

YANG, Ya-pei. The Style and Creative Intent of Daoist Immortals' Iconographies in the Ming Dynasty Court: Focusing on *Chen Nan Sailing over the Waves*, *Ge Xuan* and *Portrait of Dongfang Shuo* with (Purported) Inscriptions by Liu Jun

This paper examines three works with (purported) inscriptions by the Ming Dynasty court painter Liu Jun (c. 1430–c. 1500), including *Chen Nan Sailing over the Waves* (15th–16th century, Shokokuji Temple, Kyoto), *Ge Xuan* (dated 1485–October 1488, Private Collection, Japan) as well as *Portrait of Dongfang Shuo* (15th–16th century, Private Collection, Japan), in order to consider their style, themes, and the creative intent of the artist.

Based on previous research, the paper conducts a wide range of comparisons and presents the following analysis about these three works.

First, I point out that the style used for the Daoist immortals in the paintings shares similarities with the style of Yuan and Ming Dynasty professional painters, such as Yan Hui. However, more importantly, because they share many commonalities with the Chenghua Buddhist paintings at the Ming Dynasty court, what was previously considered Liu Jun's style should be reconsidered as a part of the Ming Dynasty court painting style.

Second, based on contemporary iconographies related to the Quanzhen School of Daoism, the subject of both *Chen Nan Sailing over the Waves* and *Ge Xuan* can be identified as Wang Chongyang, and the subject of *Portrait of Dongfang Shuo* as Ma Danyang. Based on *The Collection of Quanzhen Immortals* (hereafter, *The Collection*) with a preface by Chenghua Emperor dated 1483 (around the time when *Ge Xuan* was painted), the iconography of the immortal in *Portrait of Dongfang Shuo* essentially matches that of Ma Danyang as portrayed in *The Collection*, while the iconography of the other two paintings is similar to that of Wang Chongyang. Further, the illustrated iconographies and descriptions in the tales of the Quanzhen School founders, collected in the *Daoist Canon of the Zhengtong Reign Period*, also serve to explain the sources of the iconographic attributes in the three works. Incidentally, *The Collection* carried on the iconographic style of the Quanzhen School founders, added objects symbolizing long life, and thus narrowed the iconographic distance between these Daoist immortals and images of good fortune. The integration of styles and expansion of iconographic repertoire promoted through *The Collection* accelerated the disassembly and reconstruction of iconographies in the Chenghua period Daoist paintings by Liu Jun and others.

The motifs of immortals walking on water in these paintings hint at connections with the Aoshan Lantern Mountains, well-known for the Lantern Festival. The iconographic features of the wave-crossing immortals in these three paintings are similar to the grand two- and three-dimensional dioramas of the Aoshan Lantern Mountains that were erected in the Imperial Palace and elsewhere during Lantern Festivals in the Ming Dynasty; iconographic features of these three paintings, especially the objects held and carried by immortals, are quite different to those of Daoist iconic images and indicate that these paintings' applications differ from the images for worship. The same iconographic style of Liu Jun and similar Ming Dynasty court painters before and after his time, which Daoist figures of different lineages mix with Buddhist figures, was applied on the dioramas of the Aoshan Lantern Mountains as well. The background thereto involved the influence of the plays performed at the Ming court, suggesting that paintings like these three works were found very much in the surroundings of the Aoshan Lantern Mountains and the theatrical stage.

In recent years, research on Ming Dynasty paintings and Daoist iconographies has grown, supplementing missing information and enabling detailed chronological and regional contextualization. This paper analyzes the style and subjects of these three paintings and compares them with descriptions and iconographies relating to court events in order to position them as paintings by court painters of Wang Chongyang and Ma Danyang hung in the surroundings of the Aoshan Lantern Mountains and the theatrical stage.