳鵠 (n. d.), *The elder's continued record of things heard* (*Qijiu xuwen* 耆舊續聞) first entry in *juan* 1 on Su Dongpo (1037–1101).

10 In other fields, such as carpentry, rhymes that relied on the explanation of proportions to obtain precise shapes were also used. For example, one rhyme was used to create a perfectly round column. Because it relied only on proportions, the rule could be adapted to any size of column, see Ruitenbeek 1996: 65.

11 寫真秘訣. This treatise was published in 1818 by Ding Yicheng as the fourth part of the *Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting* (*Jieziyuan hua chuan (si ji)* 芥子園畫傳：四集), based on a text written by Ding Gao during the 18th century entitled *Insights on the Transmission of True Likeness* (*Chunzhen xinling* 傳真心領).

12 落筆絲毫不得移，對真曲直總相宜，細開細省官星位，五部三停要預知. This is a free translation that aims to maintain the rhymes of the original. For a more literal translation, refer to the full translation of the treatise in this catalogue. Ding, *Secret Formula for Painting Portraits* (*Xiezhen mijue*), 3a.

13 In the *Collected Excerpts of the Tea-Fragrance Study* (*Chaxiangshi congchao* 茶香室叢鈔), with a preface dated to 1883, Yu Yue (1821–1907) states that painters

Uploaded with permission of the Museum für Asiatische Kunst

of his time start a portrait with the nose, and he finds the Ding's approach unusual.

14 In the final section of the treatise, Ding Yicheng asks his father questions about shading. Ding Gao explains to his son that while the Chinese way of shading might seem similar to the Western shading technique, it is different in its nature. See the last section of the translation in this volume.

15 傳神秘要.

16 One considers its width, which is the horizontal measure between the two nose wings.

17 The nose, a vertical measure, is defined by the point below the tip of the nose and the upper borders of the lines for the nostrils. The passage reads: 先論之以鼻準作十分算，定鼻之大小. . . 再以鼻作十分算，定鼻準之寬狹. See *Secret Essentials for Transmitting the Spirit* (*Chuanshen miyao* 傳神秘要). In Jiang 1786: *juan* 1, 8b–9a.

18 See ibid.: *juan* 1, 9b.

19 Jiang Ji, *New Method of the Nine Palaces* (*Jiugong xinshi* 九宮新式), 4b. In Jiang 1794: *juan* 1.

20 Jiang Ji, *Continued Discussion on Calligraphy* (*Xu shufa lun* 續書法論), 6b. In Jiang 1794: *juan* 1.

21 Although this section on the Nine Palaces, along with the Mnemonic Formula of the Ancients, is appended to Wang Yi's treatise in modern publications, it is not recorded in the *Records Compiled after Retiring from Farming*, but does appear in Jiang Ji's text in the volume of collected works by the Jiang family published by his son, Jiang He, in 1794. The attribution to Wang Yi is incorrect.

22 See section on *jiugong* in *Essential Formula of the Hanlin* (*Hanlin yaojue* 翰林要訣). In Feng 1707: *juan* 1, 14a.

23 芥舟學畫編.

24 See Shen [1789]: *juan* 3, 16b–17a.

25 Records from as early as the 7th century suggest that, in physiognomy, Chinese characters were employed to describe the shape of the face at an early stage. See Yang 2005: 96–97. The earliest extant record explaining this practice for portraiture is Weng Ang's *Secret Essentials of Portraiture*. However, Weng only mentions five characters: *jia* 甲, *you* 由, *shen* 申, *tian* 田 and *mu* 目. *Bai* 白, *yong* 用 and *si* 四 are not mentioned. See Weng and Hu 1603: 2a–b.

26 法外求法，乃為用法之神。變中更變，方是求變之道. See Shen [1789]: *juan* 3, 26b–27a.

27 Guo Xi (after 1000– ca 1090) and Han Zhuo (ca 1095– ca 1125), for example, praise the proper use of different strokes, textures and ink tones. See Bush 2012: 179 and 184. Guo Xi also advocates variations that follow the principles of nature when composing a landscape. The *Formula for Landscape Painting* (*Shanshui jue* 山水訣), attributed to Li Cheng (919–967), also warns against repetition and uniformity in a composition. See Bush 2012: 180–81 and 176–177.

28 On ink gradations, see the section on "Distinctions" (*fenbie*) in Shen [1789]: *juan* 3, 17a–18a.

29 The preface was written by the official Lu Yayu (1690–1768). The passages read: "破除俗師相傳之陋." "而仁人孝子亦不自覺而油然生其尊祖敬宗之心. " In Li 1969: *juan* 2, 13b.

30 See Zhang 2017, chapters 1–3.

31 Jiang Ji's treatise is also included in the *Complete Books of the Four Treasuries* (*Siku quanshu* 四庫全書). Its inclusion is justified by the compilers' claim that it transmits traditional knowledge on portraiture by complementing Wang Yi's text, and should therefore not be disregarded. Yu 1989(2): 869–870.

32 Besides consulting digital sources, the following painting indexes were consulted: Zhongguo gudai shuhua jianding zu 1986–2001; Suzuki 1982.

33 During the early Qing, the long-standing division between scholar painters and craftsmen disintegrated. Many social factors led scholars to take up painting as a profession, and thus the status of the professional painter began to be negotiated. For example, Gong Xian (1618–1689), a scholar who wanted to remain loyal to the fallen Ming dynasty, would claim that "scholars" is not a valid category to describe painters. See Silbergeld 1981: 405.

34 For a brief description of how merit was accumulated and moral performance perfected by using morality books, see Lee 2000: 354–355. For examples of how performing good deeds and practices of evaluating merit unfolded during the Ming dynasty, see Smith 2009.

35 During the Qing dynasty traditional medical knowledge was also given a new format to become more accessible and entertaining for common readers. Information from *materia medica* would be rewritten into novels, using narrative structure and family ties in the novel as mnemonic aids. See Schonebaum 2016: 95–96.