

# THE JESUITS II

Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts

1540-1773

*Edited by*

John W. O'Malley, S.J.

Gauvin Alexander Bailey

Steven J. Harris

T. Frank Kennedy, S.J.

KOBAYASHI  
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## 12 / Suzhou Prints and Western Perspective: The Painting Techniques of Jesuit Artists at the Qing Court, and Dissemination of the Contemporary Court Style of Painting to Mid-Eighteenth-Century Chinese Society through Woodblock Prints

HIROMITSU KOBAYASHI

Several talented Jesuit missionary artists, such as Guiseppe Castiglione (Lang Shining, active in China 1715–66), Jean-Denis Attiret (Wang Qicheng, active 1738–68), and Ignace Sichelbarth (Ai Chimensi, active 1745–80), worked in the eighteenth-century Qing court. The genius of one of them, Castiglione, helped to establish a Sino-Western style of painting that is recognized today as one of the styles representative of the imperial court during the mid-Qing dynasty. Owing to the strong association of these Jesuit painters with imperial art, there is a tendency to believe that the works they produced rarely reached the larger population. But there is evidence of a strong Western influence in the style of a popular type of luxury print made during this same period in Suzhou. In this study I will present some possible routes by which Sino-Western painting techniques were disseminated to the public from the court, and so gave rise to the production of large Suzhou prints employing Western perspective.<sup>1</sup>

### The Creation of the Sino-Western Style of Painting at the Qing Court

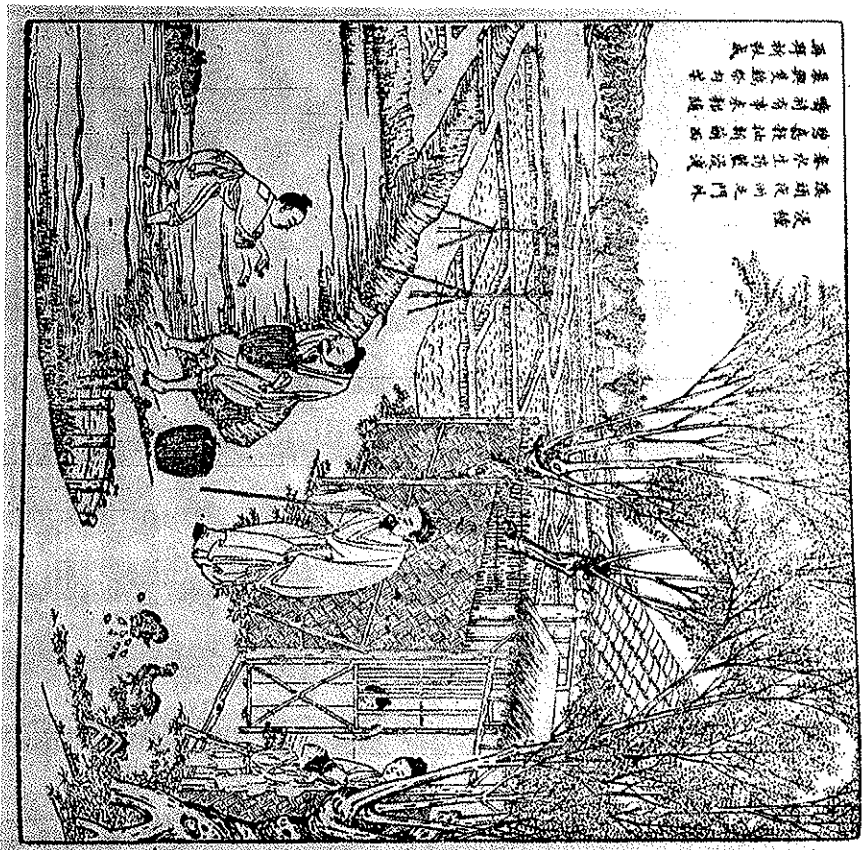
The first phase of Sino-European interrelation in art<sup>2</sup> resulted from the introduction by Matteo Ricci (Li Matou, 1552–1610) and other Jesuit missionaries of oil paintings and copper engravings into China in the late Ming period. The penetration of Western art into Chinese society in this first encounter stimulated interest among the Chinese, but new styles or schools of art were not born of this primary encounter. The second phase, with which I am concerned in this study, produced a completely new style of Sino-Western art that gained many followers. The dynastic change from the Ming to the Qing and the existence and persistence of Castiglione at the Qing court resulted in the formation of this new style.

The second phase was initiated with Emperor Kangxi's (1662–1722) intense interest in Western science. Kangxi did not allow missionary work in China, but

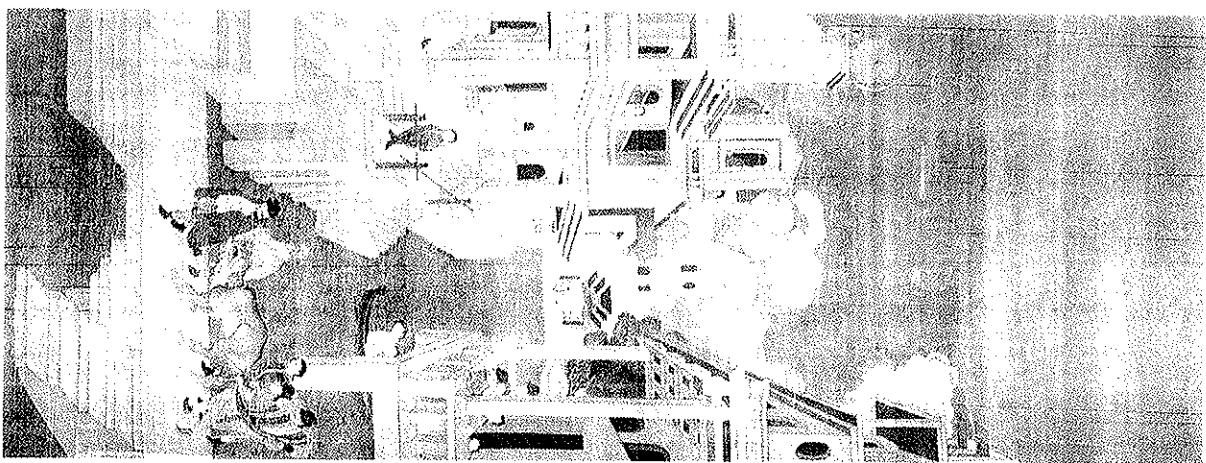
he recognized the greatness of Western science and the superb talents of the Jesuit missionaries. He created an environment in which Western ideas could flourish within the court. Kangxi himself was an enthusiastic student of Western science and culture, and often summoned the Jesuits to teach him natural science, anatomy, and mathematics. He also took an interest in the scientific mechanisms of Western perspective drawing, as we know from his approval of the painter Jiao Bingzhen (c. 1650–after 1726), who pioneered a new Sino-Western style in painting<sup>3</sup> by acquiring a knowledge of perspective drawing from Western scholars working at the court. Jiao was an officer at the Imperial Astronomical Observatory, where Ferdinand Verbiest (Nan Huarren, 1623–88) and other Jesuit missionaries were employed. His work at the Observatory provided Jiao with a unique opportunity to learn Western science and perspective from the missionaries. Both Kangxi and his artist were interested in the scientific aspect of Western art, and they were especially stimulated by the realistic ambience produced by the use of perspective.

Jiao's study of Western perspective resulted in the design of forty-six illustrations for the printed imperial edition of *Rice Farming and Sericulture* (*Gongtin*) (fig. 12.1),<sup>4</sup> published in 1696 and engraved by the renowned woodblock carver Zhu Gui.<sup>5</sup> Clearly foreshortened views of rice fields, houses, and fences and diagonally extended roads enhance the realism of scenes depicting the daily activities of farmers. Paintings such as *Classical Ladies*,<sup>6</sup> also by Jiao, demonstrate how his hybrid style works in the genre of figures in architectural settings. *View of Venice* (fig. 12.2), another interesting painting on silk, featuring a European landscape with figures, employs the same kind of Western perspective. The work is ascribed to Jiao, but attached to it are two small seals of doubtful origin reading 'Jiao Bingzhen' and 'Attending the Court,' and the work bears neither signature nor inscription.

A strange style of composition and selection of motifs in *View of Venice*, including eighteen figures in Western attire, provide an exotic atmosphere. In the foreground a gruesome though tame beast accompanied by five gentlemen walks over a bridge. The scene reminds the viewer of the classical theme of tribute to China from an unidentified distant country. It is noticeable that the animal wears a cross around its neck, perhaps symbolizing the religious beliefs of the entourage. The building topped with a solar clock at the far left side of the picture may be an observatory. The facial features of the female figures resemble those painted by Jiao. Other motifs, such as the trees, are painted in the Chinese style. The painter of this work has not yet been identified definitively, but it is obvious that the artist was seriously attempting a Western-style painting with a single vanishing-point, yet was unable to employ the technique with perfect accuracy. The further development of Western painting techniques among Chi-



12.1. Jiao Bingzhen, 'First Sprout,' in *Rice Farming and Sericulture*, preface dated 1696. Leaf from woodblock printed album, c. 24 cm x 24 cm. From a nineteenth-century reprint.



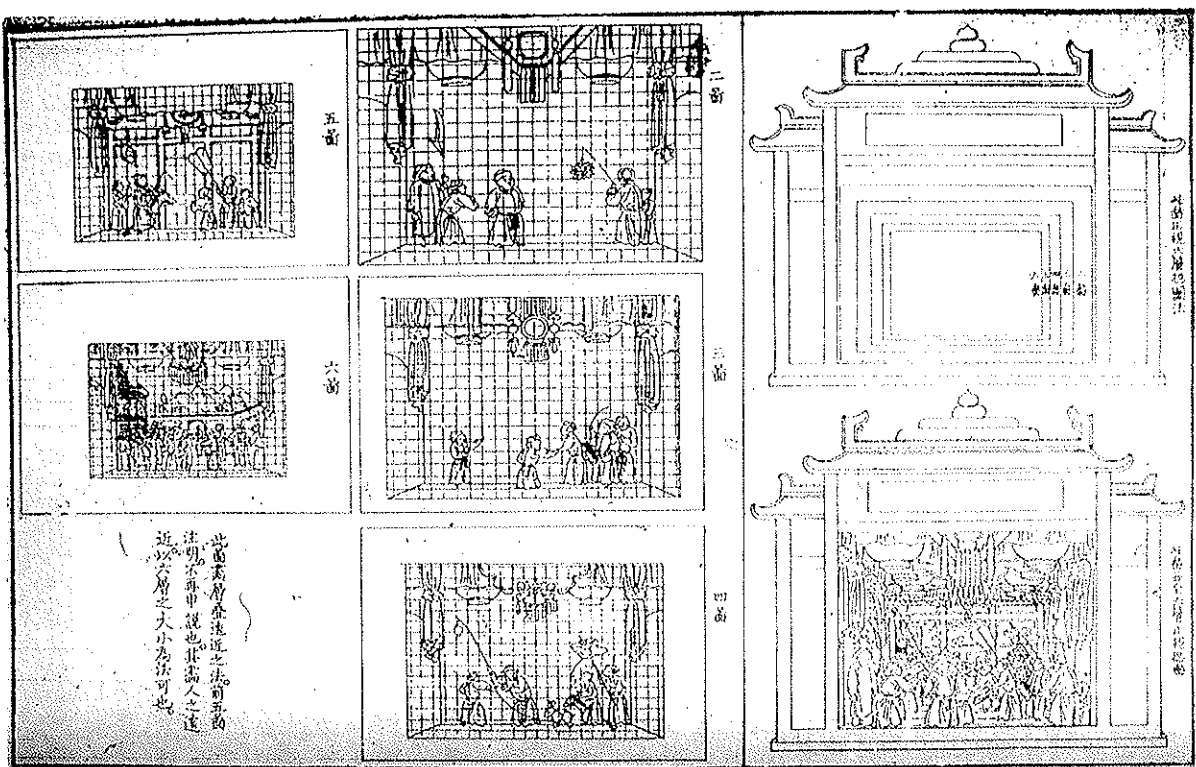
12.2. Ascribed to Jiao Bingzhen, *View of Suzhou*, eighteenth century. Hanging scroll, ink and colour on silk, 129 cm x 50 cm. Yamato Bunkakan, Nara.

nese artists would not take place until a later period, with the publication of Chinese manuals on Western painting techniques based on newly imported European books on perspective, and the beginning of organized instruction by the Jesuit painters in the Qing Imperial Painting Academy.

Jiao's work and style were carried on in the interim period by court artists such as Leng Mei (active late seventeenth- to mid-eighteenth century), who painted an album of ten leaves entitled *Ten Court Poeries*, dated 1735;<sup>7</sup> it was created to accompany poems by Prince Bao, the future Emperor Qianlong (r. 1736–95). In this work, Leng Mei employed perspective to depict lively figures in courtly scenes representing ancient states and dynasties. Kangxi was also interested in the techniques involved in oil painting.<sup>8</sup> Under the instruction of Jesuit missionary artists, Chinese court painters also produced oil paintings, such as the eightfold screen entitled *Beauties in the Shade of the Phoenix Tree*.<sup>9</sup> The picture has a single focal point, and shadows are used effectively to render a scene in dimming sunlight. The style of the court ladies' faces resembles that used by Jiao Bingzhen.

During the reign of Emperor Yongzheng (r. 1723–35), stronger prohibition was placed on the teaching of Christianity, but Jesuit missionaries continued their activities at the court. There are no extant works by Castiglione from the Kangxi reign and only a handful of signed works from the Yongzheng period, but the missionary's diligence seems to have won him friends within the elite circle at the court. It is in this period that Castiglione edited the first Chinese-language book on the mechanics of perspective, entitled *Shixue* (Visual Learning). The book was published in cooperation with Nian Xiyao (d. 1738/9), a painter,<sup>10</sup> mathematician, and government official.<sup>11</sup> It adapted sections of the first volume of a contemporary study of perspective entitled *Perspectiva pictorum et architectorum* by Andrea Pozzo (1642–1709), published in 1693. Pozzo was a celebrated Italian Jesuit painter, architect, and, above all, champion of the theory of perspective in the baroque age. Castiglione and Nian's book was first published in 1729;<sup>12</sup> a second, enlarged edition appeared in 1735. The second edition explicated the use of perspective by including an illustration of a miniature stage set with a furnished interior scene (fig. 12.3). The stage setting was divided horizontally into six sections, with each section receding farther into the background than the one in front of it; objects and figures were depicted in correct perspective, that is, according to their distance from the audience or the viewer of the illustration. The publication of *Shixue* represented the first formal dissemination of techniques and mechanisms used in Western art from a Western artist at the Qing court to the Chinese public.

Nian Xiyao states the significance of publishing the *Shixue* in the 1735 preface: 'China has cultivated a great tradition of depicting nature in landscape paintings but neglected the accurate representation of projection and the meas-



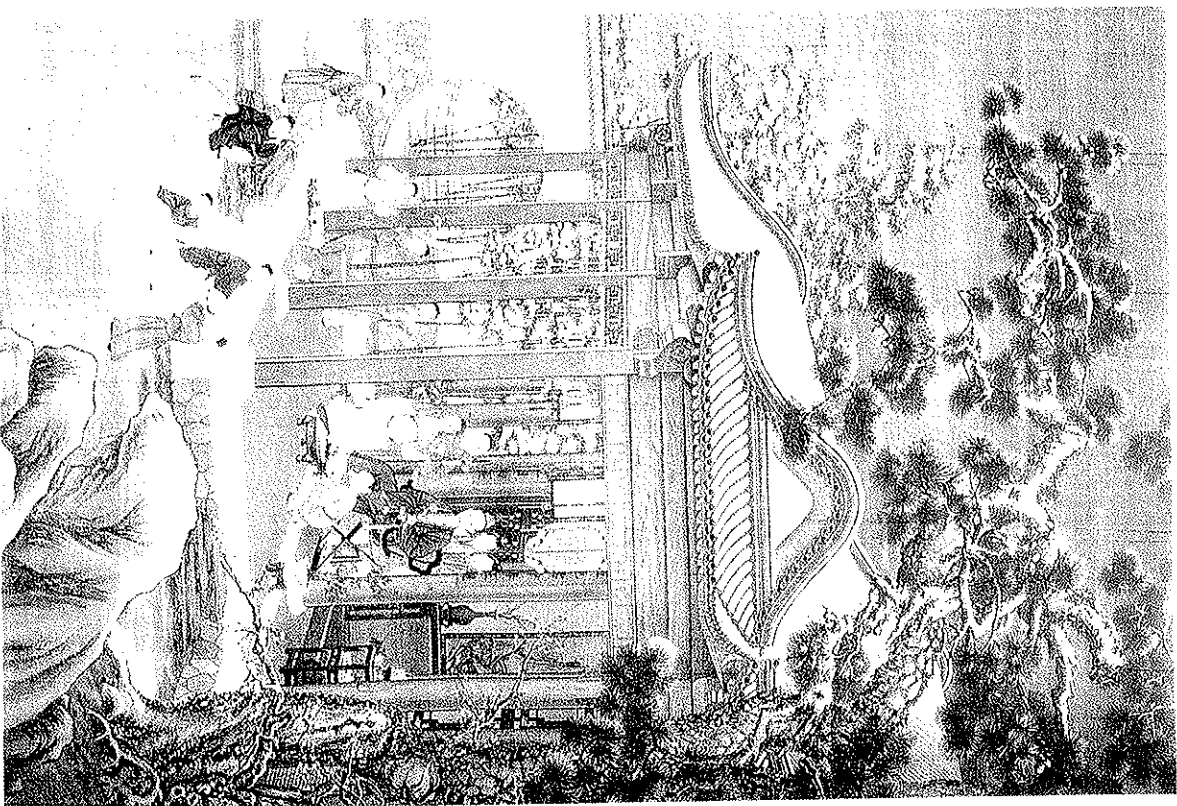
12.3. Leaf from Giuseppe Castiglione and Nian Xiyao, *Shixue*, preface dated 1735, woodblock printed book, Bodleian Library, Oxford University. From *Chingukano yofuga zen*, ed. Shigeru Aoki and Hiromitsu Kobayashi (Machida, 1995).

urement of buildings and implements. If one desires to depict these objects correctly [in a composition], one must use the Western technique.<sup>12</sup> It is clear that Nian, like Kangxi and Jiao, was interested in the production of realism and accuracy within a depicted space, and not in changing the stylistic foundations of Chinese landscape painting.

Simultaneous with the inauguration of Emperor Qianlong's reign in 1736 was the establishment of a formal Imperial Painting Academy.<sup>13</sup> Many talented artists from various localities came to work under the emperor. In 1737 three established artists from Suzhou, including Zhou Kun,<sup>14</sup> were summoned to the court by Qianlong as academy painters. Zhou Kun was a literati-style landscape specialist, and upon his entry into the court he produced a painting entitled *Auspicious Grand Bell*.<sup>15</sup> This large hanging scroll, on which Qianlong inscribed a verse, represented a Beijing scene: it employed a moderated single-point perspective, creating naturalistic space. Since the Yongzheng period the print shops of Zhou's home city had been producing large landscape prints using the techniques of Western perspective known to the public, but the prime period of their production would arrive in the next decade.<sup>16</sup> From at least the thirteenth century, Suzhou had been home to many professional and literati artists.<sup>17</sup> The affluence of this area and its abundance of talented artists made Suzhou a supply base for master painters of a calibre qualifying them to work as artists in Qianlong's Academy. At the same time, men such as Zhou, having worked at the court, returned to their native city with a newly acquired knowledge of Western art. This knowledge further influenced the stylistic development of the Suzhou landscape prints.

Emperor Qianlong selected Castiglione as his official portrait painter. Qianlong preferred Castiglione's realistic depiction of human faces, animals, birds, and flowers, but did not employ him to paint landscapes. Court records, memorandums, and passages from the letters of the Jesuit missionaries indicate that Qianlong exercised firm control over how things were depicted in the paintings he ordered. This was especially true with respect to figure paintings, including imperial portraits. Castiglione followed the imperial orders faithfully and adapted his style to create a new form of Sino-Western art to suit the taste of the emperor. Works such as *Qianlong Enjoying Snow* (fig. 12.4), dated 1738, and *Qianlong Inspecting Horses in a Spring Field*,<sup>18</sup> dated 1745, are fine examples of this new style of Sino-Western art at the Qing Academy. In these paintings Castiglione collaborated with Chinese artists, who in many cases painted the backgrounds, clothing, and other accessories, while Castiglione painted the faces of the figures, and any animals. The naturalism in the proportions of the figures, in the use of light and shadow, and in the treatment of space introduced a realistic ambience into the scene — it depicted the world as one saw it in real life. This kind of realism was not emphasized in traditional Chinese figure and landscape

Suzhou Prints and Western Perspective (continued)



12.4. Giuseppe Castiglione in collaboration with anonymous court artists, *Qianlong Enjoying Snow*, dated 1738. Hanging scroll, ink and colour on silk, 289.5 cm × 196.7 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing. From *Emperors and Their Court Arts in the Forbidden City, 1644–1911* (1997).

painting, but it must have interested artists naturally looking for new facets of their art. Works such as *Record of the Year's Holidays*<sup>19</sup> were most probably created by the artists who painted the backgrounds in many of Castiglione's large compositions of figures in a landscape setting.

While producing numerous works of art by imperial order, Castiglione was also given the job of teaching Western methods of painting to the artists of the Academy and also of training young apprentices selected among the bannermen<sup>20</sup> as specialists in the Western style.<sup>21</sup> In the classrooms there were supposedly no limitations as to genre, and both oil painting and painting using traditional Chinese materials but in the Western style were taught by Castiglione. Unfortunately, not one of these apprentices was talented enough to become a leading court painter in the Academy, and their known extant works are scarce. The Academy had a large staff, and the artists competed for the attention of the emperor by presenting him with paintings on the occasion of special celebrations, which were not many.<sup>22</sup> There was a high turnover among the court painters,<sup>23</sup> and those who learned from Castiglione or from his art brought the style home with them.

### Suzhou Prints and the Court Style

The prints known to us today as Suzhou prints were also called Gasu prints, Gusu being the old name of the Suzhou area. The prints have many subjects and styles, but in this study I will focus on those showing natural landscapes and cityscapes using Western perspective, which flourished mainly from the 1730s to the 1750s. These prints are on average about 1 metre high and 50 centimetres wide, and are either plain monochrome woodblock prints or monochrome prints to which bright colours have been applied manually. They were usually sold in pairs as New Year's decorations. The works are meticulously rendered, with human figures, architecture and architectural objects, landscapes, and other elements. The Suzhou prints came from the studios of artists living in the city, but their creation was made possible by the nurturing of the Sino-Western style of art at the Qing court and by the dissemination of the styles and techniques mastered by former court artists to professional artists working in the cities.

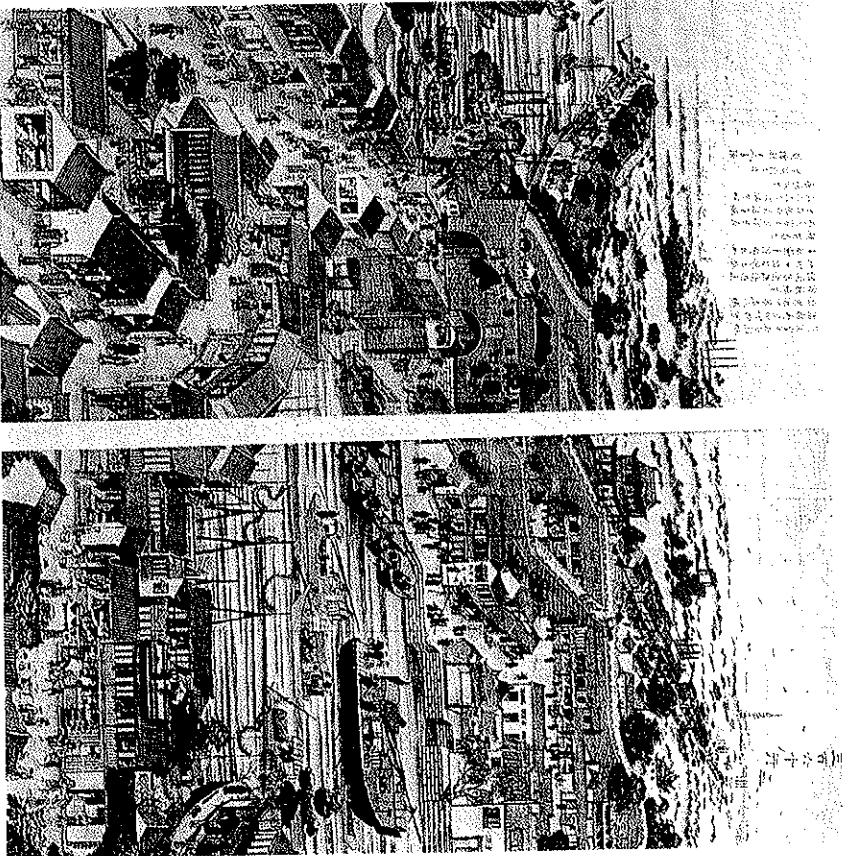
It was in Suzhou, the leading economic and cultural city of China in the early to mid-Qing period, that the large and meticulously rendered luxury prints were produced using Western perspective. This city was also known for its publishing business, which supplied illustrated books in abundance to the Chinese public. In the early Qing period, many craftsmen who had previously engaged in print making moved to Suzhou from other centres of production<sup>24</sup> and manufactured

the first relatively large multi-coloured woodblock prints – featuring, for example, 'beauties' or beautiful women, with auspicious motifs celebrating the coming of the new year. These are called New Year's prints (*nianhua*),<sup>25</sup> they were large in size but were not landscapes or cityscapes, and did not depict architecture showing hints of Sino-Western stylistic influence.

In the early eighteenth century the print shops in the districts of Taohuawu and Shantang<sup>26</sup> in Suzhou initiated the production of some completely new types of New Year's print – intricately composed, meticulously engraved, and including figures in landscapes. They employ the Sino-Western mixture of styles found at court, using a fixed-focus perspective and shading. *Auspicious Dwelling of Minister Taozhu*,<sup>27</sup> *Ladies and Boys in an Elegant Garden*,<sup>28</sup> and *Noble Family Celebrating the New Year*<sup>29</sup> are examples of the new type of Suzhou print. The use of shading undoubtedly came from Western copper engravings, which had been imported into the country beginning in the late Ming period, but the use of single-point perspective in landscape prints was an innovation. Nor had large commercial prints of landscapes been produced previously. Engraved inscriptions reading 'in the manner of Western painting' are sometimes found on these prints.

The prints feature city scenes, popular scenic or tourist spots in Suzhou and other areas, imaginary versions of sites with historical or cultural associations, scenes from popular dramas or novels, and compositions containing auspicious images for the New Year's celebrations. These themes, subjects, and motifs had previously been found in Chinese art: what was new, and what gave rise to a new subject for New Year's prints, was their treatment in landscape-with-architecture settings.<sup>30</sup> The realism with which the setting was depicted marked an innovation in the art of the Qing period. The traditional artistic emphasis in woodblock printing on the forming of images by employing smooth and clear unbroken lines – as opposed to the freehand brush-strokes used in painting – enhanced the linearity characteristic of composition using Western perspective. The period in which these Suzhou landscape prints were being produced coincides with the period in which Castiglione and the Chinese painters at court were actively cooperating to produce paintings in the Sino-Western style that has come to mark the court art of that era.

The earliest-dated pair of Suzhou prints and one of the most celebrated of those extant today is *Encyclopaedic View of Jobs in the City (Sanballushixing tu)* (Fig. 12.5); it was drafted and printed by the Master of Baohujian in 1734. The pair of prints vividly articulates the prosperity of Suzhou, in depicting the area around Changmeng (Heaven's Gate), the busiest water gate and commercial district of the city. It employs the conventional bird's-eye-view perspective, traditional in Chinese art, by looking eastward from outside the gate, but it also



12.5. Master of Baohujian, *Encyclopaedic View of Jobs in the City* (right) and *Changmeng Gate in Suzhou*, dated 1734. Hand-painted woodblock prints: right, 108.7 cm x 55.6 cm, left, 108.6 cm x 55.6 cm. Ohsha'joh Museum of Art, Hiroshima, Japan. Photo courtesy of the Ohsha'joh Museum of Art.

adapts the fixed focal point of Western perspective to portray the city realistically, in smooth diagonal recessions. Though the artist draws the buildings in a typically Chinese isometric manner, the shadows of the houses are cast on the streets, implying the presence of a single source of light from the upper left side. Such a shading technique undoubtedly was appropriated from the hatching seen in Western copper engravings. This calculated shading and the use of a constant single source of light were new in Chinese art, having been uncommon in traditional painting up to this period. The engraved inscription in the upper left

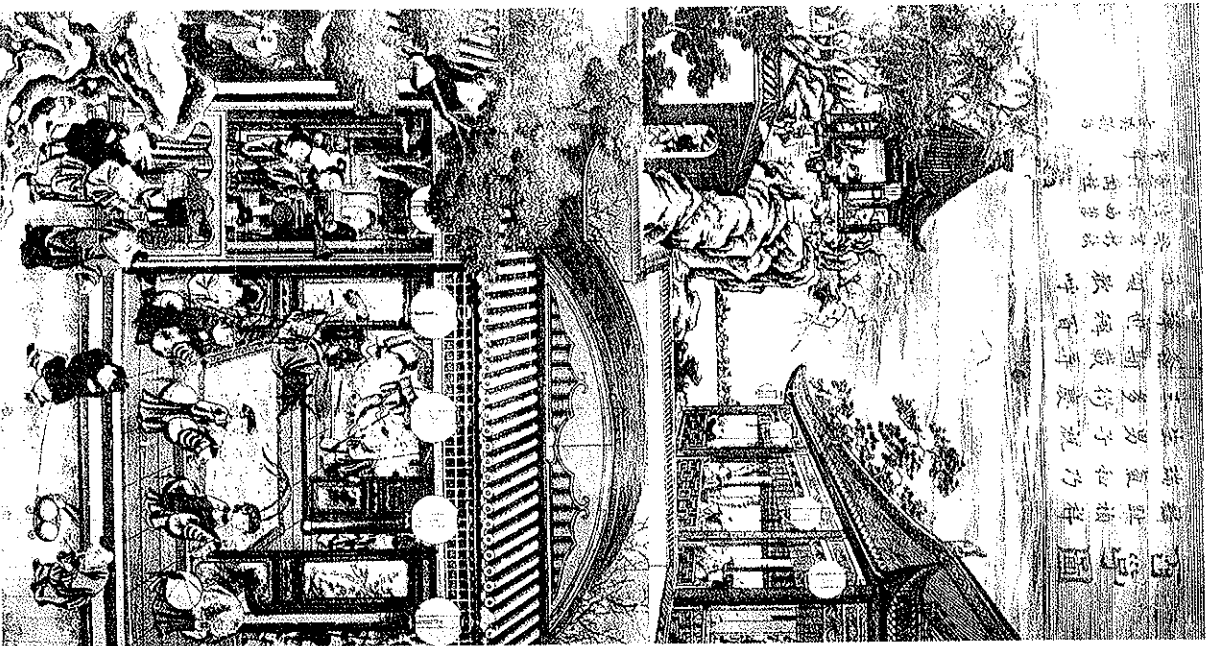
corner of the print eulogizes the city: 'It [Suzhou] gathers commercial goods from all over the world, and its urban affluence can be compared to that of Kaifeng, the capital of the Northern Song.' A bit of regional pride can be found in both the verse and the visual presentation, which uses the most contemporary techniques found in China at the time.

A print that can be traced to an illustrator who had a relative working as a court artist in the early Qianlong Academy is the work entitled *One Hundred Children* (*Barzhu*) (fig. 12.6). It was designed by Zhang Shuchu<sup>31</sup> and issued by Zhang Xingzhu at Taohawu in 1743. Zhang Shuchu was a student from Suzhou who is recorded as having produced landscapes<sup>32</sup> in a manner identical to that of his cousin Zhang Zongcang (1686–1756), a literati-style landscape painter of Suzhou, who later became a leading court artist<sup>33</sup> in the early Qianlong era. The theme of *One Hundred Children* is one of the most popular auspicious subjects for New Year's prints, symbolizing wishes for abundance of offspring and prosperity among one's descendants.

Zhang Shuchu shows a joyful gathering of children in the evening. The composition is filled with boys and girls in every corner. Lanterns lit and hanging on the eaves indicate the time of day, and plum blossoms covered with snow identify the season. The artist combines two scenes, rendered in different styles. The lower half of the composition depicts children riding hobby horses, children playing military general inside a well-decorated house, and children playing with toys shaped like animals with auspicious associations, such as rabbits and fish, in the garden. This lower half is in the conventional Chinese manner. The upper half of the composition, however, which serves as a backdrop for the scene below, uses a mixture of Western and traditional Chinese perspective. On the upper left side, boys are climbing steps towards a viewing terrace, and on the right boys with their maids are in the pavilion cheering the ascending boys. The traditional Chinese perspective of high distance has been used for the viewing terrace, and the Western technique of foreshortening for the pavilion on the right.

The details prove Zhang to be a painter of some calibre. The hanging landscape scroll in the pavilion, in ink bamboo, and the plants and wall painting of trees in the house are drawn with minute attention to detail and a convincing brush. Zhang's treatment of rocks such as those at the base of the terrace and the marvellous garden rock in the left foreground attests to his familiarity with contemporary landscape painting. The formation of the garden rock especially resembles the rock formation typical in the works of Yuan Jiang, a leading landscape painter of Yangzhou, who painted at the court during the Yongzheng era. An inscription at the top bears the sobriquet of Zhang Shuchu and mentions that the artist employed the Western style.



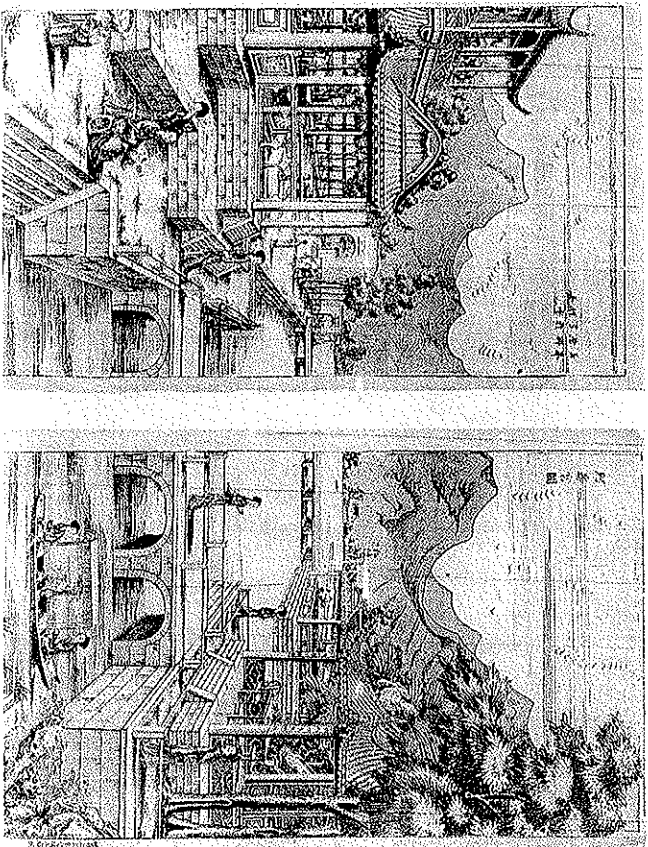


12.6. Zhang Shunchu, *One Hundred Children*, dated 1743. Woodblock print, 102.2 cm × 56.5 cm. Collection unknown.

A large painted hanging scroll that reminds the viewer of the Suzhou prints that use Western perspective is entitled *A Poetic Thought of a New Spring in the Capital*.<sup>34</sup> The work was created by a leading Academy painter, Xu Yang, who came from the Changmeng Gate district of Suzhou. He had already won fame locally as a painter before Emperor Qianlong summoned him to court in 1751. In his hanging scroll Xu employs the same compositional device – a combination of fixed focal point and bird's-eye view – that we have seen in *Encyclopaedic View of Jobs in the City*. The work depicts the city of Beijing, covered with light snow, with hundreds of minute figures going about their activities in the Forbidden City. The artist creates a lively New-Year's-morning atmosphere within an otherwise soundless and austere cityscape. Although it is unlikely that Xu Yang himself designed Suzhou prints, some minor court artists may have returned to Suzhou after their tenure and could have played a role in the production of the new landscape prints by appropriating from painted compositions such as those of Xu. There are no written records of Suzhou print draftsmen being summoned to court, but according to Wang Shacun, draftsmen from Yanglingjing, another major centre of New Year's prints near Tianjin, were summoned to serve at the court during the Qianlong era.<sup>35</sup> It is most likely that artists involved in print making in Suzhou were also called to the service of the emperor at court.

Another work bearing an inscription mentioning that Western style has been used is *The Romance of the Western Chamber* (*Xixiangji*),<sup>36</sup> dated 1747. The title was the name of a popular novel, of which there were many editions, and also of a stage drama. The composition features a bird's-eye view of a temple complex, employing a fixed single focal point. The artist depicts several scenes in the one composition by separating the scenes within architectural structures. This printed composition presents the first seven acts of the drama, and the artist intelligently highlights one of the most significant scenes, in which the hero and heroine first encounter each other at a ceremony, commemorating her late father, in a temple. The two young lovers-to-be, along with other main characters of the drama, are shown inside the Buddha hall, the largest building in the picture, placed in the upper right section. The building is situated closest to the focal point of the composition, and its placement means that the viewer is led to the first climax in this tale of romance.

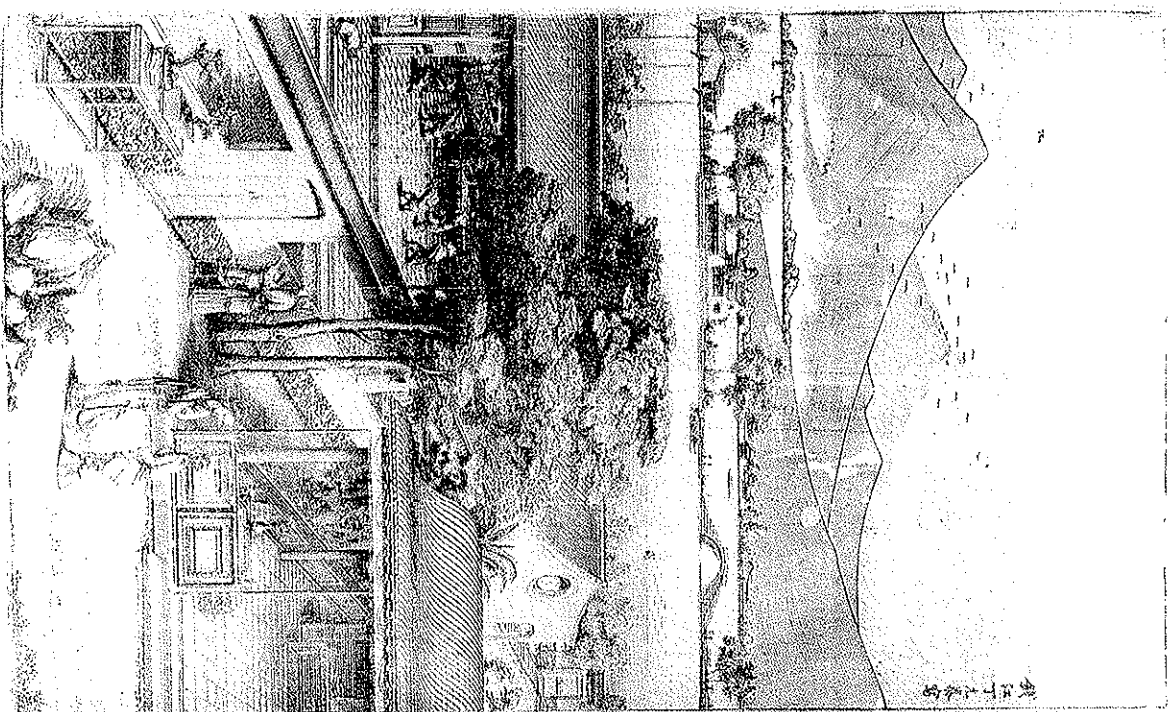
A perspective with a single focal point is employed in a symmetrical pair of prints entitled *Afengong Palace* (fig. 12.7). The date is unknown, but the work was produced by Guan Yudian's print shop of Shijiaxiang in Suzhou. The printed composition portrays the imaginary garden of a palace built by the first emperor of the Qin in 212 BCE. The artist is a certain Guan Lian. The buildings on both sides are depicted in smooth recessions that give realistic depth to the picture. The shadows of the figures and of the piers of the bridge imply a source



12.7. Guan Lian, *Afangong Palace*, eighteenth century. Woodblock prints, each 36 cm x 28 cm. Ohsha'joh Museum of Art, Hiroshima, Japan. Photo courtesy of the Ohsha'joh Museum of Art.

of light on the upper left side. A pair of prints entitled *Playing at the Lotus Pavilion*<sup>37</sup> is similarly composed, but the scene is viewed from the inside of a room in which the ceiling and floor are drawn using Western perspective. The viewer, viewing a blooming lotus pond from inside a pavilion, is given a unique and stunning visual experience – it is as if the viewer is actually in the interior of the room looking out. The realistic treatment of space and depth here and the accurate rendition of the architectural setting may be a good example of the technique of perspective that was acquired from the miniature stage set illustrations in the *Shixue*.

Chinese artists specializing in Western-style portrait painting also created landscape prints. *West Lake (Xihu)* (fig. 12.8) was designed by Ding Yingtai<sup>38</sup> from Qianjian, today's Hangzhou, and issued by Dinglajian of Suzhou. He and his daughter, Ding Yu, were known for their ink and colour portraits in the Western style. The print portrays a dwelling by the West Lake in which two



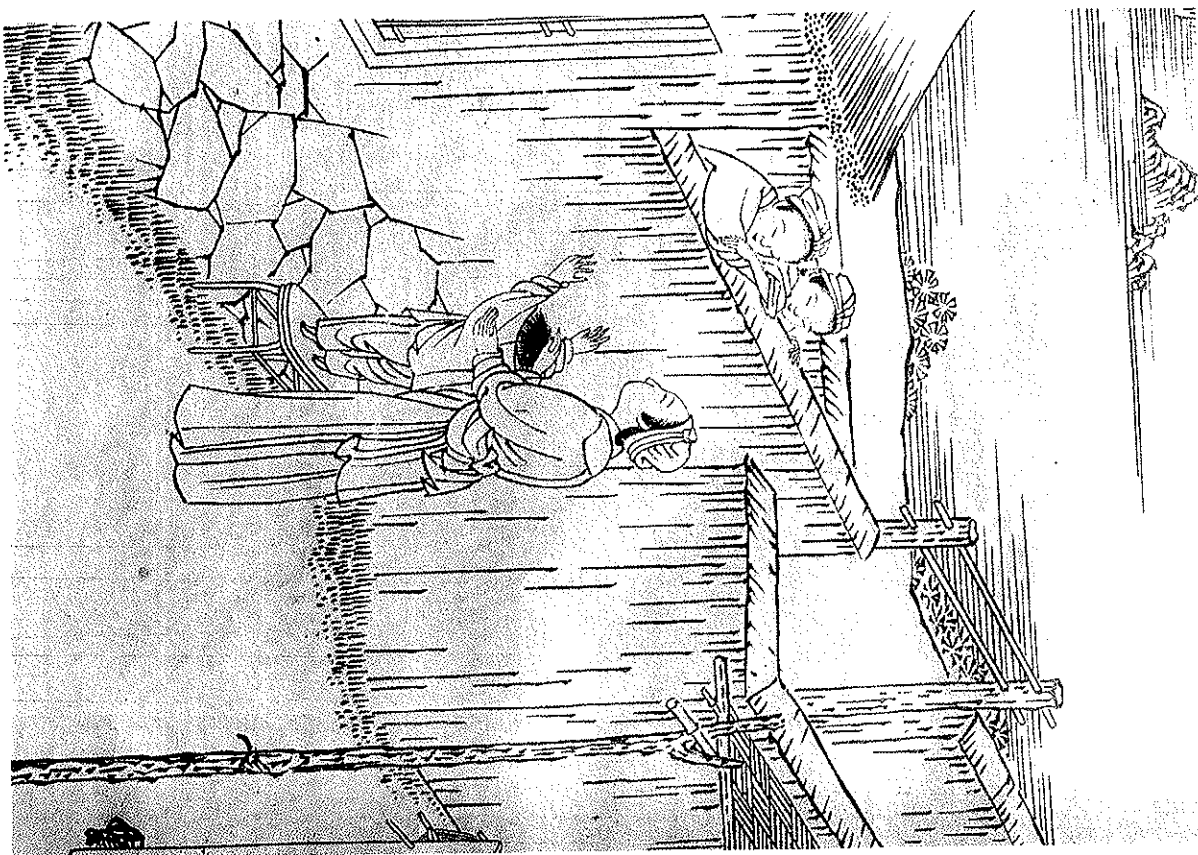
12.8. Ding Yingtai, *West Lake*, early eighteenth century. Woodblock print, 36 cm x 28 cm. Ohsha'joh Museum of Art, Hiroshima, Japan. Photo courtesy of the Ohsha'joh Museum of Art.

ladies are conversing. A little boy is climbing a fence assisted by a maid, and other boys are playing in the house. The quality of the work indicates that Ding Yingtai made a serious study of Western perspective. In fact, we know that Ding studied Jiao Bingzhen's *Rice Farming and Sericulture*, because he has appropriated motifs from Jiao's art in *West Lake*. The most apparent of these motifs in Ding's composition is the little boy being held by his lady attendant, looking over a fence: an almost exactly similar pair of figures appears in Jiao's work (fig. 12.9). In Ding's work, an effective and painstaking use of hatching on the surfaces of objects and on the shadows represented in the picture gives the illusion that this woodblock print might have been produced from a copper engraving. Also noteworthy is the three-dimensional effect of even small motifs such as potted plants on a table, a dog, and trees, which is enhanced by the careful rendering of shadows produced from a single light source on the upper right side of the composition.

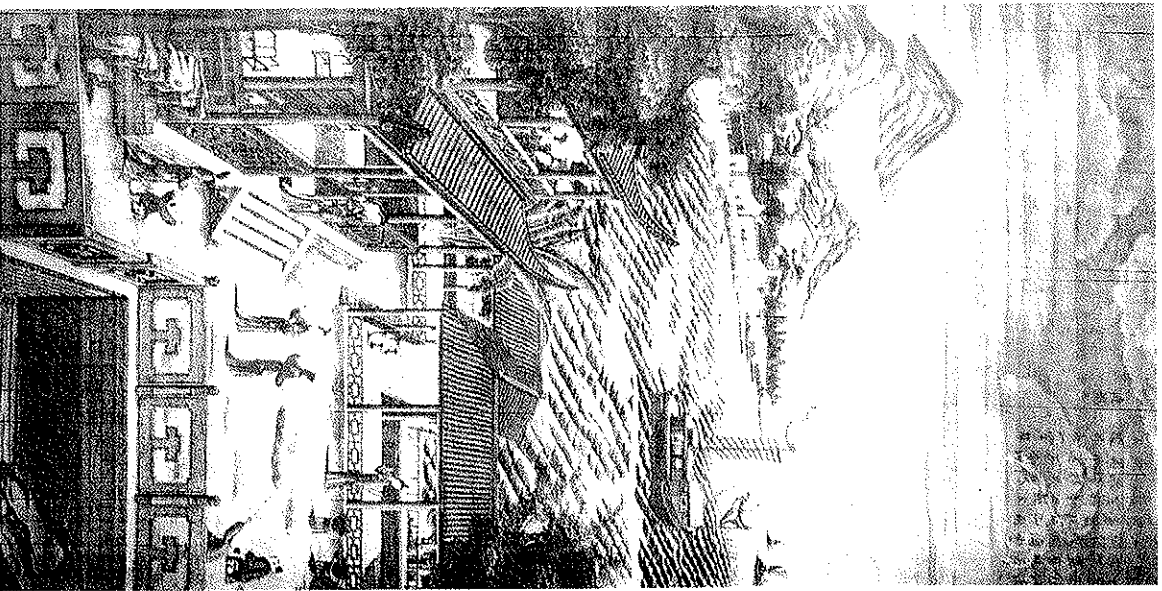
*Tengwange Pavilion* (fig. 12.10),<sup>39</sup> undated, and printed by a certain Mr Guan of Taohawu, is another work typical in its employment of Western techniques to create a realistic depiction of a scene. The work also combines the scholar-artist's tradition of *shiyiu* (poetic thought painting), which had been popular among literati artists in Suzhou since the middle Ming period. The print visualizes a poem about Tengwange by Wang Bo, a celebrated poet of the Tang dynasty: the poem is engraved on the upper right side of the composition with calligraphic strokes, and the scholar-artists' ideal of combining the 'three perfections' of poetry, painting, and calligraphy is thereby realized. However, unlike in the works of literati painting, here the combination of the three arts is made clearer to a wider audience by the actual illustration of what is read in the verses reproduced within the picture itself. Many Suzhou prints were engraved with verses composed and signed by the draftsmen themselves. They indicate that in the mid-eighteenth century, professional painters, often called mere 'artisans,' were educated enough to compose poetry, even though their verses may not have been as refined as Wang Bo's.

In *Tengwange Pavilion*, scenes of lively activity generate a joyous atmosphere celebrating the coming of spring. Ladies in the pavilion and the courtyard amuse themselves by enjoying the view over the Hanjiang River or by watching a boy flying a kite. The foreshortening employed for the pavilion and the hatching used to create shadows on figures and buildings introduce a naturalistic and realistic effect. In the background boats sail on the river, ruffled by the wind. The waves are left blank at intervals, as if to portray the reflections of sunlight.

*New Year's Morning (Suzhou)*,<sup>40</sup> rendered in the Sino-Western style, is another fine example of a poetic thought picture adorned with auspicious motifs celebrating the new year. Cai Weiyuan of Taohawu designed the picture to



12.9. Jiao Bingzhen, 'Reeling Silk Thread' (detail), in *Rice Farming and Sericulture*. Leaf from woodblock printed album, c. 24 cm x 24 cm. From a nineteenth-century reprint.



12.10. Anonymous, *Tengwengge Pavilion*, eighteenth century. Hand-painted woodblock print, 106 x 170 x 54.5 cm. Akita City Akarenga-Kan Museum, Katsumira Tokushi Memorial Gallery, Akita, Japan. Photo courtesy of Akita City Akarenga-Kan Museum.

correspond to the lines of the poem engraved at the top. The picture portrays a section of the city of Suzhou covered lightly with snow. Houses and streets along a canal are depicted in the foreground, a garden with a viewing terrace in the middle ground, and distant snow-covered mountains beyond a river in the background. The sunlight shines from the upper right side, and the shadows cast by the houses on the surface of the water in the canal are depicted using the hatching technique.

The verses engraved above the mountains read 'Plum blossoms and snow compete with each other for the spring; the sound of fireworks announces the coming of the new year; charcoal-burning red in the brazier please boys; and an old gentleman walks towards the viewing terrace with a staff.' The picture represents a clear morning scene after snow. Ladies in the foreground break the branches of plum blossoms, and a boy at the lower left corner lights a firecracker. Inside the house, in the middle ground of the picture, a boy warms his hands over a charcoal brazier. In the back yard by the river, an old gentleman with a staff approaches the terrace. As in the case of *Tengwengge Pavilion*, the picture visualizes exactly what is written in each line of the poetry, and the verses describe exactly what is depicted in the corresponding illustration. This well-designed composition reminds us of Academy paintings in the Sino-Western style such as *Record of the Year's Holidays*. The print is a visual record of how imperial painting styles of the period were assimilated into conventional literati painting.

Prints of any type are difficult to study owing to the lack of specific information on such things as date of production and the background of the artists who produced them. Information is scattered throughout miscellaneous sources, if it can be found anywhere. There have been short references by recent scholars to the fact that the Suzhou prints were produced under the influence of art works imported from the West through the trading ports of Guangdong (Canton), but neither specific examples of such stylistic influence nor specific dating has been offered. In this study I have attempted to present as many dates and names of artists as possible, along with any reliable background information on the artists. More concrete information must be found if we are to reconstruct the cultural and art historical situation of the period. Further study will aid our understanding of the dissemination of court culture to the Qing public.

Large Suzhou prints employing Western perspective were created in the city ateliers, but much circumstantial evidence points to the stylistic influence of court art and to the dissemination of the Sino-Western style by Chinese artists who acquired Western techniques in the Qing Imperial Painting Academy. The Suzhou area produced many talented men for both officialdom and the world of

art and had consequently built strong ties with the court circle by the mid-Qing period. The creation of the Sino-Western style of art would not have been possible without the Qing emperors' acceptance of the art introduced by the Jesuit missionaries; these emperors provided an environment for the nurturing of an innovative style. The Sino-Western style would not have been born without artists such as Castiglione, who persisted in his work through three imperial reigns and accepted and understood Chinese preferences in art. The development of the woodblock printed form of Sino-Western art was possible only in a city such as Suzhou, which had both a long tradition of print making and artists receptive and educated enough to recognize and value the mechanics of the innovative Sino-Western style being developed at the court. The printed works would not have flourished without a sufficient number of customers educated and affluent enough to purchase such luxury goods, which were used only during the holiday seasons. All these factors made possible the development in the cities of Suzhou of prints with landscapes using Western perspective, under the strong influence of a contemporary Sino-Western style of painting representative of court art in the mid-Qing period.

## NOTES

- 1 The word perspective is used in a broad sense in this article. Perspective as understood in Western art is different from perspective as used in traditional Chinese art. Traditional Chinese perspective has been referred to in English by words such as 'vista,' 'distance,' and 'view.' The most significant difference between the perspective drawings of the two cultures is the fact that traditional Chinese perspective used a moving focus or multiple focal points in a single composition. In this article, both Western and Chinese perspective are referred to by the single term 'perspective' and are differentiated by the specification 'Western' or 'Chinese.'
- 2 For a discussion of the first phase, see Hiromitsu Kobayashi, 'Chinese Painting and Western Art Introduced by the Jesuit Missionaries,' in *St. Francis Xavier – An Apostle of the West: The Encounter between Europe and Asia during the Period of the Great Navigations*, vol. 1 (Tokyo, 1999), pp. 172–84.
- 3 Jiao's new style was approved by Kangxi when he created a landscape painting for the emperor in the spring of 1689. Pleased with the accurate calculation of the distances among the components of the landscape, the emperor praised him: 'Jiao Bingzhen, who truly understood astronomy and perspective, successfully assimilated Western styles into Chinese painting.' See Hu Jing, *Gaozhao Yuanhua*, preface dated 1816, vol. 1, reproduced in *Huashi Congshu*, vol. 5 (Shanghai, 1962), pp. 1–2.
- 4 A later edition of the *Congqiu* was printed in 1808, and similar painted versions by

Leng Mei and Chen Mei are found in the collection of the National Palace Museum, Taipei.

- 5 Zhu Gui was best known as a carver for the *Lingyangetu* (Portraits of the Meritorious Retainers of the Hall of Fame), preface dated 1669, illustrations by Liu Yuan. Zhu meticulously engraved twenty-four meritorious retainers of the Tang emperor Taizong for the illustrations for the printed book.
- 6 *Classical Ladies* is a set of twelve album leaves, ink and colour on silk, 30 cm × 21.2 cm, in the collection of the National Palace Museum, Beijing. For a reproduction, see *Court Paintings and Court Painters of the Qing Dynasty: Qingdai gongting huihua*, comp. and ed. National Palace Museum (Beijing, 1992), plate 1.
- 7 *Ten Court Poetries* is an album painting consisting of a set of ten double-spread album leaves with paintings in ink and colour on silk on the right and verses by Prince Hongli (Bao) on the left. The prince's poems were inscribed on the leaves by an official, Liang Shizheng. Each leaf measures 32.2 cm × 42.3 cm. The album is in the collection of the National Palace Museum, Beijing. For a reproduction, see *Court Paintings and Court Painters* (n6 above), plate 3.
- 8 It is recorded that in 1721 Kangxi examined ten oil paintings by Chinese artists. See Takeyoshi Tsuruta, 'Banreki-Kanyukan no Seiyoga no ryunyū to Yōfuga,' in *Chugokuno yōfuga ten*, ed. Shigero Aoki and Hiromitsu Kobayashi (Machida, 1995), p. 443.
- 9 *Beauties in the Shade of the Phoenix Tree* is an eightfold screen, oil on paper, 128.5 cm × 326 cm, in the collection of the National Palace Museum, Beijing. For a reproduction, see *Court Paintings and Court Painters*, plate 30.
- 10 There is a record of a painting by Nian entitled *Four Mynah Birds on a Branch of Logquat* and dated 1734. The written descriptions of the painting imply a stylistic resemblance to Castiglione's realistic rendition of birds. See Zuo Lang, *Huchong Huachuanlu*, preface dated 1795, reproduced in the compendium *Meishu Congshu* ser. 1, book 10 (Taipei, 1969), p. 196.
- 11 Nian Xi Yao was once the superintendent of the Imperial Porcelain Factory. Under his supervision the imperial kiln at Jingdezhen produced fine ceramic works for the court and other purchasers in the early Qing period. Castiglione is believed to have produced designs for ceramic works during the period in which the factory was supervised by Nian. See Cécile and Michel Beurdeley, *Giuseppe Castiglione: A Jesuit Painter at the Court of the Chinese Emperors*, trans. Michael Bullock (Rutland, VT, and Tokyo, 1971), p. 47. Western shading and realism are found in some of the motifs on the wares and porcelain, which later came to be known as Nianyao (Nian's porcelain). For an example of Nianyao porcelain, see plate 111 in *From Beijing to Versailles: Artistic Relations between China and France* (Hong Kong, 1997), pp. 284–5. Nian Xi Yao was also a junior vice-president of the Board

- of Works and a minister of the Imperial Household. See *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, ed. Arthur W. Hummel (Washington, 1943; repr. Taipei, 1975), pp. 588, 590.
- 12 In his preface to the 1729 edition Nian writes that he was able to use Western techniques for Chinese subjects after receiving frequent advice from Castiglione. This preface is reproduced in the 1735 edition of the *Shixue*, a copy of which is in the collection of Bodleian Library, Oxford University.
- 13 For further reading on this topic, see Yang Boda, 'The Development of the Ch'ien-lung Painting Academy,' trans. Jonathan Hay, in *Words and Images: Chinese Poetry, Calligraphy and Painting*, ed. Alfreda Murck and Wen C. Fong (Princeton, 1991), pp. 333–56.
- 14 Two other artists were Yu Xing and Yu Zhi. See Yang Boda, 'The Development,' p. 341.
- 15 *Auspicious Grand Bell* is a hanging scroll, ink and colour on silk, 180.2 cm × 105.6 cm, in the collection of the National Palace Museum, Taipei. For a reproduction, see *Gugong shuhua tulu*, ed. National Palace Museum, vol. 12 (Taipei, 1993), p. 379.
- 16 The dates of extant known works range from 1734 to 1747, but undated works show further developments in style.
- 17 The literati were scholar-gentlemen, the educated elite, who often held government posts. Literati artists in theory were distinct from professionals in that they painted as amateurs; in other words, their paintings were not for sale. By the Ming and Qing periods, however, there were many literati painters who sold their art directly, and many professionals who painted according to literati tastes and in literati styles.
- 18 *Qiantong Inspecting Horses in a Spring Field* is a hand scroll painting created by Castiglione in collaboration with Tang Dai. The work is 46 cm × 446 cm and is in the collection of Fujii Yurinkan, Kyoto. For a reproduction, see the exhibition catalogue entitled *Chugokuno yofuga ten* (n8 above), plate 58.
- 19 *Record of the Year's Holidays* is a hanging scroll, ink and colour on silk, 195 cm × 97 cm, in the collection of the National Palace Museum, Taipei. For reproductions, see *Gugong shuhua tulu*, vol. 14 (Taipei, 1994), pp. 275–97.
- 20 *Baqi* (Eight Banners), established in the Qing dynasty, was a basic administrative and military system consisting of eight units distinguished by the colour of the flags symbolizing each unit. There were eight banners each for the Manchus and for the Mongols and the Chinese. For further information on *Baqi*, see Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford, 1985), p. 134, no. 611. Yang Boda has discovered that the apprentices in the Imperial Painting Academy were originally *sula*, or workmen from the top three Manchu banners. For further reading on this topic, see Yang Boda, 'The Development,' pp. 343–4.
- 21 *Ibid.*, pp. 338, 343.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 343.
- 23 *Ibid.*
- 24 Craftsmen came to work in Suzhou in the late Ming and early Qing periods from Xin'an, Hangzhou, and Nanjing. In the Qing period the number of such craftsmen in the area increased because the publication of vernacular literature was banned in 1652, 1709, and 1714 as part of an attempt to uphold Confucian morality in society, and experienced craftsmen employed in producing illustrations for vernacular literature in other centres lost their jobs. Many of them found positions in which they could utilize their expertise in Suzhou print shops. For further discussion of this topic, see Wang Shucun, *Chungguo minjian nianhuashi tulu*, vol. 1 (Shanghai, 1991), pp. 10–11.
- 25 New Year's pictures could be either paintings or prints. *Emperor Qianlong Enjoying Snow*, mentioned in the text, is a good example of a painted work. Today the term *nianhua*, or New Year's pictures, generally means printed works in the tradition of popular folk art that are produced by unknown local craftsmen from all over China before the holiday seasons. In the Northern Song period, New Year's prints illustrating such images as door-gods and the demon-queller Zhongui were sold at city markets in the capital, Kaifeng, at the end of the year. These printed images were believed to expel bad spirits and to prevent children from succumbing to diseases. Among the prints made in the Jin period (1115–1234) can be found the earliest extant New Year's prints. Two significant examples are *Four Beauties* and *General Guan Wu*. In the Ming and Qing periods, a variety of subjects, including beauties, boys, animals, plants, and other miscellaneous auspicious motifs, were employed in the prints. They all expressed good wishes for long life, wealth, distinction, successful careers, the prosperity of one's descendants, and soon on, as befitting the New Year's celebration. In the early Qing period, Suzhou and Yanglingjing, near Tianjin in Hubei province, became major centres of production of New Year's prints and were known for their high-quality work. Other well-known centres of production in the Ming and Qing periods included Weifang and Yangjiabu in Shandong province, Fengxiang in Shaanxi province, Wudang in Hebei province, and Mianzhu in Sichuan province. For further information on the history of New Year's prints, see Wang Shucun, *Chungguo minjian nianhuashi tulu*, vols 1 and 2 (n24 above).
- 26 During the Yongzheng and Qianlong eras, there were more than fifty print shops in the districts of Taohuawu and Shantang, which manufactured more than a million prints a year. See *Suzhou Shihua, Jiangsu renmin chubanshe*, ed. Liao Jiao et al. (Suzhou, 1980), p. 193.
- 27 *Auspicious Dwelling of Minister Taozhu*, 107.2 cm × 53.9 cm, is in the collection of the Ohsha Joh Museum of Art, Hiroshima. For a reproduction, see *Chugokuno yofuga ten* (n8 above), p. 398.

- 28 *Ladies and Boys in an Elegant Garden*, 100.1 cm × 50.5 cm, is in the collection of the Ohsha'joh Museum of Art. For a reproduction, see *ibid.*, p. 57.
- 29 *Noble Family Celebrating the New Year*, 105.7 cm × 55.3 cm, is in the collection of the Ohsha'joh Museum of Art. For a reproduction, see *ibid.*, p. 400.
- 30 Although Suzhou prints are for the most part New Year's pictures, extant examples suggest that some were used to celebrate other events, such as the Harvest Moon or the construction of a new bridge.
- 31 For a biography of Zhang Shuchu and Zhang Zongcang, see Zhang Geng, *Guozhao Huazhengxulu*, vol. 2, prefaces dated 1735 and 1739, vol. 2, reproduced in *Huashi Congshu* (n3 above), pp. 104–5.
- 32 *Ibid.*
- 33 When Qianlong visited Suzhou in 1751 on the first of his southern inspection tours, Zhang Zongcang presented him with an album of landscapes depicting the scenery of Suzhou and its vicinity. He was immediately summoned to the court. See Yang Boda, 'The Development,' p. 345.
- 34 *A Poetic Thought of a New Spring in the Capital* is a hanging scroll, ink and colour on silk, 255 cm × 233.8 cm, in the collection of the National Palace Museum, Beijing. For a reproduction, see *Court Paintings and Court Painters* (n6 above), plate 106.
- 35 See Wang Shucun, *Chungguo minjian nianhuashe tude*, vol. 1, p. 13.
- 36 *The Romance of the Western Chamber*, 96.5 cm × 53 cm, is in a private collection in Kyoto, Japan. For a reproduction, see *Chugokuno yofuga ten*, p. 61.
- 37 The prints that make up the pair entitled *Playing at the Lotus Pavilion* are 73.6 cm × 56 cm (right print) and 74.6 cm × 56.3 cm (left print). The pair is in the collection of the Ohsha'joh Museum of Art. For a reproduction, see the exhibition catalogue entitled *Chugoku kodaihangata ten* (Machida, 1988), p. 261.
- 38 For a biography of Ding Yingtai and Ding Yu, see *Guozhao Huazhengxulu*, vol. 2, pp. 116–17.
- 39 Tengwangge pavilion, near Nanchang, was built by Li Yuanying, the twenty-second son of Tang Gaozu, when he became King Teng. For biographical accounts of King Teng, see the reproduction of *Jiu Tangshu*, vol. 64, Liezhuan 14, Gaozi Ershierzi, in *Ershi wu Shi* [Histories of Twenty-five Successive Dynasties], vol. 5 (Shanghai, 1986), p. 293. The poet Wang Bo visited the pavilion and composed the poem in 659 ce. For further information on the poem, see *Toshi Sen*, ed. Maeno Naoki (Tokyo, 1961), pp. 62–4.
- 40 *New Year's Morning*, 97.8 cm × 53.9 cm, is in the collection of the Ohsha'joh Museum of Art. For a reproduction, see *Chugokuno yofuga ten*, p. 385.

## PART THREE

### Scientific Knowledge, the Order of Nature, and Natural Theology