

虛白齋藏中國書畫館  
香港藝術館二樓  
Xubaizhai Gallery of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy  
2/F, Hong Kong Museum of Art



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香港藝術館編製  
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封面：唐寅《抱琴歸去圖》 虛白齋藏品  
Front cover: Tang Yin *Returning home with a qin* Xubaizhai Collection

# 中國書畫的鑑與藏

## AUTHENTICATING AND COLLECTING CHINESE PAINTING AND CALLIGRAPHY



虛白齋藏中國書畫  
Xubaizhai Collection of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy

教育小冊子（第十五輯）  
Education Pamphlet (Volume 15)



## 書畫鑑定札記 Notes on Authentication

中國書畫很早便因酬酢饋贈的需要而出現「代筆」的情況；又基於經濟價值的原因，一向便有人作偽以求取好價。為防魚目混珠，一套有效判別真假的方法就顯得很重要。傳統以來，鑑藏家累積有豐富的觀畫經驗，能一眼看出書畫作品所屬的時代和作者是誰，然而，其對真偽的判斷往往是基於經驗的直接反應，而不盡能一一言喻。要進行全面鑑定的話，必須同時掌握較為科學的方法去分析相關的蛛絲馬跡，以期能找出作偽者的破綻。

過往依靠經驗的目鑑過程十分著重考量作品的時代氣息和個人風格。其實，所謂時代氣息和個人風格，不外是從書畫作品中的筆墨格調、思想意境、題材內容和構圖布局等各方面去作出判斷。這幾點之中有最大參考價值的自然就是筆墨。由於筆墨是個人透過長時間所建立的一套用筆和用墨的習慣，模仿者是很難加以仿效的，因而也就成了目鑑的主要依據，但是這種方法卻較為主觀。

除此之外，亦有一些較為科學和客觀的方法幫助我們去作鑑定的工作，如憑著作品上的印章、款識、題跋、裝潢形制和紙絹等各個方面去進行評斷，但由於這些方法較容易被人模仿，因此在大部分情況下只能起輔助性的作用。

For as long as Chinese paintings and calligraphy have existed, there are various reasons that forgeries have been generated. To establish friendship and social network, the act of writing or painting on behalf of the other is widely employed in the art circle; furthermore, forgeries were also produced due to their intrinsic economic value. To identify and authenticate a genuine work we need effective techniques to distinguish it from the spurious. In the past, the judgment of an experienced connoisseur was based ultimately on his personal experience of viewing works of art. Such experience, however, cannot be fully articulated since it relies, in part, on an intuitive sense about the work. More scientific methods and systematic inquiry constitute an indispensable part of identification and authentication.

The identification of the period and authorship of a selected work of art forms the two major goals of connoisseurship. Both require a critical judgment about style, which is, in turn, determined by the subject matter, composition, artistic conception and the brush mode employed by the artist. As it is difficult to simulate customized physical movement of the artist, the brush mode is considered the most reliable aspect in this evaluative process. Supplementing this judgment are rather more objective methods and a further systematic inquiry which includes the close scrutiny of the different physical aspects of the work of art, namely the seals, inscriptions, colophons, mounting formats and the type of paper or silk used. These supplement the subjectivity of the evaluation of brushwork.

## 印章 Seals

早於戰國時期（公元前 465 至公元前 221）已有人以印章用作證明身份取信於人。在書畫上鈐印可追溯至唐朝（618 - 907），至宋（960 - 1279）以後更為普及。

書畫上的印章可分為兩大類：

- (1) 作者本人印章，表示該作品是他本人的創作；許多書畫家除了鈐上自己名號的印章外，亦喜歡鈐上一些集詩句或有寓意的閒章（圖 1）；
- (2) 收藏家或鑑賞家的印章，表示曾經收藏或鑑賞該作品（圖 2）。印章成為鑑定書畫的主要依據之一。此外，鑑賞印成為了該作品的流傳紀錄。



圖 1 清代畫家高鳳翰的閒章  
Fig. 1 A seal used by the Qing artist Gao Fenghan



圖 2 虛白齋主人劉作籌藏印  
Fig. 2 A seal used by Mr. Low Chuck-tiew, owner of the Xubaizhai Collection

一般書畫家、收藏家及鑑賞家皆擁有一枚印章。要以印章來鑑定書畫必須了解他們用印的規律，如常用的印章、印文，習慣鈐印的位置和印泥的顏色等。然而，由於印章的材料以堅固的玉石為主，比較得以流傳或盜用，這時就會出現印真畫假的情況，故此不能單以印章鑑定書畫的真偽。

Seals have been used in China as evidence of certification or identification since the Warring States period (465 - 221B.C.). They were not used on paintings and calligraphy until the Tang dynasty (618 - 907), and only became popular in the Song dynasty (960 - 1279). Basically, there are two types of seals on paintings and calligraphy:

- (1) Artist's seals:  
This kind of seal serves as a signature by the artist. It may consist of the artist's name, studio name, or bear a motto, favorite sayings or individual symbols (Fig. 1);
- (2) Collectors' and Connoisseurs' seals:  
Collectors or connoisseurs used to stamp their seals on paintings and calligraphy to record their viewing or collection of the works. These kind of seals provide a history of the artwork as it was handed down or acquired through time (Fig. 2).

Most artists, collectors and connoisseurs have more than one seal. Therefore, their practice of using seals, as well as the shape and style of lettering of these seals, are very important in authenticating paintings and calligraphy. However, some seals are subsequently acquired, whether legitimately or otherwise, by those other than the original owners and may be used to mislead or deceive. This explains why there are fake paintings with authentic seal impressions.

清代（1644 - 1911）乾隆皇帝喜愛鈐幾枚印在同一件收藏的書畫上，有些鈐印的位置更直接影響了整件作品的美感。其中「乾隆御覽之寶」等的大印，更被後人戲稱為「豆腐印」。  
Emperor Qianlong of the Qing dynasty (1644 - 1911) was fond of stamping a number of seals on the surface of the paintings and calligraphy of his collection. Sometimes they were even stamped on prominent positions so that the beauty of the works may be hindered. Some seals are so big that people called them the "bean curd" seals.



## 款識 Inscriptions

款識（讀音「志」）或稱題款，是書畫作品上作者親自書寫的文字，由文字中可得知作者的姓名字號、創作時間、地點、作品的名稱、甚至記錄了作者的年歲、籍貫等重要資料。款識和印章的作用相近，以便識別該作者為何人，有取信於人的目的（圖3）。

隨著年代變更，款識的形式亦有所改變。五代（907 - 960）以前的繪畫，多為無款作品。北宋（960 - 1127）時，大多數的畫家將名款藏在樹根或石罅等畫中不顯眼之處。及至元代（1279 - 1368），士大夫開始在繪畫的空白處大量題詩寫字以便抒情記事，款識常書於顯著位置，而自此時期起很多畫家開始以字號取代姓名。明代（1368 - 1644）以後，每幅畫大都有畫家的名款，有些更加入其籍貫。

除了核實款識上記錄的創作時間外，最重要的是要了解各書畫家自身的書法風格、字蹟、簽署和題款習慣。此外，還須留意同一個書畫家在不同時期用不同字號與及題款習慣的改變。然而，歷代書畫家如宋徽宗、董其昌、王翬、乾隆皇帝、金農等均有「代筆」的情況出現，造就了一批批款真畫假的作品。

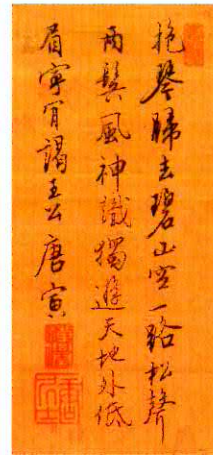


圖3 明代畫家唐寅的款識  
Fig. 3 An inscription by the Ming artist Tang Yin

An artist often writes an inscription on a painting or calligraphy on its completion. The inscription may consist of the artist's name, date and location of execution, the subject of the painting or calligraphy or even the age and native place of the artist (Fig. 3).

Paintings and calligraphy before the Five Dynasties (907 - 960) did not bear any inscriptions, while artists of the Northern Song dynasty (960 - 1127) used to hide their signatures in obscure places in the paintings. It was not until the Yuan dynasty (1279 - 1368) that scholar artists began to write multiple inscriptions describing the background of the painting, their thoughts or even poems in eye-catching areas of the paintings. From the Ming dynasty (1368 - 1644) onwards, it became fashionable for artists to add their aliases and native places in their inscriptions.

Many artists such as the Song Emperor Huizong, Dong Qichang, Wang Meng, the Qing Emperor Qianlong and Jin Nong employed “ghost painters”. They signed and wrote inscriptions on paintings done by their students, friends or officials. This practice, which has existed throughout, increases the difficulty of authentication.

## 題跋 Colophons

題跋形式豐富多變，包括標籤、引首、觀款、題詩、跋語等，歸納可分為三大類：

- (1) 作者的題跋；
- (2) 與作者同時期人的題跋；
- (3) 後人的題跋（圖4）。

題跋的內容涉及十分廣泛，主要是記載該件作品的創作和收藏過程，有些更記述鑑賞者對它的感受或評價。題跋為作品提供大量有關資料，對鑑定作品十分重要。然而，題跋亦有真假，有些是畫真跋假，有些則是畫假跋真，故應細心考證。在遇到第二類的題跋時，除了內容外，更應查證題跋者與作者的關係。

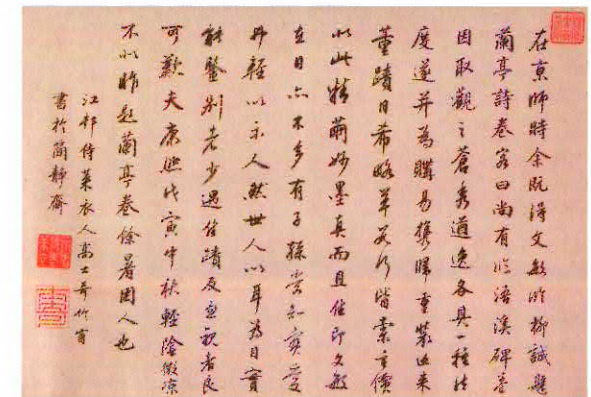


圖4 清代收藏家高士奇的題跋  
Fig. 4 A colophon by the Qing collector Gao Shiqi

Colophons have various kinds of formats. They may be written on different parts of a painting or calligraphy, such as on a title label, frontispiece, separate colophon paper or even in the blank areas of the painting itself. In general, colophons are written by:

- (1) an artist after the inscription;
- (2) the artist's contemporaries;
- (3) people of the later generations (Fig. 4).

The subject matter of colophons is boundless. Most people write colophons to praise the artist or the work itself and to record the process of creation or ownership. Colophons are essential for authentication as they provide a great deal of information about the artwork. In addition, the certification of the colophons can minimize the risk of authenticating a fake painting or calligraphy. Colophons written by friends of the artist or renown connoisseurs are relatively trustworthy.

中國歷代書畫的款識一直沿用天干地支加帝王年號的形式來紀年，如「嘉靖甲申」、「康熙乙巳」等。天干共有十干，地支有十二支。干支順序相配，六十年為一個循環。了解各朝代帝王年號和天干地支的紀年法，對鑑定書畫有莫大的幫助。

In China, years are traditionally marked by the “stem-branch” (*ganzhi*) system or the regnal year which were counted in terms of the number of years of the reign of the current sovereign. The “stem-branch” is a cyclic numeral system of 60 combinations of the two basic cycles, the ten

乾隆皇帝愛好收藏，亦喜歡於其收藏的書畫上題跋，但每有弄假成真的例子。他先收藏有黃公望《富春山居圖》的贗品，誤以為是難得絕品，後來當他遇上真品時竟說後者是贗品。（詳情請參閱「書畫收藏逸聞」）

The Qing Emperor Qianlong was fond of collecting and writing colophons on works in his collection but he was not proficient in authentication. On acquiring a copy of the famous long handscroll *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains* by Huang Gongwang of the Yuan dynasty, he



## 裝潢形制 Mounting Formats

中國書畫的裝潢或稱裝裱大致可分為：

- (1) 冊頁（又分經摺式、推篷式、蝴蝶式，一般頁數為雙數）；
- (2) 扇面（又分團扇、摺扇）；
- (3) 立軸（圖 5）；
- (4) 手卷（圖 6）。

每個時代的裝潢均各有特色，例如在明代以前裝裱的手卷是沒有引首的，如發現有早於明以前的引首，雖不可確定作品必偽無疑，但就已可斷定引首本身是偽作。由於書畫作品可以被重裱，裝潢本身並不是鑑定書畫的主要考證，然而正因每個時代的裝潢都有其特色，其綾絹、紋飾、色澤、形制均不盡相同，加上有許多收藏印是蓋在裱邊上以防後人重裱，故此遇上原裱的作品時，其裝潢特色就為作品提供了斷代的因素。

There are four major mounting formats for Chinese paintings and calligraphy:

- (1) Albums in various forms: “the pushing open an awning form” (*tuipeng shi*), “butterfly form” (*hudie shi*) and “accordion form” (*jingzhe shi*).  
An album usually comprises an even number of leaves;
- (2) Fans, both round (flat) fan and folding fans;
- (3) Hanging scrolls (Fig. 5);
- (4) Handscrolls (Fig. 6).

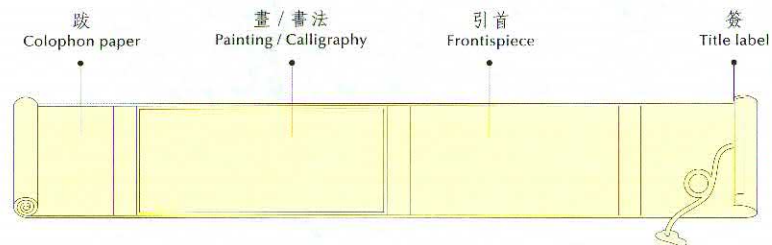
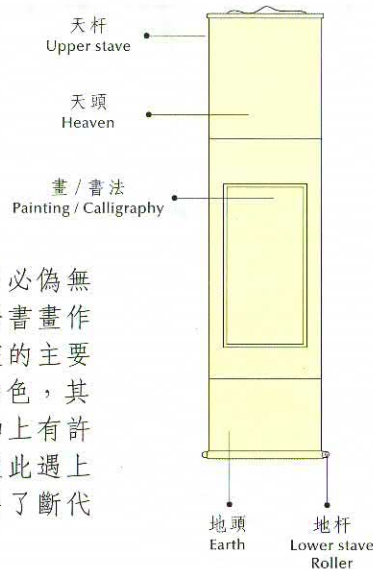


圖 6 手卷的形式  
Fig. 6 Mounting format of a handscroll

Mounting formats and techniques have varied from time to time and evolved through dynasties. For example, there is no “frontispiece” in the format of handscrolls before the Ming dynasty. Hence, if a “frontispiece” is dated before Ming, it must be forgery. There are different mounting materials, patterns on

圖 5 立軸的形式  
Fig. 5 Mounting format of a hanging scroll



## 紙絹 Silk & Paper

紙絹是中國書畫特有的載體，它的特色隨著時代發展而有所轉變。唐代有麻紙、五代有澄心堂紙（清代有仿製品，圖 7），北宋有蠟箋紙。宋代絹紋細密，元代絹紋則較粗疏。一般而言，宋代以前以絹為主，至明清年間則以紙為主。泥金紙流行於明代，而粉箋則流行於清代。由於紙絹的時代特徵，故紙絹的鑑別是鑑定書畫的另一輔助依據。當遇見有前代的作品卻用了後代出產的紙絹，該作品就必是贗品了。有人以煙熏、染色等方法將新紙絹做舊，甚至直接繪寫於前朝舊紙絹上作偽。

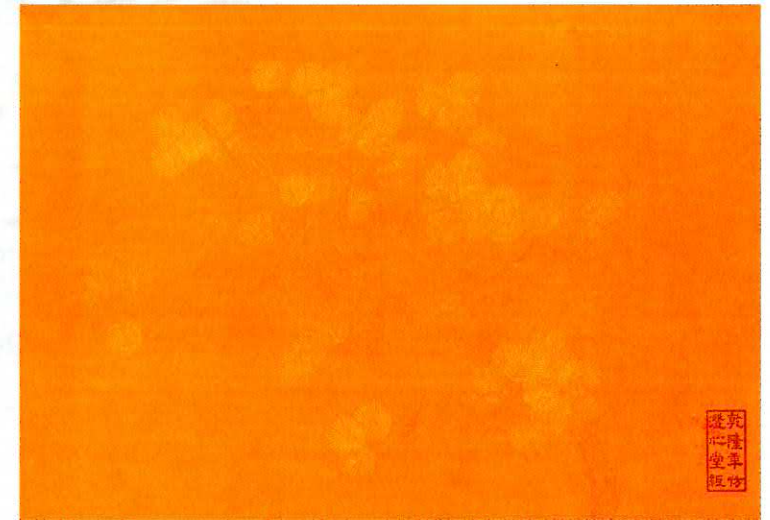


圖 7 清代仿澄心堂紙  
Fig. 7 Chengxin Tang paper (a replica of Qing dynasty)

Silk and paper are the special media of Chinese painting and calligraphy. Various kinds of silk and paper have been produced through the dynasties. For example, linen was popular in the Tang dynasty, Chengxin Tang paper in the Five Dynasties (replica in Qing dynasty, Fig. 7), and wax-polished paper in the Northern Song. The quality of silk also varied so that silk of the Song is far more delicate than that of the Yuan. In general, silk was commonly used prior to and during the Song dynasty, while paper was frequently preferred in the Ming and Qing dynasties. Therefore, if the medium used is inconsistent with the date of a work, its authenticity is doubtful.



## 書畫收藏逸聞

### 虛白齋主人救畫記

虛白齋主人劉作籌（1911 - 1993）是香港一位著名的收藏家，他於1989年將他的虛白齋藏品捐贈了給香港藝術館作永久收藏。作為一位書畫愛好者，他愛惜書畫的程度甚至過於自己的生命。1945年正值二次世界大戰的尾聲，盟軍對日軍進行鋪天蓋地的空襲，所投下的燃燒彈剛好炸中了劉氏位於新加坡的寓所，無情的大火把劉氏的收藏毀於一旦。當劉氏的家人都逃出火海避到安全的地方時，卻發現不見了劉作籌的蹤影。正當大家都心急如焚之際，只見焦頭爛額的劉作籌，手裏緊緊地抱著一個長長的木盒子從火窟中逃出來。大家還以為他手中的木盒必是藏著金銀財寶，誰知卻是他心愛的一幅清初畫家石濤的傑作《長干風塔圖》。正是他這種愛護文物的痴心，使中國的文物得以安全地傳下來。

### 顧文彬論收藏十四忌

清代蘇州收藏家顧文彬（1811 - 1889）曾在他的《過雲樓書畫記》凡例中談及收藏古書畫有十四忌，即不應該做的事情。他曾把這十四忌標示於過雲樓門楣上，是他對有心收藏事業人士的忠告，也是對自己的警惕。這十四忌分別是：蠹天、穢地、燈下、酒邊、映幕、強借、拙工印、凡手題、徇名遺實、重畫輕書、改裝因失舊觀、耽異誤珍贗品、習慣鑽營之市僧與及妄摘瑕病之惡賓。從中我們可以看到古人對收藏中國書畫的要求。首四項是關乎周圍的環境是否適宜於展示，而拙工印、凡手題等均會破壞原作品的價值，至於徇名遺實、重畫輕書、耽異誤珍贗品等均是對書畫不應有的取捨態度；但是，這當中最重要的是收藏者的心態，若收藏是為圖利的話，那也是要不得的。這些忠告有些對今天從事收藏的人仍有參考價值。

### 《富春山居圖》歷盡滄桑

《富春山居圖》是元代畫家黃公望（1269 - 1354）經過三年時間才完成的名作，畫中描繪了富春江初秋的景色。這件作品在清朝初年入藏宜興收藏家吳洪裕手中，吳洪裕視之如同珍寶，甚至在他臨死時命人把它掉入火盆之中，希望這件作品能永遠陪他一起。眼見它快要化為灰燼之時，他的從侄及時把它從火盆中搶救出來，使它免去一難。卷首略有燒灼的一部分被裁出，經修補後成為一件獨立的作品，後來被定名為《剩山圖》。餘下後部分的《富春山居圖》往後竟出現一真一贗的版本，而兩者皆先後流入了乾隆皇帝的御藏之中。他卻將贗本誤以為真蹟，在其上鈐上一枚又一枚藏印，並題上了密密麻麻的題識。至於真蹟則被他定為贗本而把它輕輕放過。一幅不朽的名作因此而得以大致完好無損，再次倖免於難。

### 王羲之的《蘭亭序帖》

《蘭亭序帖》是王羲之（約 303 - 約 361）的書法名作，且更被譽為「天下第一行書」。這件墨寶一直留在王羲之的家族之中代代相傳，直到唐代初年傳到辯才和尚手上，才離開了王氏的家傳。唐太宗李世民對王羲之的書法推崇備至，並竭力搜集王羲之的作品。相傳他知道《蘭亭序帖》在辯才手裏，多次想辦才把它交出，但都徒勞無功。後來唐太宗派遣監察御史蕭翼假扮書生接近辯才，在取得辯才的信任後，終於騙得他把祕藏的墨寶拿出，蕭翼這才表露身份，將《蘭亭序帖》取去。唐太宗得到這件朝思暮想的墨寶後，自然是愛不釋手，傳說他後來還將《蘭亭序帖》共葬昭陵，從此這件墨寶便消失人間。無論如何，此件真品今已無存；所幸的是，唐太宗在世時曾命人臨摹了多本，故此現存的《蘭亭序帖》墨蹟都是臨摹本。

### 乾隆皇帝的「三希堂」

乾隆皇帝（1711 - 1799）非常酷愛收藏古代的書畫，同時他也十分喜歡在徵集得來的作品上題識鈐印，使得今天所見曾經乾隆御藏的書畫作品上很多都有他的墨蹟。一次他徵得三件屬於東晉時期的行書法帖，這三件法帖可說是稀世的珍品。乾隆在得到這三件珍品之後欣喜若狂，並且將養心殿西暖閣西面的溫室改名為「三希堂」來專門存放這三件珍品。所謂「三希」，就是指三件稀世珍寶之意，由此可見乾隆對之的重視程度。這「三希」也就是東晉王羲之家族的作品，即王羲之的《快雪時晴帖》、王羲之兒子王獻之的《中秋帖》和王羲之從侄王珣的《伯遠帖》。一般相信，這三件作品除了王珣的《伯遠帖》是貨真價實的晉代真蹟外，其餘二者皆為摹本。雖然這三件作品曾經一度聚合在一起，但是現在卻已分隔兩岸，由北京和台北故宮分別保存起來。

### 「東北貨」與香港

琉璃廠自清代乾隆時期起已是北京著名的文物古玩市肆的集中地。二次大戰後，這裏出現一批特別來歷的文物，就是末代皇帝溥儀（1906 - 1967）早於民國初年即從宮中偷運出來的一批珍貴的書畫古籍，為數最少也有千餘件之多。後來日軍侵華，他在日本人的協助下把這批文物運往長春保存起來。日軍戰敗後，溥儀匆匆出逃，這批文物就被人一搶而空，後來逐漸在東北各地的古玩市肆間出現，形成所謂的「東北貨」，而從琉璃廠書畫市肆散出的亦為數不少。此外，香港亦嘗成為「東北貨」的集散地，例如現藏於北京故宮博物院院的五代《瀟湘圖卷》這類國寶級作品便是早年從香港購回的「東北貨」。香港藝術館虛白齋現藏的唐人寫經《小楷出曜論卷第六》亦是捐贈人劉作籌先生輾轉從「東北貨」中搶救所得之文物。



## ANECDOTES ON COLLECTING

### Deeds of Low Chuck-tiew, Master of the Xubaizhai Collection

Low Chuck-tiew (1911 - 1993), a famous collector in Hong Kong, donated his Xubaizhai Collection to the Hong Kong Museum of Art in 1989. As an art lover, he valued the safety of works of art more than his life. In 1945, massive carpet-bombing by the Allied forces on Japanese troops caused a fierce fire that burned down Low Chuck-tiew's house in Singapore. While everyone fled to safety during the air raid, Low rushed into his burning house to emerge firmly holding a long wooden box in his arms. While people thought that the box must have contained something of great value, they found that it was simply a scroll painting by the Qing dynasty monk painter, Shitao. The security of works of art produced by masters of the past is assured by such actions of collectors like Low.

### Fourteen "Don'ts" for Collectors by Gu Wenbin

In his *Record of Collection of Guoyun Lou*, the Qing dynasty Suzhou collector Gu Wenbin (1811 - 1889) listed fourteen things that we should shun from doing in collecting or viewing Chinese paintings and calligraphy. For example, Gu considered the environment important and pointed out that conditions such as cloudy weather and dirty floors, should be avoided, and paintings should not be viewed in the vicinity of oil lamps and wine. He also thought that impressing seals and colophons of low artistic value would ruin the original work. Certain criteria are related to collectors' choice or taste. In his view, collectors should strike a balance between the popularity and artistic value of the producer of the works of art, between the number of paintings and calligraphy works in the collection. Most important of all, he reminded collectors not to be concerned about monetary reward in collecting.

### The Vicissitudes of the Painting *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains*

*Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains* is a handscroll painting by the Yuan dynasty painter Huang Gongwang (1269 - 1354) who worked on it for over three years. Subsequently, the painting came into the possession of an early Qing dynasty collector called Wu Hongyu. He valued the painting very much and wanted to be buried with it. Fortunately, one of his distant relatives saved it from the fire pot. The partly damaged painting was then cut into two pieces. The front part which was scorched by fire was repaired and remounted. The remaining part was later transferred to the Qianlong Emperor's imperial collection. However a problem arose. Two identical versions - one genuine and one fake - were acquired one after another. The emperor wrongly identified the genuine version as a fake and wrote many inscriptions on it. It is perhaps fortunate that the genuine work escaped from being filled with the inscriptions and seals of the emperor.

### The Destiny of Wang Xizhi's Calligraphy Work *Preface to the Orchid Pavilion Gathering*

Wang Xizhi (ca.303 - ca.361) was a great calligrapher during the Jin

dynasty. His famous manuscript, *Preface to the Orchid Pavilion Gathering*, acclaimed as the greatest calligraphy in running script, remained in Wang's family until it was passed to the monk Biancai in the early Tang dynasty. At the time, Emperor Taizong was very fond of Wang's work and it was said that the emperor had unsuccessfully ordered the monk Biancai to surrender the manuscript *Preface to the Orchid Pavilion Gathering* to him. The emperor then sent Xiao Yi, the Investigating Censor, to contact the monk in the guise of a well-educated gentleman. As their friendship developed, Xiao Yi finally succeeded in gaining access to Wang Xizhi's work. When the emperor acquired the long-desired work, he asked several talented calligraphers to make copies of the manuscript and it was said that he ordered the genuine version to be buried with him. Today, the genuine manuscript no longer exists; different versions are but copies of the original.

### Emperor Qianlong's Sanxi Tang (Hall of Three Rarities)

An art lover and connoisseur, Emperor Qianlong (1711 - 1799) was fond of collecting antiques. Like Emperor Taizong of the Tang dynasty, he was particularly fond of calligraphy works by Wang Xizhi, the greatest calligrapher of all ages. On one occasion, he acquired three manuscripts by Wang Xizhi and other members of his family. They are the works of the father and son masters, Wang Xizhi's *Kuaixue Shiqing Tie* (The Clearing after Snow Letter) and Wang Xianzhi's *Zhongqiu Tie* (Mid-Autumn Letter), while the third is *Boyuan Tie* (Letter to Boyuan) by Wang Xun (a relative of Wang Xizhi). Overjoyed, the emperor converted one of the halls of Yangxin Dian (Hall of Mental Cultivation) into Sanxi Tang (meaning "Hall of Three Rarities") to store exclusively the three manuscripts. It is now commonly believed that only Wang Xun's *Boyuan Tie* is a genuine work of the Jin dynasty, and the other two are copies. They are kept separately in the two Palace Museums of Beijing and Taipei respectively.

### Dongbeihuo (Works from Manchuria) and Hong Kong

*Liulichang* has been famous for antique shops in Beijing since the Qianlong period of the Qing dynasty. It was also one of the places where the so-called *Dongbeihuo* (works from Manchuria) after World War II were sold. The *Dongbeihuo* is directly linked with the last emperor, Puyi (1906 - 1967). After the downfall of the Qing dynasty, the last emperor, who was free to move around, smuggled a large number of old books, Chinese paintings and calligraphy works out of the Forbidden City. During the war, he sought protection from the Japanese and stored the treasures in Changchun in Jilin province which formerly belonged to Manchuria. However, the defeat of the Japanese became a curse for the treasures. They were gradually dispersed in the antique shops in the northeastern region including *Liulichang*, and some found their way to Hong Kong. For example, the famous *The Xiao and Xiang Rivers* by an anonymous artist of the Five Dynasties, now in the collection of the Beijing Palace Museum, was one of the works in the *Dongbeihuo* which was acquired in Hong Kong by an overseas collector. Low Chuck-tiew, donor of his Xubaizhai Collection to the Hong Kong Museum of Art, attempted to save the *Dongbeihuo* from being dispersed through Hong Kong. He managed to acquire the Tang dynasty *Avadana-sutra* scroll, which is now in the collection of Hong Kong Museum of Art.