



"Bamboo and Rock Scroll" (ink brush on paper, 40.4 x 26.5 cm), painted by Wu Li during his sojourn in Macao. Tianjin Municipal Art Museum collection.



# The Life and Works of Wu Yushan

Zhang Wenqin\*

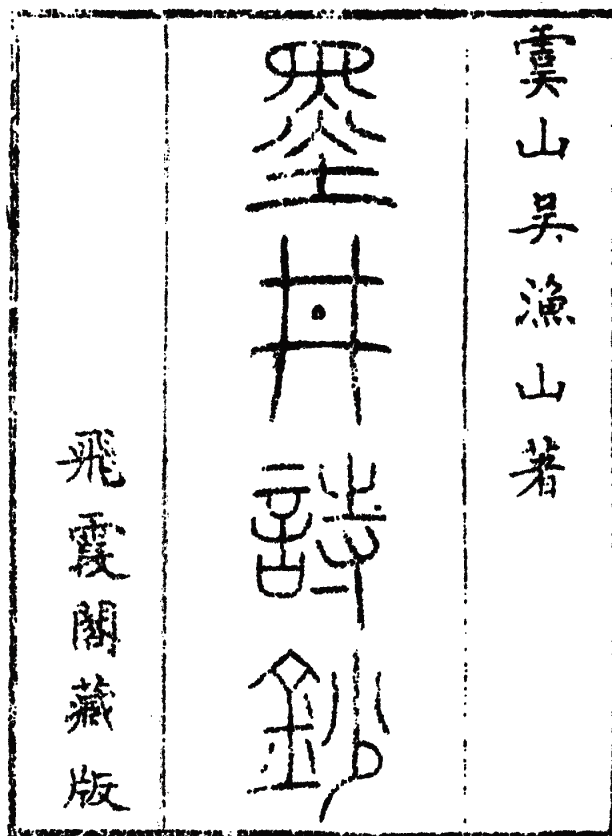


## THE LIFE OF WU YUSHAN

Wu Yushan 吴渔山 (1632-1718), a prominent cultural figure during the transition from the Ming 明 to Qing 清 dynasties, occupies an important position in Chinese cultural history and the history of cultural exchange between China and the western world.

Wu Na 吴讷 traces the family line of Wu Yushan in the "Preface to the Wu Family Tree" [*Wu Shi Pu Tu Xu* 吴氏谱图序]: "Changshu 常熟, a county under the administration of Wucheng 吴城, is about 50 km from Suzhou 苏州, the prefectural seat. According to my ancestors, the Wu clan had always lived there until Yuan 元 troops invaded China and ravaged the county. Members of the clan then scattered to escape the war, and records of the family tree were lost as a result. Cheng-an 诚庵, my great-grandfather, finding the hardships too difficult to sustain, moved from the east end of the county seat to settle by Esq. Yan's homestead near Literature Bridge [文学桥 Wenxue qiao] in Ziyou Lane 子遊巷, and has lived there ever since. Nothing earlier, however, can be traced."<sup>1</sup> Literature Bridge is also known as Yan Yan Bridge, after Esq. Yan whose full name was Yan Yan 言偃; Ziyou 子遊 was his courtesy name. Esq. Yan's homestead was therefore called Ziyou's homestead. A Confucian scholar of considerable prestige, Esq. Yan promoted education and culture in the Suzhou area and was widely recognized for his literary achievements.

Wu Na, who took Min-de 敏德 as his courtesy name, could read the *Five Classics* [*Wu Jing* 五经] at the age of seven. As he grew older, he became more and more erudite. During the reign of Emperor Yongle 永乐 he was recommended to Nanjing 南京, where he was highly appreciated by the Crown Prince, Zhu



The front cover of *Selected Poems by Mo Jing*, published by Lu Daohuai in 1719.

Gaochi 朱高炽. During the reign of Emperor Hongxi 洪熙, he was appointed Investigating Censor, and supervised the provinces of Jiangsu 江苏, Zhejiang 浙江, and Guizhou 贵州, where he enjoyed great prestige and popularity. During the reign of Emperor Xuande 宣德, he was promoted to Assistant Censor-in-Chief in Nanjing before taking full charge of the daily affairs of the Censorate in the capacity of Deputy Censor-in-Chief. During his tenure of office, he always considered the overall situation before making any decision. In his old age,



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"Bamboo and Rock Scroll" (ink brush on paper, 95 x 33.6 cm), painted by Wu Li during his sojourn in Macao. Nanjing Museum collection.

he retired to his hometown. He is the author of *Additional Notations to a Variety of Books* [Qun Shu Bu Zhu 群书补注], *Stylistics of Essays* [Wen Zhang Bian Ti 文章辨体], *Highlights of the Si An* [Si An Wen Cui 思庵文粹], *A Comparative Study of Legal Cases* [Tang Yin Bi Shi 棠阴此事], *Xiang Xing Yao Lan* 详刑要览, and collections of poetry and prose. After he passed away at 82, he was given the posthumous title of Duke Wen-ke 御史文恪, and was worshipped alongside the sages in the Ziyu Temple. Wu Chun 吴淳, Na's grandson, who was also known as Houbo 厚伯, was an imperial scholar during the reign of Emperor Zhengtong 正统. He was promoted to the position of Censor and was authorized to supervise the state monopoly on salt production in the Huai-Yang 淮扬 area. Chun was famed for his competence and honesty as an official. Wu Tang 吴堂, Na's great-grandson, who took Zisheng 子升 as his courtesy name, was an imperial scholar during the years of Emperor Hongzhi 弘治, and was promoted from the position of county magistrate to that of Investigating Censor. During the early years of Emperor Zhengde 正德, he served as the Deputy President of the Supreme Court. He offended the Emperor and his entrusted official Jiang Bin 江彬 because Tang opposed the policy of frontier expansion. Demoted to serve as the Prefect of Heqing 鹤庆 in Yunnan province 云南, he was known for his benevolent administration.

Yushan, an eleventh-generation descendent of Wu Na, was born on August 1, 1632. His father Shijie 士杰 married Wang Ruren 王孺人, a young woman from his hometown, and had three sons. Yushan, the youngest of the three, was called Qili 虯历 in childhood before he changed his name to Li 历 and adopted the courtesy name "Yushan." He also took "Mojing Dao Ren" 墨井道人, or "the Ink-well Daoist," as his penname because near his home there was a well where Yan Yan used to wash his brushes. By the time Yushan was born, his family had already fallen into decline. His father, forced to transport grain to Hebei 河北 along the Grand Canal for the Ming Court, died there. At that time, Yushan was still in his infancy. Wang Ruren, widowed, brought up her three sons by herself instead of remarrying.

In 1644, after the Ming Dynasty was overthrown by Li Zicheng 李自成 and his peasant army, Manchu troops, taking advantage of Li's arrogance, moved





through the Shanhaiguan Pass and made Beijing 北京 their capital. The Qing conquerors, in the process of establishing their rule, implemented harsh policies such as land enclosure and hair-shaving, cruelly suppressed and persecuted the Han, and devastated Han economy and culture, causing unprecedented havoc. The drastic measures, however, met tenacious resistance from the Han 汉; the most valiant fighters were the people in the Jiangnan 江南 region, especially those in Yangzhou 扬州, Jiading 嘉定 and Jiangyin 江阴. In Changshu there was also an armed struggle against the Qing rulers led by Yan Shi 严斌.

Yushan's fatherless family was caught in the whirlwind of dynastic change. Qian Qianyi 钱谦益, Yushan's poetry teacher, wrote in his "Ode to Wang Ruren, a Mother of Integrity" [*Wu Jie Mu Wang Ru Ren Zan* 吴节母王孺人赞], "During the era when blood reddened the earth, she kept her integrity and loyalty to the Ming" (in *Mu Zhai You Xue Ji* 牧斋有学集, vol. 43). One can imagine the hardships she had to endure. Yushan cherished his mother's care and love all his life.

During the reigns of Emperors Shunzhi 顺治 and Kangxi 康熙, while the anti-Qing movement was still going strong in a number of places, there emerged a quite influential class, the Ming loyalists, who preserved their integrity, deepened their learning, and left behind many colourful cultural and artistic masterworks. Yushan, having been born into a celebrated family and experienced the anguish of losing his country in his youth, was filled with a deep love for his country and family. In his masterful poem "On My Sorrow" [*Xie You* 写忧], which has been read by generation after generation, he writes: "For the past ten years I have been drifting, my eyes not yet dry from weeping at the West Terrace. Desolate new houses stand everywhere, but who now looks after the old caps and robes? Poems remain at the riverside though the spring tide has ebbed, and geese fly north of the Great Wall though it is still frosted with snow. As the dust of war has not yet settled, who has the heart to take up the old fishing rod?" (in *On My Sorrow and Other Poems* [*Xie You Ji* 写忧集]), vol. 1. All other unreferenced quotations in this essay are from the same source).

Most of Yushan's mentors and friends in Jiangnan were Ming loyalists. Apart from his poetry teacher Qian Qianyi, Yushan also studied Confucianism with Chen Hu 陈瑚, painting with Wang Shimin 王时敏 and Wang Jian 王鉴, and



"Bamboo and Rock Scroll" (ink brush on paper, 117.2 x 41 cm), painted by Wu Li during his sojourn in Macao. Nanjing Museum collection.

吳漁山





## HISTÓRIA DE ARTE

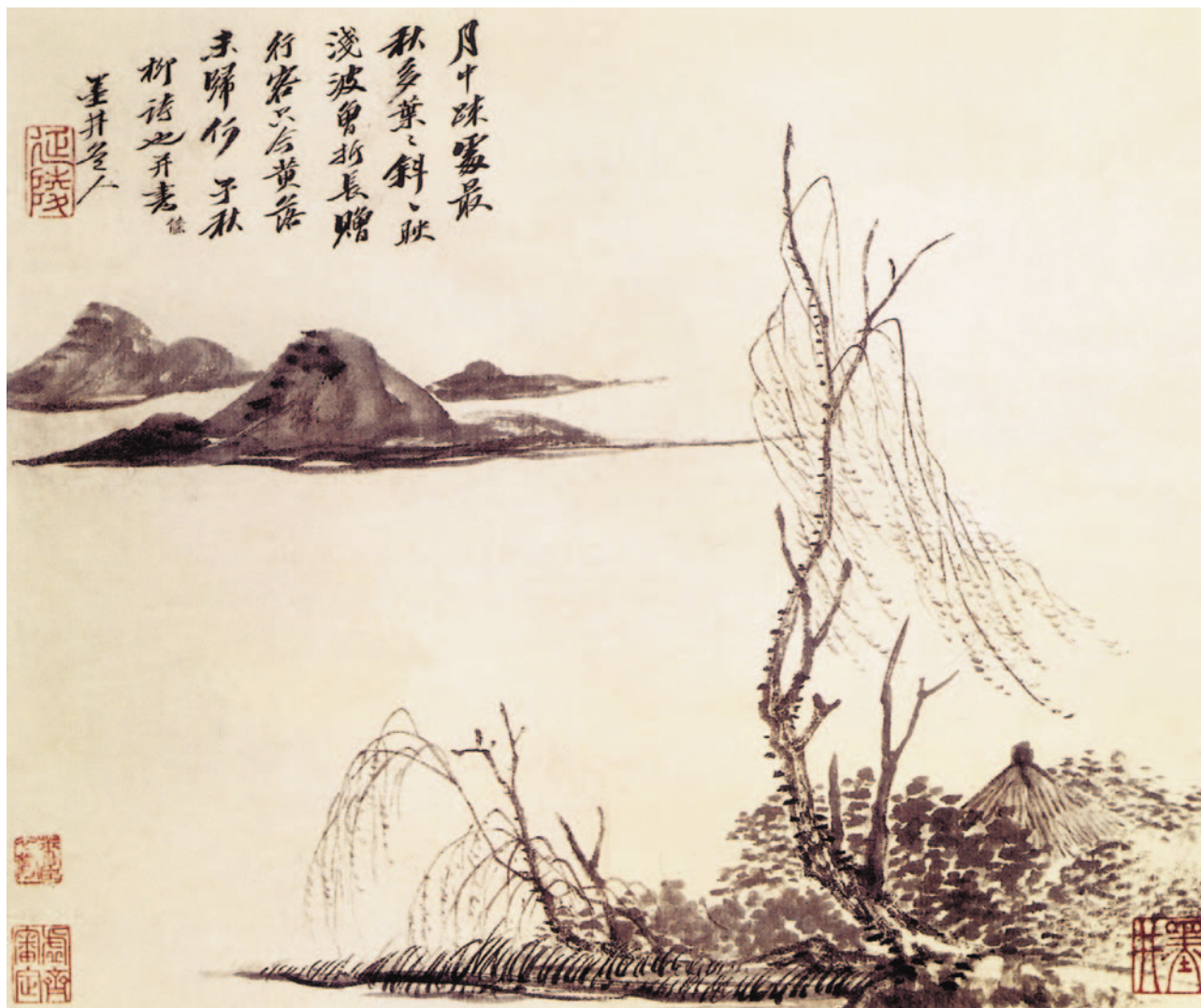


Chinese zither with Chen Min 陈岷. All four of these men were loyalists. It was under the influence of these elders that Yushan became a loyalist himself during the bloody years of the dynastic transition. He maintained this loyalist integrity all his life.

Through his teachers' guidance and his own hard work, Yushan came to acquire all the refinements of traditional Chinese culture. He excelled at calligraphy, painting, music, and poetry. Wang Shimin marvelled at his paintings, calling them "superb in skill, deep in thought, and beyond imagination."<sup>2</sup> Qian Qianyi praised his poems as "clear in thought, seasoned in style, detailed in description, like paintings."<sup>3</sup>

Since Yushan, a staunch Ming loyalist, vowed in his youth never to hold an official position, he could not enjoy the food subsidies the government provided to students, nor could he expect to ever earn a government salary. His family, which included his widowed mother and his wife and children, led a destitute life, often without enough clothes and food. To support his family, Yushan dedicated himself to painting. The poem inscribed on his painting "Crossing Baisha Lake in the Rain" [*Mao Yu Guo Bai Sha Hu* 冒雨过白沙湖] reads: "A cold day, it rains heavily as I hurry home on a boat, alone. The distant village on the lake in the east is shrouded in wet evening smoke."

"Mountains and Rivers in Imitation of the Old Masters" (no. 1 of 10, ink brush on paper, 23.2 x 28 cm), painted by Wu Li. Beijing Palace Museum collection.





My loved ones must be waiting for me by the wooden door.”<sup>4</sup> The poem, though written by Gao Qi 高启 in the early Ming Dynasty, can be regarded as an accurate description of Yushan’s early years as a struggling artist.

With the change of dynasty, most of the gentry took pride in the study and mastery of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. Many Ming loyalists, whether in Jiangnan, Southern Yunnan, or the Lingnan 岭南 region, became Buddhist monks or close friends of eminent monks. Quite a number of Yushan’s friends in Jiangnan were intimately involved with Buddhists and Taoists; for example, in his “Biography of Liu Rushi” [*Liu Rushi Bie Zhuan* 柳如是别传], Chen Yin-ke 陈寅恪 refers to Qian Qianyi as “the Poet of the Caodong Sect.” Wu Weiye 吴伟业 calls Wang Shimin “the old hermit of Xitian.”<sup>5</sup> Wang Jian used to wear a yellow cap and Taoist robe, and in his will even asked to be buried in a Taoist costume.<sup>6</sup> Chen Hu, himself a great Neo-Confucian who taught the classics, changed his faith during the dynastic transition. He often visited high monks, and his teachings took on a Buddhist flavour.

Yushan’s mother passed away in 1662, leaving her son bereaved. Shortly afterwards, Yushan’s wife died too. Feeling the impermanence of life, and disappointed with the world, Yushan was on the point of becoming a monk. In the following decade, he visited Buddhist temples and befriended monks. In the summer of 1664, he and Chen Hu stayed in the Xingfu Monastery 兴福寺 on Yushan Hill 虞山 after Yushan’s trip to Wuxing 吴兴. In 1665, when visiting Wuxing again he called with Chen Hu at a number of Buddhist sites in the vicinity, such as Tiansheng Temple 天圣寺, Daochang Hill 道场山, and White Bird Temple 白雀寺 on Bianshan Hill 弁山. On Yaofeng Hill 尧峰 outside Suzhou, where there are a number of temples and monasteries, we can still trace the footprints left by Yushan and his good friend Xu Zhijian 许之渐; and in the Nianxiao Studio 拈笑斋 at Jinming Temple 金明寺 in Xiushui 秀水, Zhejiang Province, we can still see the poems written by Yushan and Chen Fan 陈帆, a friend from his hometown, when they called on Monk Denggong 灯公. However, Yushan’s best cleric friend during this period was Morong 默容, at Xingfu Temple 兴福庵 in Suzhou.

Xingfu Temple, also known as Jifu Temple 集福庵 in older days, is situated in the Jiayufang 嘉鱼坊 area



The front cover of *Mo Jing Collection*, published by Li Duo in 1909.

in the northwest corner of the city of Suzhou. First built during the reign of Emperor Jiading 嘉定 in the Southern Song Dynasty, it was reconstructed during the reign of Emperor Xuande in the Ming Dynasty. Later it became the villa of one Esquire Ye 叶氏. In 1655, a monk called Zhengyan 证研 bought the property and restored it to a temple. Morong, the first disciple of Zhengyan, was a close friend of Yushan, Xu Zhijian and Chen Min. He studied painting with Yushan and later tried his hand at poetry. Whenever Yushan visited Suzhou, he would call at the temple; this is why Morong acquired so many of Yushan’s paintings. In 1666, Yushan painted for Morong ten pieces entitled “Mountains and Rivers in Imitation of the Old Masters” [*Fang Gu Shan Shui Ce* 仿古山水册]. In the following year, Yushan painted “The Snow Mountain” [*Xue Shan Tu* 雪山图], on which Wang Shimin inscribed, “The Snow Mountain, simple and





aloof, reflects the essence of Wang Wei 王维 and well matches the character of Morong.”<sup>7</sup>

While serving as censor in the early years of Emperor Kangxi, Xu Zhijian wrote the preface to “An Introduction to Catholicism” [*Tian Xue Zhuan Gai* 天学传概] by Li Zubai 李祖白, and was implicated in the case that Yang Guangxian 杨光先 brought against Johannes Adam Schall von Bell. As a result, he was removed from office. In 1670, as Adam Schall’s case was righted, Zhijian was ordered by the Emperor back to the capital. He took Yushan along. In 1671, Morong died of exhaustion as he tried to help Zhengyan build the Tripitaka Pavilion in Xingfu temple, despite his poor health. On their way back from the capital, Yushan and Zhijian learned the sad news, which sank Yushan into deep sorrow. In 1674, Yushan painted “In Memory of Xingfu Temple” [*Xing Fu An Gan Jiu Tu* 兴福庵感旧图], and in the poem inscribed on it, he expressed his deep sadness on losing his friend Morong. In the following year, Yushan inscribed “Mountains and Rivers in Imitation of the Old Masters” for Shengyu 圣予, Morong’s student, and painted “Pines and Gullies” [*Jian He Cang Song Tu* 涧壑苍松图] as a gift for the 60<sup>th</sup> birthday of Zhengyan, Morong’s teacher. From Zhengyan, Morong and Shengyu, we can see that Yushan made three generations of cleric friends at Xingfu Temple. In a poem, Yushan describes his relationship with the monks this way: “I’ve spent half of my three vagabond years in temples.”<sup>8</sup>

In 1676, Yushan wrote, in the postscript to his painting “Mist-shrouded Mountains after Rain” [*Yu San Yan Luan Tu* 雨散烟峦图], “I have achieved nothing. Whenever I start painting, the thought of becoming a hermit comes to my mind. But if I cannot support my family through painting, where can I get the money to buy a hill and build a thatched hut there like Huang Gongwang 黄公望?” (see *Postscripts to Paintings by Mo Jing* [*Mo Jing Hua Ba* 墨井画跋], op. 17, vol. 5). The idea of living as a recluse can be traced back to his early years. During the decade of contact with monks, Yushan called himself “the Peach Stream Hermit” [*Taoxi Jushi* 桃溪居士] and this alias appears frequently on his paintings. Had Morong not died so early, Yushan might have become a real monk instead of remaining as a lay Buddhist. Like other Ming loyalists who sought escape in Buddhism, he would have spent his life accompanied by morning

chimes and evening drums, reading Buddhist sutras in the dim light, rather than turning to the newly imported Catholicism for spiritual consolation.

When Matteo Ricci tried to carry out his mission in Shaozhou 韶州, a Jiangnan scholar by the name of Qu Taisu 瞿太素, also called Rukui 汝夔, persuaded him to give up his Catholic cap and robe for a Confucian one, so that Catholicism could be better adapted to the cultural environment in China. In 1605, baptized by Joannes de Rocha, Taisu became the first Catholic brother in Changshu. In 1623, Taisu’s son Shigu 式谷, whose religious name was Matthew, invited Giulio Aleni to Changshu. This event marks the beginning of missionary work in the county. Shigu’s cousin Shisi 式耜 was also baptized by Aleni. Judging from the facts that the Qu’s were a prominent family in Changshu, that Ziyou’s Homestead, adjacent to Yushan’s ancestral home, had served as a Catholic church since the late Ming Dynasty, and that Yushan was baptized as a child, we can presume that Yushan’s family had been converted to Catholicism in the late Ming, and may have been influenced by the Qu family.

Though Yushan was baptised as a child, as a young man he preferred the company of Buddhist monks. It was only in his 40s that he came to pay attention to Catholicism. In 1672, He Shizhen 何世贞 of Yushan Hill wrote a book entitled *In Defence of Catholicism* [*Chong Zheng Bi Bian* 崇正必辩]; on the title page of the second volume are inscribed these words: “read by Wu Yushan and Tang Tianshi 唐天石.” This shows that Yushan was in contact with Catholics by that time. *In Defence of Catholicism* was written in response to the attack against Catholicism mounted by Yang Guangxian. In the preface to the book, Mr. He wrote: “Yang Guangxian argues, in *Warding Off Heresy* [*Bie Xie Lun* 辟邪论], that with Buddha at heart, one cannot take God anymore.”<sup>9</sup> According to Mr. He, Catholicism was the orthodox doctrine whereas Buddhism is not. Yushan must have been influenced by this argument.

Yushan’s early contact with western missionaries can be traced in his “Ode to the Late Father Zhou” [*Song Xian Shi Zhou Duo* 颂先师周铎], in which he writes: “Five decades of hard work has brought enlightenment to the Orient, and seven years of kindness has comforted my soul” (in *São Paulo and Other Poems* [*San Ba Ji* 三巴集], vol. 2). Chen Yuan 陈垣

墨井画跋







explains these lines this way: "This missionary must have been in China for fifty years and died at the age of seventy. He must have landed in China during the years of Emperor Chongzhen or Shunzhi... [and] Yushan must have studied with him for seven years."<sup>10</sup> We can presume that Yushan first met Father Zhou in 1674, because he left for Macao in 1680. In other words, Father Zhou was Yushan's first Catholic mentor.

In August, 1676, Yushan presented his painting "Spring on the Lake" [*Hu Tian Chun Se Tu* 湖天春色图] to Chouhan 嵇函 of Taicang 太仓. In the inscription he writes: "As the esteemed Chouhan leads a secluded life by the Lou River 娄水, I've had no opportunity to see him even though I've cherished such a wish for a long time. My dream finally came true when I called at his home with Rougemont in spring."<sup>11</sup> Rougemont's full name, according to "The Chronicles of Wu Yushan" [*Wu Yu Shan Xian Sheng Nian Pu* 吴渔山先生年谱], compiled by Chen Yuan, was Francisco de Rougemont; he was a Belgian Jesuit. He came to China with his compatriot Philippe Couplet in 1659 and was engaged in missionary work in Jiangnan for a long time. It was Rougemont who greatly promoted the spread of Catholicism in Changshu in the early Qing period. Yushan, acting as his secular assistant, went to Taicang with Rougemont to visit church members. In September of the same year Rougemont died of illness in Taicang, and was buried in the Catholic graveyard at the northern foot of Yushan Hill.

After the death of Rougemont, Couplet became Yushan's Catholic mentor. For a long time, Couplet carried out missionary work in Jiangnan, Jiangxi 江西, Fujian 福建, Huguang 湖广 and Zhejiang. In

1680, Couplet, who had been appointed vice provincial exchequer of the Society of Jesus in China, was dispatched to Rome to recruit more missionaries and to seek permission to conduct masses in Chinese. He took five Chinese men along, including Yushan, whose religious name was Simão Xavier da Cunha, with the purpose of convincing the Vatican that these men were competent to serve as priests.

Couplet and his party arrived at Macao sometime between December 1680 and January 1681.<sup>12</sup> But Giandomenico Gabiani, the new Vice-Provincial Governor of the Society of Jesus in China, only allowed the two youngest of the five Chinese to proceed to Rome. Yushan was not lucky enough to be chosen. In November 1681, Couplet boarded a Dutch ship near Macao for Europe with Shen Fuzong 沈福宗 and another young Chinese (both of whom spoke Latin), leaving Yushan behind at the São Paulo College.

At the time, Macao was the centre of Catholicism in the Far East. São Paulo College, attached to the Church of the Society of Jesus in Macao, was a seminary established in 1594, and

dedicated to the training of missionaries who were to go to China, Japan, Vietnam and Korea. According to Lu Xiyan, who went to Macao with Couplet and Yushan, "Scholars in robes come and go through the Catholic Church. They read and discuss the Holy Book, study natural sciences, philosophy, theology, and other basics such as Latin and Chinese."<sup>13</sup>

When Yushan began to study theology, he was already about fifty. He ate and slept on the first floor of the São Paulo Church, and his classmates were

桃溪詩稿序  
近來畫家不復知屋木人物里中漁山吳子摹劉  
松年四皓圖輟以贈余蓋其朽約皴染踰兩月而  
後就余觀郭恕先畫屋木樓觀多與王士元對手  
往往假士元寫人物于其中漁山有志於古命意  
造景以二李恕先輩為師此所以覓絕於今人也  
漁山不獨善畫其於詩尤工思清格老命筆造微  
蓋亦以其畫為之非欲以塗朱抹粉爭妍於時世

The preface to *Selected Poems by Mo Jing*,  
published by Lu Daohuai in 1719.

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"Mountains and Rivers in Imitation of the Old Masters" (no. 3 of 10, ink brush on paper, 23.2 x 28 cm), painted by Wu Li. Beijing Palace Museum collection.

mostly in their teens. Compared with those youngsters, Yushan had more difficulties in his study. The Bible, most of the teaching materials used by the seminary, and the Masses said in the church, were all in Latin. Despite his age, Yushan dedicated himself to the study of Latin, theology and classical western culture, which were completely different from anything he had studied in traditional Chinese culture. He recorded his difficulties in *Postscripts to Paintings by Mo Jing* (op. 41): "In my twenty-plus years of painting, I have always striven to improve myself. But like a boat rowing against the rapids, I've not made any advance... The study of theology is more difficult than learning to paint."

To make progress in his study of theology, Yushan worked day and night. After classes in the evening, he conversed with foreign priests and brothers under the lamplight to improve his Latin. "Under the dim light, we converse in our native languages. When we cannot make sense of each other, we try to communicate in writing. I write characters and he writes words, but it is even more confusing as he has to read vertically and I horizontally."<sup>14</sup> Yushan often read until midnight, and even vowed to burn his beloved brushes, break his ink-slab, and give up painting and poetry writing. Through his study of theology at São Paulo Church in Macao, Yushan was

## ART HISTORY



completely converted from Confucianism to Catholicism. He became a staunch believer and a brother of the Society of Jesus in 1682, a decisive step and turning point in his life.

In 1683, after returning from Macao to Jiangnan, Yushan started his career as a Catholic missionary, shuttling between Suzhou, Changshu, Nanjing and Shanghai, and served as a father of the Catholic Church in Suzhou for some time. Gregorio Lopez (Luo Wenzao 罗文藻), who in 1685 became the first Chinese to be ordained as a Bishop, became his most respected teacher. In 1688 in Nanjing, Bishop Lopez officially ordained as priests Yushan, Wan Qiyuan 万其渊 and Liu Yunde 刘蕴德, the first time a Chinese bishop had ever ordained Chinese priests.

Yushan had conducted missionary work in Shanghai for about ten years before he was ordained. Despite his advanced age and poor health, he persisted in the study of Latin and theology. In 1690, when he was 59, he wrote a response to some poems by Messrs. Shen 沈 and Fan 范, two gentlemen from Suzhou: "I have spent long years studying Latin scripts without much success. The manuals, old and new, look like Greek to me;" and "as it takes time to cultivate oneself, I shut myself in my study like a prisoner in his cell... because I wish to guide my flock through Catholicism."<sup>15</sup> These words reflect his determination to master of Latin so that he could enlighten laymen with the word of God. By that time, Yushan no longer had any contact with Buddhist monks. When he learned that Tang Bin 汤斌, the Governor of Jiangning 江宁, had ordered the destruction of some temples that had been engaged in some evil-doing, he was very gratified: "Glad to see the government destroy these temples, and no more monks knocking at my door."<sup>16</sup>

While doing religious work in Shanghai, Yushan stayed in the old Catholic Church (the *Jing Yi Tang* 敬一堂) founded by Francesco Brancati, an Italian missionary, in the late Chongzhen period, where there were already four priests. After Yang Guangxian instigated the persecution of Catholic missionaries, members of this Church had been left without any priest for a number of years. Seeing some of the members losing their faith, Yushan was very sad. In his poem "Shepherd" [*Mu Yang Ci* 牧羊词], he laments, "How many fat sheep are there left in the flock? I see so many lean ones! The grass is dying out and the shepherd has arrived too late to look after

them." But instead of losing heart, he writes, "Knowing which sheep under my care are sick, I guide them by singing tirelessly even though I must be on constant guard against the wolves. I wish I could tend my flock forever, even if I have to go to the southeast in the morning and northwest in the evening" (see *Three Remainders* [*San Yu Ji* 三余集]). As most of the church's members lived in Pudong 浦东, Yushan often crossed the Huangpu River 黄浦江 to attend to their needs; shuttling between Pudong and Puxi 浦西 day and night, he seemed to forget his tiredness and old age.

From 1695 to 1708, Yushan stayed at the East Church in Jiading, as its abbot. This church, built by Sun Yuanhua 孙元化, a student of Xu Guangqi 徐光启 during the reign of Emperor Tianqi 天启, housed such western missionaries as Álvaro Semedo and Lazzaro Cattaneo and later served as Yushan's missionary base in Jiading.

By the time Yushan came to Jiading, the church was rundown, and whole sections of it were occupied its neighbours. In 1695, Yushan wrote *The Dilapidated Church* [*Po Tang Yin* 破堂吟]: "There are cracks in the leaning walls. The yard is piled with broken tiles like fallen leaves and trees are weighed down by heavy vines and other plants. As moss grows along the shadowed path, few visitors come here for enlightenment."<sup>17</sup> The east section of the church, where Yushan made his home, was extremely hot, as the setting sun blazed directly upon it. But Yushan, having given up worldly concerns, bore these hardships with equanimity. "Unconcerned by these difficulties, Yushan made the best use he could of the facility and tended his flock, rain or shine."<sup>18</sup>

Influenced by Rougemont, Yushan cherished a deep respect for St. Francisco Xavier, taking Simão Xavier as his religious name. Born into Spanish nobility, Francisco Xavier became one of the earliest followers of Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus, while studying in Paris in 1534. In 1540, he was dispatched by King João III of Portugal as the envoy of Pope Paul III, and did missionary work successively in India, Malacca and Japan. In 1551 and 1552, Xavier landed twice at Sanchoan Island 上川岛 in Guangdong 广东, but was unable to obtain permission to go to the mainland; finally, in 1552, he died of illness on the island. In his poem "St. Francisco Xavier" [*Sheng Fang Ji Ge Sha Wu Lue* 圣方济各·沙勿略], Yushan







墨井道人



eulogizes, “Xavier, a specially chosen pillar of Catholicism, followed the word of God and experienced untold hardships... He was not only a pillar of the Church, but also a kind Father of Asia.”<sup>19</sup> Yushan, following Xavier’s example for decades, lived a very simple life. In 1696, at a ceremony celebrating the founding of the Franciscan Order in Jiading, Yushan admonished the brothers and sisters in his flock to learn from Xavier, the paragon of missionaries, who had sailed such a long distance to evangelize the Orient.<sup>20</sup>

In 1701, celebrating his seventieth birthday in Jiading, Yushan composed four poems to express his feelings. In these poems, he not only records his difficulties in religious study, his humble and poor priesthood, and his pride in transcending this mortal world, but also a sense of nostalgia for his hometown, children and grandchildren. His third poem, for example, reads, “If my two sons could serve God as I wish, Catholicism could be carried on in my family;”

and in the fourth he says, “Having lost most of my teeth, I have difficulty chewing sugarcane; but I know its taste already” (see “Catholic Poems” in *São Paulo and Other Poems*). After thirty years of religious study, cultivation, and preaching, Yushan finally completed his great shift from Confucianism to Catholicism.

Around 1709, Yushan returned to Shanghai to spend the remainder of his life. In 1710, on his painting “Rain in the Country” [*Nong Cun Xi Yu Tu* 农村喜雨图] he inscribed a poem and a postscript, in which he said: “Though an old man, I’m still in the service of God. The good rain in the country is surely a favour and gift from the Creator who remembers his flocks” (see *Postscripts to Paintings by Mo Jing*, op. 37). Judging from this invocation of the Creator, we can conclude that in the latter part of his life, Yushan was still dedicated to the service of God, and used his poems, paintings, and postscripts as tools to spread the Word.

“Early Summer in the Country—in Imitation of Shi Danian” 赵大年 (colour on paper, 18.7 x 28 cm), painted by Wu Li around age 40. Beijing Palace Museum collection.





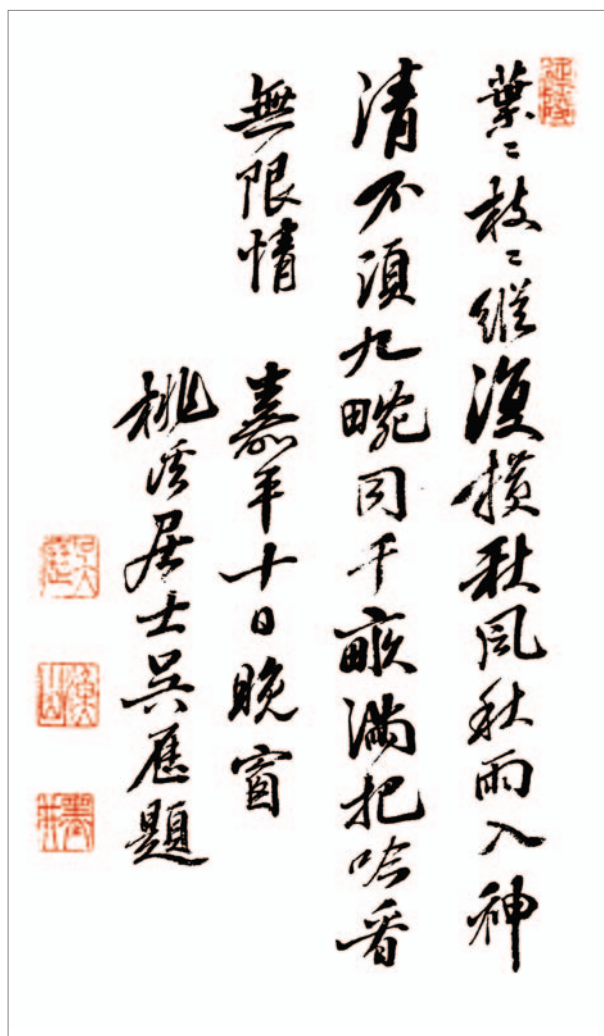
Around 1712, Yushan wrote a letter to Wang Shigu 王石谷, a man of the same town, same age, same church, and who had studied under the same painting teacher as Yushan. But Shigu, fond of worldly pursuits, did not have much faith in God even in his old age. Yushan, as a friend and priest, admonished Shigu to examine himself, redeem his sins, take communion, and accept God's grace so that he could enter heaven as a devout believer. Yushan reminded him of the importance of this admonition and asked him "not to take his advice as nagging" (see *Addenda to Painting Postscripts*). Yushan's advice apparently worked: Shigu eventually became a devout believer.

On February 24, 1718, Yushan passed away in Shanghai at the age of 87. He was buried in the Catholic graveyard outside the South Gate, with a tombstone erected by Manuel Mendes, a foreign missionary, on which is inscribed, "The tomb of Mr. Wu Yushan, Catholic priest."

#### YUSHAN'S WORKS AND THEIR BASIC CONTENT

Regarding Yushan's early works, Chen Yuan says, in his *Origins of the Mo Jing Collection* [*Mo Jing Ji Yuan Liu Kao* 墨井集源流考], that the poems that Yushan composed before the age of thirty are collected in *The Peach Stream Collection* [*Taoxi Ji* 桃溪集]. In 1660, Qian Qianyi wrote his "Preface to the Peach Stream Poems," [*Taoxi Shigao Xu* 桃溪诗稿序] and in 1668 Tang Yuzhao 唐宇昭 also authored a preface for *The Peach Stream Collection*. In 1664 and 1665, when Yushan visited Wuxing with Chen Hu, the two friends composed many poems for each other on the road. Chen Hu collected some of Yushan's poems into a volume entitled *Travels* [*Cong You Ji* 从遊集], and wrote a preface for it. After his mother passed away in 1662, Yushan visited Wuxing frequently and wrote *On My Sorrow and Other Poems*, which was prefaced by Yu Huai 余怀. *The Peach Stream Collection*, *On My Sorrow and Other Poems*, and *Travels* have since been combined into *The Collected Poems of Mo Jing* [*Mo Jing Cao Tang Shi* 墨井草堂诗] with a preface by Chen Yuqi 陈玉璫.<sup>21</sup>

According to Jiang Guangxi 蒋光熙 in the second volume of his *Selected Works of Donghu* [*Dong Hu Cong Ji* 东湖丛记], during the reign of Emperor Daoguang 道光, Grand Scribe Sun Yuanxiang 孙原湘



A poem by Wu Yushan on a painting.

acquired two volumes of Yushan's manuscripts, namely *The Peach Stream Collection* and *Travels*, prefaced by Tang Yuzhao. But today no trace survives of these two volumes. Only *On My Sorrow and Other Poems* is available in scribed copy at the Nankai University Library in Tianjin 天津. With the help of my friend Prof. Li Qingxin 李庆新, I had the opportunity to read the whole manuscript. The poems in the manuscript are almost identical to those printed in the two-volume *Selected Poems by Mo Jing* [*Mo Jing Shi Chao* 墨井诗钞] by Lu Daohuai 陆道淮. Only the titles of a few poems, and the preface written by Yu Huai, are slightly different in the Lu Daohuai edition. According to Chen Yuan, in his *Chronicles of Wu Yushan* (vol. 1), Yu Huai wrote this preface in





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1665. But in the original preface to *On My Sorrow and Other Poems*, we found the sentence, “Wu Yushan is a Catholic brother.” And quite a few of the poems are composed after 1665, the latest ones having been written when Yushan was engaged in religious work in Jiading. Yu Huai, who died in 1695, still had the chance to read them. So this preface must have been written sometime before 1695. Thus the original collection, which included poems written by Yushan from his early to late years, was probably made during Yushan’s time in Jiading. *On My Sorrow and Other Poems* takes its title from the first poem in the collection. And the “sorrow” in this title refers not to Yushan’s sorrow over the death of his mother, but to that he felt at the loss of his country—a state of mind quite fitting to the ardent loyalist that Yushan was. At the end of *Selected Poems by Mo Jing*, there is a postscript written by Lu Daohuai, who states, “the two volumes of *Selected Poems by Mo Jing* and the one volume of *Postscripts to Paintings* were given to me by my teacher Yushan in Shanghai.” In other words, the poems in *On My Sorrow and Other Poems* (also known as *Selected Poems by Mo Jing*) were chosen by Yushan himself in his old age, and Lu Daohuai simply had them published. Another edition of *Selected Poems by Mo Jing* (in two volumes), printed by Gu Xiang 顾湘 of Changshu as part of the “Little Rock Villa” Series [*Xiao Shi Shan Fang Cong Shu* 小石山房丛书] during the reign of Emperor Daoguang, was based on Lu’s edition, while *Selected Poems by Mo Jing*, the second volume of *Mo Jing Collection*, printed in 1909 by Li Duo 李杜, was based on Gu’s edition.

During Yushan’s sojourn in Macao, he wrote many poems, which are now collected in *São Paulo and Other Poems*, prefaced by Song Shiyin 宋实颖 and You Tong 尤侗. The thirty miscellaneous poems composed in Macao that are included in the first part of the book, and the eighty-two Catholic poems that comprise the second part, must also have been selected by Yushan himself. Chen Xun 陈薰 includes *São Paulo and Other Poems* and “Macao” by Lu Xiyan as appendices in his *Key to the World of Catholicism: An Introduction* [*Kai Tian Bao Yao: Xing Xue Xing Mi* 开天宝钥·性学醒迷], which was printed in 1705, meaning that by that time these two books were already available in their own right. In 1719, one year after Yushan’s death, Lu Daohuai asked Zhang Pengchong 张鹏翀 of Jiading to edit *Selected Poems by Mo Jing* before he had it printed.

Zhang put the thirty miscellaneous poems in different section and deleted all 82 Catholic poems because by that time the Qing court had already started moving towards a total ban on Catholicism in China. When Li Duo printed the *Mo Jing Collection* in 1909, he included eighty of the Catholic poems taken from the Xujiahui Library in Shanghai 上海 in the third volume of *São Paulo and Other Poems*, but deleted the two poems in which Yushan expressed tender thoughts for his dead wife. He did this out of the belief that Yushan, a man who converted to Catholicism in his old age, should not cherish such worldly feelings even though he had stayed away from women since his wife’s death. During the Republican era, Chen Yuan re-inserted these two poems into *São Paulo and Other Poems*, thus making it complete. However, when working on his compilation, Chen Yuan found that two of the poems entitled “Self Accounts” [*Zi Shu Yuan Yun Er Shou* 自述附原韵二首] had actually been written by a friend of Yushan rather than by the priest himself, so he removed them and put them instead into the collection entitled *Occasional Poems* [*Jiao You Shi Lu* 交遊诗录]. That is why in the current edition we still see only eighty Catholic poems. Li Duo’s edition of *São Paulo and Other Poems* includes four poems entitled “Seventy,” which were not written in Macao.

*Three Remainders* originates in a scribed copy kept at the Xujiahui Library. Chen Yuan says, in *The Origins of the Mo Jing Collection*, “I believe *Three Remainders* refers to the poems not collected in the three original volumes, namely, *Peach Stream*, *On My Sorrow and Other Poems*, and *Travels*. The title may not have been given by Yushan himself.”<sup>22</sup> The poems in *Three Remainders* were written by Yushan while he was doing religious work in Shanghai and Jiading, much later than the poems collected in *São Paulo and Other Poems*. According to the “Biography of Wang Su” in *The History of the Three Kingdoms* 三国志·魏·王肃传, the phrase “three remainders” or *san yu* refers to “remainders of the winter, remainders of the night, and remainders of the rain” The title indicates that Yushan composed the poems in the time that remained to him after he finished his religious work. In 1937, Father Xu Zongze had the poems published in volume 26 no. 8 of *Shengjiao Magazine* 圣教杂志. In 1967 in Hong Kong, Professor Fang Hao 方豪 discovered the *Poems by Mo Jing, the Ink-well Taoist* [*Mo Jing Dao Ren Shi Gao* 墨井道人诗稿], in Yushan’s





“Mountains and Rivers”(no. 7 of 12, ink brush on paper, 18 x 20 cm), painted by Wu Li in 1708, at age 77.  
Beijing Palace Museum collection.

own handwriting, which includes the eighty-nine poems collected in *Three Reminders* and the thirty miscellaneous poems that were composed in Macao and collected in *São Paulo and Other Poems*. After comparing them with other available editions, Professor Fang wrote two papers—“A Revised Edition of *Three Reminders* by Wu Yushan” [*Wu Yushan Xian Sheng San Yu Ji Jiao Shi* 吴渔山先生《三余集》校释] and “A Revised Edition of *São Paulo and Other Poems* by Wu Yushan” [*Wu Yushan Xian Sheng San Ba Ji Jiao Shi* 吴渔山先生三巴集《校释》]<sup>23</sup>—correcting some of

the mistakes detected in the earlier printed editions. The handwritten manuscripts were later acquired by the Hong Kong Museum of Art, and Tan Zhicheng 谭志成, its curator, included photocopies of the manuscripts in his book *The Six Masters of the Early Qing Dynasty and Wu Li* [*Qing Chu Liu Jia Yu Wu Li* 清初六家与吴历].<sup>24</sup>

As mentioned earlier, *Postscripts to Paintings by Mo Jing*, also selected by Yushan late in his life, is included by Lu Daohuai in *Selected Poems by Mo Jing* in a new section entitled “Sixty-Six Postscripts to





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Paintings" [*Hua Ba Liu Shi Liu Ze* 画跋六十六则]; but in point of fact there are sixty-nine postscripts in this section. During the reign of Emperor Daoguang, Yang Fuji 杨复吉 of Zhenze 震泽 included them in the *Sequel to the "Books of the Qing" Series* [*Zhao Dai Cong Shu Xu Ji* 昭代丛书续集]. Gu Xiang changed the title to *Postscripts by Mo Jing* when he included them in Volume 15 of the "Little Rock Villa" Series. Li Duo used Gu's version when he published *Mo Jing Collection* during the reign of Emperor Xuantong, with only slight differences in order. During the Republican era, Ma Keming 马克明 included them under the title of *Selected Essays on Painting* [*Lun Hua Jin Yao* 论画辑要], published by the Commercial Press.

In his essay "In Commemoration of Yushan's Ordination 250 Years Ago" [*Wu Yushan Jin Duo Er Bai Wu Shi Nian Ji Nian* 吴渔山晋铎二百五十年纪念], Chen Yuan states, "Besides *Three Remainders*, Yushan's poems and postscripts are also found in other painting collections. I myself have collected one volume of *Supplement to the Poems* [*Shi Chao Bu* 诗钞补] and another volume of *Supplement to the Painting Postscripts* [*Hua Ba Bu* 画跋补]." <sup>25</sup> It is a pity that these volumes have not been published. In the past half century, however, Yushan's paintings and calligraphy have been published both inside and outside China. Since the 1980s, the Cultural Relics Publishing House has published twenty-four volumes of *A Catalogue of Ancient Chinese Calligraphy and Paintings* [*Zhongguo Gu Dai Shu Hua Tu Mu* 中国古代书画图目], which include most of Yushan's paintings and many of his poems and postscripts on paintings. I have also managed to publish one volume of *Supplement to the Poems* [*Shi Chao Bu Yi* 诗钞补遗] and another volume of *Supplement to the Painting Postscripts* [*Hua Ba Bu Yi* 画跋补遗].

Yushan studied music with Chen Min in his youth, and was well-versed in the traditional music of China. After he became a brother of the Society of Jesus, he was exposed to Masses in Latin and to western sacred music. He realized that if Catholicism were to be spread in China, Masses would have to be conducted in Chinese, and hymns composed in traditional Chinese style. Yushan's *Catholic Sacred Music* [*Tian Yue Zheng Yin Pu* 天乐正音谱] is one such pioneering effort. The songs, based on both southern- and northern-style tunes popular in China, are divided into

nine categories and twenty chapters, in imitation of ancient Chinese songbooks. They include "Mass Music" [*Mi Sa Yin Yue* 弥撒音乐], "Ode to the Holy Mother" [*Cheng Song Sheng Mu Yue Zhang* 称颂圣母乐章], "Give Thanks to the Lord" [*Jing Xie Tian Zhu Jun Tian yue* 敬谢天主钧天乐], "On Sin" [*Yu Zui Yue Zhang* 喻罪乐章], "Lamenting This Secular World" [*Bei Si Shi Yue Zhang* 悲思世乐章], "Guard Against Pride" [*Jing Ao Yue Zhang* 警傲乐章], "Guard Against Lust" [*Jie Xin Yue Zhang* 戒心乐章], "In Praise of the Ten Commandments" [*Yong Gui Cheng* 咏规程], "Lamenting the Pride of Satan" [*Bei Mo Ao* 悲魔傲], and "Moses to His Followers" [*Mei se (Mo Xi) Yu Zhong Yue Zhang* 每瑟 (摩西) 谕众乐章]. Prof. Fang Hao borrowed these songs from the Xujiahui Library through Father Xu Zongze, and he and Zheng Qian 郑骞 edited them for publication in 1950. After a careful re-editing in 1958, they were included in *Works Selected by Fang Hao at Sixty* [*Fang Hao Liu Shi Zi Ding Gao* 方豪六十自定稿].

When Yushan was doing religious work in Jiading, Zhao Lun 赵仑, a church member, compiled *A Sequel to Services and Daily Speeches* [*Xu Kou Duo Ri Chao* 续口铎日抄]. The book was so named because at the end of the Ming Dynasty, Li Jiubiao 李九标 of Futang 福唐 had recorded Giulio Aleni's words in a volume called *Services and Daily Speeches* [*Kou Duo Ri Chao* 口铎日抄]. The records start from August 15, 1696, with the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and end on Dec. 25, 1697, with Nativity of the Lord. The book exists in manuscript form at the Xujiahui Library. When Li Duo printed *The Mo Jing Collection*, he changed the title to *Services and Daily Speeches by Mr. Wu Yushan*, and included it in the fifth volume.

In the records of the Shanghai Library, it states that there is a manuscript version of *Couplets for the Holy Days* [*Zhou Nian Zhan Li Bian Dui Lian Ju* 周年瞻礼匾对联句], authored by Yushan, appended to *São Paulo and Other Poems*. "A List of Holy Days" [*Zhan Li Dan* 瞻礼单], published in Zhao Lun's *A Sequel to Services and Daily Speeches*, won great attention from Yushan and the priest in Shanghai, and we suspect that Yushan's work must be similar to Zhao Lun's. Unfortunately, however, the author searched all of Shanghai for this manuscript, but was unable to find it. Professors Wang Xi 汪熙 and Chen Jiang 陈绛 of Fudan University have also asked their



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library for it, but were told that although the library originally had the manuscript, the librarians were unable to locate it. Though disappointed by this news, we hope the manuscript will be located and published as soon as possible, giving us a complete view of Yushan's works.

Now that we have discussed Yushan's works and their publication, let us take a closer look at their basic content.

Poetry is a reflection of the poet's mind. After the fall of the Ming Dynasty, many loyalists wrote poems to express their aspirations and laments. In Yushan's early poems collected in *On My Sorrow and Other Poems*, we can see many such examples. For instance, the first couplet in "On My Sorrow" alludes to "weeping at the West Terrace," a popular figure among Ming loyalists because in 1290, Xie Ao 谢翱 a Song loyalist, made offerings to the soul of Wen Tianxiang 文天祥, a Song prime minister, at the West Terrace where Yan Ziling 严子陵 of the Han Dynasty used to go fishing, and wrote an essay entitled "Weeping at the West Terrace" [*Xi Tai Tong Ku Ji* 西台恸哭记] to express his grief over the fall of the Song court. The Song and Ming loyalists shared the same sentiment over the loss of their countries. There are three poems under the title "On Reading 'Weeping at the West Terrace'" [*Du Xi Tai Tong Ku Ji* 读西台恸哭记], in the same vein as "On My Sorrow."

In "A Sick Horse" [*Bing Ma* 病马], Yushan writes, "The horse is sick in the depths of autumn, though its hair and bones are different from those of the others. The grass grows verdant on the battlefield, and the valiant soldier can but sing a song of lament over the bones of his comrades. Exhausted, how many years can the horse go on whinnying? Tears of blood drip onto the grass, for it cannot repay the kindness of its master." As a young loyalist, Yushan once thought of joining the armed struggle against the Qing rulers in an attempt to restore the Ming, but finally abandoned this plan as his widowed mother depended on his support, and the anti-Qing movement was not going well. In 1650, when Yushan was 19, Qu Shisi was beheaded by the Qing troops in Guilin 桂林. In 1659, when he was 28, Zheng Chenggong 郑成功, also known as Koxinga, besieged Nanjing but was quickly forced to withdraw. After that point, the Ming restoration movement lost steam. The horse and soldier

described in the poem are a true reflection of Yushan's state of mind, as he could not find any way to serve his beloved country.

In 1654, the remains of Qu Shisi were brought back from Guilin and buried on Yushan Hill in Changshu. The young Yushan wrote a passionate poem entitled "Lamenting Prime Minister Qu, Earl of Lin'gui" [*Ku Lin Gui Bo Qu Xiang Guo* 哭临桂伯瞿相国]: "You are left with deep regret as you failed in your attempt in Guilin, and your ancestral home is desolate with wild grass... Cherishing a deep love and respect for my dead friend, I have yet to tread a long path lined with leafless poplars." When Lu Daohuai published *Selected Poems by Mo Jing*, he attempted to cover up Yushan's ties to the southern Ming by changing the title of this poem to "Lamenting a Dead Friend" [*Ku You* 哭友], changing the reference to "Guilin" 桂林 (meaning "sweet osmanthus grove," is also the name of the city where Qu was executed) to read "guizhi" 桂枝 (meaning "sweet osmanthus bough"), and changing the phrase "wild grass" (蔓草 or *man cao*) to read "poems" (诗草, *shi cao*). For 300 years, readers of Yushan's poetry have been fooled by this editorial sleight-of-hand into believing that Yushan was lamenting a poor scholar who failed to pass the imperial examinations. The titles of other poems were also changed: for example, "Seeing Zhu Shunshui Off to Japan" [*Song Zhu Shun Shui Zhi Ri Ben* 送朱舜水之日本] was changed to "Seeing a Friend Off" [*Song You* 送友]; and "Seeing Off Tang Maohong, a Provincial Graduate, to Penghu Island" [*Zeng Tang Mao Hong Xiao Lian Zhi Peng Hu* 赠唐茂弘孝廉之澎湖] was changed to "Seeing Off Tang Maohong, a Provincial Graduate" [*Zeng Tang Mao Hong Xiao Lian* 赠唐茂弘孝廉]. Only with the discovery of *On My Sorrow and Other Poems* were we able to detect these changes.

Integrity is of vital importance in this world. It was the lifeblood of the Ming loyalists. Yushan not only upheld his sense of integrity throughout his life, but also praised this quality in his poems. Yushan was a master at painting bamboo; it is featured in dozens of his works. Bamboo, regarded as one of "the three friends in winter," is a symbol of integrity, and symbolizes the ethos of integrity among the Ming loyalists. In his postscripts to paintings, Yushan often praises bamboo: "The change of climate brings frost, which has destroyed

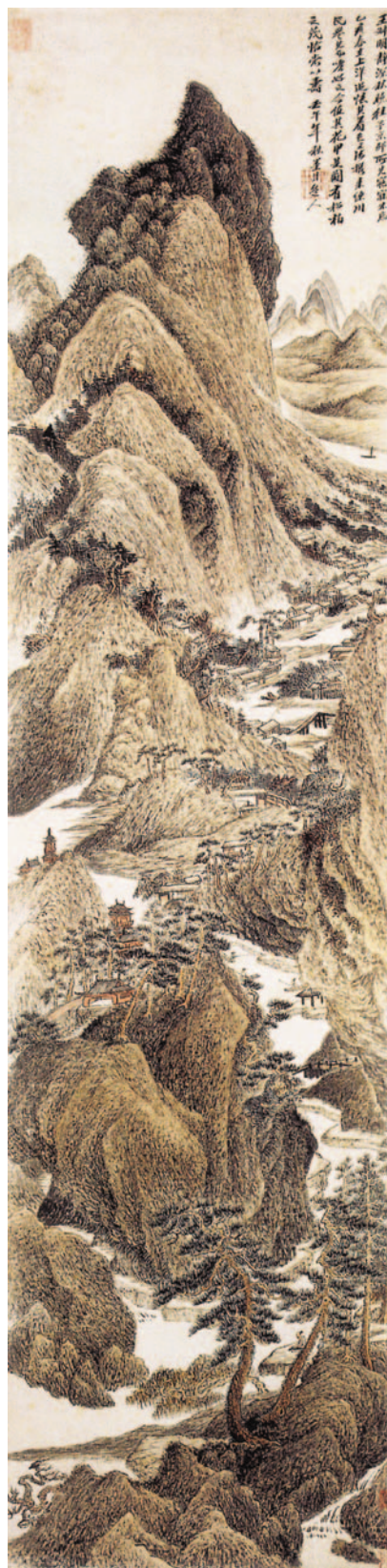




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"Deep Forest away from Secular Dust" (colour on paper, 142.5 x 48 cm), painted by Wu Li in 1673, at age 42. Guangdong Provincial Museum collection.



"A Quiet Dawn in Autumn" (ink brush on paper, 95.6 x 24.1 cm), painted by Wu Li in 1695, at age 64. Nanjing Museum collection.







many plants. Only the bamboo is still green;" "The integrity of bamboo is even more prominent [when it grows] in the cracks of rocks;" "When painting bamboo, one should focus on its integrity, which is rendered more prominent in an environment of frost and snow;" "To capture the noble character of bamboo, one should paint it in an environment of wind, rain, frost or snow" (see *Postscripts to Paintings by Mo Jing*, ops. 50, 52, 53, and 54). Judging from these postscripts and the poems quoted above, we know why Yushan the man is still so highly regarded hundreds of years after his death.

Yushan took integrity and moral cultivation as lifelong pursuits. Known early in life as "Wu the Moralizer," he was widely respected. Leading a transcendent life of seclusion, untainted by fame and wealth, his ideals are reflected in his simple landscape paintings and the poems inscribed upon them. In the poem inscribed on the painting entitled "Sleeping in the Snow" [*Wo Xue Tu* 卧雪图], painted for Morong, he writes: "Icicles tumble down the ravines and snowflakes fall against the window panes. I'd rather lie frozen in a thatched hut in the mountains than to ask favours from prefect or magistrate." In the poem inscribed on "Landscape" [*Shan Shui Tu* 山水图], he writes: "Living in a boat, the hermit moves at his will, without having to ask for anything in this world. Reading on a distant lake, he resents the green mountain close at hand" (see *Supplement to the Poems*).

In the early Qing Dynasty, Wang Wei, who worshipped Buddha and was a vegetarian, and Huang Gongwang, who exchanged his secular robes for those of a Taoist priest, were held in high esteem by the literati. Ming loyalists, having experienced such drastic changes in the world, often became hermits, leading a secluded life in the mountains and forests. Many of them took Buddhism or Taoism to be their lifelong companions. Yushan was no exception. Now that we have briefly discussed his Buddhist-related poems, let us examine his poems related to Taoism. During the reign of Emperor Shunzhi, there was a man by the name of Zhang Chunpei 张春培, from Yushan's hometown, who lived by Yushan Hill and practiced medicine to help the poor. In the autumn of 1659, several pieces of Chinese ganoderma (a kind of mushroom-like plant) appeared out of nowhere in his thatched home. Because the plant was regarded



as an auspicious sign, Yushan immediately painted them in "Ganoderma in Cenwei's Home" [*Cen Wei Ju Chan Zhi Tu* 岑蔚居产芝图]. And in the accompanying poem, he writes: "Only on the ten fairy islands does there grow ganoderma that does not wither for a thousand years. Cenwei's home, a place of virtue and earth-essence, produces it too. The glowing purple caps eliminate our secular thoughts of dynastic change. That such an auspicious plant should appear in his home is an indication that the master of the house must have touched Heaven with his great virtue. I can say nothing but wish him a long, long life." Similar poems include the one inscribed on "Ganoderma Collection" [*Ti Cai Zhi Tu* 题采芝图], which goes, "The rising stream covers the bridge with blue water, and the returning clouds fill the valley with greenness. The ganoderma collector sings in his thatched hut." In "Poems Inscribed On Paintings" [*Ti Hua Shi* 题画诗], op. 16, he writes: "Clouds spread at dawn across autumn-tinged mountains; treetops echo the gurgling green stream. In a secluded place one can collect ganoderma and meet the immortals" (see *On My Sorrow and Other Poems*). Later Yushan became more focused on Catholicism. After he became a Catholic brother, he

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Poems in "running hand" script by Wu Li  
(ink brush on paper, 28 x 27 cm). Li Qiaofeng 李乔峰 collection.



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tried his to rid himself of the influence of traditional Chinese culture that was in conflict with the teachings of Catholicism, and started to criticize the elements of Buddhism, Taoism and superstition he found in his poems.

During the transition between the Ming and Qing dynasties, Neo-Confucianism was very popular. For example, Yushan's teacher Chen Hu, a pure-minded Neo-Confucianist and Ming loyalist, adopting the neo-Confucianist ethic of "serving the country and helping the poor," dedicated himself to good causes. Yushan, an underprivileged, fatherless youth who had lived so long among the poor, experienced plenty of hardships himself. Though he could not serve his country like his teacher, he was full of sympathy for his compatriots. This sympathy was often reflected in his poems. In a poem he sent to Xu Zhijian in 1674, Yushan writes:

"Born in Suzhou Prefecture, I started early in life making a living far from my home. I worked hard all year round and never had a chance to relax. Returning home this year, I learned to plant crops on White Cloud Island. But when a devastating storm struck in spring, my hometown was completely submerged by floods. Families drifted among the duckweeds, and milling rods were left idle. Homes were turned into boats and boats floated on the treetops... For fear of being taxed as usual, my compatriots busied themselves draining the floodwaters until midnight. I had a good mind to leave my hometown again, but the weather did not permit... I was depressed as my home had been destroyed by the storm. Had I been able to predict such a calamity, I would have bought a fishing boat for my home. But can one live all his life on a boat?" (from *Supplements to the Poems*)

Yushan, having had a hard life far from home, returned home to learn farming, but was caught in an unexpected storm that destroyed his house. But he was more concerned for his compatriots, who had lost their livelihood, who were afraid they would not be granted any tax relief in view of the disaster, and who thus had to work until midnight in order to drain the floodwaters. His concern for others far exceeds the concern expressed by Du Fu 杜甫 for the homeless, in his poem entitled "My Thatched Hut Wrecked by Autumn Wind" [*Mao Wu Wei Qiu Feng Suo Po Ge* 茅屋为秋风所破歌].



Yushan's care and concern for ordinary people remained unchanged throughout his life. Such care and concern can be seen in his poems on farming as well as on fishing. In his "On the Fisherman" [*Yu Fu Yin* 渔父吟] he writes:

"He mends the fishing net until his eyes become blurred. He casts his net tirelessly for small fish and shrimp. In his younger days, his catch served the monarch; but as he grows old, can he give up? Casting his net, he often mistakes the sky for water. And in a drunken stupor, he sleeps with the dragon on the river. His hair and beard have turned greyish-white, and he fears the early arrival of autumn. His friend has given up fishing for herding, but flock-tending is even harder than fishing. Selling his catch in town, he is glad to see a believer buying his fish." (from *Three Remainders*)

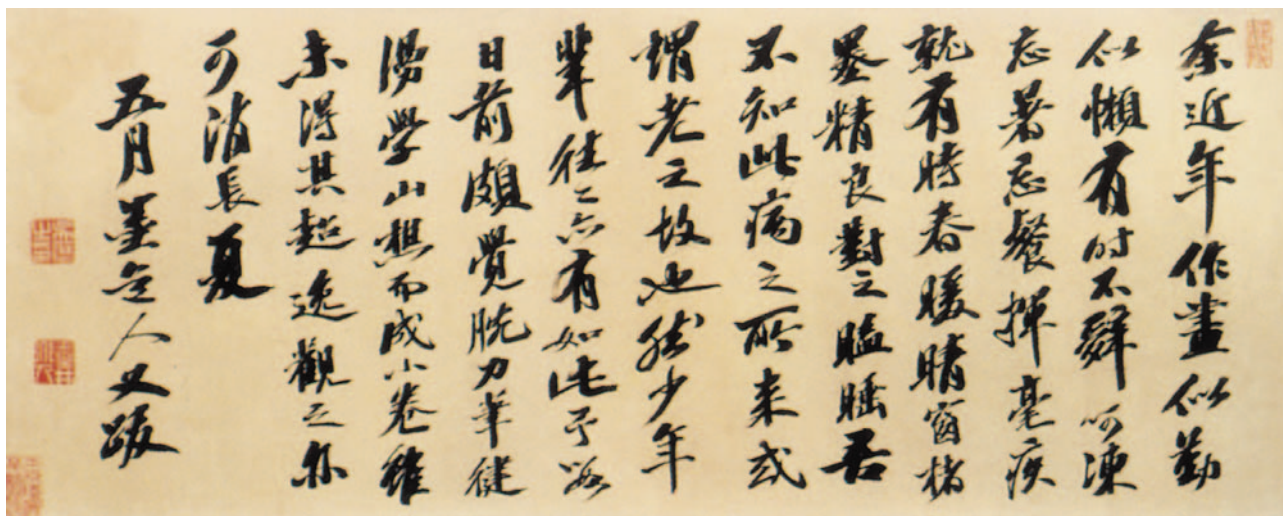
Here Yushan has given a realistic description of the hard life of a fisherman. In the poem, "friend" and "believer" refer to Yushan himself. In other words, he has placed himself in the same position as the fisherman, and implies that a Catholic priest must work even harder than the poor fisherman. On the days when believers are not allowed to eat the flesh of warm-blooded animals, he buys fish (which is not prohibited by the Church) instead. This poem demonstrates the harmonious relationship between Yushan and the fisherman.

In his later years, Yushan, as a Catholic priest, travelled tirelessly among the towns and villages of Pudong and Puxi to spread the Gospel. We can trace the footprints of this hardworking shepherd in such poems as "Ten Years in Shanghai" [*Shi Nian Hai Shang* 十年海上], "Inscription for the Wang Family's Listening-to-Pines Hall" [*Ti Wang Shi Ting Song Tang* 题王氏听松堂], "Going to the Village" [*Cun Xing* 村行], and "Crossing the Huangpu River" [*Du Pu* 渡浦], collected in *Three Remainders*. From the descriptions of Masses and sermons said by Yushan and the records of his daily conversations in *A Sequel to Service and Daily Speeches*, we can have some general idea of his selfless conduct and his achievements in Catholicism.

In his poem entitled "Lamentable" [*Ke Tan* 可叹], he writes: "People are more concerned with their property and rank rather than faith. Death takes away those whose hair has not yet turned white. Since life is so uncertain, non-believers will surely burn in the



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A postscript on a painting by Yushan in 1706, at age 75.

hell. Their long journey on the road astray only ages them. It makes me sick that those trapped by Confucianism even dare to question the authenticity of Catholicism, instead of following the Holy Spirit!... As they do not believe in Him, they remain sinners all their life. Having preached tirelessly for a decade, I wish the ignorant would convert to Catholicism so they may have an eternal afterlife" (see *Three Reminders*). There is a story about this poem in *A Sequel to Service and Daily Speeches*:

"In August 1696, when Yushan was visiting the church at Luoxi 罗溪, he met "a Mr. Shen" 申某, a non-believer, at the dinner table. Huan Shi 桓式, Zhao Lun's nephew, asked him to join the Church, saying, "You are a Confucianist, but according to my observation, not all Confucians are good." "I just want to add that not all Catholics are good either," came the reply. Upon hearing this, Yushan said, "I am trying to persuade you to join the Church, rather than asking you to follow any particular man... Our life, like a sampan on the sea, will sink when struck by a storm. Temporary happiness means nothing. Instead of becoming consumed by regret in your old age, why not find a place where you can rest your soul?" I (Zhao Lun) added that "Huan Shi's observation that not all Confucians are good is not entirely correct. First of all, it's a sin to doubt other people... I used to follow Confucius myself. When I was young, I learned poetry and read the *Four Books* [Si Shu 四书], the *Five Classics* and mountains of annotated editions of

them. As I grew older, I tried my luck at various examinations and thought I was on the right path. But when I began to seek [an understanding of] the origin and value of life, I could not find an answer no matter how hard I tried. Confucius himself said little about these matters. That is why I converted to Catholicism, and since my conversion, I feel enlightened and have become a completely new man..." During my speech, Yushan nodded repeatedly in approval and composed "Lamentable" shortly afterwards."

From this story we can conclude that Yushan and his disciple Zhao Lun believed that Confucius and Mencius ignored such important questions as the origin of life, since they said so little about it. Followers of Confucius thus aimed only to gain fame and wealth with their skills in poetry, and never thought of mending their ways. Even more outrageously, they ridiculed the orthodoxy of Catholicism. In the debate about the superiority of Catholicism over Confucianism, Zhao Lun used his own experience of conversion from Confucian to Christian as an example to convince non-Christians. His experience was very similar to that of Yushan.

The phrase "Tian xue" 天学, literally "the study of God," was used to refer to Catholicism in the late Ming and early Qing. The term "Tian xue shi" 天学诗, "Catholic poems," was invented by Yushan. While preaching in Jiading, he told Zhao Lun that compared to other kinds of poetry, the composition of Catholic

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poems was far more difficult (see *A Sequel to Service and Daily Speeches*). The “Catholic poems” Yushan speaks of are of two kinds: those based on the teachings of Catholicism, which can be called Catholic poems in the strict sense, and those about Catholic culture in the West composed by Catholic priests in the style of classical Chinese poetry, which are Catholic poems in the broad sense. Although the origin of Catholic poems can be traced to the late Ming Dynasty, Yushan was the most dedicated and prolific of Catholic poets, and tried to express in his poetry the teachings of Catholicism and his understanding of them.

Yushan’s Catholic poems, about 100 in total, are primarily collected in the sections called “Catholic Poems” in *São Paulo and Other Poems*, “Miscellaneous Poems Composed in Macao,” and *Three Remainders*. They describe Yushan’s difficult but happy life at the São Paulo College, and sing praises of the Catholic Church, especially the Society of Jesus, and his predecessors Francisco Xavier, Ignatius Loyola, Francisco de Borja, and Stanislaus Kostka. Some of the poems also give expression to Yushan’s memory of Father Zhou, Philippe Couplet, and other Catholic priests. “In Memory of Bishop Gregorio Lopez” [*Ku Siu Jia Luo Xian Sheng* 哭司教罗先生] records such religious events as Masses, consecrations, processions, Christmas, the Crucifixion, and so forth. Other poems reflect Yushan’s devout dedication to Catholicism and his understanding of the Trinity, Nativity, heaven and hell, and other Catholic doctrines. These poems were composed either while he was studying theology at São Paulo College in Macao or while he was preaching in Shanghai and Jiading. His dedication to composing poetry despite his hard life, ill health and old age is clearly an expression of his devotion to the Church. Influenced by the Chinese literary tradition of “writing poetry to express one’s feelings,” Yushan took every opportunity to write, either to encourage his fellow believers or to promote God’s holy word.

When Yushan says that composing Catholic poems is more difficult than other kinds of poetry, he means that the difficulty lies in combining the traditional Chinese poetic form with Catholicism, so deeply rooted in Western culture. This difficulty is caused, in the final analysis, by the differences between Chinese and Western cultures. Yushan, however,

successfully brought the two cultures together with his extraordinary literary abilities, because he acquired both a profound knowledge of Chinese culture and a deep understanding of Catholicism, which are unmatched by his Chinese contemporaries. This is why his Catholic poems could reach such unprecedented heights of literary achievement.

During the transition between the Ming and Qing dynasties, Macao was a centre of cultural exchange between China and the West. When Yushan studied religion there, he made careful observations of the differences between Chinese and Western cultures: “western rites and customs are entirely different from our own. For example, in China, when we receive guests, we put on our caps and robes, but here they remove theirs. The same is true with the written word and painting. Chinese characters are composed of strokes, whereas theirs words are formed of letters. We write vertically, and they horizontally. When we paint, we pay attention to essence rather than form, but they to shape and shadow. We put our signatures on the upper part of the painting, they on the lower part. Such differences are too numerous to be counted” (see *Postscripts to Paintings by Mo Jing*, op. 59). Chinese paintings, especially those painted by Yushan and other intellectuals, emphasized essence and vibrancy rather than form and shape, whereas Western painting stresses the use of colour, chiaroscuro, and perspective. Even the artist’s signature belongs on different parts of the painting. From his observations, we can see that Yushan has not only noticed the differences between Chinese and Western languages and social customs, but also was the earliest Chinese artist to compare the different characteristics of Chinese and Western painting.

In addition, in his poems Yushan also makes note of new things like telescopes, alarm clocks, microscopes, the Western calendar, snuff, wine, and other kinds of technical know-how that were imported into China through Macao.

## CONCLUSION

Wu Yushan was a celebrated cultural figure during the Ming-Qing transition. Born into a prominent family, he was a Ming loyalist, and a famous painter and poet. Like other Ming loyalists of the era, Yushan maintained his integrity throughout his life,





along with a strong of responsibility for the preservation and promotion of Chinese civilization. Dedicated to the causes he loved, he made outstanding achievements in literature and art despite the harsh conditions under which he lived.

In his conclusion to *The Chronicles of Wu Yushan*, Chen Yuan states, “Many Chinese literati became Matteo Ricci’s followers after he came to China. But Yushan was the first scholar who actually became a priest.” Among Ricci’s followers in the late Ming, the most prominent was Xu Guangqi. In Xu’s time, however, intellectual believers could seek the complements between Catholicism and Confucianism, because they claimed “we must understand the West before we can surpass it.” By Yushan’s time, the Rites Controversy had grown much bitterer. As a result, there was no room for gentry believers to seek compromises between Catholicism and Confucianism, because the conflicts and differences between Catholicism, representing Western culture, and Confucianism, representing traditional Chinese culture, had grown too sharp. In

the end, they had to make a choice: to follow Catholicism or Confucianism.

Yushan came to his belief in Catholicism in middle age, well after he turned forty. After many years of studying theology and preaching, he underwent a sea change in his belief system, from Confucianism to Catholicism, at about the age of seventy. His Catholic poems, though they take the literary form of classical Chinese poetry, are expressive of Catholic teachings. His *Catholic Mass Songs*, based on the folk tunes popular in China, were written and sung in Chinese. After a long period of observation and study, he compared western social customs, language, art and science with those of Chinese culture. From this we can conclude that Wu Yushan and Xu Guangqi were representative of the cultural exchange between China and the West at different times during the Ming-Qing transition. **RC**

Originally published in *Review of Culture* (Chinese edition) no. 51.

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## NOTES

- 1 See Shao Songnian 邵松年, *Hai Yu Wen Zheng* 海虞文征, vol. 2.
- 2 See “Inscription for Wu Yushan’s Imitations of Song and Yuan Paintings” [*Jiao You Wen Lu: Ti Wu Yu Shan Lin Song Yuan Hua Suo Ben* 交遊文录·题吴渔山临宋元画缩本], in *On Socializing*, Appendix II.
- 3 See Qian Qianyi’s 钱谦益 *Taoxi Shigao Xu* 桃溪诗稿序 (“Preface to the Peach Stream Poems” in *Xu Ba Zhuan Ji: Tao Xi Shi Gao Xu* 序跋传记·桃溪诗稿序 (Prefaces, Postscripts and Biographies).
- 4 See “Inscription on the Ink Bamboo Painting,” in *Hua Ba Bu Yi: Ti Mo Zhu Tu* 画跋补遗·题墨竹图 (Supplement to the Painting Postscripts), vol. 6.
- 5 See *He Wang Tai Chang Xi Tian Za Xing* 和王太常西田杂兴 (“In Response to Wang Taichang”) in *Wu Mei Cun Quan Ji* 吴梅村全集 (Complete Works of Wu Meicun), vol. 5, p. 1.
- 6 See Cai Xingyi 蔡星仪, “Wang Jian,” in *Zhongguo Li Dai Hua Jia Da Guan: Qing* 中国历代画家大观·清 (A Complete Dictionary of Chinese Painters: Qing Dynasty), vol. 1.
- 7 See *Zhongguo Gu Dai Shu Hua Tu Mu* 中国古代书画图目 (A Catalogue of Ancient Chinese Paintings), vol. 1, p. 28.
- 8 See *Zhu Shulou Ciyun Hua Yin* 著书楼次韵话隐 in *Xie You Ji* 写忧集 (On My Sorrow and Other Poems).
- 9 See Xu Zongze 徐宗泽, *Ming Qing Jian Ye Su hui Shi yi Zhu Ti Yao* 明清间耶稣会士译著提要 (A Guide to Translations by Jesuits in the Ming and Qing Dynasties), p. 238.
- 10 See *Chen Yuan Shi Xue Lun Zhu Xuan* 陈垣史学论著选 (Selected Historical Essays by Chen Yuan), p. 409.
- 11 See *Zhongguo Hui Hua Quan Ji* 中国绘画全集 (Complete Paintings by Chinese Artists: Qing Dynasty), vol. 24, p. 181.
- 12 See Lu Xiyan 陆希言, *Aomen Ji* 澳门记 (“Macau”), in *On Socializing*, op. cit.
- 13 See Lu Xiyan, *Aomen* (“Macau”), in *On Socializing*, op. cit.
- 14 See *Aozhong Za Yong* 澳中杂咏 (“Miscellaneous Poems Composed in Macao”), in *San Ba Ji* 三巴集 (São Paulo and Other Poems), op. 26.
- 15 See *Ci Yun Za Shi Si Shou* 次韵杂诗七首 (“Seven Miscellaneous Poems”), op. 3 and 4.
- 16 See *San Yu Ji* 三餘集 (Three Reminders), vol. 3.
- 17 See *Shi Chao Bu Yi* 诗钞补遗 (Supplement to the Poems), vol. 4.
- 18 See Chen Yuan, *Shi Xue Lun Zhu Xuan* (Selected Historical Essays by Chen Yuan), p. 412.
- 19 See *Sheng Xue Xi* 圣学诗 (“Catholic Poems”), in *San Ba Ji* (São Paulo and Other Poems).
- 20 See *Xu Kou Duo Ri Chao* 续口铎日抄 (A Sequel to Services and Daily Speeches).
- 21 See Chen Yuan, *Wu Yushan Xian Sheng Nian Pu* 吴渔山先生年谱 (The Chronicles of Wu Yushan), vol. 2, Appendix, p. 55.
- 22 See Chen Yuan, *Wu Yushan Xian Sheng Nian Pu* (The Chronicles of Wu Yushan), vol. 2, Appendix, p. 56.
- 23 These were published in *Xian Dai Xue Yuan* 现代学苑 (Modern Intellectuals) (Dec. 1967) and *Guo Li Zhong Yang Tu Shu Guan Guan Kan* 国立中央图书馆馆刊 (Journal of the National Central Library) (Jan. 1968), respectively.
- 24 Published by the Hong Kong Urban Council, pp. 352-361.
- 25 See Zhou Kangxie 周康燮, ed., *Wu Yu Shan Yan Jiu Lun Ji* 吴渔山研究论集 (Selected Research Papers on Wu Yushan), p. 57.