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STUDIES IN LATE QING DYNASTY BATTLE PAINTINGS*

PART ONE

DOCUMENTS FOR FOUR CHINESE BATTLE PAINTINGS
IN WESTERN COLLECTIONS

In his seminal work on European culture in the late medieval period, Johan Huizinga (1872–1945) observed that history has always been more possessed by the problem of origins and development than by those of decline and fall. He writes: “When studying any period, we are always looking for the promise of what the next is to bring.”¹ This observation still holds true if applied to the study of nineteenth-century Chinese art, a burgeoning field in recent years. Thus, in art historical discourse on this period, much attention has been given to the search for the origins of modern Chinese culture. Many works have focused on the artistic productions shaped by new cultural forces, such as Sino-western pictures, popular prints, early photography, and above all paintings of the Shanghai School. The nineteenth century has been treated as if it had been no more than the infancy of modern China. Consequently, the contemporary court cultural production has been largely neglected.

Since the art at the late Qing court has been so poorly studied that reliable dates and attributions have not been established for even the most important artworks commissioned by the Manchu court, I want to postpone the reappraisal of the nature of the Chinese art during the nineteenth century. The present study considers dating and attribution problems of four large battle paintings in Western collections – one painting in the Mrs. Cécile McTaggart Collection, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada (fig. 1), two paintings in the National Gallery, Prague (figs. 2–3), and another in the Royal Collection at Sandringham House, Norfolk, England (fig. 4). This analysis is followed by a second, related study, that assesses a work available in two versions respectively in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, and the National History Museum, Beijing. A crucial technique applied to both studies is the use of the documents in the *Zhongguo diyi lishi dang’anguan* (Chinese First Historical Archives) in Beijing, in connection with other newly discovered visual and textual materials.

* This article grew out of one chapter in my Ph.D. thesis, “Wu Youru’s ‘The Victory over the Taiping’: Painting and Censorship in 1886 China,” (London, University of London, 1999), on the 1885 imperial commission of a series of paintings commemorating the victory over the Taiping. During my research on my doctoral project, Roderick Whitfield has always been the prime source of guidance and encouragement. I also thank Wang Tao, Paul Moss, Fang Yujin, Man-jong Ou, Christopher Lloyd, Barbara Allred, Lucie Borotova, Ladislav Kesner, Cecile McTaggart, and colleagues at the Palace Museum, the Chinese First Historical Archives, the National History Museum, and the National Palace Museum, for their valuable support at various stages of my research. Huang Yin has read an early version of this article and helped to smooth the English. Roderick Whitfield has checked the language of the final version; I am grateful for their generous help.

1 Johan Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (London: Peregrine, 1965), 7.

In 1992, the McTaggart painting was shown in the exhibition, *Transcending Turmoil: Painting at the Close of China's Empire 1796–1911*, in the Phoenix Art Museum.² Claudia Brown, a curator of the exhibition, identified the subject of the painting as a battle in the Taiping Rebellion (1851–64), based on a study of the cartouches.³ In a related article she also put forward a hypothesis that the painting may have belonged to a series of military paintings commemorating the dynastic victory over the Taiping Rebellion, commissioned by the late Qing court.⁴ She was probably encouraged to offer that hypothesis by the existence of the three paintings in Prague and at Sandringham House, for all of these share a similar imperial style, being executed on the same material and having identical measurements. It is not only these pieces in Western collections that support Brown's speculation, the Palace Museum in Beijing also possesses twelve battle paintings that match the McTaggart painting in both their measurements and general stylistic features (fig. 5). The major differences in the case of the Palace Museum paintings are that each of them is accompanied by a text (fig. 6), indicating the particular battle represented, and recording the government's military campaign against the Muslim Rebellion in Yunnan and Guizhou (1856–74), rather than that against the Taiping. These differences, however, may advance Brown's hypothesis a step further. The disparity of the subject matter may actually indicate that the scope of the imperial commission was larger than Brown has suggested; the commission included, but was not limited to, the campaign against the Taiping Rebellion. The absence of any text on the four paintings in Western collections might have resulted from loss at some later time.⁵

The evidence that supports the hypothesis exists in the Chinese First Historical Archives.⁶ Under the heading of the Junjichu dang'an (Archives of the Grand Council) there is a category for visual documents called Yutu (The Maps Depository), which was begun with the standardization of the Grand Council in the late 1730s and contains visual documents presented originally together with memorials by the council to the throne.⁷ These visual documents are divided into seven sections:⁸ the first includes atlases of administrative divisions, maps of individual regions, and city plans; the second comprises the maps of the Yangzi River and the Yellow River, and of the coastlines; the third concerns the Grand Canal; the fourth records battles and battlefields in major military events of the dynasty; the fifth documents the royal tours and visits; the sixth registers locations and buildings of monasteries

2 Claudia Brown and Ju-hsi Chou, *Transcending Turmoil: Painting at the Close of China's Empire, 1796–1911*, exhibition catalogue (Phoenix: Phoenix Art Museum, 1992), pl. 5.

3 *Ibid.*, 31. Brown does not specify the battle, the painting is simply titled *Battle Scene from the Taiping Rebellion*.

4 Claudia Brown, "Transcending Turmoil: Painting at the Close of China's Empire, 1796–1911," *Orientalism* 24, no. 4 (April 1993), 66–67.

5 See note 12.

6 Beijing, Chinese First Historical Archives (hereafter cited as CFHA), I. Archives of the Qing dynasty, A. The Central Administration Archives, 3. The Grand Council Archives. For the current classification system of the archives, see Qin Guojin, *Zhonghua Ming-Qing Zhengdang Zhinan* (A Guide to the Archives of the Ming and Qing dynasties), [Beijing] Renmin chubanshe, 1994), Appendix 1. "Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'anguan suocang Ming-Qing dang'an ge quanzong yilan biao" (An Overview of the System for the Ming and Qing Archives in the Chinese First Historical Archives), 243–46.

7 For the institutional history of the Grand Council, see Beatrice S. Bartlett, *Monarchs and Ministers: The Grand Council in Mid-Ch'ing China, 1723–1820* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), particularly Part Two, Chapter 5, 137–168. For the category of Maps Depository in the Grand Council archives, see Qin Guojin (1994), 45–48.

8 Qin Guojin (1994), 112.

and temples, and matters relevant to religions; and the seventh details imperial mausolea. Separated from the memorials that accompanied them as they entered the archives, these visual documents form an independent class. Various hands have contributed to the filing of documents over the years and the cross-referencing to the memorials was complex and not always consistent. It is therefore difficult to assess the precise date of some items.

Among the documents in the fourth section of the archives are the cartoons for the four paintings in Western collections,⁹ as well as for the twelve paintings in the Palace Museum (fig. 11). The inscriptions on the four cartoons help to identify the particular subject-matter of the six paintings: the McTaggart painting depicts the battle at Tongcheng in Hubei province on December 10, 1857 during the Taiping War; the two paintings in the National Gallery, Prague, represent the scenes in the government campaign against the Nian Rebellion (1851–68): the defeat of the troops of a chief rebel Zhang Minhang in Shandong province in October 1861, and the triumphant procession of the government troops which completed the campaign in August 1868; and the Sandringham painting describes a battle between the government troops under the command of Duo-long-a (1817–64) and the rebels in the region of Wei River in Shaanxi province in August 1863, one of the numerous battles during the campaign against the Muslim Rebellion (1862–78) in Shaanxi, Gansu and Xinjiang provinces.¹⁰

The four paintings, as well as the twelve in the Palace Museum, form part of a single commission that involved many more paintings, as we learn from the way in which their respective cartoons are grouped in the section. Research on other pieces in the section shows that the sixteen cartoons are part of a group which contains sixty-seven cartoons in total, namely twenty paintings for the Taiping War, eighteen paintings for the Nian Rebellion, twelve paintings for the Muslim Rebellion in Yunnan and Guizhou, and seventeen paintings for another Muslim Rebellion in the Northwest.¹¹

These sixty-seven cartoons probably formed the total number of paintings in the commission, for the twelve cartoons of the campaign in Yunnan and Guizhou squarely match the twelve paintings of the same subject in the Palace Museum, Beijing. This suggestion has been confirmed by the discovery of the photographic record of some of the finished paintings. Two photographic albums, which record the paintings for the victory over the Taiping and the Nian Rebellion, exist in the Peking University Library, and they contain exactly the same number of pictures as the cartoons of the two subjects (see Appendix 1).¹²

Like the finished paintings, the cartoons are not dated or signed and give little information about the patronage of the commission. Some of the documents produced during the commission which have

9 Beijing, CFHA, Maps Depository of the Grand Council, nos. 364, 380, 392, 395.

10 For works on the Nian and Muslim Rebellions, see Siang-tseh Chiang, *The Nien Rebellion* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1954); Wen-djang Chu, *The Muslim Rebellion in Northwest China, 1862–1878: A Study of Government Minority Policy* (The Hague: Mouton, 1966).

11 Beijing, CFHA, Maps Depository of the Grand Council, nos. 256–422.

12 Peking University Library, Special Collection, *Pingding Yuefei zhantu zhaopian* (The Photographs of the Battle Scenes from the Victory over the Taiping Rebellion); *Pingding Nianfei zhantu zhaopian* (The Photographs of the Battle Scenes from the Victory over the Nian Rebellion). Apart from showing the paintings, both albums also contain photographs of the original texts attached to the paintings (figs. 7–8), which confirm that the texts belonging with the four paintings under discussion have been lost.

been discovered recently in the Grand Council archives are invaluable sources in identifying the nature of this commission: these include four letters to the Grand Council by Yihuan (1840–91), the father of the young Emperor Guangxu (reigned 1875–1908), and various types of the Grand Council records.¹³ These documents inform us that the court initiated the painting project to commemorate the government victory over three major rebellions in the mid-nineteenth century – the Taiping Rebellion, the Nian Rebellion, and the Muslim Rebellion in both the northwest and southwest – immediately after the peace agreement between China and France over the Vietnam controversy was signed in June 1885.¹⁴ Due to the large scale of the commission, Yihuan acted as the commissioner. In November 1885, the Grand Council was assigned the task of selecting the subjects. Three clerks in the council, composed of one Senior Secretary (*dalami*) and two Junior Secretaries (*zhangjing*), were responsible for each war.¹⁵ Their duties included studying official documents and drafting a list of subjects. The workshop to carry out the execution of the paintings was established under the Shenjiying (Beijing Field Forces),¹⁶ a modern-trained troop of Bannermen guarding the capital. On March 11, 1886, the group of clerks for the Taiping Rebellion discharged their duty and submitted their proposal on the subject-

13 Peking, CFHA, A, 3: The Grand Council Logbook (*Suishoudang*), the entries on Guangxu (hereafter cited as GX) 12/2/6 (March 11, 1886), GX12/2/16 (March 21, 1886); Record Book of Imperial Edicts (*Shangyudang*), undated between two entries on GX12/2/6 (March 11, 1886) and GX12/2/7 (March 12, 1886), the entry on GX12/2/16 (March 21, 1886); Record Book of Lateral Communications (*Jiaofadang*), the entry on GX12/2/16 (March 21, 1886); Memorial Packet Copy of Palace Memorials (*Lufu zouzhe*), undated between two entries on GX12/2/6 (March 11, 1886) and GX12/2/7 (March 12, 1886); and Miscellaneous Documents – Yihuan's Letters (*Zajianlei, Chun qingwang xin*), GX11/10/5 (November 11, 1885), GX11/11/26 (December 31, 1885), GX12/8/14 (September 11, 1886), GX12/10/30 (November 25, 1886). The first three letters by Yihuan have been published by Fang Yujin, "Qing Chunqingwang Yihuan xinhan xuan" (Selected Letters by Yihuan Prince Chun), *Lishi dang'an*, 1982.4, 33–40.

For general biographical information on Yihuan and Guangxu, see Arthur W. Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period 1644–1912* (hereafter cited as *ECCP*) (Washington, D.C.: United States Printing Office, 1944), 384–86, 731–34.

14 *Ibid.*, Miscellaneous Documents – Yihuan's Letters, GX11/10/5 (November 11, 1885). In this letter the Sino-French War (1881–85) is also included in the project: "I have seen the list of each war and the names and the ranks of the officials who participated in the campaigns. This project of painting, as far as my humble opinion is concerned, differs from previous ones which only focus on either one campaign or the merits of a few commanders. If our case is not treated with great care, many important events will be omitted. It might be proper therefore to divide the project into four groups: the first group is about the Taiping Rebellion, the second the Nian Rebellion, the third the Muslim Rebellion which also should be divided into two sub-groups: one is about the rebellion in Yunnan province, the other in Ili, and the last group concerns the Sino-French War in Vietnam." But this last idea was probably soon abandoned, since some contemporary accounts of the commission mention only the three mid-century rebellions. For example, Jichang, *Xingshuzhai zaji* (Miscellaneous Notes of the Xingshu Studio), facsimile of 1901 edition (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1984), second half of the volume, 7b. This may explain why there is no single cartoon representing the Sino-French War in the archives.

15 *Ibid.*, GX11/11/26 (December 31, 1885). Yihuan writes: "I suggest that we assign four *dalami*, each with two *zhangjing*, to be in charge of the four groups respectively."

16 *Ibid.*, Record Book of Imperial Edicts, the entry on GX12/2/16 (March 21, 1886): "Deliver to the Beijing Field Forces. The Grand Council presented the twenty edicts issued regarding the suppression of the Taiping Rebellion. Today, the councilors received respectfully the Cixi duanyou kangyi yuzhuangcheng Empress Dowager's order: deliver the twenty edicts to the Beijing Field Forces and order it to make paintings and present them to the throne." See also The Grand Council Logbook, the entry on GX12/2/16 (March 21, 1886); Record Book of Lateral Communications, the entry on GX12/2/16 (March 21, 1886).

matter of twenty items (see Appendix 2).¹⁷ Empress Dowager Cixi (1835–1908) approved the subject matter on March 21, and it was immediately handed down to the painting workshop in the Beijing Field Forces.¹⁸ The subject matter for the Nian Rebellion was approved in September and went to the workshop immediately afterwards.¹⁹ When the selection of the subject-matter for the Muslim Rebellion was completed is not documented.

Names of the painters in the workshop are not given in the archives. Yet these painters were almost certainly under the command of Qingkuan (1848–1927).²⁰ We learn this from a highly reliable colophon by a certain Wang Yu on a landscape painting by Qingkuan (Appendix 3),²¹ which notes that it was through Yihuan's recommendation that Qingkuan was placed in charge of the execution of the project.²² The colophon gives a detailed treatment of the life of this Bannerman painter which is otherwise little known. According to Wang, Qingkuan was born into the Zhaojia clan and was a member of the Plain Yellow Chinese Banner. It seems that he had been under Yihuan's patronage since he was very young. As an adult Qingkuan worked as a secretary in several institutions such as The Beijing Field Forces, the Linggong (Imperial Mausoleum Work), the Haijun yamen (Board of Naval Affairs), all of which were under Yihuan's supervision. At the same time he seemed to have acquired painting skills in various subjects through diligent study. It was probably due to his close connections with Yihuan that his talent in painting was quickly recognized at court. From the 1880s, Qingkuan was appointed director of almost every major imperial art commission. Apart from the commission of the military paintings under discussion, he was in charge of the architectural decoration of the Summer Palace, the painting projects for Guangxu's wedding ceremony (1889) and Cixi's sixtieth birthday (1893). At the peak of his official career Qingkuan chaired three institutions of the Neiwufu (Imperial Household): Shangsiyuan (the Palace Stud), Wubeiyuan (Court of Imperial Armaments), and Fengchenyuan (Imperial Parks Administration).

The same colophon also notes that the commission commemorating government victory over three major rebellions was completed by 1890, and that the paintings were made for the Ziguangge (Purple Effulgence Pavilion) in the Sanhai (Sea Palace). We also know that this building had been a spe-

17 *Ibid.*, The Grand Council Logbook, the entry on GX12/2/6 (March 11, 1886): "Deliver the memorandum about the edicts regarding the suppression of the Taiping Rebellion issued during the war time, and the list of the twenty edicts. Chen and Shen on the sixth day of the second month." The twenty items are given in Record Book of Imperial Edicts, the undated entry between two entries on GX12/2/6 (March 11, 1886) and GX12/2/7 (March 12, 1886). Another copy is in Memorial Packet Copy of Palace Memorials, the undated entry between two entries on GX12/2/6 (March 11, 1886) and GX12/2/7 (March 12, 1886).

18 See footnote 16. For a brief biography of Cixi, see *ECCP*, 295–300.

19 *Ibid.*, Miscellaneous Documents – Yihuan's Letters. GX12/8/14 (September 11, 1886): "Today, by imperial decree we delivered a series of edicts regarding the suppression of the Nian Rebellion (to the Beijing Field Forces), which are again only the extracts of the full texts. Please remind the Southern Quarters of this and ask them to supply a full list of the people who received reward."

20 Qingkuan's dates are given by his descendant Zhao Zhengjin. See Zhao Zhengjin, "Yiwei zhide zhongshi de gongting huajia" (A Noteworthy Court Painter), *Guangming ribao*, July 14, 1985.

21 The reliability of Wang's colophon can be verified by the correspondence between the available documents about Qingkuan and the relevant passages in the colophon. See the footnotes for Appendix 3.

22 *Ibid.*

cial place for displaying and storing military paintings since the mid-eighteenth century,²³ and that when these paintings entered the building, the battle scenes commissioned by Qianlong (reigned 1736–96) had been taken off the walls in order to display the new ones.²⁴ These paintings remained on the walls of the pavilion until they began to be dispersed in the summer of 1900, when the Eight Allied Forces of the Western Powers seized Beijing and were stationed in the Sea Palace during the Boxer Uprising.²⁵

23 For studies of the functions of the pavilion and analysis of the Purple Effulgence Pavilion as the architectural setting of the battle paintings, see Zhang Hongxing, “Wu Youru’s ‘The Victory over the Taiping’: Painting and Censorship in 1886 China,” 186–96. See also Walter Fuchs, “Die Schlachtenbilder aus Turkestan von 1765 als historische Quelle,” *Monumenta Serica* 4, (1939/40), 116–24; Wu Kong, “Ziguangge he Qianlong de Shiquan wugong” (The Purple Effulgence Pavilion and the Ten Complete Victories in the Qianlong Reign) *Beijing Wenshi* 1995.1, 17–20.

24 Beijing, CFHA, C.5: Record of Imperial Parks Administration, New System, GX15/11/1 (November 23, 1889).

25 Di Chuqing, *Pingdengge biji* (Notebook of the Pingdeng Studio), (Shanghai: Youzheng shuju, n.d.), vol. 1, 3b. Di records his visit to the building in the summer of 1900, describes how the staircases to the upper tier inside the building had been destroyed, and writes of how books were scattered on the floor. He also notes that the paintings depicting the victory over the Nian and Muslim Rebellions in the Northwest were still on the walls of the ground floor.

APPENDIX I
A Check List of the Battle Scenes from the Commission

PM (Palace Museum, Beijing)

CFHA (Chinese First Historical Archives, Beijing)

BUL (Beijing University Library)

NG (National Gallery, Prague)

McT. (Mrs. Cécile McTaggart Collection, Canada)

Royal Coll. (Royal Collection, Sandringham House, Norfolk)

No.	Subject	Cartoon	Painting	Photograph
<i>The Taiping Rebellion</i>				
1	Huaiqing	CFHA		BUL
2	Dulu	CFHA		BUL
3	Linqing	CFHA		BUL
4	Yuezhou	CFHA		BUL
5	Qizhou	CFHA		BUL
6	Xunjiang	CFHA		BUL
7	Lianzhen	CFHA		BUL
8	Fengguantun	CFHA		BUL
9	Tongcheng	CFHA	McT	BUL
10	Wuchang	CFHA		BUL
11	Ruizhou	CFHA		BUL
12	Huaitong	CFHA		BUL
13	Anqing	CFHA		BUL
14	Yuhuatai	CFHA		BUL
15	Jiufuzhu	CFHA		BUL
16	Shi Dakai	CFHA		BUL
17	Shuzhou	CFHA		BUL
18	Hangzhou	CFHA		BUL
19	Jiangning	CFHA		BUL
20	Hong Fuzhen	CFHA		BUL

The Nian Rebellion

1	Haozhou	CFHA		BUL
2	Qiuho & Zhengyang	CFHA		BUL
3	Liuan	CFHA		BUL
4	Changhuai	CFHA		BUL
5	Zhang Minhang	CFHA	NG	BUL
6	Biantang	CFHA		BUL
7	Pingyu	CFHA		BUL

No.	Subject	Cartoon	Painting	Photograph
8	Qixian	CFHA		BUL
9	Taoqingshan & Jinhe	CFHA		BUL
10	Sucheng	CFHA		BUL
11	Shaanzhou & Yongning	CFHA		BUL
12	Juheji	CFHA		BUL
13	Mengcheng	CFHA		BUL
14	Ganyu	CFHA		BUL
15	Gaobao	CFHA		BUL
16	Changzhou & Yanshan	CFHA		BUL
17	Zhang Zongyu	CFHA		BUL
18	Triumph	CFHA	NG	BUL

The Muslim Rebellion (Yunnan and Yuizhou)

1	Chuxiong & Jingdong	CFHA	PM	
2	Xingyi	CFHA	PM	
3	Qujing	CFHA	PM	
4	Zhenxiong	CFHA	PM	
5	Chengjiang	CFHA	PM	
6	Chengjiang	CFHA	PM	
7	Xingyi	CFHA	PM	
8	Zhaozhou & Menghuating	CFHA	PM	
9	Guizhou	CFHA	PM	
10	Dali	CFHA	PM	
11	Shunning & Xila	CFHA	PM	
12	Yunnan	CFHA	PM	

The Muslim Rebellion (Shaanxi, Gansu and Xinjiang)

1	Wanggecun & Qiangbaizhen	CFHA		
2	Changtouzhen	CFHA		
3	Weihe	CFHA	Royal Coll.	
4	Pingliangfu	CFHA		
5	Baofeng	CFHA		
6	Gaojiabao	CFHA		
7	Guyuan & Xiaohe	CFHA		
8	Heichengzi	CFHA		
9	Langzhou	CFHA		
10	Didaozhou	CFHA		
11	Hezhou	CFHA		
12	Wulumuqi	CFHA		

No.	Subject	Cartoon	Painting	Photograph
13	Manasinan	CFHA		
14	Daban & Tulufan	CFHA		
15	Kala & Shaerku	CFHA		
16	Akesu & Wushi	CFHA		
17	Triumph	CFHA		

APPENDIX 2

Twenty Subjects Selected for the Commission Victory over the Taiping Rebellion (Beijing, CFHA, A, 3: Record Book of Imperial Edicts, microfiche no. 331)

Twenty imperial decrees regarding the Pacification of the Yue Bandits received:

- Rescuing of the Huaiqing prefect from siege, the fourth day of the eighth moon of the third year, Xianfeng reign (September 6, 1853).
- Destroying of the Dulu traitors, the thirteenth day of tenth moon of the third year, Xianfeng reign (November 13, 1853).
- Regaining of Linqing city, the twenty-eighth day of the third moon of the fourth year, Xianfeng reign (April 25, 1854).
- Regaining of Yuezhou city, the twenty-second day of the seventh moon of the fourth year, Xianfeng reign (August 15, 1854).
- Destroying of the bandit lairs in Tianjiazhen, the twenty-ninth day of the tenth moon of the fourth year, Xianfeng reign (December 18, 1854).
- Sweeping of the rebels out of the Xun River, the second day of the twelfth moon of the fourth year, Xianfeng reign (January 19, 1855).
- Overcoming of Lianzhen, the twenty-first day of the first moon of the fifth year, Xianfeng reign (March 9, 1855).
- Occupation of Fengguantun, the eighteenth day of the fourth moon of the fifth year, Xianfeng reign (June 2, 1855).
- Occupation of Tongcheng, the twenty-fifth day of the ninth moon of the fifth year, Xianfeng reign (November 4, 1855).
- Vanquishing of Wuchang city, the twenty-eighth day of the eleventh moon of the sixth year, Xianfeng reign (December 25, 1856).
- Overcoming of Ruichou city, the fifth day of the eighth moon of the seventh year, Xianfeng reign (September 22, 1857).
- Destroying of the bandits' lairs at Tongcheng and other places, the twenty-fifth day of the eleventh moon of the tenth year, Xianfeng reign (January 5, 1861).
- Occupation of Anqing city, the twenty-fifth day of the eighth moon of the eleventh year, Xianfeng reign (September 29, 1861).

- Lifting of the siege of Yuhuatai, Jinning, the eighth day of the eleventh moon of the first year, Tongzhi reign (December 28, 1862).
- Overcoming of the Isle of Jiufu and other strategic passes, the fifth day of the sixth moon of the second year, Tongzhi reign (July 20, 1863).
- Capture of the major traitors such as Shi Dakai and others, the twelfth day of the sixth moon of the second year, Tongzhi reign (July 27, 1863).
- Occupation of Suzhou city, the fourth day of the eleventh moon of the second year, Tongzhi reign (December 14, 1863).
- Overcoming of Hangzhou and Yuhang cities, the twelfth day of the third moon of the third year, Tongzhi reign (April 17, 1864).
- Overcoming of Jiangning city, the twenty-ninth day of the sixth moon of the third year, Tongzhi reign (August 1, 1864).
- Capture of Junior traitor Hong Fuzhen, the eleventh day of the tenth moon of the third year, Tongzhi reign (November 9, 1864).

APPENDIX 3

Colophon by Wang Yu, dated in correspondence with 1915, on a landscape by Qingkuan. Handscroll in a private collection, Beijing.

I met Mr. Qing, Xiaoshan, in our late years. But our spiritual communication began thirty years ago. In the tenth year of the Guangxu reign (1884) when I was working for Mr. Zeng Zongxiang²⁶ the governor-general of Liangjiang, I learned his name. I was told at that time that he had been entrusted by Prince Chun²⁷ with the inspection of the newly-established School of Infantry and Navy, and that he had been praised by the prince for his work. In the following year when the renovation work of the Purple Effulgence Pavilion was finished, the court ordered the setting up of a workshop to paint the battle scenes and the portraits of the meritorious servitors from the three campaigns – The Taiping, Moslems, and Nian – for the hall. Upon Prince Chun's recommendation, Mr. Qing was put in charge of this commission, which was finally finished six years later, with one hundred and several tens of scrolls being made.²⁸ During this period, in the tenth year (1884),²⁹ he accompanied Prince Chun, General Shan,³⁰ and Governor-general of Zhili, Mr. Li Wenzhong,³¹ to inspect the navy on the sea, and warship dock and torpedo factory in Lushun. Apart

26 Zeng Guoquan (1824–90), for biographical information see *ECCP*, 749–51.

27 Yihuan (1840–91), for biographical information see *ECCP*, 384–86.

28 The commission comprises not just battle paintings, but also portraits of commanders and officers. Several letters by Yihuan have made this clear. See Beijing, CFHA, A, 3: Miscellaneous Documents – Yihuan's Letters, GX11/10/5 (November 11, 1885), GX11/11/26 (December 31, 1885). We have limited our discussion to the battle paintings in this article, although these portraits are equally important for study.

29 Wang's date for the naval inspection is incorrect here. The correct date should be 1886, as we know from official documents such as the Veritable Records.

30 Shanqing (died 1889).

31 Li Hongzhang (1823–1901), for biographical information see *ECCP*, 464–74.

from his inspection duties, he was ordered to be in charge of painting the events of the journey. One day, the sea seemed to have a soul. Suddenly a mirage appeared. He quickly recorded the scene and presented it to the throne.³² In the fourteenth year (1886) when The Summer Palace renovation work started, the designs of the decorations for all the halls, terraces and pavilions on the site were all made by him. In the fifteenth year (1889), he was commissioned to direct the painting of the complete wedding ceremony of Dezong.³³ A year before the twentieth year (*i.e.* 1893) he had painted a scroll to celebrate the Empress Dowager's sixtieth birthday and presented it to the throne; the scene that he painted was magnificent and spectacular. If Mr. Qing did not handle his subjects masterfully, how could such perfection be achieved? Sometimes in the past, it had occurred to me that Mr. Qing perhaps was just an expert on portraiture and of real scenes. But on viewing the present picture that embodies a real understanding of Mr. Dai Wenjie's³⁴ ideas, I could not help admiring him. Following my inquiry he told me that at the beginning of his career he studied with Yuan Ruishou from Shandong, concentrating on portraiture. Then he had an opportunity to learn Mr. Dai Wenjie's most secret methods, so that he employed landscape vividly.³⁵ Then, he studied with Wang Chengfeng,³⁶ and subsequently he gradually excelled at every kind of flower, bird, and insect subjects. He is such a diligent person, pursuing art with steady will and devoted mind. The forty-leaf album, *The Origins of the Truly Mighty*, and the painting, *The Mountain at Chonglin*, received special imperial rewards. Alas! Mr. Qing is so versatile that he was not only successful in the profession of painting. His name is Kuan. His *zi* is Youshan. Songyue jushi is his *hao*. When he became old he began to use Chengwai chunshou as his *hao*. Yet another later *hao* of his is Xingshou. He is a Bannerman, coming from the clan of Zhaojia, and belonging to the Plain Yellow Chinese Banner. From his position of assistant director and then director, he was promoted to be the chair of the Three Agencies in The Imperial Household.³⁷ He had served the Salt Control Circuit as the Surveillance Commissioner in Jiangxi province.³⁸ Since his childhood, his talent had been recognized by Prince Chun, so he served in The Beijing Field force as a secretary, as the inspector of imperial mausoleum work, and as head of the financial office and the archival office of The

32 This is also recorded in Yihuan's poems written during the journey. Quoted in Furen, "Yihuan xunyue haifang jingguo" (An Narrative Account of Yihuan's Naval Inspection), *Zijinzheng* 1990.4, 19.

33 Guangxu. A set of albums of the wedding is in the Palace Museum collection.

34 Dai Xi (1801–60), for biographical information see *ECCP*, 700–01.

35 It is likely that he had learned from studying Dai's paintings rather than from Dai Xi personally, for Qingkuan was only eleven years old when Dai Xi died in 1860.

36 Wang Chengfeng is recorded in Yu Jianhua, *Zhongguo meishujia renmin cidian* (Dictionary of Chinese Artists) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1981), 82–83.

37 The Three Agencies of Imperial Household during the Qing dynasty refer to the Palace Stud, Court of Imperial Armaments, and Imperial Parks Administration. He remained in this position at least until 1905, when he wrote a letter to Hubert D. Ves, a painter from the United States, regarding a portrait of Cixi painted by the latter. See Luke S. K. Kwong, "Cixi xiezhaode xubi: Hubert D. Ves" (Another note about Cixi's Portrait: Hubert D. Ves), *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* 2000.1, 81.

38 For different account of Qingkuan's official career see, He Gangde, *Chunmeng Menglu*, 1922, repr. 1983 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji shudian), 21b–22a; *Qingbai Leichao* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), 332.

Board of Naval Affairs.³⁹ His achievements in official affairs are well known to all, and witnessed by the dynastic history, so it is unnecessary for me to relate them in detail. After he served in office outside the capital, he had ceased to paint. In *xinbai* year (1911) when the government was disbanded, he came back, living in solitude and returning to his old learning for self-enjoyment. But friends and acquaintances seeking for his paintings increased day by day. As an example, Tao, the Beile and the son of Prince Chun,⁴⁰ pleaded with Mr. Qing to paint a painting commemorating his balloon-excursion on his trip to Europe.⁴¹ That painting is remarkably true to life, which indicates that Mr. Qing is also an expert in Western technique. The present scroll was made when he was sixty-eight. In the painting the gathering and flowing clouds and mists suggest imminent rain. This effect truly captures the essence of Mr. [Dai] Wenjie's art. I have traced the origin of Qingkuan's art at the end of this scroll so that the viewers of this painting in future are able to add this account to the history of painting. In the mid-winter season of the *jiwei* year (1919), Wang Yu, Dufu, from the ancient Yanguan, wrote this.

PART TWO

TWO VERSIONS OF TWELVE BATTLE PAINTINGS BY WU YOURU IN THE NATIONAL PALACE MUSEUM, TAIPEI AND THE NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM, BEIJING

In the historical archives department of The National Palace Museum, Taipei, there is an album of twelve leaves which depict twelve battles from the Qing government's campaign against the Taiping Rebellion (figs. 9–20). Each painting is accompanied by a text on the facing page, written in small regular script. In 1961, the National History Museum in Beijing acquired a handscroll from Baoguzhai, an antique shop in Liulichang, Beijing,⁴² with identical scenes. Although neither work bears the artist's signature or date, the condition of the mountings betrays their origin as a pair of paintings by late Qing court artists.⁴³

While the Beijing scroll still remains unstudied, the Taipei album has attracted scholarly attention during the last decade. Four of the battle scenes have been published in Jonathan Spence's biog-

39 Qingkuan's appointment to the last post is also mentioned in a list of the officials of the newly established Board of Naval Affairs by *Wanguo gongbao*. Quoted in Wang Jiajian, *Zhongguo jindai haijunshi lunji* (Collected Essays on the History of the Chinese Navy in Early Modern Time), (Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1984), 219.

40 Zhaitao (born 1886).

41 Zaitao made this trip to Europe in 1910 to study military conditions. See *ECCP*, 386.

42 I am indebted to Lu Changsheng, the curator of the Painting and Calligraphy Section in the National History Museum, for this information.

43 The National History Museum in Beijing registers its scroll as *Qingjun zoubao yu Taiping jun jiaozhan tujuan* (The Qing Government Army Reports the Battles with the Taiping). The National Palace Museum, Taipei, registers its album as *Pingding Yuefei tu* (Paintings of the Suppression of the Taiping Rebellion). It seems that neither museum was aware of the existence of the other version. I am indebted to Nie Chongzheng, an authority in the Qing court art in the Palace Museum, Beijing, for confirming the court identity of the scroll in the National History Museum through examination of its mounting.

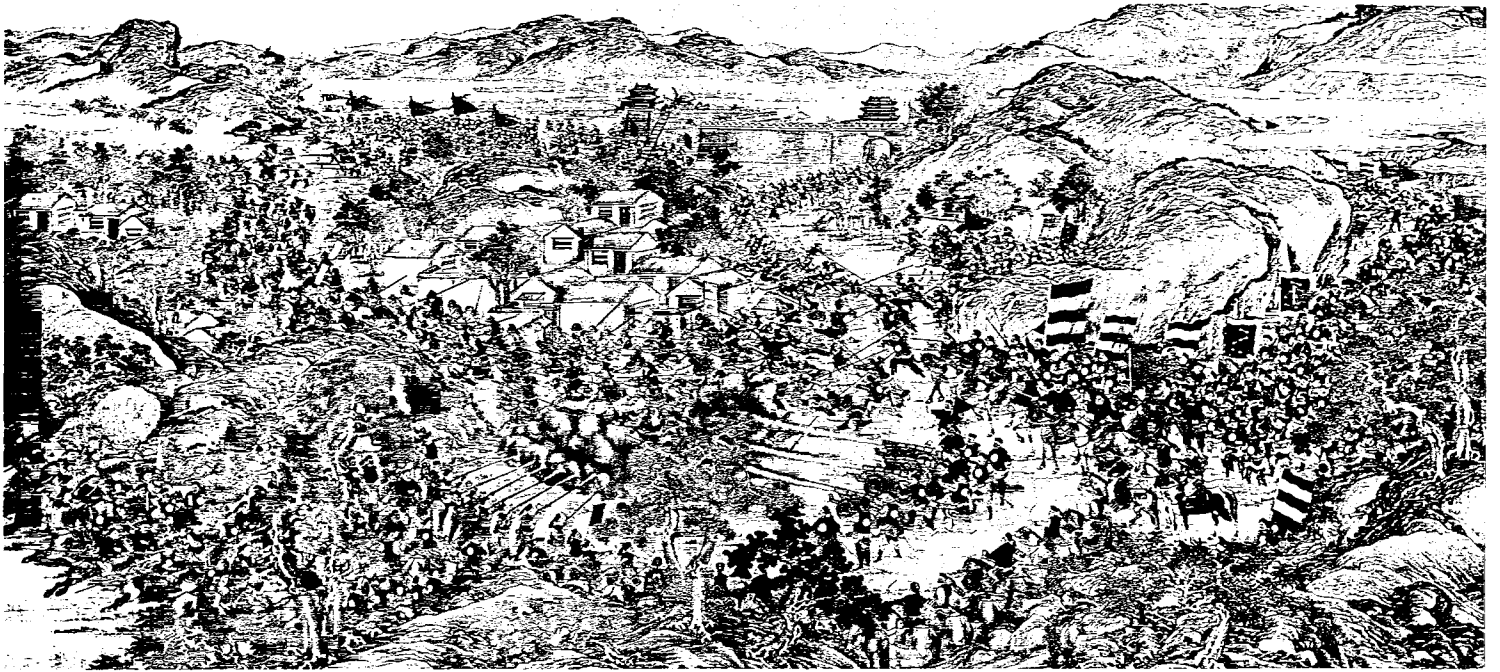


Fig. 1 Qingkuan *et al.*, *Victory over the Taiping*. 1886–90. Set of twenty paintings. Painting nine: “Regaining of Tongcheng, Hubei.” Ink and color on silk, 135.9 × 307.3 cm. Cécile McTaggart Collection, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. After Claudia Brown and Ju-hsi Chou, *Transcending Turmoil, Painting at the Close of China’s Empire 1796–1911* (Phoenix: Phoenix Art Museum, 1992), pl. 5.

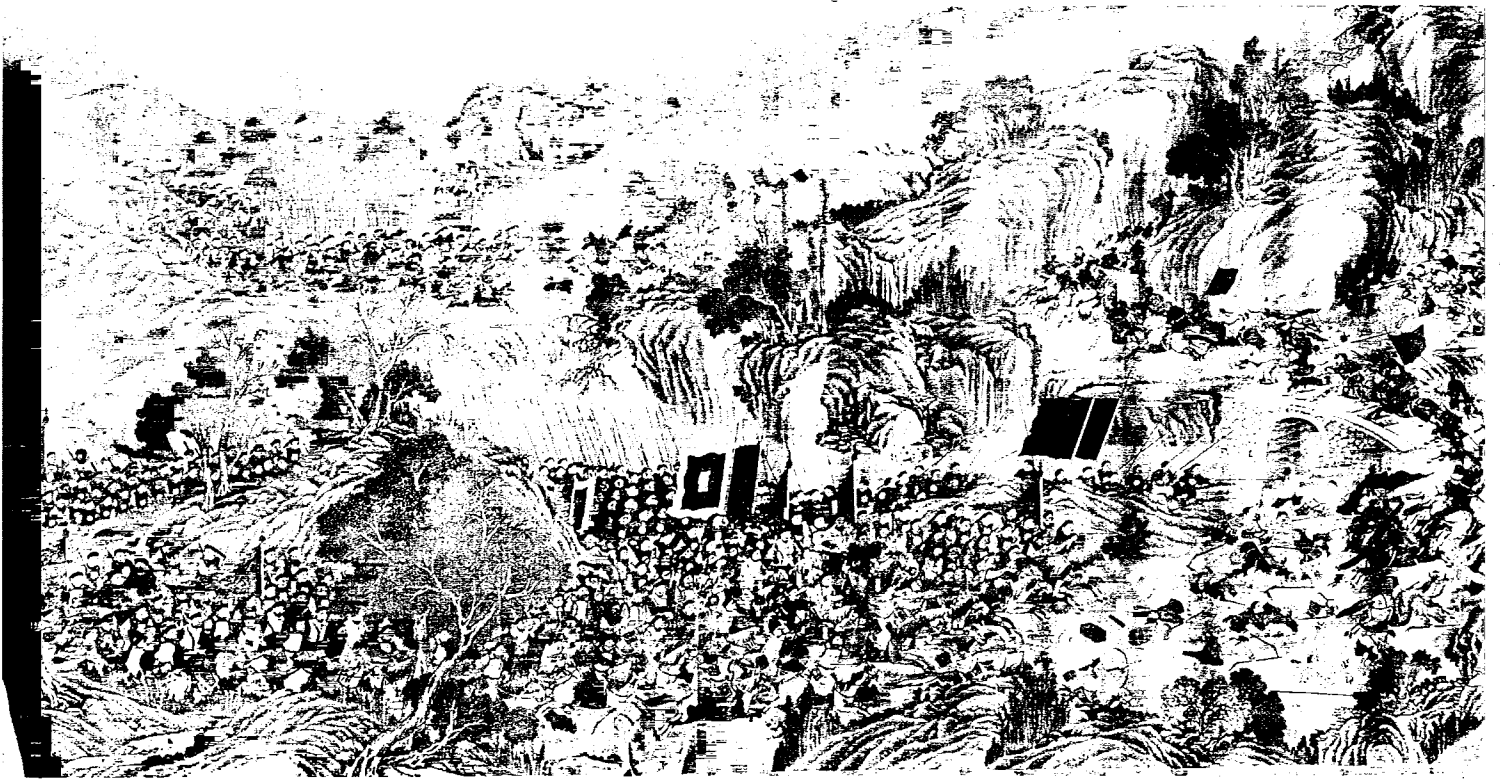


Fig. 2 Qingkuan *et al.*, *Victory over the Nian*. 1886–90. Set of eighteen paintings. Painting five: “Defeating the Nian Troops under the Command of Zhang Minhang in Shandong.” Ink and color on silk, 137.0 × 310.0 cm. National Gallery, Prague, Czech Republic.

