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**Manifestations of Cultural Hybridity in Yosa Buson's Bunjinga:
Interpretations of Eighteenth-Century Japanese Paintings**

Robert Michael Mintz

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of**

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

2002

Program Authorized to Offer Degree: Art History

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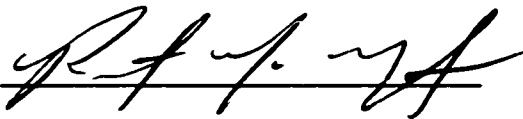
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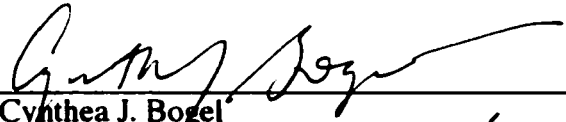
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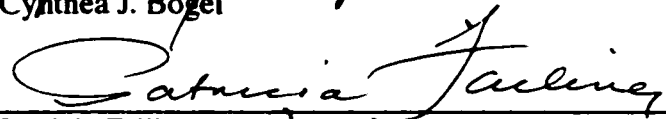


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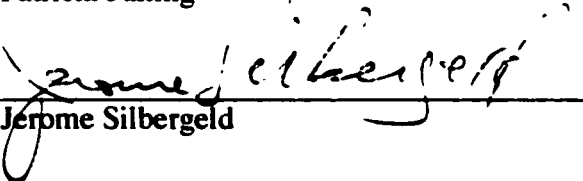
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Abstract

**Manifestations of Cultural Hybridity in Yosa Buson's Bunjinga:
Interpretations of Eighteenth-Century Japanese Paintings**

Robert Michael Mintz

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:

Associate Professor Cynthia J. Bogel

Art History

This dissertation examines Yosa Buson's (1716–1783) dated paintings of the literati style. Buson's paintings act a visual record of the cultural hybridity the artist gradually developed through his embrace of Chinese and Japanese traditions of representation. Through a juxtaposition of biographical accounts of Buson's life and close visual studies of his dated works, the hybrid nature of the paintings becomes evident. This hybridity has implications for how these works enhance our understanding of eighteenth-century Japanese urban Sinophiles as they embraced Chinese precedents and altered them to suit their individual interests and idiosyncrasies.

Japanese scholars' examinations of the many recorded events of Buson's life emerge both within the research dedicated to the artist's painting and his poetry. Combing through these accounts introduced in chapter one, a richly detailed narrative of Buson's life emerges. In chapter two the events of Buson's youth and early years as a painter (1716–1750) are detailed to provide a framework for understanding the many elements contributing to his earliest paintings. Chapter three examines these paintings in detail to enumerate the ways in which the young artist absorbed and appropriated

imagery from his surroundings.

Chapters four and five provide further biographical information showing Buson's having closely studied Chinese paintings in a focused manner. His paintings from this period are assessed in chapter six to reveal how Buson appropriated images and recombined them to form novel compositions. Chapter seven explores the last period of Buson's life (1771–1783). It is during this period that his works exhibit a fully internalized hybridity as they retain links to Chinese and Japanese painting traditions, and inspire a new generation of Japanese painters through their visual impact. Through juxtaposition of Buson's images and records of his life, it is possible to see his artistic activities shift from imitative, to appropriative, and finally to unified, novel expressions of the artist's individual conceptions of the world. In these last expressions, Buson's hybrid works emerges from his explorations of both native Japanese painting styles and Chinese styles as represented by imported works he had seen.

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Dedication

To my partner Beth and son Julian

Introduction

An eighteenth-century resident of Kyoto interested in acquiring a painting would have had the opportunity to choose from among many available styles and types of art. Japanese painters active in the traditions of the Kanō, Tosa, Unkoku, and other lineages that had flourished during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were joined by artists working in the Rimpa style and the emerging masters of the Ukiyo-e tradition. In addition, interested patrons could acquire both new and antique paintings imported from China or Korea. Each of these types of painting had a significant following that drove artists to produce works to meet a constantly shifting demand. Into this crowded field there emerged a new type of painting first created by Japanese artists less than a century earlier. These were the works of the *bunjin* painters who would find themselves popular among a wide spectrum of patrons throughout the Tokugawa period and into the modern era.¹

Japanese *bunjin* explored their art as a painting style, a literary movement, and a general life-style. Paintings by the *bunjin*, or *bunjinga*, were generally inspired by Chinese brush styles visible in imported works and publications that found their common root in the

¹Here and throughout this text I have chosen to use the term *bunjin* to denote the members of the artistic movement within which Buson painted and wrote. This term seems most appropriate, as it emphasizes the similarities between these Japanese artists and their Chinese counterparts who provided much of their inspiration. The *bunjin* label is a direct Japanese reading of the Chinese term *wenren*, or literatus. Alternate terms used to describe Buson's and other Japanese artists' works include "Chinese style painting" (*kanga* [漢画]), and "Southern style painting" (*nanshūga* [南宗画]), or simply *nanga* [南画]. The terms connected to the south refer to Dong Qichang's reconfiguration and labeling of traditions in Chinese painting. Using a metaphor drawn from the Zen Buddhist division into Northern and Southern schools around the selection of the Southerner Hui Neng as the sixth patriarch of the Chan lineage, Dong praised the spontaneity of some painters, beginning with Wang Wei in the eighth century. He went on to praise Dong Yuan, the Four Yuan Masters, and a host of other artists he believed built on the foundations laid in the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries. See James Cahill, *The Compelling Image* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 43, and Wen C. Fong, "Tung Ch'i-ch'ang and Artistic Renewal," *The Century of Tung Ch'i-ch'ang 1555-1636*, Vol. 1, (Kansas City: Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 1992), pp. 43-45. For a thorough discussion of the historical use of these terms in Japan see: Yamane Yūzō [山根有三], "Bunjinga to nanga: tokushū ni tōtte [文人画と南画: 特輯に當つて]," *Kokka*, 1207 (October 1996): pp. 3-11.

late sixteenth-century criticism of Dong Qichang (董其昌, 1555–1636).² Unlike the lineage models inherent in the Kanō and other familial traditions of painting in Japan, the *bunjin* were a comparatively disorganized cluster of individuals. They did share, however, a general pattern of social interest and, like their Chinese models, strove to express themselves in the arts of painting and poetry. The formal links between them took on a variety of forms, including friendship associations, membership-based organizations of artists, and mentor-pupil relationships. This social structure differed distinctly from the relationships represented by painters' adoptions of lineage names, which had been commonplace through much of the history of Japanese painting prior to this time. Each *bunjin* artist had a distinct circle that included pupils, patrons, fellow painters, poets, and scholars of Chinese thought. These circles of individuals overlapped to form a social sphere within which the *bunjin* movement is historically recognizable.³ By choosing to acquire a work by one of the *bunjin*, a Kyoto patron would likely have been making a choice that stretched beyond the aesthetic appearance of the image to embrace a complex set of values and ideas that traced both Japanese and Chinese traditions of expression.

This investigation of the history of one of the Japanese *bunjin*, Yosa Buson (与謝蕪村, 1716–1784), seeks in part to explain the relationship between the artist's experiences and the appearance of the paintings he chose to produce. Implicit in this discussion is the

²The theory and general approach to painting that the Japanese *bunjin* followed were derived from writings by Mo Shelong (莫是龍, 1537–1587) and Dong Qichang that examined the painters of the past and consciously divided them into a model group of masters and all the others. This activity and its impact on Chinese painting around the end of the Ming Dynasty is discussed effectively in: Nelson Wu, "Tung Ch'i-ch'ang (1555–1636): Apathy in Government and Fervor in Art," *Confucian Personalities* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), pp. 260–93.

³This characterization of the *bunjin* tradition is largely based on the model communicated to me by Paul Berry through many individual conversations about the nature of these painters and their experiences. See Paul Berry and Michio Morioka, "The Relation of Japanese Literati Painting to Nihonga," *Modern Masters of Kyoto* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), pp. 32–9. See also Yamane, 1996, p. 4, and Calvin French, *The Poet-Painters: Buson and His Followers* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Museum of Art, 1974), pp. 3–4.

assertion that the patrons of *bunjin* art were, in part, attracted by the personalities and histories of the painters when they acquired images. Buson rose to prominence among the Kyoto *bunjin* through his successes in painting, poetry, and Chinese scholarship, and through his deft blending of these artistic pursuits into a life that became the very model of the eighteenth-century literatus. Buson's *bunjinga* allow us to see these various facets of his life come together and thus open a window onto some of the reasons for his great success and continued appeal.

As a youth Buson moved from the Kansai region, the area around Osaka and Kyoto, to the Kantō region, the area around Edo, where he studied Chinese poetry and began to pursue a life dedicated to the literary and visual arts. He traveled the countryside gathering experiences and meeting associates before returning to the Kansai area, where he would eventually settle into a life marked by periods of intense dedication to poetry and painting. The products of these periods in Buson's life are in part records of his experiences and memories, but they also provide a record of the gradual blending of ideas that eventually led to his emergence as one of the leaders of the *bunjin* movement during the mid-eighteenth century. To this day, Buson's works are loved in large part for their ability to bring together aspects of poetry and painting in novel and intensely personal forms while evoking the spirit of both the Chinese and the Japanese past. Since the early nineteenth century, Buson's work has inspired writers to comment on his virtuosity and individuality. While early writings reveal to us the value that Buson's works held at the time, recent writings on Buson's poetry and painting reflect the ability of these works to maintain a continuing visual appeal. Over the past three decades, at least twenty significant English language articles and books dealing with Buson's painting as a primary topic have appeared.⁴ Included in this number are four doctoral dissertations looking at specific facets

⁴Some of these texts are literary analyses of Buson's poetry, but they are included here because they both comment on and derive some of their evidentiary material from the study of painting.

of the artist's oeuvre and several books dedicated solely to the study of Buson's creations.⁵ While these publications are, on the one hand, reflections of the interests of individual scholars writing for Western-language journals and presses, the attention paid to Buson's work suggests the widespread and continuing interest that his work has generated. The diversity of expression that characterizes Buson's oeuvre has inspired many to find his work compelling and meaningful.

In English-language writings on Buson's painting, there have been two primary avenues of inquiry. One body of writings has sought to explain the relationships between Buson's paintings and their Chinese prototypes. These analyses have approached the works according to formal and stylistic concerns, but at the same time have reached far beyond the artwork itself, in some instances linking Buson to Chinese theories of expression and traditions of brushwork. The second path of inquiry has examined Buson's *haiga* [俳画], or paintings to accompany *haikai* [俳諧] poetry.⁶ Following those literary scholars who have explored the nature of Buson's poetic creations, these studies find Buson to be working in a manner that derives its inspiration from both Chinese and Japanese traditions in approximately equal measure. These two trends in the study of Buson's work differ markedly in their conclusions. While the painting scholars strive to represent Buson as a scholar and follower of the Chinese literati painting tradition, the *haiga* scholars perceive Buson as a pillar of the *haikai* tradition and preserver of the Japanese poetic art form. These two approaches to Buson do not directly conflict with each other because they focus on distinctly different material from the artist's oeuvre. In essence, they add emphasis to the idea that Buson's impact on the history of Japanese art

⁵For a list of recent publications on Buson in English and Japanese, see the bibliography at the end of this text.

⁶Throughout this text, *haikai* refers to the seventeen-syllable poetic form practiced by Buson and other *bunjin*. Terms such as *haiku*, *hokku*, *kasen*, etc... are used to refer to specific poems as they relate to other poets' works.

has been truly multivalent.

In Japanese-language studies of Buson, this dichotomy of approaches seems less prominent. Instead, there are several distinct canonical lists of Buson's paintings and poetry that have been published as catalogues of the artist's works.⁷ These *zenshū* [全集], or complete works, are invaluable resources for the study of Buson's work, but their seeming thoroughness masks a competition on the part of their authors to create the definitive canonical list of the artist's works. In shorter articles, authors discuss specific works and make the case for the inclusion of these works in the canon that they support. Outside of painting studies, there is a great deal of variation in Japanese scholarship centered on Buson's poetry and associated *haiga*. In this realm, there is again a canon of poems and some dispute about the most important of these poems, but the primary avenue of inquiry center on more firmly establishing Buson as the eighteenth-century leader of the Matsuo Bashō (松尾芭蕉, 1644–1694) tradition of *haikai* composition. In addition, there have been a few attempts to discuss the intersection of Buson's painting and poetry in the past decade, and there seems to be a general effort at present to explain the importance of Buson's youth as it relates to both his paintings and his poetry.⁸

This study uses resources presented in recent Japanese texts to explain how Buson's works relate to Chinese models and how they came to embody the Japanese *bunjin* ideal. Using the information gathered in recent Japanese collections of poetry and

⁷Texts of this type include Ogata Tsutomu [尾形仂], Sasaki Jōhei [佐々木丞平], and Okada Akiko [岡田彰子], *Buson zenshū: Kaiga, Iboku* [蕪村全集：絵画・遺墨] (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1998). This volume is number six in a series of nine dedicated to the study of Buson's life, writing, and painting. Another example of this type of text is Matsuo Yasuaki [松尾靖秋], Tanaka Yoshinobu [田中善信], Muramatsu Tomotsugu [村松友次], and Tanichi Yoshikazu [谷地快一], *Buson jiten* [蕪村辞典] (Tokyo: Ofusha, 1990).

⁸Texts that were particularly important to this study fall into this last category of writings. They include Takahashi Shōji [高橋庄次], *Buson denki kōsetsu* [蕪村伝記考説] (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 2000) and Segi Shinichi [瀬木慎一], *Buson: Gahai nidō* [蕪村：画俳二道] (Tokyo: Bijutsukoronsha, 1990).

painting that provide the most comprehensive catalogues of Buson's oeuvre, I demonstrate how questions about the appeal and meaning of Buson's works can be illuminated. By simultaneously observing his paintings as Chinese-inspired and destined for a Japanese consumption, it is possible to understand these works as playing dual roles. This duality inherent in Buson's work displayed as a kind of hybridity that allowed the works to resonate with Chinese history while appealing to a broad Japanese audience. By understanding this hybrid nature, it becomes possible to speculate on the manner in which the paintings were perceived in their time. Buson's life experiences and his expressions in painting were intimately linked through this hybridity, which combined his study of Chinese paintings with his professional careers as Japanese poet and painter.

Just as this study blends the resources of the distinct traditions of painting and poetry scholarship, Buson's paintings appear to blend traditions and influences. The hybrid nature of Buson's paintings emerges as one explores their relationships to his life experiences, his exposures to Japanese and Chinese paintings, and his immersion in the world of the *haikai* poets. In essence, Buson's oeuvre appears as the site within which a process of blending and selective re-expression takes place. His works emerge as hybrid products among which a host of cultural associations and compelling traces are discernible. Through an examination of many distinct images that Buson produced over the last three decades of his life, it becomes clear that he was actively processing ideas and experiences in his paintings. By identifying some of the component parts presented in each of these images, we can begin to understand the complex appeal of these works of art today. Reading back from this modern appeal, it is possible to speculate about the reasons behind Buson's choice to blend these specific expressions and the appeal that these images may have had when they were produced.

The proposition that Buson's work exists as the site where this hybridity is born is

essential to the conclusions of this study. By seeing Buson as the active agent contributing to this hybridity, it is possible to understand how he is at once immersed in studies of Chinese literature and Japanese poetic creation, and able to produce paintings that are new and dynamic. These paintings do not precisely follow earlier Japanese painting traditions or Chinese painting traditions, yet they resonate with elements from both of these traditions. By being hybrid forms, these paintings fulfill the requirements of multiple traditions of image-making and stand on their own as unique creations that inspire their own tradition among Buson's followers.

The idea of cultural hybridity has been frequently discussed in recent years and has been used to describe a wide variety of cross-cultural interactions. At its root, the idea of the hybrid is a product of the biological sciences. Hybrid, as it was used by Gregor Mendel in his eighteenth-century explorations of genetics, referred to any offspring whose parentage involved members of distinct varieties.⁹ My thinking about the nature of Buson's paintings started with this definition, but it soon became evident that the hybridity of Buson's paintings was a little different. The biological hybrid, understood today, is sterile and captures only parts of each of its distinct parents' characteristics. Buson's works, far from being the sterile products of the crossing of various cultural ideas and influences, inspired numerous successors and contributed to the formation of new styles of painting that arose among artists of succeeding generations. In addition, Buson's paintings seem to fully embody the characteristics of the separate cultural traditions and ideas that inspired them. In an effort to refine this idea of the image as a hybrid produced through the blending

⁹Mendel stated that the hybrid was the product of differing species, but in his experiments he often produced hybrids that were parented by members of differing varieties within a single species. The hybrids Mendel created were true blends of only slightly different parents. Today, Mendel's hybrid has been redefined to clearly stipulate that the creature produced is only the result of cross-species hybridization. This results in offspring that are only sexually nonviable, or mules. These are biological "dead-ends" that are unable to reproduce, but Mendel created viable creatures that evoke a much richer image of the hybrid form.

of cultural experiences it is valuable to turn to studies concerned with cultural hybridity.

Cultural hybridity as a model for understanding the products of human social activity has gained a variety of nuanced meanings through the writings of post-colonial theorists of the past decade.¹⁰ I believe it is appropriate to add to this growing set of meanings a cultural hybrid model that reflects the relationship between *bunjinga* and its cultural roots. Buson's Japan, was deeply indebted to China for many cultural and social models, and possessed its own national traditions perceived internally as purely domestic inventions.¹¹ The repeated importation of ideas from China, beginning with Buddhism and the written language and continuing through the centuries leading up to Buson's era, helped to craft a society in which the distinctions between imported and domestic creations were clouded by the passing of time. That said, it is clear that China and Chinese ideas were topics of interest and concern for many members of Buson's society. When Buson embraced recently imported Chinese forms of expression, his works seem to have evoked ideas from outside the Japanese tradition. Like many of the *haikai* poets, Buson actively sought to embrace new ideas from China to enliven their art. With imported painting styles and themes, Buson manipulated these imported styles to resonate with older imported Chinese traditions that had effectively become domesticated Japanese traditions. Buson created images that were both able to exist as Chinese and as Japanese expressions for his patrons.

¹⁰The term "cultural hybrid" is now familiar from the work of Homi K. Bhabha in his explorations of post-colonial identity. Because Bhabha offers a model focused on the dynamic relations fostered in the post-colonial environment, his work does not directly address the nature of Buson's situation, where no colonial dynamic existed. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 4.

¹¹It is important to distinguish between imported ideas that were valued in Japan as foreign concepts and earlier imports that became defacto indigenous traditions. Cases of the later include some Buddhist religious traditions, writing, forms of painting imported between the thirteenth and late fifteenth centuries, and other Chinese ideas that earlier generations of Japanese people had heartily embraced.

As hybrid forms, these paintings and poems had to retain characteristics that could be isolated and perceived as being domestic or imported. Since Japanese people were prohibited from traveling to China and trade was closely controlled, Buson's hybrid paintings filled desires for both imported and domestic products. Their hybridity allowed them to be both Chinese and Japanese in nature, but also to be neither Chinese nor Japanese. The presence of visual connections to both of these traditions allowed the works to serve as fantasies of escape. The Chinese aspects provided escape to the continent, while Buson's emphasis on rural figures in imagined landscapes provided an escape for urban Japanese patrons by offering a rural utopian vision. In these ways, the hybridity of Buson's paintings allowed them to serve multiple purposes and allowed a range of distinct associations to emerge from each image.

Buson's hybridity is, unlike some expressions called hybrid, not merely a blend of different ideas. Instead, it retains close links to its models so that each work is polysemic in its nature. The hybrid paintings are both Chinese and Japanese simultaneously. This is similar to the expressions generated from the liminal space of post-colonial writers, but is more evenly multiple in its references to its cultural inspirations. By seeing the hybrid as a representation of the space between two cultural poles, we can postulate the existence of an expression ideally located between Chinese and Japanese conventions of image-making that resonates with both of these traditions and comes to substitute for both as a better alternative. The *bunjin* embraced a Chinese import and restated it to suit a Japanese audience. In essence, they created a hybrid between cultural influences. The *bunjin* adopted new ideas proposed by sixteenth and seventeenth-century Chinese writers of texts on painting and combined them with ideas derived from earlier Chinese imports strongly identified with Japanese culture and indigenous inventions, thereby creating hybrid products. These paintings and poems draw on Chinese ideas to create images that are

largely Japanese in their appeal.

Buson's choice to paint in a style derived from China during a time of domestic isolation begins to suggest a distinct social stance. Buson and his fellow emergent class of commoners, or *chōnin* [町人], lived under the close scrutiny of the Tokugawa government and its restrictive laws. The government, through the power of its military mandate, imposed a series of restrictions on trade and international travel in the first decades of the seventeenth century. By Buson's time these restrictions had become the norm for the society. There were still imports flowing into Japan from China through the open port of Nagasaki, but these imports were restricted by both statutory law and the limitations created by the physical distance between Nagasaki and the population centers of Edo and Kyoto. For Buson and his contemporaries this was not a newly imposed isolation, but a way of life. They lived in a restricted realm, and as such the choice to study imported Chinese ideas and to create images that were based on Chinese models appears to have a social meaning beyond mere fascination with the foreign.

The choice to begin working in a Chinese mode of artistic expression is key to seeing Buson's work as hybrid in that visually he chose to speak in the language of the distant continent. The *chōnin*, from whom Buson's patrons emerged, were making a political and social statement as they embraced ideas recently imported from China. Buson and other *bunjin*, in their exploration of recent Chinese culture, entered into a long-standing process of hybridity that had been a part of Japanese society from the time of its inception. This pattern was essential to the *bunjin* and to the Tokugawa government, but they seemed to use the connection to Chinese tradition in very different manners. By embracing China and also retaining close links to Japanese tradition, Buson's works were able to speak from both inside and outside Japanese society.¹²

¹²In essence, Buson's works, and those of many of the *bunjin*, seem to transcend the duality of domestic and imported traditions of expression. This is similar to the hybrid state

The Tokugawa government was organized under the rule of Tokugawa Ieyasu as a Confucian state. The various Confucian philosophies of the early Edo period eventually were overshadowed by the Neo-Confucian thought of Chu Hsi, as taught to Ieyasu by Hayashi Razan (1583–1657). Razan's form of Confucian thought emphasized the relationships among the samurai, the shogun, and the imperial court. It was understood that the samurai owed their allegiance to the shogun, and in turn the shogun was thought to owe his allegiance to the Emperor. This model was not entirely satisfying for the Tokugawa shoguns, as they sought justification for their absolute rule. In 1724 Arai Hakuseki resolved this issue in his history of Japan entitled *Tokushi yoron*. In this work he explained how the authority to rule had been passed from the imperial house to the Fujiwara clan and in turn to the Taira and Minamoto in the early medieval period. This gave absolute authority to the shogunal line of the Tokugawa through the family lineage adopted by Ieyasu, which tied him to the Minamoto. With this justification in place, Ieyasu's successors were shown to be the absolute rulers within their imported Chinese Confucian model of rulership.

Under the Tokugawa, the samurai class were gradually encouraged to expand their primarily military responsibilities to being the interpreters and carriers of the Confucian tradition. They had to become scholars of Chinese texts and ideas, as they were the members of society who had the time and support to work through ancient Chinese texts imported into Japan generations earlier. Following the teachings of Yamaga Sōkō (1622–1685), the samurai were encouraged to follow the austerities of their traditional role as warriors and to function as moral exemplars embodying the Confucian ethic. This pattern remained commonplace among the samurai of Buson's time, but there arose in the

explored among the early twentieth-century Japanese and American artists exploring the newly shrinking divide between the Pacific rim neighbors. See Bert Winther-Tamaki, *Art in the Encounter of Nations* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), p. 175.

eighteenth century a new social pattern that challenged the traditional authority. Spurred by the expanding influence of Chinese ideas in Japan, which began to reach beyond the Confucian to deal with issues as mundane as irrigation and medicinal preparations, a number of commoners began to call for a return to Shinto worship. This was encouraged by Kamo Mabuchi (1697–1769), who expressed the importance of returning to the Japanese traditional histories recorded in the *Kojiki* and *Manyōshū*. In this effort he sought to extract the underlying indigenous qualities from the texts that had been altered and reconstituted under the influence of Buddhist and Confucian thought.

Alongside this effort, the *bunjin* offered a similar reaction as they reached to new Chinese models of society and art to supplement or supplant the Tokugawa-endorsed concept of Confucian rule. In essence, the *bunjin* strove to do what the Tokugawa had already done in creating eighteenth-century Japanese society. The *bunjin* created a hybrid domestic interpretation of Chinese thought, but they relied on a different set of ideas born in China during this later period. This became a useful and powerful act: Familiar in its pattern as an interpretation of Chinese ideas for a Japanese audience and challenging to the existing norm, it called on new imported roots to generate interest among its followers. Like the reactions against Chinese tradition espoused by Kamo Mabuchi and others who sought a return to a native social model, the *bunjin* offered a reaction that turns even more directly to China to reap the rewards of centuries of Chinese refinement of Japan's own culture.

To demonstrate how Buson's paintings emerge as hybrid forms and to suggest some of the ramifications of seeing his works in this way, this study gradually builds an image of Buson and his paintings that strives to highlight the relationships between the artist's experiences and the images he created. The first chapter provides a brief review of Western and Japanese scholarship that has examined Buson to create a framework within

which the hybrid nature of the paintings can emerge. Following this foundational material, in chapter two I highlight events in the artist's life that reveal his incorporation of ideas from Chinese sources and their transformation into paintings that spoke to a Japanese audience. From this point forward the chapters largely alternate between examinations of Buson's biography and close observations of paintings made during the years discussed in the biographical review. These chapters reveal the growing experience of Buson as a painter and professional *bunjin* and illuminate the ways in which his life and interests become visible in his paintings. By detailing Buson's experiences with Chinese paintings and poetry, examining works of art he produced, and then considering the way he seems to have incorporated his experiences into the paintings, the nature of the hybrid form represented by these paintings emerges. This gradual explanation of the hybrid nature of these paintings will appear in chapters two through seven. Each chapter examines a series of years in the artist's life divided somewhat arbitrarily into manageable periods of time. The divisions that appear here largely parallel those used by Japanese and Western scholars in the past, as they are tied to Buson's geographical moves around Japan. It is important to avoid making too much of these moves. Buson's life and art evolved gradually, but his life was marked by several significant moves to and from major populations centers of the eighteenth century. These moves, however, were not precisely followed by changes in the style of Buson's paintings or poetry.

Chapter two examines Buson's life from his birth in 1716 until 1750. Buson's youth and the nature of his experience at home as a child prefigure in some ways his life in early adulthood. It is useful to look at Buson's youth because he would eventually reflect on his own experience as he neared the end of his life. In this reflecting there is an important suggestion of how the artist's creations relate to his lived experience. In discussing this early period of time, the goal is to provide a sense of the raw material of life

that Buson would incorporate into his work later in life. To demonstrate the beginning of this process, chapter three looks closely at some of the earliest works that survive from the artist's oeuvre. These two chapters act as two poles between which the hybrid art of Buson's later career eventually emerges. For this reason, the language remains largely focused on Buson's biography in the second chapter and visual analysis of his paintings in the third.

As Buson's painting and life moved forward, the record of his life and the number of surviving paintings increased dramatically. For this reason the time period covered in subsequent chapters becomes markedly shorter, and the primary aim of the text becomes the elucidation of the emergent hybridity visible in the paintings. Chapter four examines events that marked Buson's life and the paintings he made between 1751 and 1757. This is a time of transition that many scholars have examined in the past, but it is also a time in which Buson's work and life seem to occupy rather separate realms. This chapter and the succeeding discussion of Buson's life in chapter five show how he builds a set of experiences, but also how those experiences and his paintings remain independent. Chapter six illustrates how paintings made between 1757 and 1770 emerge as some of the first successfully hybrid images. A close examination of these works gives an idea of how they succeed in uniformly blending ideas drawn from Chinese study and lived Japanese experience.

Chapters seven and eight examine the mature career and mature hybrid paintings of Buson and the potential that his later images present. In these chapters the material for the conclusions in chapter nine emerge. The experiences of Buson as a professional poet and painter who embodied the very definition of the Japanese *bunjin* appear as both a burden and an artistic catalyst that spurred Buson to produce some of his most impressive works of literature along with paintings that have become monuments to the history of Japanese

art. The nature of the hybrid quality of these paintings emerges in the analyses in chapter eight. It is then possible to speculate on how the hybridity of these works may have contributed to their success and to the emergence of Buson's followers in the years immediately after his death.

Chapter 1: Review of Critical Literature

In the scholarship dedicated to Buson's paintings, several discernible patterns have emerged. Scholars have explored Buson's paintings to understand their styles, the life of the painter, and the society of mid-eighteenth-century Japan. In addition, they have attempted to deconstruct the images to understand the poetic elements, the Chinese elements, and the innovative elements of these works. The decision about how Buson's works should be approached has been the individual choice of each scholar drawn to the paintings, and they have made these choices along lines that allow us to see distinct Japanese and Western approaches to the artist's works. In addition to this broad division, minor divisions within Japanese and Western traditions of scholarship seek to understand the works from a variety of distinct viewpoints.

The viewpoints adopted each address a distinct question related to how we interpret the art of eighteenth-century Japan. Scholars in the West have been considering this period of Japanese art history for many years, but the majority of analyses are individual views. They each seem to follow a path of inquiry that is unique to the scholar examining the work, rather than building on the work of earlier scholars in the field. In contrast, Japanese scholars have been working toward a common goal in several interpretations of Buson's paintings, so their scholarship has taken on a distinctively different tenor. In gathering the raw material for this study, I have tried to step back from these various traditions of analysis in order to appropriate their material discoveries without adopting their individual ideological positions.

The first study of the art of the *bunjin* painters in the West appears in the cursory remarks of Ernest Fenollosa in his *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art* of 1913. Although Fenollosa's interests and approach to paintings differ greatly from the approaches

and views held by most scholars today, his assessment of *bunjinga* suggests of how Japanese patrons at the end of the nineteenth century viewed these works. Fenollosa approached eighteenth-century literati art, or *bunjinga*, with a broad brush, castigating and rejecting the paintings largely because they failed to capture the “classic” ideal of early Chinese painting.

Without attempting to describe this movement along any other line than that of art, we must declare it at once to have been a combined fortune and misfortune. The actual worth of what it introduced was small. Japan had been, up to this moment, fortunately preserved from the intellectual perils of Confucianism. Ming destruction by the *bunjinga* heresy of early Ming art had not touched Nippon. Now the torch began to kindle, and the fire to start, and the national traditions of Japanese art over nine-tenths of the popular fields to burn down to cold ashes!

...A great school of Japanese “*bunjinga*” fanatics now grew up in Japan, whose style in following the most misshapen cows, gentlemen with trepanned skulls, and wriggly-worm branches of their masters shows even in its deliberate distortion a certain distinction. Such is the work of Taigado and Buson, to give conspicuous example.¹³

Fenollosa’s approach to the art of the literati painters was tinged with disdain, as he saw their contribution to the art of Japan as irrelevant or even damaging to the culture. This stance attempted to create an image of Japanese art generated through Fenollosa’s personal impressions and tastes as he asserted a narrowly defined “proper” art for the Japanese culture. The formulation of one’s own idea of the nature of a distant culture, regardless of how long one has been immersed in that culture, is at the heart of the orientalist practice that dominated Western studies of Asia at the turn of the century. To distance themselves from this practice, recent scholars have taken great care to avoid the appearance of making judgements that can be perceived as an imposition of external criteria for the evaluation of the people and products of a culture distant from their own.

¹³Ernest Fenollosa, *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art*, Vol. 2, (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1913), pp. 163–65.

I believe we can learn a great deal from the practices of early Western writers like Fenollosa, as they created visions of the cultures of Asia for consumption by readers who had little or no opportunity to experience these cultures for themselves. Fenollosa's criticism of the literati appears to be a reaction to the Japanese desire to embrace the foreign in an environment that strictly controlled the flow of information about the nature of foreign places. What struck Fenollosa as the "torch" beginning to burn was a development that came into direct conflict with the mythical history of Japanese art that he championed and strove to insert into the collective sense of the West and Japan. Fenollosa saw the Japanese love of Chinese *bunjinga* as a misstep in the history of Japanese art, and one that needed to be rectified for the "real value" of Japanese art to be seen. It remains for us to wonder exactly why this type of art struck such a negative chord in the mind of this critic, but on the surface it seems to have been its reference to both domestic and non-Japanese sources.

We can further understand Fenollosa's critique by considering the nature of orientalist thinking. Fenollosa formed a systematic vision of the history of Japanese art and was loath to find anyone, foreign or Japanese, who chose to create work that fell outside his canonical set of images and styles. Literati painting failed to uphold Fenollosa's idea of traditional Chinese painting, so it was not to his liking. Perhaps even more discouraging for him was the Japanese embrace of later Chinese painting that veered away from his idea of classic Chinese painting. Fenollosa stated that in "Japan in 1878... when the masterpieces of the great Kanō artists could be bought for a song, there was never a period when a fine Chinese *bunjinga kakemono* would not bring several thousands of yen."¹⁴ Japanese patrons had an affinity for the literati style, but Fenollosa could not embrace this type of painting because of his preference for refined clearly depicted images. Fenollosa did not and could not share in the mythology surrounding China and Chinese things that had

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 165.

developed during the Tokugawa isolation and which found its expression in the art of the *bunjin* painters. This inability to see through the eyes of others and to move beyond the boundary of one's personal mythology surrounding a foreign place is characteristic of the orientalist writers. I believe it is also key to understanding the art of the Japanese *bunjin* painters. For it is in the hands of artists such as Buson that we see the development of a type of visual myth tied to the Chinese literati model, but which is not Chinese. In essence, I believe Buson and the many followers and patrons of *bunjinga* in Japan were engaged in a process of mythologizing China that closely parallels the mythologizing of Japan that preoccupied Fenollosa for much of his long and successful career.

There have been several recent texts which endeavor to create meaningful narratives by examining the relation of Buson's painting to that of the Chinese painters he mentions in his writings and inscriptions. This was one of the primary avenues of investigation for Calvin French in his 1974 catalogue for the exhibition *The Poet-Painters: Buson and His Followers*. French investigates Buson's style as it related to Chinese precedents and seeks explanations for how Buson developed his mature style of figure and landscape painting from the artist's examinations of Chinese literati works. He explores the relationship between Buson's figure paintings and Ming and Qing dynasty painters' works thought to have been represented in collections of works in Kyoto, but concludes "[r]arely did Buson conform absolutely to his chosen models. There is consistent evidence of stylistic departures that anticipate the highly personalized idiom of his mature paintings."¹⁵ In essence, after searching for concrete precedents for Buson's individual style of painting, French concludes that the style, while related to Chinese painting, is really Buson's own creation. This might seem an obvious conclusion, but it is quite important in that it would be easier to talk about Buson's painting in terms of the Chinese literati if indeed we were

¹⁵French, 1974, p. 16.

able to find many direct Chinese precedents for his work. Because the large body of literature in the West relating to Chinese painting has been so richly developed, we could effectively use this material to explore Buson's mode of creation. French seems to begin his study with the presumption that Buson's work is a direct outgrowth of the Chinese tradition, but he finds a preponderance of circumstances in which Buson differs from his Chinese models.

The search for relationships to Chinese models has also been the primary interest of James Cahill in his writings on Buson. Like French, he attempts to see Buson, in part, through the lens of the scholar of Chinese literati painting. In his 1996 text on Buson's paintings, *The Lyric Journey: Poetic Painting in China and Japan*, Cahill explores the rise of what he calls "poetic painting" in China during the Song and late Ming dynasties in Hangchow and Suchou respectively. He also describes a poetic sensibility in the *bunjinga* of the Edo period, with particular emphasis on the art of Buson. In Buson's work, Cahill finds early paintings that "must be called awkward and inept."¹⁶ The "awkwardness" of these works is shown to lie both in their deviation from Chinese models and in their internal structure, as they appear to lack the power and thought-provoking potential of Buson's later paintings. Like French, Cahill begins with the assumption that the Japanese painter is striving to imitate Chinese paintings, and that he should be assessed using the terms and traditions of Chinese painting. From these early works, Cahill moves on to explore works "derived from Ming representations" and works "imitating various Chinese masters and models or even... direct copies [of those models]."¹⁷ Cahill finds many valuable ways in which Buson's painting reflects and improves on themes and techniques he learned through his study of Chinese paintings. But it is in Buson's mature paintings,

¹⁶James Cahill, *The Lyric Journey: Poetic Painting in China and Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 151.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 152–53.

those of the later 1770s and 1780s, that Cahill finds the fullest expression of “poetic sentiment.” These works present Chinese themes in combinations which Cahill supposes may be “for poetic effect” or the result of “imperfect mastery of the thematics of the [Chinese poetic] genre.”¹⁸ In the finest of these late images, Cahill sees Buson moving well beyond his Chinese models to create images that are able to communicate a poetic sentiment that captures a moment and feeling, which is analogous to the subtle power of *haiku*. These late works are no longer Chinese-derived in Cahill’s formulation, but present a Japanese form of literati painting that, in its poetic effect, surpasses Chinese models to create a new form of artistic expression for the eighteenth century. Yet, I believe we should ask whether the movement in Buson’s work is from Chinese models to a Japanese form of expression, or from earlier Japanese conceptions of China to newer and more distantly separated forms of expressing the Chinese literati mode of painting. To see Buson’s paintings expressing a poetic sentiment seems once again to be an obvious conclusion in that he was first an acknowledged success as a *haikai* poet. Given that Buson was a poet who turned to painting in a mode connected to Chinese prototypes, it remains a perplexing question as to why this poetic sentiment seems to emerge only after many years of painting in the *bunjin* mode.

In both French’s and Cahill’s works, we see attempts to empirically describe Buson’s young works as they relate to China and the claim that the power and success of his later works is found in his deviation from Chinese prototypes. Like the Chinese painting student in Ching Hao’s *Bifazhi* [筆法記], Buson is shown to have been derivative in his “awkward” days and successful when he finally broke from Chinese precedents to create new and, we might say, Japanese expressions.¹⁹ In both of these

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 160.

¹⁹Munakata Kiyohiko, *Ching Hao’s Pi-fa-chi: A Note on the Art of the Brush* (Ascona, Switzerland: Artibus Asiae Publishers, 1974).

analyses we are given a great deal of valuable information about the links between the Japanese literati and their Chinese progenitors, but we are left with a definition of Japanese literati painting in the example of Buson that is stated in the negative. The Japanese aspects of Japanese literati painting appear to be those properties that are shown to be non-Chinese. This method of defining Buson's painting, while effective in drawing the distinction between his work and those of the artists he mentions in his inscriptions and letters, leaves us to wonder if there is a way to describe these paintings from the perspective of what they present, rather than what they do not. In addition, it addresses these paintings according to the construct presented by the Japanese painters who were allegedly emulating the Chinese literati.

In the writings of some Japanese scholars we see efforts to comprehend Buson's art from a perspective that originates not in Chinese art, but within a domestic Japanese tradition. The writings of Sasaki Jōhei, Yoshizawa Chū, Segi Shinichi, and others provide great insight into the art and life of Buson and other *bunjin* artists of the eighteenth century. Characteristic of most Japanese writings on *bunjinga*, however, is the supposition of a good deal of cultural knowledge shared by the authors and readers. Factual data in these writers' works is rich, given the authors' unparalleled access to documents and works associated with Buson. But there remains a good deal of unstated supposition in these works that remains inaccessible to most Western readers. Beyond the barriers of language lie subtle methods of shorthand reference, which appear in the narratives of all writers concerned with their own cultural heritage. We need only think of the issues involved in writing a history of the American West for residents of that region, and compare them with those involved in communicating the same history to a student living on the East Coast or, more dramatically, in Japan. The readership for texts on Buson written by these and other Japanese scholars is, with few exceptions, a narrow audience within Japan and an

additional handful of readers in the international academic community. It is therefore not surprising to see the language of most texts by Japanese scholars filled with references to shared cultural knowledge. While this knowledge is generally a part of the working vocabulary of most specialists in the study of Japanese paintings, these texts are often nearly unintelligible in translation or even in their original language to those who study fields other than the history of Japanese painting. Owing to the strong Chinese influence inherent in *bunjinga*, a significant number of terms and expressions are derived from antiquated Chinese texts that have become jargon within this type of study, but which tend to exclude all but the dedicated few. This is not necessarily meant as a criticism of such texts or their authors. We must, however, keep in mind that writing about a culture is inherently different when performed within that culture and when exercised from the outside.

Classification and the establishment of an artistic taxonomy to segregate and arrange the many works associated with the artist are of great importance to the Japanese discussion of Buson's work. A case in point, from Sasaki Jōhei's text for the journal *Nihon no Bijutsu*, appears in the topics that make up a discussion commemorating the bicentennial remembrance of Buson's death. In the first essay, Sasaki addresses "Truth and Fiction" in reference to the characterizations of Ike Taiga [池大雅, 1723–1776] and Buson in Tanomura Chikuden's [田野村竹田, 1777–1835] *Sanchūjin Jōzetsu* [山中人饒舌].²⁰ This discussion reflects both the deep interest in Buson that has existed for much of the past two centuries and a need to explain the early castigation of Buson by Chikuden and other writers around the turn of the nineteenth century. This is an interesting issue, but to the reader unfamiliar with the fame of both Buson and Chikuden, the discussion of the semantics surrounding this early review is largely a tour of the opinionated nature of early

²⁰Sasaki Jōhei [佐々木丞平], *Nihon no bijutsu* [日本の美術], no. 109 (Tokyo: Seibundo, 1975), p. 19.

modern Japanese critics. Following this discussion, Sasaki explores the distinction between the perception of Sakaki Hyakusen as representing 明風 [*meifu*], or “Ming Dynasty Chinese Style,” and Buson representing 漢流 [*kanryū*], or “Chinese-inspired style.”²¹ This distinction is derived from a line of Buson’s text explaining the difference between his work and that of Hyakusen. Sasaki explains the known links between these two painters and, through analysis of Buson’s images, demonstrates what he sees as the *kanryū* in Buson’s paintings of the 1750s.

In subsequent essays he discusses the distinction between “naturalistic” and “descriptive” paintings in Buson’s oeuvre, and monochrome ink paintings versus lightly colored works. These essays focus on ways in which Buson’s oeuvre can be and has been divided by other writers, emphasizing definitions featured in the study of *bunjinga*. In each of these essays we see text aimed at a readership that is well-versed in the history of nineteenth-century Japan and, I believe, one that is aware of concerns internal to collectors and scholars of art within Japanese society. In essence, I think the crucial issue in interpreting these texts is understanding the exploration of concepts connected to Japan’s understanding of itself and its own evolution.

In contrast to this type of esoteric writing, a significant number of texts on Buson deal with the biography of the artist. Writers working with Buson’s poetry have paid a great deal of attention to the historical record of his life as a means of placing him within the context of the revival of Bashō-style *haikai*. Yoshizawa Chū’s writings on Buson’s painting trace Buson’s life with an emphasis on mapping his developing painting style onto the existing chronology of the artist’s life. In an essay for the *Nihon bijutsu zenshū* series, Yoshizawa follows the development of Buson’s painting as he moved around the Kantō and Kansai regions.²² By examining the poetry Buson was producing in each of the

²¹*Ibid.*, pp. 25–34.

regions he inhabited and by tying that poetry to various paintings, Yoshizawa creates a chronology for many of Buson's more distinctive painting styles. This essay, in addition to others by the author, creates a linear narrative that succeeds in introducing the artist and reveals some of the issues that have been at the center of Buson scholarship in the post war period. This type of essay is aimed at a much broader audience than that of the more academic writing of Sasaki, but it, too, is threaded with commentary that addresses questions of cultural identity and awareness. Implicit in Yoshizawa's text is a desire to reconcile the practice of *haikai*, for which most Japanese readers know Buson, and the painting of *bunjinga*, which one might associate more directly with an interest in China. This pairing of practices in Buson's case is complex, but Yoshizawa strives to relate the two practices through the biographical record of the artist. This investigation is intimately tied to relating Japanese and Chinese artistic pursuits as they are understood today. Left unrevealed is a sense of the eighteenth-century division, or lack thereof, between these cultural activities. This is an issue that seems critical from the perspective of an outside viewer in the West who might strive to understand how these cultures were blended and separated during the eighteenth century. I believe this is an important difference in the type of questioning that seems appropriate for domestic versus foreign researchers.

The same line of investigation exercised by Yoshizawa appears in Segi Shinichi's text *Buson: Gahai nidō*.²³ In this text a great effort is made to explain how Buson, who for a long period of time has been studied as a poet or a painter, can be studied as both without contradiction or confusion. This is a crucial issue in the study of Buson, as scholarship on his painting and his poetry have typically developed independently. The effect of this, as Segi shows, has been to bifurcate the individual who, as we know from the historical

²²Yoshizawa Chū, *Nihon bijutsu zenshū* [日本美術全集] (Tokyo: Shueisha, 1981), pp. 97–122.

²³Segi, 1990.

record, was one man working in both fields of creative practice. Segi recreates the chronological investigation of Buson's life and, through a thorough exploration of his poetry and paintings of various periods, shows how they can be understood in the context of one individual's creative enterprise. This work, Segi emphasizes, is "a common-sense approach" to the apparent dualism inherent in much of the literature surrounding Buson.²⁴ This work addresses one of the most difficult problems that we face in studying Buson. It tries to reconcile some of the conflicting observations that have been presented by scholars of poetry and scholars of painting in an effort to bridge this gap. In so doing, it reveals to us critical questions with which Japanese scholars have been struggling, and it allows us to see areas of inquiry that have received relatively little attention within the Japanese academic community. Chief among these seems to be an investigation into the meaning of China to the eighteenth-century *bunjin* artist and his patrons. In Segi's work, we are again taken on an investigative excursion into eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century descriptions of Buson's works by Chikuden and Gyokushū, but we are left to wonder what the label of "fiction" or "Chinese-inspired" means in the context of the eighteenth century. These labels appear and are demonstrated through works by Buson that may have given rise to this differentiation, but I believe we can also see through Buson's "Chinese-ness" a view of the "Chinese" that existed for Buson and his associates.

In the past few years several major works dealing with Buson have been published in Japan. These include *Buson jiten*²⁵ by Matsuo Yasuaki, Tanaka Yoshinobu, Muramatsu Tomotsugu, and Tanichi Yoshikazu, *Buson zenshū: Kaiga, Iboku*²⁶ by Ogata Tsutomu, Sasaki Jōhei, and Okada Akiko, and *Buson denki kōsetsu*²⁷ by Takahashi Shōji. These

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 301.

²⁵Matsuo et al., 1990.

²⁶Ogata, 1998.

texts each compile a vast amount of data related to Buson's artistic output and provide the raw material for innumerable analyses of the artist's oeuvre. Although none of these texts forms a traditional narrative biography or a targeted analysis of the artist's work, they each present a view of Buson created through chronological recording of his poems, paintings, and recorded life events. These works have been extremely valuable to my study, as they present the most thorough cataloguing of records dealing with Buson's life as he moved around Japan. In essence, they provide readily accessible, raw material for my analysis. What is absent from these recent texts is an overview that attempts to make sense of the records and their relationship to other historical events that were taking place during Buson's life. They also avoid looking outside the life of the artist, and therefore do not address issues linked to broader Japanese and Chinese arts and cultures. Finally, they do not address Japan's relationship to Chinese models that were clearly very popular and well known in Buson's time.

The end points of these various traditions of scholarship differ, and it is difficult to predict how each approach to these paintings will evolve. What is clear at this point is that scholars have uncovered a great deal of information related to the history and background of Buson's works. The primary source material revealed by the scholars mentioned above is used to support a new analysis in this study. The goal is to present Buson's works as hybrid Sino-Japanese production and to explore the ramifications of seeing the works in this manner. To compliment the hybrid nature of the paintings, this analysis functions as a kind of hybrid itself in its adoption of characteristics and components of scholarship from the various traditions present in the West and in Japan.

²⁷Takahashi, 2000.

Chapter 2: Buson's Early Years

1716–1750

Yosa Buson was born in 1716 to the Taniguchi (谷口) family in the village of Kema (毛馬), outside Naniwa (浪花, now Osaka).²⁸ There remains no record of any painting or poetry by Buson during his time spent living in Kema, but there has been a great deal of speculation about his tie to that community and the identity of his family.²⁹ The only reference Buson made to his young life appeared in his book *Yahanraku* (夜半楽), published in 1777. Two poems in this book, entitled *Shunpū bateikyoku* (春風馬堤曲) and *Dengaka* (澱河歌), specifically deal with images of youth in the region of Kema. These poems first appeared in a letter written on the twenty-third day of the second month of 1777.³⁰ Within the poems is imagery that describes the experience of a young man who, on returning to his native home, meets a young woman also returning to her parents' home. Buson muses about walking with this woman and hearing of her experiences as she follows the shore of the Yodo River. Finally, she sees her mother standing at the door to her family home.³¹ We might imagine Buson himself walking along

²⁸Stories surrounding Buson's birth and the identity of his parents are numerous and based largely on posthumous accounts of the artist's young life.

²⁹For a thorough discussion of the possible identities of Buson's family(s) and the various proposals made in the past ten years, see Segi, 1990, pp. 12–26. See also Eri Fujita Yasuhara, *Buson and Haishi: A Study of Free-Form Haikai Poetry in Eighteenth Century Japan* (Ph.D. diss.: University of California, Los Angeles, 1982), pp. 17–18.

³⁰Throughout this text, dates will be presented with seasonal and month references reflecting the inscriptions on Buson's paintings and in his letters. These dates are connected to the lunar calendar with the new year falling around mid to late February. Because of the discrepancy between the modern Gregorian calendar and the lunar calendar, some works of art that were made near the end of the lunar year would be dated to the following Gregorian calendar year. I have tried to avoid this problem by adopting the somewhat awkward form of referring to the numbered month and the year with the understanding that these years do not always coincide precisely with the same years recorded in Western history. For example, Buson's death was in the last month of 1783 by the lunar calendar, but would be considered January 1784 using the Gregorian calendar.

the banks of the river as a boy and seeing the young women of his village returning from their employment as domestic workers in Osaka. This scene may well have been common, as the youth of Kema looked outside their small village to work for the wealthier merchants of the city. While this musing paints an idyllic image of Buson's youthful experience, in a letter of the same year, the first day of the fourth month 1777, he states that the account is fictional.³² It is only through our assuming this image has some tie to Buson's lived experience that we can begin guessing about his childhood. Even Buson's birth in Kema is somewhat speculative, but he clearly wished to express a tie to this community later in his life. The strongest evidence for this appears in the names he chose to use on several of his paintings created around 1758. His signature lines derive their forms from the full reference to the locality of his village: 東成郡の淀川南岸の毛馬堤 (*tōseigun no yodogawa minamikishi no kema zutsumi*). He draws on this description for the names 東成趙居 (*tōsei chōkyo*), 馬塘趙居 (*batō chōkyo*), 河南趙居 (*kanan chōkyo*), and 淀南趙居 (*dennan chōkyo*).³³ In these references Buson uses a series of names that derive their forms from the village, but it was up to later writers to explain that these references relate to the artist's birthplace. Buson's students, writing shortly after his death, detailed these local references and reported their understanding of his early life.³⁴ Even among these writings

³¹Matsuo et al., 1990, p. 78; English translation in Makoto Ueda, *The Path of Flowering Thorn* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 101–2. See also Ōtani Tokuzō (大谷篤藏) and Fujita Shinichi (藤田真一), *Buson Shokanshū* (蕪村書簡集) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1992), p. 188, and Yuki Sawa and Edith M. Shiffert, *Haiku Master Buson* (Union City, Calif.: Heian International Publishing, 1978), p. 170.

³²Ueda, 1998, p. 102.

³³Takahashi, 2000, p. 3. These signatures appear on Buson's paintings *Horse and Groom* dated 1759 (東成趙居); *Tao Yuanming and Two Horses and a Groom*, both dated 1758 (河南趙居); and *Shide*, also dated 1758 (淀南趙居).

³⁴Writings by Kito and others appear to mark the anniversaries of Buson's death. These writings gradually detail a vision of Buson's life that influences most of the biographical accounts of the artist's life, including this one. For a list of major texts and dates of publication beginning with the year of Buson's death, see Matsuo et al., 1990, pp. 110–15.

close to the artist's lifetime, contrary reports of Buson's birth cite him as a man of Settsu born in Tennōji Village who was raised at his mother's home of Yosa in Tangō province, and as a man born and raised in Yosa.³⁵ While we may never know precisely where Buson was born, this set of locations played an important role in the artist's expressions in his later years.

Among Buson's students' writings, several of their brief biographical references written shortly after his death in 1784 offer interesting suggestions about how Buson's artistic life evolved. Teramura Hyakuchi [寺村百池, 1748–1835] referred to Buson's family as the Taniguchimin (谷口民), while Shunyarō Kitō [春夜楼几董, 1741–1789] and Ōemaru (大江丸, 1722–1805) simply referred to the family as the Tanimin (谷民).³⁶ While these men differ in their references to the family name, they all place Buson's parents in the village of Kema. The name Tani or Taniguchi links Buson to a relatively successful or powerful family. Some have interpreted the vagueness of Buson's account of his childhood and the link to the Tani name as an indication of his having been born to a village leader and his domestic servant from Yosa. This assumption is in part a reaction to the story conveyed in the *Shunpū bateikyoku*, where we see the young domestic worker returning to her parents' home. The suggestion is that the young woman is both a vision from Buson's youth and an expression of his mother's situation.³⁷ The status of Buson's father is suggested by Kitō in his *Yahanō shūenki*, written shortly after Buson's death. In this text he refers to Buson's father as a village headman (村長), but later the reference to Buson's father was physically changed in the text to read *gōmin* (郷民), or rural villager.³⁸

³⁵Yasuhara, 1982, pp. 18–19.

³⁶Takahashi, 2000, p. 5.

³⁷Ueda, 1998, pp. 111–12.

³⁸Takahashi, 2000, p. 6.

A later discussion of Buson and his station in society as a child is provided by Tamiya Chūsen (田宮仲宣) in 1805–1806. He castigates Buson for having squandered a family fortune in pursuing a life of carefree wandering.³⁹ While perhaps a mere critique of what he saw as Buson's unjustified popularity in the years following his death, we may be seeing glimpses of the life that Buson refused to address directly in his own writings.

What arises from this glimpse of Buson's origins is a view of the artist as the product of both an awkward childhood and one graced with the means to learn and explore the finer side of life. As the child of a well-to-do household, Buson had the opportunity to see beyond the life of the poor villager. Adding to this image of Buson's young life is the explanation of his early interest in painting in Hyakuchi's *Buson ō hibun* (蕪村翁碑文), kept at Kompuku-ji in Kyoto. Hyakuchi remarks that Buson showed a love for painting as a young child of seven or eight. He adds that Buson was raised by his mother's family in Yosa, implying a separation of his parents from a very early time.⁴⁰ In support of this idea Takahashi Shōji looks to a painting in the Gitter Collection that reveals a man and woman gazing at each other across a river winding through mist-shrouded mountains [Figure 1].⁴¹ This image, if a reference to the separation of Buson's parents, may reveal some of the struggle Buson faced in his early years and may help to explain why he never recorded a visit to Kema during his adult life, even when he lived a mere thirty miles to the north, in Kyoto.

From these assorted accounts of Buson's early years, it is easy to see the manner in which the image of the artist has been largely constructed by his followers. The seeds for

³⁹Yasuhara, 1982, p. 19, and Takahashi, 2000, pp. 27–8.

⁴⁰Takahashi, 2000, pp. 9–10.

⁴¹Ueda states that the Tani name was only given to families of the samurai class and upper-class farmers. This fact may give greater support to the idea that Buson was not a legitimate son of the Tani, or Taniguchi, household but a child born of a domestic servant. Ueda, 1998, p. 3.

this construction of the artist lie in Buson's own vague suggestions about his past. It then falls to contemporary scholars to try to make sense of the many past interpretations, but plausible alternatives exist in most recent analyses. We need only examine the Gitter Collection painting briefly to see an alternate interpretation of this image. The two figures, while distinctly separate, show little indication of their respective sexes and may more convincingly read as representations of the hermit (at the left) and the traveler (at the right).⁴² In this reading the opposition is between moving through life as a wanderer, the role Buson explored in his twenties, and settling down to a life of semi-retirement, like the life Buson experienced in his sixties. While Takahashi's analysis is appealing in its connection to the stories of Buson's youth, this equally plausible interpretation suggests that within the works now used to explain the artist's background, there is a great deal of unsettled meaning. The fact that the work can be so easily used to expound upon very different aspects of the artist's life is crucial to perceiving the work as a hybrid product. As a result of the blending of several external influences, this painting and many others contain multiple meanings and expressions. They draw off a range of experiences and connect to a diversity of thoughts and ideas.

Perhaps the most complex aspect of Buson's hybrid paintings is their style. Buson's works present a diversity of underlying connections to other works of art that began to emerge very early in his life. During the time spent at his mother's family home in Yosa, Buson seems to have first been exposed to the paintings of Momota Korenobu [桃田伊信, dates unknown]. Buson's student Kawada Denpuku [川田田福, d. 1793] wrote in 1785 about Buson's meeting Korenobu in Ikeda twenty years earlier and their first meeting forty years before that in Yosa.⁴³ He states that Buson first studied painting under

⁴²While I see the possibility that Takahashi proposes in interpreting this image, after a long discussion with Paul Berry regarding this painting and others that appear to present similar imagery, I tend to favor interpreting these figures as both male.

Korenobu's supervision. If this account is accurate Buson would have been eight or nine years old at the time. Whether we can rely on the account of Denpuku or not, it seems that Buson had some exposure to painting at a very young age and that this connection was strongly linked to his mother. Perhaps his father was already dead by this time or a rift had arisen in the family; whatever the case may have been, Buson would later adopt the name of his mother's town in taking the name Yosa as an adult.

The reason Buson felt such a strong connection to his mother and her hereditary home may in part lie in the occurrence of her death in 1728 during Buson's transition to young adulthood. In the year of his mother's death, Buson turned thirteen and celebrated the rite of passage called *hekoiwai* (禪祝い). This celebration was facilitated by Buson's mother's family, leaving us to wonder further about the account of his having been the son of a village headman. Why would the only male child of a powerful community leader have his rite of passage performed by his mother's family? Perhaps it was simply due to his presence in Yosa and the need to stay with his mother's family following her death, or perhaps it suggests the depth of the rift that existed between Buson and his father's family.

In the years following his mother's death Buson may have returned to Kema, but his relationship to this area did not have the weight and importance to his life that his connection to Yosa did. If his father was a village headman, as suggested above, then we would expect to see Buson taking on this family role. Instead he seems to have excluded his life in Kema from his later thoughts. Only the *Shunpū bateikyoku* makes reference to the area, and this is only in the context of his time there as a very young child. Buson may have stayed in Kema for a portion of the time between 1728 and 1732, or he may have remained in Yosa, but as early as 1732 he seems to have left for a new life in Edo.⁴⁴ Upon

⁴³Kawada Denpuku [川田田福], *Buson sankai tsuitō* [蕪村三回忌追悼], written in 1785. Quoted in Takahashi, 2000, p. 14.

⁴⁴While there are several different accounts of Buson's age when he left for Edo, I believe the early

arrival, the eighteen-year-old Buson quickly joined the ranks of the Edo *haikai* poets surrounding Hayano Hajin [早野巴人, 1677–1742].⁴⁵ The *haikai* tradition had existed for centuries among the literate elite of Japan, but it was not until the advent of the Tokugawa era and its liberalization of educational institutions, which provided common people with the opportunity to become literate and to study Chinese neo-Confucian thought, that the poetic form could emerge as a type of popular literature. Economic reforms and a burgeoning urban population led to the rapid spread of interest in *haikai* among the growing class of commoners with money. In turn, poets found the support necessary to seek a livelihood exclusively within the realm of writing and publishing. The growth of book printing and publishing supported these new poets, and their popularity grew quickly among the masses. As the *haikai* poets were providing popular art to a mass audience rather than the traditional elite audience, they needed to generate novel expressions with great regularity to maintain the interest of their patrons. By turning to Chinese poetry (*kanshi*) as a resource, they were able to mine the wealth of Chinese writing that had to date been unexplored in popular Japanese literature. The interests of the government in both urbanization and Chinese thought meant that the poets met with little if any resistance from officials as they created poems for the new class of readers and taught a large number of would-be dilettantes.

date of 1732 is more likely than the later dates of 1733 and 1735 suggested by some authors. The appearance of the name Saichō [西鳥] in Edo poetry published between 1733 and 1736 is strong support for this view. Buson used variants of this name in his early years in Edo and may even have arrived there from Yosa rather than from Kema. See Takahashi, 2000, pp. 30–32.

⁴⁵*Haikai* refers to the writing of poetry related to the tradition of individual, seventeen-syllable *hokku* (later called *haiku*). These were often used in linked poems with a fourteen-syllable *wakiku* following the introductory *hokku* and a further seventeen-syllable *daisanku*, which return to the form of the first poem. Collections of linked verses in these basic forms were then created in groups of thirty-six (*kasen*), forty-four (*yoyoshi*), fifty (*gojūin*), one hundred (*hyakuin*), and one thousand (*senku*). These collections of poems might be created by individual *haikai* poets, but they were often created at gatherings of poets. The progression of poetic images was constructed by the group, which took turns as they built upon their peers' literary contributions.

In the year Buson arrived in Edo, Hajin was in Kyoto, and Buson seems to have been embraced by one of Hajin's followers named Raisen [来川, d.1736]. It was during his time spent with Raisen that Buson used the name Saichō [西鳥].⁴⁶ Under this name his poetry was published with Raisen's in the *Yume monogatari* [夢物語] in 1734. Raisen died in 1736, leaving Buson again without an elder associate. It was in the winter of this year that we see Buson shift to the name Saichō (written with different characters, 宰鳥) as he wrote poetry with another follower of Hajin named Hyakuan [百庵]. During this time, Buson seems to have been searching for a guide in the Edo poetry community. This search was brief, as he soon began his association with Hajin following the older poet's return from Kyoto. In 1737, the name 宰町 (Saichō, again using different characters) appears associated with Hajin's studio called Yahantei [夜半亭]. Buson was most likely a live-in disciple of Hajin at this time, and within this first year, his poetry was being published with the other members of Hajin's circle. The earliest work from Buson under the name 宰町 (Saichō) appeared in late 1737.⁴⁷ It reads:

鎌倉詠物

尼寺や十夜に届く鬢葛

Ordered from Kamakura:

The nunnery during the Ten-Night Service pomatum ivy arrives.

This poem appears with a woodblock illustration bearing the signature Saichō [宰町]. In this early work we see both the direction of Buson's poetry and an early glimpse of his

⁴⁶The appearance of Saichō written with the characters 西鳥, 宰鳥, and 宰町 may all be references to Buson. The last of these was used by Buson in 1738 when working with Hajin, but Ebara Taizō [額原退藏] in 1943 followed a line of reasoning that suggested all of these were names used by the young Buson. Takahashi, 2000, p. 30.

⁴⁷There is some discrepancy as to whether this is the first or second work under the Saichō [宰町] name. Ueda cites this as the earliest *hokku*, while others consider it second to a work gathered with the writings of Hajin upon his return from Kyoto, which is also signed with the same Saichō. See Matsuo et al., 1990, p. 14.

imagery [Figure 2]. This illustration reveals a certain youthful awkwardness in its wavering lines and confusing spatial structure, but it demonstrates Buson's dedication to the arts of poetry and visual imagery from the age of twenty-one. The poem creates a brief story of the nuns of Tōkei-ji in Kamakura.⁴⁸ Women would come to this temple seeking divorce from their husbands. By staying at this temple for a period of three years as a nun, the women would be granted a divorce, after which they were free to pursue other relationships. The text of the poem relates the experience of the nuns engaged in recitation of a prayer as part of the Ten-Night Service, which is held each year during the tenth lunar month. During this recitation a messenger arrives with a sprig of pomatum ivy, which may mark the sender as the lover of one of the nuns and the reason for her seeking a divorce.⁴⁹ In this short poem Buson encapsulates a story which is enhanced in its sentimental qualities by the associated image of the young woman reading a letter while the sprig of ivy rests on the floor, at the lower right of the image. With this work we can already see the direction Buson's poetry would travel as he later used this story-like encapsulation to create his vivid, yet wistful images.

Hajin and his followers practiced a form of *haikai* inspired by the work of Matsuo Bashō [松尾芭蕉, 1644–1694]. Bashō's approach to poetry was conveyed to Hajin through two of his teachers: Takarai Kikaku [宝井其角, 1661–1707] and Hattori Ransetsu [服部嵐雪, 1654–1707]. The message communicated by these poets to Hajin and then to Buson is summed up in the master's words: "in composing *haikai*, try not to adhere to your teacher's style. Change your style with time and occasion, setting it distinctly apart from what has gone before as well as what might come after."⁵⁰ This statement seems to have

⁴⁸Tōkei-ji was an *engiri-dera* where women would seek refuge while awaiting divorce.

⁴⁹Ueda, 1998, p. 6.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 1998, p. 5. Translated from Ogata Tsutomu, et al., *Buson zenshū* [蕉村全集], Vol. 7 (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1995), p. 75.

been critical to Buson's development as an artist and poet in that his personal style is marked by constant change. The idea of embracing constant change and allowing time and occasion to guide one's style is at the heart of the hybrid form, as it absorbs and rephrases multiple factors to generate new forms of expression. Buson later would inherit the leadership of the Bashō tradition and assume the studio title of Hajin, becoming known as *Yahantei II*.⁵¹ Buson lived and studied poetry in Edo for six more years, until Hajin's death in 1742. During this period he most likely produced paintings, probably *haiga* or paintings to accompany *haikai* poetry, like that in Figure 2, but poetry comprises the bulk of his dated artistic output during this period.⁵² He also must have become familiar with the works of classical Chinese poets, including Du Fu [杜甫, 712–770] and Wang Wei [王維, 699–759], whose works were the focus of much study among the Hajin circle.⁵³

In addition to studying poetry with Hajin during this time, Buson was likely exposed to the work of Hattori Nankaku [服部南郭, 1683–1759]. As a scholar of Confucian classics and a pioneer of the Japanese *bunjin* painting style, Nankaku taught in Edo during the period of Buson's residence and was connected to several members of the literary circle of Hajin. Buson later affirms this link in his eulogizing inscription marking the death of Sakaki Hyakusen [彭城百川, 1698–1753]. In this writing Buson relates his

⁵¹The title of *Yahantei Nisei* was recorded in 1770, when Buson was fifty-one years old. This title was presumably given by members of the poetry community of which Buson was the leader, and reflected their respect for his position in the Bashō lineage. Buson apparently resisted this role as head of the lineage, stating in a postscript to *Kokan tanzakushū* of 1751 that he saw the world of *haikai* masters as one rife with "ridicule and slander." Yasuhara, 1982, p. 33.

⁵²While I say that poetry comprised the bulk of Buson's creative work, it is important to note that only nine *hokku* and twenty-six *tsukeku* comprise the whole of Buson's recorded writing from the years he spent at *Yahantei* in Edo, learning the *haikai* tradition of Hajin (Yasuhara, 1983, p. 20). Along with this poetic output, it is safe to assume that Buson was painting at this time because he emerged as a skilled painter shortly after. While there seem to be no paintings that date to this period, it would not be unusual to find the young artist's work discarded or misattributed to other artists because these works would have lacked the stylistic markers that allow us to attribute later works to Buson.

⁵³Ueda, 1998, p. 4.

link to Kikaku through Hajin and asserts an affinity between his own *bunjinga* and that of Hyakusen. As a practitioner of *bunjin* painting, Hyakusen was familiar with Nankaku and his teacher Ogyū Sorai [荻生徂徠, 1666–1728], who asserted that the Japanese poet should translate Chinese classical poetry into a more colloquial Japanese form while retaining the appearance of the Chinese original.⁵⁴ In addition to studying classical Chinese poetry and Ming and Qing Dynasty Chinese paintings that were entering Japan, Nankaku is noted for his examinations of Muromachi ink painting associated with Shubun and Sesshu. Through this connection Buson may have been exposed to both Nankaku's contemporary interpretations of Chinese painting and some of the history of Japanese reinterpretations of Chinese painting styles over the preceding three centuries. In essence, Nankaku's method of translating Chinese prototypes into Japanese forms lays the foundation for one aspect of the hybridity that Buson would explore through much of his life.⁵⁵ Buson's direct connections to Nankaku are speculative, but it is clear the two men shared a similar interest in Bashō-style poetry and Chinese-style painting.

Buson's life as a painter and writer progressed gradually through the 1730s and 1740s. In his youth, Buson was primarily known for his poetry, leaving few if any paintings. There are various references to paintings done in Buson's early years, but these works appear to be rather formulaic, and none are firmly dated.⁵⁶ Complicating the search

⁵⁴Cahill, 1996, p. 174.

⁵⁵Nankaku, like Buson, produced hybrid paintings, but Nankaku's works appear to separate the world of poetry from that of painting more consistently.

⁵⁶Calvin French states that Buson supported himself as a free-lance painter, or *machi-eshi* [町絵師], throughout the 1740s. French notes that the paintings from this period suggest that Buson was producing them within a rather restricted range of styles. The only difficulty with seeing Buson as a *machi-eshi* is the apparent lack of early Buson paintings in existence. See French, 1974, p. 6. It remains unclear whether the few paintings from Buson's early period are indicative of a style that he learned from Korenobu. Perhaps they reveal, as Sasaki Jōhei implies, Buson's early study of Japanese-style painting, but the dates of the creation of these images is a matter of great uncertainty. See Sasaki Jōhei [佐々木丞平] and Sasaki Masako [佐々木正子], *Buson: sono futatsu no tabi* [蕪村：その二つの旅] (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 2001), pp. 8–11.

for early Buson paintings is the fact that at the age of twenty-seven (1742), he left Edo to travel around the Kantō plain and the provinces to the north.⁵⁷ Buson's journeys took him to some of the locations described by Bashō in his poetic journal *Oku no hosomichi* (奥の細道), or *Narrow Road to the Remote North*. This journey would later form the basis for several of Buson's paintings in the *haiga* style. It was during this period of wandering that Buson seems to have undergone a distinct change from following masters such as Raisen and Hajin to becoming a creative artist in his own right. Perhaps in an effort to live according to the advice Hajin had offered, Buson no longer followed a master, but allowed himself to change freely to fit the circumstances that confronted him.

During this period of constant movement, there are only scattered records of where Buson stopped and what he did. Some of his poems from this period state the place in which they were written, and there are records of a few paintings being created as Buson moved around the northern provinces. It is clear that Buson initially left Edo to live in Yūki, where he stayed with Isaoka Gantō [砂岡雁宕, d. 1773].⁵⁸ Gantō had been a follower of Hajin, and Gantō's father had been a follower of Hajin's associates Ransetsu and Kikaku. He was now running the family home in Yūki and was well respected in his community.⁵⁹ Buson later reflected on this period of his life, saying that he "focused on haikai composition day and night."⁶⁰ This period lasted through 1743, when Buson left to travel further to the north. He worked his way north through Utsunomiya to Sakata, on the Japan Sea coast, eventually reaching the northern end of Honshū at Sotogahama.⁶¹ From

⁵⁷Fujita Shinichi [藤田真一], *Yosa Buson, Kobayashi Issa* [与謝蕪村・小林一茶], *Shincho koten bungaku album* [新潮古典文学アルバム] (Tokyo: Shinchosha, 1991), p. 103.

⁵⁸Muramatsu Tomotsugu, *Buson no tegami* [蕪村の手紙] (Tokyo: Daishukan Shoten, 1990), p. 13.

⁵⁹Ueda, 1998, p. 13.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, p. 13.

there he returned down the east side of the island, ending his journey back in Yūki in 1744. Of this journey, Buson wrote, “I became ill on the road, went hungry, and suffered from heat and cold.”⁶² This struggle seems to have given Buson a greater independence than we see prior to 1744, and it may have marked his final break with his series of parental figures: his mother, Raisen, Hajin, and members of the Hajin poetry circle.

Buson’s second period of living in Yūki seems to have been a much more focused period of creative expression. Rather than being a time of exclusive dedication to *haikai*, it was a time of creative exploration in his poetry, painting, and spiritual life. In addition to staying with Gantō, Buson lived for a time with other successful merchants in Yūki, including a man called Jōu [丈羽], mentioned in Buson’s *Shin hanatsumi* [新花摘], written in 1777. It was around this same time, in 1744, that the first use of the name Buson appears in the artist’s literary work. Writing in a *saitanchō*, or New Year poetry collection, in February 1744 Buson composed two *hokku* signed Saichō [宰鳥] and one signed Buson [蕪村], each of which recalled images from his travels in the previous year.⁶³ The shift to the name he would use as a writer throughout the remainder of his life may indicate Buson’s own understanding that something in his life had changed. In essence, he had matured, and from this date forward he worked in an even more independent fashion. Like the earlier step of leaving Edo in 1742, Buson followed the guiding words of Hajin as he welcomed change and strove to react according to his circumstances rather than following

⁶¹Buson writes of these travels in *Shin hanatsumi*. For an English translation see: Yasuhara, 1983, p. 25.

⁶²Ueda, 1998, p. 15.

⁶³Takahashi, 2000, pp. 62–4. While the date of 1744 is clear for the first use of this name, there is some discrepancy as to where the 1744 *saitanchō* was written. An alternative proposal places Buson in Utsunomiya, north of Yūki, in this year. See Okada Rihei [岡田利兵衛], *Hajin no shoga bijutsu: Buson* [俳人の書画美術：蕪村], Vol. 5 (Tokyo: Shueisha, 1978), p. 134. See also Yoshizawa Chū [吉沢忠] and Hoshino Suzu [星野鈴], *Nihon bijutsu kaiga zenshū: Buson* [日本美術絵画全集：蕪村], Vol. 19, (Tokyo: Shueisha, 1981), p. 99.

the specific words of a teacher. Following this advice and seeking to follow no master facilitated the idea of Buson's combining various influences to generate the hybrid imagery that would become central to his art.

At this time Buson painted a set of four wooden doors, or *sugidō* [杉戸], depicting six figures dancing and playing with battledore and shuttlecocks [Figure 3]. Although undated, this work was painted for a locale near Yūki as a symbol of good health and safety through the year.⁶⁴ As in the woodblock illustration in Figure 2, Buson seems to have relied on a traditional Japanese painting style in creating this work. In this case his work parallels the techniques of some of the Kanō painters and shows some similarity to the emerging *ukiyo-e* tradition. The flat areas of color and virtual elimination of brushstrokes are characteristic of both the *sugidō* and paintings created in the Kanō tradition, as well as several other traditional forms of painting. It is likely that this was a commission, and as such Buson chose the style to complement the traditional symbolic meaning inherent in the work. As an alternative, we might speculate that this work reflects the style Buson learned as a young man from painters such as Korenobu. In addition, in around 1744 Buson painted a triptych in a more Chinese style [Figure 4]. This work, now entitled *Tao Yuanming Returning Home* (*Tōenmei kikyoraizu* [陶淵明歸去來圖]), is signed with the name Shikan [子漢] in each of its three scrolls. The subject is the Chinese poet Tao Yuanming, seated at a table with a *qin*, or Chinese stringed instrument. The center scroll is flanked by landscape scenes of boats on a broad expanse of water below distant mountains on the right and a white bird flying above bamboos and a mountain stream on the left. The figure style of the central scroll is similar to that of the figures in the battledore and shuttlecocks *sugidō*. The flowing lines used to depict the landscape and the flat treatment of the colored surfaces resemble Japanese interpretations of Chinese painting

⁶⁴Sasaki, *Buson*, 2001, p. 32.

styles practiced by the Kanō school of painting [Figure 5]. The landscapes also reveal some of the mannerisms of the eighteenth-century Kanō painters in the application of broad areas of wash to define the surfaces of mountains within rather strong black outlines. Overall, this work, while closer to a Chinese form in its subject, reveals just how closely Buson's early painting followed existing Japanese forms of painting. These early paintings reveal Buson's understanding of Chinese-style painting as it had been interpreted by the Kanō school of Japanese painters. They also display Buson's willingness to alter his painting style to fit with the subject matter that he was investigating in each image, just as he was willing to alter his poetic style to suit his various experiences.

Buson's stay in Yūki also marks the beginning of his tie to the Buddhist tradition and provides experiential sources for what would later become signs of both his humor and his taste for the macabre.⁶⁵ In 1745 Buson wrote a eulogy marking the death of another associate in Yūki named Hokuju Rōsen [北寿老仙, d.1745].⁶⁶ In signing this work, he refers to himself as Shaku Buson [釈蕪村].⁶⁷ The adoption of this name is significant in that at this time, Buson seems to have become so closely tied to the Buddhist faith that he was referred to as *hōshi*, or priest. He formed an association with Gukyō-ji [弘経寺], a *Jōdo* sect temple in Yūki patronized by the Isaoka family.⁶⁸ Buson's adoption of the *Shaku* prefix associates him with the lineage of monks at Gukyō-ji, which he maintained until his break with the lineage in 1760.

There remain unsigned paintings of plums and landscapes with buildings at Gukyō-ji that may have been painted by Buson during this period [Figure 6 and 7].⁶⁹ If

⁶⁵Ueda, 1998, p. 14.

⁶⁶Hokuju was also known as Hayami Shinga [早見晋我].

⁶⁷The *Shaku* prefix was customarily taken by Buddhist priests and was derived from the two-character reference to the historical Buddha, *Shaka*.

⁶⁸Takahashi, 2000, p. 77.

these works are Buson's, it appears that he actively changed his style while in Yūki. These works show a much greater degree of focus on the expressive potential of the brush. In the painting of the tree trunks in the plums, broad expressive strokes slide up and across the painting surface, communicating the strength and dynamic vitality of these gnarled trees. The landscapes also demonstrate the artist's awareness of Chinese techniques of creating atmospheric effects. These works are significantly more subtle than the landscapes seen in the *Tao Yuanming* triptych. While these early works may show Buson moving toward Chinese styles of painting as a mode of expression, they are still firmly rooted in Japanese traditions of ink painting that evolved during the Muromachi period.

Buson remained in Yūki from 1745 until 1751, when he moved to Kyoto. During this period he produced poetry on a regular basis and associated with many followers of the Hajin tradition. His poetry expands in its subject matter, and the surviving images from this time suggest that he was actively painting as well. While it is somewhat difficult to find authentic works that date from this period, a set of eleven scrolls mounted on folding screens dated 1750 must have been produced before Buson's move to Kyoto [Figure 8]. The last of this set of paintings is inscribed with the statement 寛延庚午孟夏画於東野城隅, "painted while resident at Tōya-jō, early summer, Kōgo year of the Kan'en era (1750)."⁷⁰ Tōya-jō is thought to be the castle in the city of Mitō (水戸, in modern Ibaraki Prefecture). Buson may have stayed briefly at Tōya-jō in the year prior to his move to Kyoto in 1751. These works will be addressed in detail in the following chapter, but here it is important to note that they reveal a style close to that used in the *Tao Yuanming* triptych, and the signature Shimei [四明] is present on ten of the eleven works.⁷¹ Buson used the

⁶⁹Ogata, et al., 1998, pp. 18–19.

⁷⁰These paintings once formed a pair of six panel screens, but one of the panels was separated from the other eleven. See: Sasaki Jōhei [佐々木承平], "Yosa Buson hitsu sansui jinbutsu zu" [与謝蕪村筆山水人物図], *Kokka* [国華] (No. 1119, 1988): p. 20. I was recently informed by Paul Berry that the twelfth panel has resurfaced in Kyoto, but I have not had the opportunity see it yet.

Shimei signature on many works in this early period and continued to use it in various forms until at least 1757. The name Shimei may have been derived from the name of a peak on Mount Hiei called *Shimeigetake* [四明ヶ嶽]. Perhaps Buson chose the name of this peak because he was familiar with Mount Hiei from his childhood experiences in Kema and Yosa, on opposite sides of this important Buddhist site.⁷² The adoption of this name may be the first hint of Buson's desire to return to the area of his birth. By recalling a prominent location in the Kansai region, Buson seems to prefigure his decision in 1751 to leave the Kantō region for good and to establish a new home in Kyoto. During his stay north of Edo, Buson seems to have developed much of the personality that he would later express in writing and painting. In addition, a few paintings appeared in the 1750s that suggest the direction Buson's later painting would take, but none of the main body of Buson's mature works are dated before the 1750s.⁷³ These eleven paintings are the only dated Buson paintings from his ten years of itinerant travel. The works show a distinct interest in the expressive nature of the brush and deal with a number of Chinese themes. The landscape, architecture, and the dress of the figures are based on Chinese models, and the style grows out of that in Buson's undated, but presumed earlier work. The variety of styles and modes of painting revealed in Buson's early work should be kept in mind as we address his later paintings because they preface the diversity of styles that appear between the 1750s and the gradual appearance of his mature style in the 1770s.

During the first thirty-five years of Buson's life, we see fragments of a young life

⁷²The one exception is the sixth scroll, which is signed Rairyō [頼良]. While its signature is unusual, this work is marked with a seal reading Shimei sanjin [四明山人] that appears on other works in this set.

⁷³Tanaka Yoshinobu [田中善信], *Yosa Buson* [与謝蕪村] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbundō, 1996), p. 43.

⁷³Sasaki Jōhei, "Yosa Buson hitsu sansui jinbutsu zu" [与謝蕪村筆山水人物図], *Kokka*, No. 1119, 1988, pp. 20–31.

characterized by a variety of challenges. His family situation was apparently difficult, which led Buson and his mother to live at her childhood home in Yosa. The end of this difficult period is marked by the death of his mother, with whom he had a deep and significant bond. This death is but the first of what would be a series of losses that Buson faced as he grew older. As a teenager he moved to Edo, where he formed relationships that parallel his close link to his mother. In his life with Raisen and Hajin, he was embraced and nurtured as a *haikai* poet. While fruitful, these associations were temporary and ended with the deaths of these teachers. Moving to the north, Buson established familial and religious ties with people in the town of Yūki. Here he may not have found the comfort he sought on first staying in the town, for he then traveled north in what he later related as a difficult and unpleasant wandering. Returning to Yūki, Buson formed more solid relationships but appears to have remained unsettled. Perhaps reacting to grief associated with the annual memorials for his departed mother or simply longing for the relative comfort of the past, Buson finally resolved to return to the Kansai area in 1751, leaving the Kantō area for good. Through this period Buson gradually became more successful as both a poet and painter, but his life remained unfocused. As he related in his later writings about his youth, this period was essential to his emergence as a master poet and a trying time in which he sought to find his own voice and a sense of belonging.⁷⁴ This period provided Buson with both the model for his free combination of experiences in his artistic expression and offered the opportunity to experiment with a wide range of distinct styles of painting and poetry. In essence, the framework for Buson's later success and the raw materials of experience with paintings that he would later use in his creation of hybrid works was fixed in the artist's life during this early period.

⁷⁴These ideas emerge in Buson's 1777 *Shunpū bateikyoku* and *Shin hanatsumi*.

Chapter 3: The Early Paintings

The earliest images thought to be by Buson were introduced in the preceding chapter, but it remains important to examine them more closely to see how the artist began his painting career. The following discussion will examine the images from the standpoint of their styles, brushwork, and subjects to demonstrate the foundation upon which Buson's later paintings would expand. These works have recently been used by Sasaki Jōhei to suggest that Buson began as a painter in the older Japanese manner of the Kanō school, only later to shift in his focus to the *bunjinga* tradition.⁷⁵ While it remains unclear as to whether Buson envisioned himself as working in styles that were associated with Japanese traditions or Chinese traditions in his own day, there is little doubt he was exposed to a wide variety of stylistic approaches to image making. In addition, his poetry studies show him to be well aware of Chinese traditions of writing based on the poetry of Wang Wei, Du Fu, and other classical Chinese writers. In thinking about Buson's early images, the work of scholars studying his early poetry are particularly helpful. Within the poems they have found references and adaptations of Chinese images introduced in the classics mixed with models provided by Hain and other poets of the Bashō lineage. In these verses, imported and domestic inspirations are present side-by-side and stem directly from existing Japanese traditions or newly imported Chinese traditions. Within the scant visual record of this period, we can see a similar blending of motifs and styles with specific links to one tradition or the other.

The woodblock image created in 1737 to accompany a *hokku* mentioned in the

⁷⁵Sasaki and Sasaki, *Buson*, 2001, pp. 11–13.

biographical sketch above is the oldest image thought to have been created by Buson [Figure 2]. The image presents a young woman seated in the center of the lower half of the frame. Her head occupies the center of the page, drawing the viewer's attention to the figure rather than allowing the eye to float between the image and the inscribed poem. The figure's face and the angle of her head indicate that she is focused on a letter resting in her hands. Her right hand grasps the folded portion of the letter, while the remainder of the letter descends toward her folded legs. As it is the right side of the letter that is folded, we can surmise that she has read the bulk of the text and is now beginning to think about the content. Her kimono is adorned with clusters of leaf patterns, which may suggest a seasonal reference. As the poem mentions the Ten-Night Service, which takes place in the tenth lunar month, the pattern is possibly based on a plant symbolic of late autumn.⁷⁶ Beneath the kimono the young woman's legs jut out to the left side of the image. Her left leg is bent upward so that her bare left foot is visible emerging from beneath the folds of the garment. Her right leg is also bent, with the knee on the floor and the foot tucked under her body. To the right side of the figure, a large fold of cloth lies rumpled on the floor, balancing the right knee by stretching toward the left edge of the image. The effect of this balance is to create a stable triangular form occupying the lower half of the page. Below this form on the right is a sketchily drawn object that may be the bundle of pomatum ivy mentioned in the poem. These observations suggest that Buson's image is a close representation of the content of the poem's narrative.

While the image follows the narrative of the inscription, it remains vague enough in its appearance to allow for some debate as to the precise meaning of the inscription. In an alternate translation of this poem, the object accompanying the messenger's letter is identified as hair for a new wig. In this translation, the last two characters are read *bin*

⁷⁶The kimono pattern may be based on a *momiji* pattern or perhaps a stylized bamboo, but because there is so little of the pattern visible, its precise identification remains problematic.

kazura [鬘葛] rather than *sanekazura* [鬘葛] and refer to the arrival of hair rather than the pomatum plant, whose sap was used for oiling the hair.⁷⁷ Buson's image reveals the bundle, but whether it is hair or ivy is entirely unclear. In either case, the message is that the young woman will soon be free to once again treat her hair as a lay person after divorcing her husband, and the image shows us the woman at the moment of this realization.

The figure in this image, while decipherable, appears to sit in a rather awkward manner. This is in part due to the apparent contortion of her legs. Looking at the lines that comprise the figure's left leg, the curves of the knee and buttock are placed in rather close proximity. Comparing these features to the torso, the arms holding the letter, and the face, the figure begins to appear somewhat unnatural, with legs of differing lengths and an uncomfortable posture. This kind of uncomfortable presentation of the figure is perhaps derived from traditional *kasen-e*, or poet portraits, and bears a resemblance to the woodblock images of this theme by *ukiyo-e* artist Hishikawa Moronobu [Figure 9]. Moronobu's seated male figure show, a similar disproportional emphasis on the torso and head, but in this example the figure faces the right rather than the left. It is likely that Buson would have seen images like these popular prints in Edo, and he could have been inspired by their form of figure drawing.

Emphasizing this compositional awkwardness is the quality of Buson's line that delineates the figure. While this line quality is in part attributable to the block carver and printer, a quick comparison of the lines used in the calligraphy with those that form the figure reveals a distinct difference. Whereas the lines comprising the characters *Kamakura*

⁷⁷Leon Zolbrod, "Buson in English," *Buson Jiten* (Tokyo: Ōfūsha, 1990) p. 8. Zolbrod's translation reads: "From the nunnery. It will reach you in ten nights — Hair for your new wig." While this translation reflects the meaning of the characters as they are written, the use of *bin* in place of *sane* leaves the final line short one syllable. For this reason I have chosen to follow Ueda's translation in assessing this poem and image.

[鎌倉] appear to flow naturally, the lines of the figure's sleeves and legs show a distinct lack of confidence and a slight wavering motion. These wavering lines appear uncontrolled as they start and end. They present clearly drawn points of initiation and completion, but seem to miss their mark slightly in forming the contours of the figure. Where the line of the right leg meets that of the left leg, it crosses the boundary of the two forms in a manner that disrupts the flow of the rising left knee. Similarly, the lines of the hands and the bundle of cloth lying to the right of the figure do not resolve into clear descriptions of forms, leaving a great deal of ambiguity as to how the image is to be read. Finally, the face of the figure shows a strangely vacant quality not unlike the masks used in Nō theater. The marks that form the eyes and the nose are blunt, and the mouth seems to form a slight frown as the figure stares vaguely toward, but not at, the cryptic marks of text on the unfolded page. The page itself also presents an awkward form as its width seems to broaden as it falls from the woman's left hand. The effect is to create a paper that appears plastic in its structure as it falls heavily toward the floor. It does not bend naturally, but falls in such a way as to flatten the image around it, disrupting the illusionistic quality of the figure suggested by the head, body, arms, and legs.

While these criticisms reveal some of the weaknesses inherent in this early image, it is important to see the successes that are presented in this work as well. The imagery presented in the poem is that of a nun and wife seeking the freedom to pursue her love for another man. The image manages to capture a sense of the longing and strain that this woman must feel as she reaches the end of her three years of seclusion as a nun. Cherishing the letter and holding it close to her breast, the figure, while distant in her expression, seems to present a tenderness and strength that convey the challenges that she must have faced. Her love has placed her in this situation, and it is her strong-willed dedication to the presumed writer of this letter that has allowed her to persevere. It is with a

kind of sweet sorrow that she realizes both her freedom from the past and the struggles that have brought her to this point. With this early work, Buson appears to have used the imagery to illustrate the rich narrative potential of his poetry. This encapsulating of a broader narrative into a focused expression will later become an essential component of the artist's mature hybrid works. Perhaps the later paintings have roots that reach all the way back to this earliest surviving image from Buson's hand.

There are no further images that can be shown to come from Buson's early years in Edo. The next clear example of Buson's painting is the set of *sugidō* made while Buson was living in Yūki [Figure 3]. This set of cedar doors is painted with thick pigments within strong calligraphic outlines. The figures are clustered at the left, leaving the far right panel nearly bare, aside from its strongly modulated grain. The rope — hanging in two swags adorned with hanging boughs of cedar, straws, and papers — unifies the individual doors into a single work and complements the rich grain of the panels. A single figure of a young girl appears in the center right panel as she bends toward the left to pick up a shuttlecock lying on the undefined ground. The center left panel presents a male and a female figure each facing the right in dynamic postures as they swing their battledore. The female figure looks up to a flying shuttlecock which is falling toward her, while the male figure appears to be lunging forward and falling to his knees. The left panel shows a male figure with a young boy on his left shoulder. The boy appears to have just hit a shuttlecock with the fan he is brandishing above his head. He is looking up toward the hanging rope swag where the shuttlecock flies upward. Facing the male figure and the boy is another young girl, who appears astonished by the boy's having hit the shuttlecock. Each of these figures is dressed in rich textiles with bold colors that tend to link one person to another through carefully planned repetition. The blue and white tones shown in the garment of the small figure at the right are repeated in the blue and white garment of the male figure at the left. The red of the

same small figure at the right reappears in the red under-kimono of the young girl at the left, in the ribs of the boy's fan lifted high in the air, and in the bold red pants of the female figure in the left center panel. In addition, the mauve and gold colors in the shirt of the boy at the left are repeated in the shirt of the female figure in the left center panel. These colors give the work a quality of gaiety and vitality that complements the atmosphere of pleasure communicated by the activities of the figures. Contrasting with this joyous quality is an extremely reserved style. The colors are each applied carefully, and the lines appear extremely taut and controlled. These qualities tend to hide the artist's hand, as each area of color and line appears almost mechanical in its precision.

The details of this work and the rigid style of its execution suggest the social status of the people playing in this scene. The male figure at the left wears a sword at his waist, which identifies him as a member of the samurai class. The bold colors and sumptuous patterns of the textiles worn by the women and children suggest their relative wealth. These may have been the types of people, or may have appealed to the people, with whom Buson was staying while in Yūki. Patrons such as Hokuju Rōsen, for whom Buson wrote the eulogy mentioned in the previous chapter, might well be the target audience for this type of painting. Far from being solely interested in *haikai* poetry, patrons such as Hokuju and others were people who enjoyed the many entertainments of life available to members of the growing middle-class.⁷⁸ People of the type presented in these *sugidō* appear in several images Buson is thought to have made during his early years as a painter, but they differ markedly from the figure types who would come to populate his more Chinese-inspired paintings of the following years. These works are executed in a style that can best be associated with the *yamato-e* tradition, which continued in popularity in the hands of many painters of the Edo period.⁷⁹ The tradition of associating this style of painting with

⁷⁸Hokuju was a Confucian teacher in Yūki and seems to have been extremely supportive of the young Buson. Takahashi, 2000, p. 63.

Japanese topics such as the play scene presented in the *sugidō* has roots reaching back hundreds of years through the followers of the Tosa school of painting. In constructing a work like this, Buson may have looked to any of a host of screen painters' works that present the dense areas of color and relative precision in execution shown by the *sugidō*.

About this same time, Buson reveals his understanding of another distinct style of painting in his triptych of the Chinese poet Tao Yuanming flanked by landscapes [Figure 5]. This work takes as its subject a Chinese poet whose poetic style was important to the *haikai* followers of Bashō and Hajin. Buson presents the poet seated in a chair decorated with a light-colored floral pattern. He leans forward on a table, upon which rests a stringless *qin*. The figure is turned slightly to the right and appears to gaze into the distance as if in contemplation as his arms rest on the flat surface of the *qin*. To the left of the figure near the bottom of the scroll rests a small red object that is likely the plectrum cast aside as the instrument rests in its unplayable state. The figure is dressed in a light green garment with blue trim, which seems to communicate the age and wisdom embodied by this monumental figure in the history of Chinese literature. The lines that define the garments are smoothly flowing calligraphic strokes of black ink that resemble those used in the earlier printed image [Figure 2]. While these lines start and stop in a manner suggestive in itself. Rather than strictly describing the structure of the body, they show a much greater degree of confidence in the hand of the painter than those seen in the earlier print. Similarly, the lines that describe the edges of the table show a great degree of control in representing the thin table surface.

The linear style and application of color in this image are similar to works made by artists associated with the Kanō school of painting in Edo as noted in chapter two.⁸⁰ The

⁷⁹Sasaki Jōhei and Sasaki Masako, "Fuji hitotsu uzumi no koshite wakaba kana" [不二ひとつうずみのこして若葉かな], *Geijutsu shinchō* [芸術新潮] (February, 2001): p. 19.

⁸⁰Sasaki, 1975, p. 26.

landscapes flanking the central scroll confirm this association, as they present two distinct mountain and water scenes painted in a manner that recalls the work of Kanō Tanyū's [狩野探幽, 1602–1674] many followers. To the right is an image of a broad expanse of water with small sailboats scattered across the central portion of the image. A peninsula reaches into the water from the right side of the scene, forming a series of low curving hills colored with a variety of brown and green washes. These colors are repeated in the distant mountains of the upper portion of the scroll, but here the hills are more rigid in their forms as they rise sharply from the shore. These distant hills are defined by strong outlines filled in with colored washes. Rising behind these hills are a series of light blue peaks defined by jagged outlines, broken as clouds of faint gray wash and areas of bare silk slice across the image. The blue of the peaks is repeated in the distant mountain in the landscape scroll at the left. In this image we see a single white bird flying in front of the distant mountain and a cluster of bamboos painted alongside a rushing stream in the lower portion of the work. The water of the stream again repeats the blue wash and bare silk as it flows between areas of dark brown wash that form banks and islets within the stream. Each of these scenes forms a complete image while also creating a pair of bracketing compositions for the central figural works.

The Kanō-inspired style of these images reveals Buson's interest in working with styles that derive their form from Japanese interpretations of Chinese prototypes. The Kanō tradition, as it appears in the hands of Tanyū's followers, began as an outgrowth of the Japanese reinterpretation of imported Chinese paintings made by artists during the Muromachi period. The Kanō painters enjoyed the patronage of the military elite of the Muromachi and Momoyama periods, and under Tanyū they experienced a resurgence in the Edo region, where their work was embraced by the Tokugawa shogunate in its state commissions.⁸¹ While Buson's following of a style associated with the Kanō indicates an

interest in Chinese-inspired painting, this style is distinctly different from the form of Chinese painting that would become Buson's interpretation of the *bunjinga* tradition.

Following the generally accepted attribution, Buson's paintings for Gukyō-ji in Yūki also show him to be following the Kanō tradition in his large-scale *fusuma* [Figure 6]. The ink plum paintings are bold works whose roots could lie in any number of earlier painters' works, but a brief glance at the large decorative works made for Nagoya Castle by Tanyū serves to demonstrate this stylistic link [Figure 10]. Like Tanyū, Buson uses a broad gestural brushstroke to describe the twisting, aged trunk and branches of this tree reaching across the empty field of the painting. The painting style is less descriptive than suggestive of the power and strength of the subject. This form of painting has its roots in the *suibokuga* of the late Muromachi and Momoyama periods. It would have been familiar to Buson from any number of similar works in the Edo area and could even have become familiar to him as a young man in the Kansai region, where the Muromachi painters' works were more prevalent.

Buson's other works at Gukyō-ji reveal a further link to the ink paintings of the Muromachi as interpreted by the Kanō tradition in their faint, misty landscapes and strong atmospheric effects of mist and clouds [Figure 7]. These works reveal a technique of linear painting that presents an inorganic quality that suggests the forms of buildings and landscapes.⁸² The lines that define the buildings in each of these paintings follow a tightly ruled pattern that is descriptive, but the scenes themselves are somewhat cold and hard in their lack of emotion and personality. This style also has parallels in the Kanō tradition and its sub-traditions, but where or from whom Buson learned this particular style remains

⁸¹Kono Motoaki [河野元昭], "Kanō Tanyū" [狩野探幽], *Nihon no bijutsu* [日本の美術] (No. 194, July 1982): pp. 17–20.

⁸²Yoshizawa Chū [吉沢忠], *Nihon bijutsu kaiga zenshū: Buson* [日本美術絵画全集: 蕉村], Vol. 19 (Tokyo: Shueisha, 1980), p. 100.

unclear. This style of painting returns in some of Buson's later works, but it rarely has the cold dispassionate quality that these paintings reveal.

The works mentioned thus far must have been made when Buson was in his late twenties to his mid-thirties, but none is firmly dated. The first dated works that survive were painted in 1750 shortly before the artist left the Kantō region. These works, the set of eleven scrolls depicting landscapes and figures [Figure 8], reveal Buson's enhanced confidence in his painting style, as they present a distinctly different style from that presented in the *Tao Yuanming* triptych.⁸³ They also reveal a form of aggressive, powerful brushwork that differs from the bold, but more controlled brushwork seen in the plum trees at Gukyō-ji [Figure 6]. While it is not certain that Buson placed these works in the order seen here, they seem to form a set of four triptychs, with the four figural works each flanked by a pair of landscapes.⁸⁴ These triptychs are similar to the composition of the *Tao Yuanming* painting mentioned above, but the similarity seems to end with the overall form. The theme of these landscape paintings includes four of the eight Daoist immortals.⁸⁵

Beginning with the upper right of these triptychs, we see two figures dressed in Chinese robes walking across a bridge above a rushing stream [Figure 11]. The two figures interact with each other within the image and appear to have stopped to discuss something. These figures are described by a line that falls heavily from their shoulders, giving them a solid, bulky quality. The right figure wears a dark robe colored with a

⁸³See note 72.

⁸⁴The arrangement of these scenes is a matter of some controversy, but I have chosen to follow Sasaki's arrangement for lack of any information suggesting a more significant meaning arising from an alternate arrangement. See Sasaki and Sasaki, *Buson*, 2001, pp. 46–47.

⁸⁵I believe this is the overall theme of this set of images, and I suspect that there may be another set of images that completes, or once completed, the eight-figure series. The theme of the eight Taoist immortals is one that has long been painted in China, but the limited number of iconographic inclusions in these images suggests to me that this may be an interpretation based largely on textual references. During the Ming Dynasty, a pair of narrative texts detailing the backgrounds and exploits of the immortals was published, and it may have been these texts that inspired Buson as he painted these works.

smooth ink wash, while the left figure wears a white robe defined only by its outline. Both figures appear a bit weary, as their shoulders are weighted down by their garments. The right figure carries a basket of mushrooms in his left hand and a stick in his right. His hair and beard appear wild and long, marking him as a Daoist sage collecting mushrooms in the wilderness. Perhaps the figure at the right is Zhongli Quan, who wore his hair in the distinctive two-bun style seen here.⁸⁶ The left figure wears a Chinese scholar's hat and sports a trimmed beard, suggesting that this is a scene focused on the meeting of these two distinct types from the pantheon of Chinese mythical personalities. Comparing these figures to that of Tao Yuanming, it is clear that the style is derived from a different source, but it is still within the range of styles associated today with the Kanō painters.⁸⁷ The sharp lines and heavy forms contrast strongly with the flowing physical shape of Tao Yuanming.

The bridge upon which these two figures stand is outlined with strong ink lines, and it is given texture through several broad strokes of ink applied with a wide brush like that used to create the trunk of the plum tree at Gukyō-ji. At the base of the bridge are a series of rectangular rocks that create a solid foundation to support the figures' weight. Beneath the bridge, the water is depicted through a series of parallel curving lines that reach to the left and right, creating the impression of water surging over rapids. This stream originates to the left of the white robed figure, where it appears to flow more gently before plunging under the bridge. Rising up the left side of the image is a large rock created through a series of concentric arcs painted with the same strong outline used to define the figures and the bridge. This rock is given structure and texture through a variety of wide brushstrokes in a variety of ink tones that darken as they reach toward the center of the

⁸⁶Zhongli Quan [鐘離權] is said to have discovered the elixir of immortality during the Han Dynasty, and later led Lu Dongbin [呂洞賓] to immortality during the Tang. Benjamin Penny, "Immortality and Transcendence," *Daoism Handbook*, ed. Livia Kohn (Boston: Brill, 2000), p. 118.

⁸⁷Sasaki, 1988, p. 27.

scene. Growing from this rock and reaching out over the heads of the two figures is a tree. It appears to have two distinct forms of foliage, either implying that there are two distinct plants growing here or that it reaches both forward and back to cover these figures' heads. The remainder of this scene is left blank, providing the figures and the rock and tree a great deal of space within which to exist. This draws the viewer's attention to the figures, as the tree and rushing stream form parenthetical brackets guiding the eye back to the primary subject of the figures' interaction.

The two landscapes paired with this image reveal scenes of water meeting high mountains on the right, and scholars on a high, rocky ledge gazing out at clouds hanging in a mountain valley on the left. In the scene on the right, several small boats sail on a mountain river. This river, devoid of any indication of water as it flows down from the left side of the image, seems to reach back into the distance around a promontory emerging from the left side of the painting. Along the left bank of the river are several large trees, which hang out over the river. The foliage of these trees is created with repetitive, choppy strokes of gray ink with a thin wash of blue ink applied over the surface. This is the only color in the image other than the varied tones of gray and black. Across from these trees is a steep cliff that rises abruptly from the river's right shore. This rocky form is defined by a distinct black outline and broad strokes of dark gray wash that suggest the steepness of this form. Within the washes are further dark strokes, providing a layered texture to the form of the rock. These internal lines are supplemented by dots of ink that imply sparse vegetation in a forbidding environment. Near the top of this cliff, a cleft forms where the black contour strokes become densely clustered. The cleft is filled with dashed lines that appear to be vaguely defined trees or even birds flying toward the top of this precipice. Moving into the distance at the center of the image, a passage of mist envelops the upper reaches of the river. Rising from this mist is a series of strokes of gray ink over gray wash that imply

a hill with structures and trees nestled at the heart of the mountains. Above this at the left side of the image rises a towering peak defined by a rigid outline and smudged wash. This peak stretches up into the top third of the image, where it meets a faintly darkened sky of clouds created through subtly modulated washes of gray ink.

The landscape to the left of the center panel presents a cluster of pines on a low hill at the base. These pines and the hill are defined by flat horizontal strokes of black and gray that lead the eye up to the center of the image, where a small outcropping of rocks supports three tiny figures. One figure is dressed in a white robe and holds a staff. He appears to look out over the mountain valley that both reaches into the distance and seems to descend behind the pines in the foreground. Beside this figure is a similarly dressed figure who seems to face toward the first figure and gaze out of the image toward the viewer. Beside these two is a seated figure, who appears to be an attendant, leaning against the rocky cliff that rises above the scholars' ledge. This cliff rises above a cloud of mist that grows up from the right side of the pines and grows in a series of geometric facets until it forms a vertical face directly above the two scholar figures. This cliff is marked by several dark ink lines and small dots that give the form an oblong, concentric shape. Within these lines are a series of strokes made with the tips of a wide brush to create a combed appearance that follows the concentric curves of the massive rock. Moving off to the right side of this rock, a darker form emerges from the same cloud form at the bottom, but flattens out, creating a visual step moving the eye toward the top of the big rock. At the opposite side of the image we see a space of empty paper that must be a heavy cloud hanging in the valley. Above this cloud a series of high distant peaks that reach into the upper half of the work. The peak at the left is dark with several layers of wash of varying tones, which creates a dark weight to balance the dark forms stepping up toward the top of the rock on the right. This peak, like the white peak at the center of the upper portion of the work, is defined by a rigid black

line, making these mountains appear as flat backdrops hung in a darkened sky. Between the light and dark peaks is an area of dark wash that opens to reveal a moon hanging in a dark sky.

These features of the landscape differ markedly from the subtle, almost soft quality of the flanking landscapes in the *Tao Yuanming* triptych. This difference may imply that Buson was examining and learning a variety of styles at this time, and it may be connected to his work for different patrons. Whatever the motivation, it is clear from these works, in comparison to others made at approximately the same time, that Buson was painting in several distinct styles. These youthful styles became the raw material for Buson's later hybridization of forms of expression to create a new form of expression.

The triptych arrangement within the eleven scrolls is repeated in a second set of images that center on a solitary figure in Chinese dress seated on a low table flanked by landscapes of water and boats [Figure 12]. The central image of this set presents a large figure dressed in a white robe with dark gray trim at the collar and hem, seated with one leg pendant on a table that emerges from the right side of the scene. The figure's robes are drawn with fine black lines that show some wavering as they move down from the man's drooping shoulders. The contrast of the black of these lines and the bare paper of the white robe creates a dramatic note to this otherwise calm scene. The figure's head leans slightly toward the left side of the image, making it appear as though he is despondently staring at the ground near his foot. His face is finely painted in gray ink, and he wears a trimmed beard and short cropped hair. Atop his head is a small cap that also leans toward the left side of the image. Over his right shoulder and extending down to the left of his foot is a staff to which is tied a small bundle drawn with fine black lines. Below the billowing sleeve at the right side of the image are two large vessels with lids sitting on the ground in front of the table. Closer to the figure is a taller gray vessel, and closer to the viewer is a

white vessel defined by a smoothly flowing gray outline. These vessels sit on a ground that is defined by horizontal applications of wash, which provide a mottled surface that reaches back to blend with the faint washes that form the air surrounding the figure. This figure is likely a representation of Cao Guoqiu.⁸⁸ Emerging from the right side of the image above the figure is the single branch of a leafless tree. This branch is drawn with a curving line of dark ink that divides repeatedly and ends with tiny dots suggesting buds. The image, through the repeated presentation of downward curving lines, appears to communicate a depressed or drunken quality that compliments the distant calm embraced by this figure as he harmonizes with the Dao.

The landscapes at the right and left of this triptych present scenes that emphasize atmosphere rather than the monumental landscape scenes in the previous triptych. In these images rivers flow down and out toward the viewer. At the mouths of the rivers are moored several boats in each scene. In the right image, a clear atmosphere and the suggestion of wind blowing from the left side of the image dominate, while the left image presents a strong rain shower. The figure on the wooden bridge in the left scene leans into this wind as he moves toward the shore at the left where trees, painted with black trunks and wisps of dark gray foliage, bend to the wind's powerful force.

In these first two triptychs, the theme of eight Daoist sages emerges. The figures are not specifically identified, but there are several objects consistent with the iconography of the eight sages. The two figures on the bridge in Figure 11 evoke a connection to the practice of Daoist alchemy and the creation of elixirs from gathered products, such as the mushrooms in the figure's basket. This figure could represent several of the eight immortals, but the activity in which he is engaged suggests he is one of the immortals connected to the search for alchemical means of achieving eternal life. He is actively

⁸⁸Cao Guoqiu [曹國舅] is said to be dressed as an official or scholar. Penny, 2000, p. 118.

gathering mushrooms, and he interacts with the white-robed figure at the left. In contrast to this active immortal, the second triptych presents a figure in isolation. This immortal embodies the passive, internally focused follower of the Dao. These two differ in their relation to the outside world. In the subsequent two triptychs, images of Li Tieguai, who had the power to leave his body and fly to inhabit other bodies in distant places,⁸⁹ and He Xiangnu,⁹⁰ the female immortal, round out this cluster of paintings. Each of these figures has distinct powers and, in this set of paintings, appears to represent a single facet of the Daoist view of the world. In conjunction with these immortal images, the pairs of landscapes function more like poetic references to enhance the atmosphere of the figure paintings. Like the images that flank the *Tao Yuanming* triptych, these landscapes only distantly relate to the figure at the center, but their presence establishes a context within which to imagine the immortals.

The image of Li Tieguai at the center of the next triptych [Figure 13] is painted with a sharp black outline that appears broken and retraced as it follows the contour and internal folds of the garment. The effect is to suggest a heavy, rough cloth draping over the erect body of this man. The garment is colored with slightly modulated gray washes, which creates a distinct contrast with the bare paper of the figure's forearms, hands, feet, and face. At the figure's back is a large conical straw hat, and emerging from the hem of the garment are his bare feet and tightly clothed legs. In his hands he grasps a staff that extends across his body and rests on the ground to the right of the figure. His hair and beard are

⁸⁹Li Tieguai [李鐵拐] had left his body one day to travel. While he was away, his body was discovered and thought dead. It was then cremated, preventing the return of Li to his original form. He appropriated the body of a lame beggar who had just died as his surrogate home. He is identifiable by the iron crutch he holds and the mist emerging from his mouth, which represents his soul flying off to inhabit other bodies. Penny, 2000, p. 18. See also Stephen Little, *Daoism and the Arts of China* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 2000), p. 331.

⁹⁰He Xiangnu [何仙姑] is the female member of the eight immortals. She became immortal at the age of thirteen and was later seduced by Lu Dongbin. Penny, 2000, p. 18.

drawn with dark gray ink and suggest the roughly shorn hair of a mountain recluse. Emerging from his mouth is a stream of atmosphere that curves upward as it moves toward the left side of the image. This stream of breath appears as a light area of bare silk surrounded by faint washes that gradually dissipate into the surrounding paper. This feature clearly identifies this figure as Li Tieguai, as it repeats a convention present in many Chinese expressions of this theme. The rock upon which Li stands is defined by a strong outline and bare white surface. Its lower portions are made complex with slightly curved black lines and dots that give the rock a faceted appearance. Its internal structure is marked by several broad strokes made with a split-haired brush, which provides a scratchy texture. Below this rock are a series of low hills that both form the foreground space and seem to descend at the left to become distant peaks. Rising behind the figure at the right side of the work is an additional rocky outcropping that is entirely separate from the lower rock cluster. This rock is drawn with the same strong outline that was used in the rocks below, but it appears to have some withered vegetation hanging from its lower surface, painted with dark, wet strokes of ink. The remainder of this work is blank paper, giving the impression that this sage is standing at the top of a great peak surrounded by limitless clouds and space. It is in essence a space of undefined mystery that complements the mystery of this sage's unusual ability. The style used in this image is extremely close to that used in the landscapes associated with the first triptych discussed above [Figure 11].

The landscape to the left of this figural image is a distinct contrast to the others in this triptych in that it presents a detailed mountain valley scene with trees, rocks, water, and dwellings. The rocks rise in a steep stack at the left side of the image and are painted using the same outline and wide filling strokes that appear in the Li Tieguai image. At the base these rocks flow horizontally, leaving enough space for a single pine to rise at the far left corner. Emerging from these low rocky mounds is a faintly drawn path of stairs that rises

from the center of the image and angles toward the upper left side. At the far right side of the lower portion of the work is a passage of water that winds its way up the right side to define a wide mountain valley. Small boats are moored on the right shore of this river, where a second series of rocks emerges from the right side of the image. These rocks are bordered by a clump of trees that screen the view of the river as it trails into the distance. Moving up the image, there are larger and larger rocks at the left side and a pair of large trees with distinct foliage of two differing types at the center, which overhang a pair of huts on the left shore of the river. These huts are detailed and relatively large in comparison to the boats that lie further down the river. Emerging from behind the two large trees is a massive rock that forms a cliff-like edifice defined by faceted black lines and delicately modulated washes that give the structure a clearly defined form. Further vegetation emerges from this cliff above the huts, and a dense tangle of trees completes the rising rock forms at the left edge of the painting. At the top of this image is a background of high peaks outlined with a fine black line and filled by subtle washes of gray. At the base of these peaks are patches of bare paper that form clouds lying in the upper reaches of the river's course, where a pair of tiny boats again rest at the right shore of the river. Above the distant peaks are both white cloud forms and a darkened sky that fills the upper quarter of the scroll. This landscape is the most precisely defined and complexly created of the works in this set, and as such it displays Buson's understanding of both Chinese landscape composition and spatial illusion of the type presented in sixteenth-century ink paintings. The structure of the image is reminiscent of Muromachi period landscapes and the many expressions of the Kanō painters of the seventeenth century.

The final triptych in this series centers on a pair of female figures standing on a faintly described ground painted in light gray wash [Figure 14]. The larger figure at the right of this image is likely He Xiang. She wears a lower garment of white defined by

sharp vertical strokes of black ink with a single strip of gray that appears to be the tail end of a sash hanging low around her shoulders. It winds its way over her arm, emerges at the waist, and descends toward the garment's hem. At her hips the cloth appears gathered where a series of vertical black strokes reach down from a belt that holds her waist tightly. Her upper body is covered with a gray shirt with billowing sleeves that hide her hands as they grasp an oval fan painted to appear translucent. The fan covers her chest and neckline, revealing a dark neck band at the top of her shirt. The fan also covers the lower portion of her face, giving her a coy look as she peers out over the top of the fan toward the right side of the image. The story of her emergence as an immortal explains that she was thirteen years old when she began to follow the Dao. This is emphasized by her facial features, which are clearly defined with extremely thin lines that form a small nose, eyes with pupils, and smoothly arching brows. The perfection of her young face reveals both youth and the calm understanding that is associated with the mind of an immortal.

To the left of He Xiangü stands a smaller attendant figure holding a small vessel. This figure is dressed in a long robe gathered at the waist over white pants. Darker gray ink emerges at the left side of this figure's waist, forming the ends of a belt or sash. The robe of this figure is tinged with a slight orange-ish color that helps separate the white undergarment from the over robe. This over robe presents a dark gray neck band and dark gray strips at the cuffs of the sleeves, where they meet over the figure's clasped hands. This figure's robes are also created with the fine sharp lines used in creating the garments of the larger figure, but the treatment of the lines is slightly less precise. Looking specifically at the lines defining the back flap of the over robe at the left side of the figure, there is a wavering of the contour line, which provides a less formal quality to this figure's dress. The head of this figure turns slightly to the right side of the image, like that of He Xiangü, but it appears to droop slightly, as if weighed down by her duty to attend her

superior. The face of the attendant is precisely drawn like the face of the immortal, with visible details in the eyes and nose. The jar in her hands likely contains mystical substances connected to the immortal's alchemical practice. Surrounding the figures is a vague series of washes on bare paper, making it the least specific of this series in terms of creating a surrounding landscape space for the figures.

The landscapes to the right and left of this figural image present more images of Chinese-inspired places that provide atmospheric context for the figural scene. At the bottom of the right image is a finely detailed boat with a raised sail moving toward the left side of the image. Immediately below this large boat is a small, flat boat with a single figure looking back toward the right, where a cluster of low horizontal rocks mark the shoreline. On this shore is a low house emerging from behind these rocks, and water reaching its way back toward a more complex shoreline. This shoreline stretches almost all the way across the image. This passage appears both extremely refined and powerfully executed. The brushwork presents a simplified form of that presented in seventeenth-century ink paintings. To the left of this image is a protruding rocky form that resembles a hawk's head. This protruding form is surrounded by stark white paper, which must be a cloud bank resting in the distance. Unlike the mound-like rocks at the right, this protrusion is defined by straight black lines and modulated washes, which give the form a rigid quality separating it from the rest of the image. At its top surface a tree emerges and guides the eye back to the distant mountains. These mountains are more complex than those seen in the other images in this series as they present several rising peaks and internal structures defined by washes and contour lines. Above these peaks to the right and left are a pair of white peaks bordered by black lines and a dark sky of wash that gradually fades as it reaches toward the top of the image.

The last landscape image on the left of this triptych presents yet another form of

image making. This time we see a willow-covered promontory reaching into a body of water from the left side of the lower portion of the image. The willows are created with dark black trunks and a few branches shrouded by weeping strokes of dark gray ink that fall in arcs, similar to the mound-like rocks seen in the right hand landscape image. Emerging from the willow thicket are two buildings. A small structure's roof emerges in the foreground, and a large Chinese-style pavilion emerges at the center of the image. This building has a tall stucco-covered base that reaches up a full story or more, leaving large openings into the structure on the two visible sides. Atop this stucco-covered base is a complex structure with broad openings and verandas. It is topped by a gabled roof with a lower pitched veranda roof surrounding the central roofed section. This willow promontory stretches from the left to the right side of the image and ends in a bare passage of water that fills the central portion of the image and reads visually as a broad expanse of empty water. In the upper third of the image the land reemerges as a series of projecting forms with smaller willows adorning the surface. These create a winding passage of water moving into the distance and eventually disappearing into a bank of mist defined by washes that emerge as distant mountains at the right side of the upper portion of the painting. These peaks are defined by relatively wide gray strokes that divide the peaks into many small rising mountain tops. At the left side of this mountain peak complex, a faint blue is used to differentiate the farthest peaks from the slightly closer mountain forms rising from the mist. This work presents a strong sense of horizontal flow back and forth as it moves into the distance. It also divides distinctly into two separate halves, with little to unite the foreground and the distance. At the left side of the empty central section is the inscription, which explains the circumstances and date of the creation of this set of images and contains the artist's full signature line *shimei sanjin* [四明山人].

In examining this series of images, we can begin to draw a few conclusions. First,

it is clear that Buson was aware of a variety of Chinese approaches to landscape as he created this series of paintings. His presentation of Daoist immortals reveals his knowledge of this theme and suggests he was both familiar with and interested in Daoist thought. The figures are drawn from a Chinese literary source, and it is possible to envision these works as an illustration of an imported text.⁹¹ His Daoist images form a distinct contrast with the image of Tao Yuanming, in which Buson created an imaginary portrait based on his impressions gleaned from reading the poet's writings. In conjunction with the different kinds of source material suggested by these images are two clearly separate styles of brushwork. The images show an awareness of paintings of this Chinese thematic system as they follow the patterns of mountains and water that were commonly used by Chinese and Japanese ink painters of the past. Buson worked in this early period with brush-oriented forms of expression and a separate coloristic approach to expression. This is seen in his following of the *yamato-e* tradition in the *sugidō*. While it is tempting to say that these early images suggest Buson's desire to create paintings in more and more Chinese-inspired styles, it is important to note that there is little in these images to suggest he was looking at anything other than Japanese interpretations of Chinese paintings. Buson's *sugidō* show a link with the richly colored Tosa and other *yamato-e* inspired traditions, while his *Tao Yuanming* triptych seems to reflect the character of the Kanō, or even the *ukiyo-e*, tradition. The style of the theme of the Daoist immortals reveal links to the ink painting tradition of the previous century. These individual approaches to painting each offer a form of reinterpretation of Chinese methods of image making, but they have been actively pursued in Japan for so long that they now look only vaguely Chinese. They offer a variety of examples of how earlier artists interpreted Chinese painting styles, but they show Buson

⁹¹There were several Taoist texts available during the early eighteenth century in Japan. See Masuo Shinichiro, "Daoism in Japan," *Daoism Handbook*, ed. Livia Kohn (Boston: Brill, 2000), pp. 821–42.

to be exploring a host of domestic approaches to presenting these themes. He produced these works while actively studying Chinese poetry and thought, but it appears that he was studying Chinese painting through earlier Japanese interpretations.

This earliest period of Buson's painting career serves to demonstrate the environment and climate of artistic production that would later impact his development as a painter. At this time he was primarily a poet, as we can see in his associations with the followers of Hajin in Yūki, but it is clear that painting was playing an important role in his life. As Sasaki Jōhei perhaps glibly noted in response to an interviewer's question about why Buson would have turned to painting in this period, "a poetry master needs to eat."⁹² It is likely that these early images made for the people surrounding Buson in his days as a wandering poet are not examples of his dedication to painting as a form of expression, but rather expressions of his learned skill being used as a means of personal support. They provide evidence for what Buson was studying, as we see the images of the Chinese poet and Daoist immortals with more conventional images of figures, plum trees, and landscapes. The range, from the richly painted *sugidō* to plum trees for the Gukyō-ji to the figures and landscapes in monochrome ink, presents an artist working to serve the desires of others while exploring a host of extant approaches to painting. While it might be said that any artist who hopes to sell his works has to be flexible in his style and subject matter in order to succeed, these early works show little of Buson's later form of personal expression. These are works that reveal his breadth of exposure to painting since his youth, but in their awkwardness and their diversity, they also show a painter who was searching for a voice and learning a wide range of existing styles of painting that revolved around the idea of reinterpreting Chinese paintings in Japan.

⁹²Sasaki, *Geijutsu shinchō*, 2001, p. 19.

Chapter 4: Buson's Travels in and out of Kyoto 1751–1757

Buson left Yūki for Kyoto in the summer of 1751. This move marked a turning point in Buson's painting as he incorporated new images and experiences into his growing repertoire. Upon his arrival in Kyoto, around the seventh month, Buson sent a letter to Hokuju Rōsen's son, Momohiko, in Yūki. In the letter, Buson wrote that Kyoto was very interesting and that he spent a great deal of time wandering around the area seeing the sights.⁹³ This letter bears a fragmentary address placing Buson in the Sawaragi-chō area of the city, where he may have been staying with one of several followers of Hajin.⁹⁴ Hajin had been in Kyoto when Buson first arrived in Edo in 1732, and he appears to have kept close ties to a number of poets in Kyoto until his death. As one of Hajin's close associates, Buson seems to have been welcomed by the Kyoto circle of Hajin poets. Buson published poems with two of these associates, named Kikei [几圭, 1687–1760] and Sōoku [宋屋, 1688–1766] in the first few years he spent in Kyoto. Both of these poets lived in the area near Sawaragi-chō and may have provided a room for Buson during his first days in the city. In the poetry written with these friends, Buson refers to himself as Tōbu Buson [東武蕪村], or Edo Buson. This suggests he saw himself as only a visitor to Kyoto during this time and that he retained his links to the Edo area. He spent the remaining months of 1751 meeting with other Hajin followers, and even hosted the visit of one of his associates from Edo named Mōotsu [毛越], with whom he had studied at Hajin's Yahantei.⁹⁵

In 1752 Buson wrote a poem that may have been based on his experience with a

⁹³Takahashi, 2000, pp. 99–100.

⁹⁴Otani and Fujita, 1992, p. 23.

⁹⁵Takahashi, 2000, pp. 103–104.

specific painting he studied in Kyoto. He wrote:

紫野に遊びて、ひよ鳥の妙手を思ふ。

時鳥画に鳴け東四郎二郎

While wandering in Murasaki-no, I found a bird by a master.

*The hototogisu sings within the painting Higashi Shiro-jirō.*⁹⁶

The introductory line indicates that Buson was exploring the area of northern Kyoto known as Murasaki-no, where the Daitoku-ji complex of temples is located. While looking around this area, he explains that there is a painting of a bird that displays the hand of a master. In his poem he writes of the singing of this painted bird and the name of this master, Higashi Shiro-jirō, a variant name for Kanō Motonobu [狩野元信, 1476-1559].⁹⁷ The painting to which Buson refers may have shown him a style similar to that seen in the set of *fusuma* depicting birds and flowers of the four seasons in Daisen-in [大仙院] at Daitoku-ji [Figure 15]. This poem suggests that Buson was actively studying the great paintings gathered in the temples and private collections of Kyoto. In addition to the work by Motonobu that Buson mentions in this poem, he may have had the opportunity to see the works of such masters as Kanō Tanyū in the Honbū; Unkoku Tōgan at Kōbai-in; Kanō Shōei, Kanō Eitoku, and Unkoku Tōeki at Jukō-in; Soga Jasoku and Hasegawa Tōhaku at Shinju-an; and Sōami with Motonobu at Daisen-in.⁹⁸ Daitoku-ji's wealth of resources for the study of Japanese painting, particularly that which displays the interpretations of Chinese paintings entering Japan during the Muromachi period, may have provided Buson with the inspiration necessary to expand his repertoire of approaches to painting. The affinity he demonstrated for the Kanō style in his works from his time in Yūki could have driven him

⁹⁶Matsuo et al., 1990, p. 610. Leon Zolbrod translated this poem as: "Cry, sad cuckoo bird, pictured in the eastern sky — The whiteness of dawn."

⁹⁷Yoshizawa, 1981, p. 101.

⁹⁸Takahashi, 2000, p. 105.

to look closely at the works of older Kanō artists such as Motonobu, and the richness of the Kyoto area collections of paintings seems to have broadened Buson's awareness of various painting traditions. The works associated with temples, as well as the privately held paintings that Buson must have seen as he associated with various poets and their friends, seem to have provided him with many new ideas and painting styles to absorb.

Later in 1752, Buson seems to have moved across Kyoto to the Higashiyama area of the city. He began a poem from the end of this year with the line 東山麓にト居, or "dwelling at the foot of Higashiyama."⁹⁹ With this move he separated himself slightly from the poets he had been associated with in Sawaragi-chō, but he seems to have found in this area a place where he was comfortable staying for the subsequent year and a half. While staying in the Higashiyama area he may have further studied Kyoto paintings while continuing his associations with the poets of the Hajin circle. Because few poems from this period have been preserved and there are no paintings dated to this year, it is possible that Buson was studying the paintings and other entertainments available in the Kyoto area and settling into his new life as a resident of this region. The lack of records from 1753 also may indicate Buson's growing need to come to terms with his past. In his relative silence there may be a suggestion of his slight dissatisfaction with his situation, as he soon moved once again to the region of Yosa where his mother was born and where he may have spent a good portion of his childhood.

In the fourth month of 1754, Buson moved to Miyazu [宮津], near his mother's home of Yosa, within Tangō [丹後] province. He would stay in this area for three years until his return to Kyoto in 1757. The twenty-seventh anniversary of the death of Buson's mother was in 1754, and it may be in part this anniversary that drew him to this area. He

⁹⁹Matsuo et al., 1990, p. 24. Buson's poem following this headnote reads:

我庵に火箸を角や蝸牛

Translated by Leon Zolbrod as: "In my humble hut, for fire irons I have horns — a snail in its shell."

established a residence at Shinshō-ji [真照寺], a *Jōdo* temple in a cluster of temples called Ogawa-chō [小川町], where he would write and paint using the names Rakutō Kanjin [洛東間人], and Nōdōnin [囊道人].¹⁰⁰ These names link him back to Kyoto in a manner similar to that used when he first arrived in Kyoto and linked himself back to Edo. In Miyazu, Buson painted an image of three monks famous for their *haikai* work [Figure 16]. While unsigned and now quite fragmentary, this work presents images of Chikukei [竹溪] from Kenshō-ji [見性寺], Rojū [鷲十] from Shinshō-ji, and Ryōha [兩巴] from Muen-ji [無縁寺].¹⁰¹ These three were well known for their poetry, and as residents of the Ogawa temple village where Buson was staying, they would likely have known Buson through their shared interest in *haikai*. It is even possible that Buson knew Chikukei from his childhood when he visited this area with his mother. Chikukei was a year older than Buson and may have lived at Kenshō-ji since his youth. This link may explain Buson's staying in Ogawa-chō.¹⁰²

While in Tangō, Buson demonstrated his awareness of Sakaki Hyakusen [彭城百川, 1698–1753], who had also visited the area. As fellow Kyoto painters and poets writing fondly of *Ama-no-hashidate* [天の橋立], a sand spit reaching nearly across a bay on the Tangō coast, Hyakusen and Buson shared interests in both their paintings and poetry. In addition, they shared a tie to Yosa. It remains unclear whether the artists ever actually met, but it is clear that Buson knew of Hyakusen's work and saw the links that connected the two artists to a common form of expression. In 1757, just prior to Buson's return to Kyoto, he wrote of Hyakusen in an inscription on his painting of *Ama-no-hashidate* [Figure 17]:

¹⁰⁰Takahashi, 2000, p. 111.

¹⁰¹Sasaki and Sasaki, *Buson*, 2001, p. 35.

¹⁰²Takahashi, 2001, p. 116.

Hassenkan Hyakusen was fond of red and blue coloring and liked paintings of the Ming Dynasty. Nōdonin Buson takes pleasure in painting and also works in the Chinese manner. Both of us admired the *haikai* of Bashō. Hyakusen studied Otsuyu but did not imitate him. I belong to Kikaku's group but do not imitate Kikaku. Neither of us had ambition to gain a reputation through our *haikai*. When he came to this place on his way back to Kyoto, Hyakusen wrote the poem:

橋立を先にふらせて行秋ぞ

Over Hashidate distant rain approaches - the end of autumn.

My poem upon departing is:

鶺鴒の尾や橋立をあと荷物

Tail of a wagtail - Ama-no-hashidate left behind me.¹⁰³

In this inscription Buson connected himself to Hyakusen and suggested praise for the form of painting that Hyakusen pursued. In noting Hyakusen's interest in Ming Dynasty Chinese painting, Buson revealed that he had been studying paintings other than the Kanō school works he mentioned during his stay in Kyoto. It seems that he became broadly interested in a variety of paintings during his time in Tangō, including the Chinese styles revealed in printed painting manuals such as the *Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting* [芥子園畫傳]. This book was created in China during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The books were written and illustrated by three brothers named Wang Kai [王概], Shih, and Nieh, with a preface by Li Yu [李漁, 1611–c. 1680]. The texts first appeared in sections released in 1679, and the book reached its full thirteen-volume size in 1701.¹⁰⁴ Although the illustrations for this book were completed in the

¹⁰³French, 1974, p. 6. This poem is also translated: "Like the wagtail bird, I'll leave the Bridge of Heaven far, far behind me." Leon Zolbrod, in Matsuo et al., 1990, p. 59.

mid-Qing dynasty, the captions and preface sought to display the long history of Chinese painting reaching back to the Song Dynasty and its progenitors. In the introductory remarks to the first volume of this work, Wang Kai reiterated the Chinese canons of painting that had been stated in various forms since the fifth-century writings of Gu Kaizhi [顧愷之, 344–405] and Xie He [謝赫, c. 500–535]. The six essential aspects of painting as described by Wang include a presentation of spirit, fidelity to the conventions of brush use, fidelity to natural forms, application of color as it appears in nature, planned composition, and imitation of past masters.¹⁰⁵ Buson and other active *bunijn* seem to have embraced texts like this for their direct transmission of Chinese approaches to painting. Within the essential characteristics explained by Wang, Buson may have found a certain resonance with the poetic teachings of Hajin. In particular, the urging in the last of these essentials to learn from one's master, but to diverge from the master's form to create new works, sounds like Hajin's idea derived from Bashō, which urged the student to learn from but not be bound by the teacher's compositions. This concept reappears in Buson's inscription above and seems to emerge in his paintings as they follow a broad range of styles during this period.

Hyakusen, like Buson, was interested in the development of the *haiga* form of painting and was also exploring ways of interpreting Chinese painting traditions. In the extant body of paintings by Hyakusen, a variety of forms derived from the Chinese painting manuals are evident, and he likely studied and imitated imported Chinese paintings housed in temple and private collections, which were also available to Buson.¹⁰⁶ It is

¹⁰⁴Mai-mai Sze, *The Way of Chinese Painting: Its Ideas and Technique* (New York: Random House, 1959) pp. xvi–xvii.

¹⁰⁵Sze, 1959, p. 131.

¹⁰⁶James Cahill, *Sakaki Hyakusen and Early Nanga Painting* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, 1983).

through Buson's awareness of Hyakusen that we can begin to see the breadth and diversity of the visual experiences that the Kyoto and Tangō environments provided. By examining paintings from these varied sources, Buson seems to have been expanding his understanding of Chinese forms of expression as well as Japanese interpretations of these works. In several works dated to 1755, aspects of the *Mustard Seed Garden Manual* were used to create images of Chinese subjects. In Buson's image of Li Bo viewing a waterfall, the figure style and the techniques used to create the pine branch above the figures has parallels in the various books of the manual [Figure 18]. The figure of Li Bo is drawn with a fine line that is accented with swellings, which indicate the brush was stopping and starting as it created the outlines of the form. This is in distinct contrast to the technique used in the figural images made in Yūki. The hanging branch with pine needle clusters and entwining vines seems to be a variant of the Chinese manner of painting pines in the first volume of the manual [Figure 19]. Buson appears to have been exploring the various forms of brushwork that these manuals display and gradually mixing them with ideas he had learned through his study of the Kanō masters. In painting the figures of Li Bo and his attendant, Buson used date-stone, nail-head, and rat-tail strokes that parallel the Chinese brush techniques detailed in the manual [Figure 20]. In addition, he seems to have been exploring works that were connected to the Kansai area. In particular, he appears to have enjoyed the folk paintings associated with the city of Ōtsu [大津], through which he must have traveled as he moved from Edo to Kyoto.

Ōtsu-e appear in one of Buson's poems from 1777, but it is evident in the style of some of his paintings from the period of his life in Tangō that he had seen and learned from these works earlier. In the screen now called *Dengaku-chaya* [田楽茶屋], the figures and the application of colors owe a debt to the style used in the Ōtsu-e images of *Fuji musume* and other figural topics [Figures 21 and 22].¹⁰⁷ The softness of the color present in this

screen and the bold black outline that flows around the figures reveal Buson's interpretation of the form of these folk paintings, but in the vegetation at the rear of the scene, Buson continued to follow the Kanō styles he had seen in Kyoto and Edo. The mixture of these two styles of expression is significant in that we begin to see in this period Buson's reaching beyond the bounds of a single source for his paintings to create works that are unique in their blended forms. By reaching to folk painting and Kanō styles to create this work, Buson revealed his growing ability to appropriate images and styles from varied sources and rearrange them to create new works. In this he followed the pattern he learned from Hajin as he studied the rudiments of *haikai* composition. Like the works of Hyakusen and other *bunjin*, Buson's paintings blended images taken from a diversity of sources that were both imported from China and developed domestically.

The dating of events in Buson's life during the three years spent in Tangō is often speculative, but there are two works dated to 1755 signed Shimei Chōsō [四明朝滄] that are reliably dated to this period. The image of Li Bo viewing a waterfall carries two white-character seals reading Chō [朝] and Sō [滄] [Figure 18]. This work, as noted above, reveals Buson's interest in Chinese styles as they were transmitted by printed manuals, but its internal structure and composition reveal more than simple copying of printed imagery. The figure of Li Bo stands to the left of the center of the scroll gazing toward the waterfall that descends vertically from the upper left corner of the work. The white garment this poet wears is defined by a crisp black line that shows many swollen passages. These strokes are known by the names *kettōbyō* [けつ頭描] and *kanranbyō* [橄欖描].¹⁰⁸ These stroke forms appear in the *Mustard Seed Garden Manual* and in other printed sources available to Buson. He used these strokes to form the large billowing

¹⁰⁷Yoshizawa Chū, "Tangō jidai no Buson sakuhin no tokushū ni atatsute" [丹後時代の蕪村作品の特輯にあたって], *Kokka* (No. 971, 1974): pp. 18–19.

¹⁰⁸Sasaki and Sasaki, *Buson*, 2001, p. 70.

sleeves of the poet's robe and the pliant outline of the hat that points down and away from the figure's darkened face. At the sides and back of the figure's robe, the swelling strokes are complemented with lines of lighter ink along the dark contour lines of the folded cloth, giving the appearance of shadows falling where the cloth folds back upon itself.

An even more exaggerated form of these brush strokes appears in the clothing of the small attendant who stands to the right of the poet. This figure holds a wrapped *qin* in his left arm while he raises his right hand to his mouth. He looks in the same direction as the poet, but his face reveals a playful quality enhanced by his raised hand inside his sleeve. On his head he wears a dark hood that drapes over his shoulders, giving him a stout form that seems timid and childlike. These two figures stand on a fragmented ground plane that forms a pair of steplike rocky plateaus. A few sprigs of vegetation emerge where these steps meet, creating a distinct separation between the figures. To the rear of the attendant at the right edge of the scroll is a rising rocky form that seems to jut slightly into the figures' space. Painted with strong black outlines and dark wash, this rocky form with a few grassy plants rising from its face helps to form a visual line running from the lower right side of the work through the head of the attendant to the face of the poet. This visual line is echoed by the line of the poet's staff, which leads the eye in the same direction, from the feet of the attendant toward the subject of the poet's gaze.

Above these two figures is a passage of mist defined by a patch of gray wash that hovers above the two. This gray wash rises slightly over the head of the poet, leaving a white space that appears to represent mist or fog. This misty patch of empty paper rises higher over the dark head of the attendant, creating a negative space that mirrors the heights of the attendant and poet in reverse. Floating above the dark wash that borders the area of white mist is a contorted pine branch that seems to swirl around in a counterclockwise circle as it covers the rocky cliff that borders the waterfall on the right. Within the branches

of this pine are tangled vines created with quick strokes that seem to fall toward the figures below. This visually complex passage floats above the large, empty white space over the attendant and ends just above the head of the poet. This compositional structure connects the figure of the poet with the waterfall, while the attendant is connected with the pine. In this manner the waterfall comes to dominate the scene at the left as the master to the attendant pine struggling to grow in the uncomfortable environment of the rocky cliff. At the top edge of the image, the cliff from which the pine emerges angles upward toward the left, leading the eye to the origin of the waterfall high above this scene. The strokes used in this passage are very fragmentary, suggesting the forms of the cliff and waterfall without specifically describing their physical structures. In creating a scene with this level of complexity, it is apparent that Buson had come to understand an aspect of Chinese painting that reaches beyond appropriating brush techniques and basic visual formulae.

Comparing this work to the paintings from Buson's period in Yūki, it is clear that he understood by this time how to create paintings of greater diversity, and that he had learned methods of creating compositional structures that reveal a greater control of his medium. The figural works from the series of four of the eight Daoist immortals Buson created in 1750 present their primary subjects in relatively sparse environments. Looking back to the image of Zhongli Quan on a bridge carrying a basket of mushrooms [Figure 11], some of the balancing of the composition by protruding rocks and vegetation in the upper portion of the painting is evident, but there remains a great deal of undefined space hovering above and around the figures. While in the image of Cao Guoqiu sitting on a table from the 1750 series [Figure 12], the figure inhabits an undefined space with a branch hovering above his head like an umbrella, the image of Li Bo presents a hanging branch that becomes an integral part of the composition rather than simply filling the upper portion of the work [Figure 18]. The new form of brushwork Buson employed becomes

most evident in this comparison. The smoothly falling lines of the earlier figure's robes appear static and flat as they define his body, while the modulated *kanranbyō* used in the later work give the figure a powerful presence as he stands erect before the waterfall. The later image reveals Buson's growing mastery of both brush and compositional techniques that reach far beyond the scope of the works he had attempted during the period of his life spent in the Kantō region.

In the same year, 1755, Buson also created a work focused on the figure of Chinese poet and Zen priest Feng Gan [豐干] with two attendants and his pet tiger [Figure 23]. This work, like the painting of Li Bo, is signed Shimei Chōsō [四明朝滄], with the additional line Nōdōnin [囊道人], which appears frequently in his poetry and paintings made during his time in Tangō. The work also presents two seals. A large white-character seal reading *sansuijishingen* [山水自清言] and a smaller red-character seal reading *shimeisanjin* [四明山人] follow the signature line in the upper right corner of the work. Both of these seals appear on other works from this period, and the latter seems to have been in Buson's possession since he painted the set of images of figures and landscapes in Yūki.¹⁰⁹ The painting of Feng Gan and the tiger is striking in its use of relatively rich colors and richly varied brushwork. At the lower left corner of the work, a small attendant figure walks toward the left side of the painting while turning his head to look back at the tiger whose eyes seem to communicate very directly his interest in the figure's basket. This figure wears elaborate Chinese-style shoes and carries a red basket of what appears to be food. His turned head suggests that he fears the tiger and is perhaps thinking about the beast lunging toward the morsels contained in the basket. His clothes are defined by the *kanranbyō* that Buson used in the Li Bo image [Figure 18]. On his back he

¹⁰⁹The *shimeisanjin* seal appears on five of the eleven surviving works in the figures and landscapes series and seems to have been brought by Buson back to Kyoto in 1757, as it appears on later dated works as well.

wears a long cape painted in various tones of brown ink, and his torso is covered by a dark green robe beneath which faintly orange pants gather about his ankles. His head with long earlobes is only seen from the back, so his features are not visible, but he sports a fringe of black hair around his large bald head. Both his head and his hand that carries the basket are tinged with orange pigment that gives a sense of life to his skin.

The tiger's face is elongated with a wide mouth drawn back to form what appears to be a grin. The fur of the tiger's head is very finely painted, revealing the mottled color and bristling whiskers of the powerful cat. Its front paws are extremely large and seem to be lunging forward toward the small figure. The paws, forelegs, and undulating body stretch back to the right side of the painting and are all covered in fine strokes of black ink laid over the orange and black stripes that flow over the beast. Draped over the tiger's neck is a band of white cloth that is tied to two bundles of scrolls hanging like earrings at the two sides of the tiger's head. These scrolls are the poetry of the tiger's master, Feng Gan, who stands behind the tiger with his left hand resting on the animal's shoulder.

Below the tiger's body, Feng Gan's feet, covered in dark green shoes with curling white designs, emerge from his long white robe as he steps forward. Above the tiger, Feng Gan can be seen wearing a light blue robe with a dark gray border at the collar and a white under-robe that spills open to expose the poet's chest. This robe is also defined with the *kanranbyō* that appears in the garments of the lower figure. The robe is gathered at the waist by a dark gray band tied in a smoothly painted bow with tails flowing down the figure's body. Feng Gan's hand, which rests on the tiger, has long pointed nails that dig into the tiger's fur as the poet rears back to restrain the tiger in its movement toward the smaller figure. The poet's other hand is tightly grasping a white staff that emerges from behind the tiger and points with its gnarled end toward a third figure in the upper left portion of the painting. Feng Gan's head is thrown back as if he is looking up to the sky.

His chin is pointed at the viewer, revealing the wrinkles of his neck behind the wisps of his beard. His eyes and long eyebrows are seen at the top of his head in a very unusual position. This manner of painting the head, as though seen from the bottom, seems to be an experiment that Buson did not repeat in later images.

The final figure in this image stands at the left side of the painting, facing the left with his head slightly above that of Feng Gan. He is clearly shorter than the poet, which follows the tradition of painting attendant figures as smaller than their masters, but he is not the passive attendant of the Li Bo image [Figure 18]. This figure is shown dressed in elaborate clothes with a gray shirt and gold robe hanging over his white under-robe. Around his shoulder he wears a long sash painted in a yellow-green color that drapes across his body and curves around his thigh. In his left hand he holds a dark green vessel with an open top. The vessel is held in front of the figure's body just below his waist. His right hand holds a spoon that he is about to place in his wide open mouth. The vessel that he gently holds must be filled with food or elixir that he is about to consume. Unlike the two figures interacting with the tiger, this figure appears relaxed as he enjoys his food, but he also appears somewhat awkward. The hand holding the spoon appears fat and a little misshapen, and the wide open mouth is difficult to read as it seems to lack a defining stroke at the left side. The figure's face is oblong, like the heads of the other two, and it also shows a fringe of hair surrounding a shaved head. Since these figures are Zen Buddhist monks, their lack of hair is understood as an aspect of their devotion, but the untrimmed appearance of these figures' hair gives them the appearance of being eccentrics living outside the formal institutions of Buddhist practice. The orange color of the skin that appeared on Feng Gan and the lower attendant is repeated in this upper attendant figure, but the face is given further color where the red of the mouth is accentuated in its open anticipation of the approaching spoon. This figure's ears are also tinged with a red hue that

draws attention to their extended lobes and curving surfaces. The ears, hair, and robes of this figure are all closely associated with his status as a Buddhist adherent, but his robes seem to suggest an even deeper connection to the religious tradition. The flow of the lower robe of this figure and the arching of the cloth over the legs recall sculptural representations that Buson may have seen in the Pureland temples where he stayed while residing in Miyazu. Even the open sandaled foot of this figure and the delicate rise in the cloth of his pant leg it creates seem to echo sculptural representations common in Buddhist temples [Figure 24].

Rising behind the figure of Feng Gan is a large rock that juts into the upper portion of the image. This rock is painted in a manner that differs markedly from that used in the figures. While the figures create a dynamic arrangement within which there is an illusion of space in the lower portion of the work, the rock appears flat as it rises from the right side of the image to reach out over the head of the figure eating at the left. The structure of this rock is created with brushstrokes that curve and wiggle as they provide texture for the surface of the stone. These strokes, unlike the ambiguous strokes that surround the pine in the image of Li Bo [Figure 18], seem to form a graphic flatness that consumes the illusionistic potential of this form. Like tiny eels swimming up the surface of this rocky protrusion, these strokes of ink stand as independent objects rather than creating an image of a rough surface. Filling the area around these swimming strokes are a variety of washes of gray that also serve to flatten the rocky form. Emerging from behind the rock are two small bits of vegetation with precisely drawn leaves of bright green laid over yellow pigment. Emerging within these leaves are small white flowers with pink centers. These flowers and vegetation in bold colors serve to brighten this already richly colored scene so that it has a sweet quality reminiscent of the *sugidō* painted in Yūki. Above the rock in the upper third of the Feng Gan painting is an area of wash that slashes across the empty sky to

create a clouded image of the distance. This feature is reminiscent of the Kanō style Buson used in the Daoist immortals, but here it serves simply to fill out the remaining portion of the scroll rather than forming a specific atmosphere for the interaction of the figures.

A quick comparison of Figures 18 and 23 reveals the diversity Buson's creations presented in 1755, while he was in Tangō. These two images have roots both in Buson's earlier works and in the various sources that he embraced in his studies of Chinese and Japanese painting. In addition, these works demonstrate Buson's growing understanding of compositional techniques and their potential to empower the images. In painting *Li Bo*, Buson has unified the surface of his image to create a work that does not simply imitate the paintings he was studying, but grows out of his studies of the styles revealed in Chinese manuals and other painted sources. The painting of *Feng Gan and the tiger* similarly grows out of Buson's studies of Chinese painting techniques, but it also reveals his willingness to experiment with styles and compositions that present novel ideas derived from sources as widely divergent as Buddhist sculpture, Kanō-style painting, and imported Chinese images. This combination of ideas in the composition of these paintings shows Buson to be in a period of growth and change that would continue throughout his period in Tangō and for several years after his return to Kyoto in 1757.

The works created in Yūki a decade earlier revealed Buson's interest in existing images and his skill in imitating them. His works appear to have followed single coherent models of Chinese or Japanese painting. In contrast, the works from his period in Tangō reveal the artist as an appropriator of styles, compositional forms, and themes. He combines these appropriated pieces of other works to create new artistic products within which the brush techniques and compositional elements remain separate and readily identifiable. In examining Buson's paintings created before 1757, it becomes apparent that he first studied works to understand how they were made, and then created works that

appear as a kind of pastiche. Within this blend of individual appropriated images are the seeds of the emerging hybrid style, but at this time in Buson's career he has yet to fully master the various styles he has learned.

The years Buson spent moving from Yūki to Kyoto, and then to Tangō, were some of the most important in terms of his developing a personal painting style. It was during this period that the majority of his Chinese-inspired forms of expression first appeared, but the works from these years remain derivative and stylistically inconsistent. In his experiments with folk painting styles, his encounters with Sakaki Hyakusen's paintings, and his connections to the monks in Miyazu, Buson discovered many new Japanese painting traditions. In addition, his experiences in Kyoto viewing large temple collections and many important Chinese paintings provided him with a wealth of new styles to study and embrace. These were the building blocks for his later paintings, but they remained distinct and separate in the artist's work throughout this period. It was not until he returned to live in Kyoto that he finally came to harmonize the pieces of this pastiche to create truly novel works that resonated with these appropriated elements but presented entirely new expressions. These new expressions presented the early hybrid form that would become his signature style in the waning years of his life. While Buson would only come to this mature style in the last decades of his life, the raw materials appear as he entered middle age and finally settled on a home in Kyoto.

Chapter 5: Buson's Life in Kyoto

1757–1770

Sometime after the ninth month of 1757, Buson left the Tangō area to return to Kyoto, where he had maintained his ties to the circle of poets he had known through his connections to Hajin and the people of Yūki. In 1758 he joined Chōmu [蝶夢, 1732–1795], Shōzan [嘯山, 1718–1801], Tōta [稻太, dates unknown], Bunen [武然, d. 1803], Sōoku [宋屋, 1688–1766], Gantō [雁宕, d. 1773], and Kikei [几圭, 1687–1760] in writing a memorial poetry collection for Hajin on the seventeenth anniversary of his death. The decision to write this work and the importance of this anniversary may have been a major factor in Buson's decision to return to Kyoto. While he never made a clear statement about why he moved to the city, he lived there throughout the later portion of his life. While working with the poets of the Hajin circle and continuing to paint, Buson used the names Tōsei Chōkyo [東成趙居], Dendan Chōkyo [淀南趙居], Kanan Chōkyo [河南趙居], and Batō Chōkyo [馬塘趙居]. The first two characters in each of these names links Buson to the town of his birth, as mentioned above (see footnote 36), but the last two characters of this set of names may give some idea of the artist's sense of himself upon his return to the city. The character *chō* [趙] provides the sense of proceeding slowly when used in Chinese surnames, and *kyo* [居] is taken from the compound *ango* [安居] and relates to the Buddhist monk's period of secluded practice, traditionally followed from the sixteenth day of the fourth month until the fifteenth day of the seventh month of the lunar calendar. This pairing of characters provides us with an image of Buson's state of mind upon his return to the city. Remembering that Buson had been living with the monks at Shinshō-ji for much of the preceding three years, it is not surprising to see a Buddhist term playing an important role in his self reference. As he

adopted this name from the Buddhist tradition and from his study of Chinese *wenren* tradition, Buson appears to have crafted an artistic persona that was part monk and part literatus, modeled on his view of the Chinese.¹¹⁰

In 1758 Buson painted a pair of works focusing on the Chinese poet monks Hanshan and Shide [Figure 25]. This work continues the style of the paintings made in Tangō, but it reveals a greater focus on facial structure and individuality of details in these two large figures.¹¹¹ These works state that they were painted at Shukarō [朱菓樓], in the eastern part of Kyoto.¹¹² In the following year Buson painted a work with a horse and groom that presents in its inscription a reference to Buson's new studio home in the northern portion of Kyoto [Figure 26]. The inscription on this painting states that it was painted at Sankashodō [三菓書堂]. Coinciding with these different locations, Buson used the names Dendan Chōkyo and Tōsei Chōkyo, relating himself to the village of Kema. In the spring of 1760 Buson painted a pair of landscapes at Sankashooku [三菓書屋] [Figure 27]. This may be a third residence for Buson during this period, but one which he used for only a short period of time. On these landscapes the artist used the name Sha Chōkō [謝長庚], taking the character 謝 from the name of his mother's home in Yosa [与謝]. At this time he took on the name Yosa, identifying himself with his mother's home in Tangō rather than his birthplace. In the autumn of 1760, he painted several works inscribed with the location Sankashooku, which also present the new name Shachōkō [Figures 28 and 29]. These paintings of an autumn view of a mountain landscape and a landscape with a bamboo forest mark the end of Buson's imitative phase in his painting, and the beginning of his move toward what would become his mature style of painting. Through the use of this new

¹¹⁰Takahashi, 2000, p. 130.

¹¹¹For a thorough discussion of the style and composition presented in this work, see chapter 6.

¹¹²Takahashi, 2000, p. 134.

name and new studio identifications, Buson appears to have embraced something more personal as he embarked on his painting career in Kyoto

At about this time, in 1760, Unribō Seihan [雲裡房青飯, 1691–1760], one of Buson's fellow monks associated with Shinshō-ji, passed away. With his passing, Buson discarded the Buddhist prefix used in the name Shaku Buson in favor of the name Yosa Buson [与謝蕪村]. This shift in Buson's personal reference suggests he was undergoing a subtle change from directly associating himself with his friends in the Buddhist communities of Yūki and Tangō to relating himself once again with his family through reference to his mother's home. This name change also coincided with Buson's marking of the thirty-third anniversary of the death of his mother.¹¹³ This coincidence suggests his use of the name Yosa was in part a tribute to his mother in addition to a mark of his having lived in Yosa. In this year Buson also married his wife Tomome [とも女]. Buson was forty-five years old when he married, having spent many years traveling and wandering as an unsettled lay monk. It is thus probably not mere coincidence that he broke with the *Shaku* name connected to his association with the *Jōdo* sect in the same year that he married and settled down to live in Kyoto. He moved with his new wife to a home in the center of the city, where he painted under the studio names Sankaken [三葉軒] and Sankatei [三葉亭]. With this move he entered a longer period of settled living than he had known during the preceding forty-five years. He seems to have become a more resolutely focused artist working as a resident of Kyoto. The reasons for Buson's change were in part religious, in part personal, and perhaps in part professional. He seems to have changed from being an itinerant poet and painter practicing in a haphazard manner as he drifted around the country

¹¹³The thirty-third anniversary of a person's death was thought particularly important, as it marked the end of the individual's progress in the afterlife. Celebrations on the first, seventh, and forty-ninth day, and first, third, seventh, thirteenth, and thirty-third year after death were marked as moments of transition that led to the individual becoming an ancestor, who would return annually to the family at the New Year festival.

to being a professional painter, producing many more images than in earlier years for what must have been a consistently supportive group of patrons.

In the winter of 1760 Buson painted an image of a pair of horses in a cold forest in a style based on the work of the Chinese painter Shen Nanpin [沈南蘋, 1682–c. 1760] [Figure 30]. This work bears the name of the new studio, Sankaken, and the personal reference Tōsei Shachōkō. With this work Buson displayed his willingness to explore a wide variety of styles while creating works at a feverish pace.¹¹⁴ He also demonstrated his familial line through his use of names derived from his father's home in Kema, recalled through the use of Tōsei, and his mother's home in Yosa, recalled by the use of Shachōkō. It seems as though he had settled physically in Kyoto, and had settled mentally with respect to his own identity, as he formed a name that united his parents' family homes and his own split upbringing. He produced other works with horses in forest scenes, which follow the general ideas of Shen Nanpin's paintings, and he continued to produce Chinese-inspired landscapes, including a view of early spring in the mountains [Figures 31 and 32]. At the end of 1760 he painted two large landscape screens that, according to their inscriptions, follow the styles of Mi Fu and Wang Meng [Figures 33 and 34]. These works reveal that he was becoming quite bold in his interpretations of Chinese styles that he had learned from printed books, existing paintings, and new traditions of painting that were entering the Japanese art market through the port of Nagasaki.¹¹⁵ Buson seems to have derived his style in this period from all of these sources without privileging one over another. His works are for the most part identifiable in terms of their sources, indicating that he was not yet capable of freely blending his models to create a unique style of his own, but it is clear that he had gained a great deal of confidence and facility with these various manners of Chinese

¹¹⁴There are at least ten dated works from 1760 and as many as thirteen more works that appear to have been made at this time.

¹¹⁵See the discussion of these paintings in the following chapter.

painting. The works from 1760 continued to present Buson's appropriation of styles and images from an ever-widening field of different sources. They suggest his progress toward a new individual style, but they remained rooted in his study of other works.

In the spring of 1761 Buson created an image of a magpie on a rock that shows a new degree of expressiveness in the use of the brush [Figure 35]. This work reveals Buson's exploration of a style that relies on the power of the brush to communicate the feel of a subject rather than the visual details of the scene. The bird is defined in a precise manner, while its surrounding landscape is left vague and fragmentary. Later in this year Buson created several images of Chinese poets that also use this expressive style. A work made in the autumn of 1761 that presents an attendant in Chinese dress leaning on a pine shows Buson experimenting with ink tonality to create the illusion of depth within the pictorial space [Figure 36]. A pair of similar works painted in the winter present Tao Yuanming and an attendant among pines, yet in these images Buson seems to have been exploring another way of defining space, as the clouds appear as distinct white forms slicing across the picture plane [Figure 37]. In yet another work from the winter of 1761, Buson seems to have taken Chinese bird and flower painting as his model in presenting three geese among reeds and peonies [Figure 38]. This work shows virtually none of the expressive brushwork present in the other works from this year, as it focuses on precise details of the birds and their surrounding vegetation. It appears that these works were created to serve the interests or requests of distinctly different patrons, as the works seek their inspiration from entirely different Chinese models. While the identities of Buson's patrons are unclear, the diversity of his styles and the dramatic increase in his production suggest he had developed a significant following. While he may have been following his own interests in producing these paintings, it seems more likely that these works reveal styles that had wide popularity in Kyoto and were therefore specifically commissioned or

requested.¹¹⁶

In the summer of 1763 Buson began to use the new studio name Hekiundō [壁雲洞]. This studio name appears on a pair of large landscape screens painted in the fourth month of the year [Figure 39]. It is possible that this pair of screens and another presenting a gathering of horses in a landscape [Figure 40], painted in the eighth month, are products made for a screen patronage group. Unlike Figure 39, this pair of screens states in its inscription that it was painted at Sankaken. In a letter dated to the twentieth day of the fourth month, Buson speaks of painting for the “group” [講].¹¹⁷ This group may have been an organized body of patrons who commissioned screens from Buson during this year, providing him with both a steady income and specific requests with respect to style and subject matter to be included in the works.¹¹⁸ The presence of patronage groups in Kyoto that commissioned art work by pooling their resources and acquiring works gradually over time for each of the group members is well known, and it is likely that Buson was being commissioned by this type of group. Perhaps this group was formed among Buson’s associates in his poetry circles. Buson may have continued painting works for this type of gathering of patrons for several years, with the members of the commissioning group changing over time. In another undated letter, possibly from later in the same year, Buson referred to the “screen group” [屏講] and mentioned the name Teramura.¹¹⁹ Teramura Hyakuchi [寺村百池, 1748–1835], whose father, Sankan [三貫], was a follower of Hajin, began to have his poems included with Buson’s and others in 1763. It is likely that

¹¹⁶Miyajima Shinichi [宮島新一], “The Introduction of the Nampin School of Painting to the Three Cities: Osaka, Kyoto and Edo,” [三都における南蘋西風の流伝], *Yamato Bunka*, no. 73 (March 1985).

¹¹⁷Tanaka, 1996, p. 85.

¹¹⁸Takahashi, 2000, pp. 139–40.

¹¹⁹Matsuo et al., 1990, p. 355.

this letter dates to the approximate time when these poems were created.¹²⁰ It seems Buson may have relied on his connections to the *haikai* community to form a patronage circle that could support his expanding livelihood as a professional painter.

The Hekiundō studio name appears regularly on works dated 1763 and 1765, and there are occurrences of this studio name outside this period as well. It is likely that the Hekiundō name does not reveal a move to a new studio, but indicates some other designation within Buson's oeuvre. This studio name might have been used to designate a particular set of images that were made for certain patrons. The designation of the work as coming from this studio might have signified that the work was for a "group" to purchase, as opposed to being a work created through Buson's personal interests or ideas.

To demonstrate this, it is necessary to look at the correlation between Buson's dated paintings and the uses of these various studio names. The Hekiundō name appears on a single work from 1761 and on one work dated to the summer of 1763 [Figure 39]. It also appears on two works from the autumn of 1763 [Figures 40 and 42], and on four works dated to the summer, autumn, and winter of 1765 [Figures 51, 53, 54 and 55]. Outside of these eight dated images, the studio name appears on a few undated works in styles that suggest they were made around this same period of time. The Sankaken name appears on works from 1760 [Figures 30, 31, 33 and 34], 1761 [Figures 35, 37 and 38], and on the pair of horse screens from the autumn of 1763 [Figure 40]. This one example presents both the Sankaken and the Hekiundō names in the signature lines on the right and left screens respectively. The Sankaken studio name does not appear on works dated to 1764, but reappears on works dated to the summer and winter of 1765 [Figures 52, 56 and 57], spring of 1766 [Figure 59], summer of 1768, and on a single work dated 1772. Works from 1764 and the spring of 1765 bear the studio name Sankatei, which also appears on a

¹²⁰Takahashi, 2000, p. 141.

single work from the winter of 1771 [Figures 47–50].¹²¹ These three names appear in clusters within this set of dated works, but it remains unclear what they signify within the larger body of Buson's painting. The early shifts from Sankado and Sankashooku to Sankaken may indicate physical moves within Kyoto as Buson's personal life became more settled, but the use of the later studio names, Sankatei and Hekiundō, may relate to patronage or to how Buson wished to present himself to his public within the city. While it is clear that these names had some meaning to the artist's life and work, there may be a certain degree of freedom of use present in the later appearances of these names. The clustering of these names in the years between 1761 and 1765 suggests that they had a specific meaning, but their appearance later in the artist's life on single works may simply be evidence of the artist recalling his own earlier works. The simultaneous use of these studio names through this five-year period and the wide-ranging use of differing styles in scroll and screen paintings suggest a patronage pattern that may be connected to these studio designations. The appearance of the Hekiundō and Sankaken names on an equal number of dated screens and scrolls (five scrolls and three sets of screens present each name) suggests these dated works were being produced regularly and for a specific market.¹²²

In 1764 Buson continued to paint under the name Shachōkō, completing several large pairs of screens. In the summer and autumn he painted landscapes that present a precise style of execution with broad applications of color [Figures 43 and 44]. Following these works, he painted two pairs of screens in the winter that present similar themes of

¹²¹The anomalous presence of the Sankatei name on the landscape from 1771 in conjunction with its eclectic style suggests it may be a forgery. For this reason it is not illustrated here. Excluding this peculiar work, the Sankatei studio name can be isolated in its use to 1765 and the last month of the previous year.

¹²²Further study of these studio names and others that Buson used in his mature life may reveal additional patterns that relate to the artist's patronage and marketing efforts.

figures walking on a path and boatmen poling their vessels through marshy waters surrounded by willows [Figures 45 and 46]. In their similarity, these works may offer further support for the idea that Buson was painting for several groups of patrons. While not identical in their compositions or inscriptions, these works seem to display the artist's willingness to recreate successful works to suit the desires of his patrons. This is the first appearance of this theme in Buson's oeuvre, and from this point Buson would return to the theme of the boatman moving among reeds and willows many times until the end of his life. There seems to be no poetry from the mid-1760s to compare to these paintings, but in this absence of writing we may see evidence for Buson's having focused his creative efforts primarily on painting.

These years have been referred to as the "screen years" by several scholars who note the sudden appearance of many large-scale works by Buson that coincide with his textual references to the "group" of patrons.¹²³ Buson seems to have been spending all of his time painting these large works, which included a pair of screens painted over the final month of 1764 and the first month of 1765 [Figure 47]. In the third month of 1765, Buson painted a pair of tall landscapes that reveal his development of a formula for composition based on Chinese landscape models [Figures 48 and 49]. These works show a compression of the pictorial space into a vertical format, with steep cliffs and high mountains towering above a narrow path that unifies the foreground and background spaces. This compositional form continued through much of the rest of Buson's life as he explored the potential of this narrow view of nature to produce dramatic scenes of figures and wildlife in a natural environment. This is a significant step in the artist's progression from appropriated images to newly synthesized compositions that grow out of his studies of Chinese and Japanese imagery.

¹²³Tanaka, 1996, p. 85. See also Yoshizawa, 1981, p. 104, Sasaki, 1984, pp. 64–5.

In the fifth month Buson painted a scene of three figures resting among large trees [Figure 50]. Later, in the summer and early autumn, Buson returned to the narrow format landscape painting in images of rustic figures walking on mountain paths [Figures 51–55]. These works focus on the image of the fisherman and the porter carrying his load through the mountain wilderness, mirroring the imagery of Chinese poetry made famous by writers such as Wang Wei and Li Bo. Buson’s familiarity with these poets’ writing is clear from both his earlier paintings of these poets and his early poetry, which draws on their work in its imagery. The figures in these images are the idealized “rustic men” in nature that would come to dominate Buson’s later images.

In the tenth month of the winter of 1765, Buson created several more images that reveal his continued interest in exploring a variety of styles and themes. He painted a rustic scene of dwellings in a mountainous landscape with bamboo and waterfalls, returning to the models drawn from Chinese painting manuals [Figure 56]. In the same month he painted *Gathering in an Orchard of Peaches and Plums* [Figure 57], which closely follows a work by the Chinese artist Li Shida [李士達, early 17th century].¹²⁴ These images reach to various Chinese sources for their styles and themes, indicating that Buson was still actively trying new ideas and practicing what he had been exploring in earlier years while fulfilling the requests of his patrons. With these two works, we see the end of a period of production in which Buson seems to have been solely focused on his painting. In the next year he returned to poetry as a major form of expression, but his painting continued at the pace that emerged during the period from 1761 to 1766.

In the spring of 1766, Buson painted the image of a figure on horseback being led across a stream under willows [Figure 59]. In this image he seems to have explored the psychology and personality of the traveling figure. Like the figures that appeared in his

¹²⁴See the discussion of paintings in the following chapter, and Figure 58.

earlier works as small images in monumental landscapes, these figures are rustics moving through the natural world. In this case the figure on horseback is large and can be seen looking out of the image to confront the viewer with a head-on gaze and gentle smile. At this time Buson used the same scale and gaze toward the viewer in a pair of large screens showing figures in Chinese dress drinking tea and liquor among trees and rocks [Figure 60]. In this work, the figures, furnishings, and objects are all drawn to appear Chinese. The figures are interacting with each other and actively looking out of the scene to confront the viewer. At about the same time Buson painted an image of the *Gathering at the Orchid Pavilion*, from the Chinese literary reference to this event [Figure 61]. While clearly meant to be a recreation of the famous Chinese scene, as indicated by the inclusion of excerpts from the Chinese text arrayed across the twelve panels of the screens, this work presents the same viewer-focused composition to present the figures. These may be products for the screen patronage group, or they may serve a different patronage circle that was specifically interested in these large-figure subjects. These paintings present a new focus on individuals and show Buson turning once again toward poetry in his thinking. The inclusion of themes drawn from famous Chinese literary sources may foreshadow the formation of a new poetry circle around Buson later in the summer of 1766.

On the twelfth day of the third month of 1766, Buson's close associate Sōoku died at the age of seventy-nine.¹²⁵ At about the same time, Buson's wife gave birth to his only child. She was named Kuno, and although as a child she seems to have had little impact on Buson's poetry and painting, she would gradually become important to the artist's life as she married and then returned to live at home in the 1770s.¹²⁶

¹²⁵Matsuo et al., 1990, p. 36.

¹²⁶The precise date of Kuno's birth seems to be questionable, as she is known to have married in 1776. Even if she was born only a few years before 1766, she would have been a young teenager at the time of her marriage. While young marriage was not uncommon in this time period, it may be more likely that the child was born closer to the time of Buson's marriage in 1760. This would make the child, Kuno, about

In the fifth month of 1766, Buson joined seven other poets of the Hajin tradition to form the Sankasha [三葉社] poets group.¹²⁷ In the group were Taigi [太祇, 1709–1771], Shōha [召波, 1727–1771], Tetsusō [鉄僧, dates unknown], Chikudō [竹洞, dates unknown], Inami [印南, dates unknown], Gabi [峨眉, dates unknown], and Hyakuboku [百墨, dates unknown]. The first meeting of this group took place at the Teramura home.¹²⁸ Since Teramura was mentioned in the context of the screen group as well, we can see that the patrons for Buson's painting and poetry were in some cases the same. At this first meeting of the *haikai* poets, they addressed a variety of topics related to early summer. The Sankasha met a second time in the sixth month of the year at the home of Gabi, where the poets wrote about further summer topics, focusing this time on broader images of flowers and clouded peaks as they created their linked verses.¹²⁹ The group remained in contact, but did not meet again until the summer of 1768 because Buson left Kyoto in the ninth month of 1766 to travel to Sanuki [讃岐] province.¹³⁰ Prior to this excursion Buson painted several more large-scale works. A pair of screens dated to the summer of 1766 reveals that Buson continued to explore themes of rustic huts and mountain landscapes [Figure 62]. In the ninth month Buson created a pair of two-fold screens that present a very similar scene in a compressed form, indicating that he is reworking and adjusting these themes to fit specific media shapes and sizes [Figure 63]. In the winter of 1766 he created a triptych centered on Jurō, with flanking images of male and sixteen years old at the time of her marriage. Regardless of this logic, later writers recording Buson's biography shortly after his death suggest the child's birth year was 1766. Tanaka, 1996, pp. 80–2.

¹²⁷The first meeting of this group is cited as occurring in either the fifth month or on the second day of the sixth month of 1766. See Matsuo et al., 1990, p. 36.

¹²⁸Matsuo et al., 1990, p. 36.

¹²⁹Takahashi, 2000, pp. 144–5.

¹³⁰The reason for Buson's traveling to Sanuki is unclear, but the result was the expansion of both his painting and poetry patronage circle. He also developed mentor relationships with both painters and poets in this area and corresponded with them regularly after returning to Kyoto.

female deer [Figure 64]. This theme seems to have become particularly interesting to Buson, as there are three separate triptychs of the theme with Jurō in the center. The other two images display a stag on one side and a crane on the other. One of these triptychs is dated to the third month of 1767 [Figure 65]. This work bears an inscription stating the location of its creation as *Zogaku kakusha* [象岳客舎], which is in keeping with Buson's travels during this year.¹³¹

Buson had left Kyoto in the ninth month, and the excursion seems to have resulted in expanding Buson's exposure as a painter. Even though Buson arranged and seems to have relished the idea of traveling again, he revealed some ambivalence in a letter written to Shōha shortly before he was to leave Kyoto. He wrote:

As you have suspected, I am heading for Sanuki Province. I don't know when I shall be returning. My home will be under my wife's care. I feel a little uneasy, though, because we have a small baby. I'm depending on the kindness of my friends, who I hope will come and see them from time to time during my absence. I should like to ask you to visit them, too. I'm afraid I won't have time to see you and say good-bye....

I look forward to the time when I return and attend your *haikai* parties again. For a while I'll have to bear with rustics— a gloomy prospect indeed. But at least I'll be accompanied by someone from Kyoto on my way to Sanuki. [Buson was accompanied by Sōoku's son for the first part of his journey.] We'll be traveling on land from Osaka to Hyōgo. Our plan is to visit places like Suma, Akashi, and Ichinotani. Those places will make me think of the past so fondly that my traveler's clothes will be soaked with tears.¹³²

This letter shows Buson to be in a state of ambivalence about the journey, but his reference to places like Suma and Ichinotani indicates his interest in these sites, famed for their

¹³¹*Zogaku kakusha* is a reference to the mountain, *zōzusan* [象頭山], on which the Kōpira Shrine sits in the town of Kotohira, southwest of Takamatsu.

¹³²Ueda, 1998, p. 47.

importance to the history of Japan. These well-known sites were central to the events described in the *Heike Monogatari*. As a literatus, Buson was naturally drawn to this Japanese classic, and it is not surprising that he would want to visit the sites where the definitive battles of the *Genpei* wars were fought. While at Ichinotani, Buson wrote upon seeing the grave of Taira Tadanori [平忠度, 1144–1184]:

月今宵松にかへたるやどり哉

Night of the full moon — a pine tree will nicely serve as our place to stay.¹³³

This poem reveals Buson's familiarity with the story from the *Heike Monogatari* that tells of Tadanori's foreshadowing of his own death at Ichinotani, where the cherry blossoms would become his "landlords."¹³⁴

Late in 1766 Buson arrived in Sanuki, where he came to reside near the Kompira shrine [金毘羅] in Kotohira [琴平]. While his traveling companion had to return to Kyoto, Buson stayed in this area for much of the next two years.¹³⁵ While in Kotohira, Buson painted the Jurō triptychs [Figures 64 and 65] in the third month, and a crouching tiger dated to the fourth month [Figure 66]. In the following month Buson painted an autumn view of a mountain landscape in which he continued his exploration of styles and techniques that he had used in the screens produced in Kyoto [Figure 67]. A final work from this period shows Buson's exploration of a long horizontal format, as he created an image that blended the landscape forms of his hanging scrolls and the sweeping views of

¹³³Zolbrod, 1990, p. 68.

¹³⁴Tadanori, it is said, wrote a poem about this spot, asking that the cherry tree on the hill where his grave is located be his "landlord" should he die in battle the following day. He was killed and his poem was found tied to his armor. Buson found the grave, and a pine served the role once occupied by Tadanori's cherry tree. Ueda, 1998, p. 48.

¹³⁵Buson seems to have returned briefly in the fourth month of 1767 to Kyoto from Sanuki to mark the anniversary of Sōoku's death, but he returned to Sanuki, indicating that this trip was more than a mere diversion. He must have made commitments in the region to paint for a significant period of time.

landscapes and water used in the screens [Figure 68]. This work is dated to the winter, and it was likely created just before he moved closer to the Takamatsu region to pursue further connections with patrons in the area.

During 1768 Buson stayed with several wealthy merchants who seem to have introduced him to the Marugame [丸龜] community surrounding Myōhō-ji [妙法寺]. He painted several works for the temple and seems to have developed patronage relationships with a diverse range of people in the area. Among these patrons were members of the Toyama family [富山], who had strong connections to the temple. This connection was supplemented by Buson's apparent friendship with many of the Takamatsu area's *haikai* poets. While painting seems to have been the reason for this trip to Sanuki, Buson's interest in poetry did not wane during this period, as he created a number of *hokku* that relate to his journey and experiences in the region. For the new year in 1767, he wrote of the budding branches of the willow foretelling the coming of the spring, revealing his continued interest in observing nature, which is paralleled by a pair of screens decorated with cycads for Myōhō-ji.¹³⁶ As these plants were rare in Kyoto, but more common in Shikoku, Buson continued to follow the advice Hajin gave him as a young poet. He painted and wrote about the circumstances that surrounded him, adjusting his words and images to fit the circumstances of his life. While he followed this idea in his work as he lived in Sanuki, he continued to exercise the ideas he had been exploring while in Kyoto.

In terms of his painting, Buson seems to have reached broadly to styles drawn from Chinese and Japanese traditions while constantly acknowledging the importance of studying the forms of painting introduced in the Chinese painting manuals he had studied earlier. He wrote in a letter to Genpo [玄圃, dates unknown] of the importance of

¹³⁶For a New Year's album in 1767 Buson wrote:

“Without a single dead branch hanging, a willow.” 一筋も弃たる枝なき柳かな

Matsuo et al., 1990, p. 243. Translation from Ueda, 1998, p. 50.

following the *Mustard Seed Garden Manual* in creating Chinese paintings.¹³⁷ This note may imply that Buson was both establishing patronage relationships with people in Sanuki and finding followers who were interested in the type of painting he was producing. Genpo does not appear in any records of the Takamatsu area's poets and seems not to have become a professional painter, but Buson wrote to this person at length after leaving the area, implying the importance of their relationship.¹³⁸ Perhaps Buson was actively engaging students while he traveled and painted during this period. To this student, and perhaps others, he imparted his own idea of the importance of following the painting manual's guidelines rather than emphasizing the flexibility of style that had been so important in his own work over the preceding years.

Prior to leaving Marugame on a boat for Osaka, Buson painted several large screens for Myōhō-ji that show him working in a faint style of landscape based on Chinese models.¹³⁹ These screens are dated to the summer of 1768 and may have been executed around the same time he created the pair of four-fold screens of cycads, hanging scrolls of bamboos, sliding doors (*fusuma*) presenting Hanshan and Shide, and another image of Jurō, all still in the possession of the Myōhō-ji. Following the painting of these works, Buson seems to have felt the need to return to his family in Kyoto. In the fourth month of the year he boarded a boat in Marugame and returned to Osaka, and from there traveled overland back to his home. During the summer he painted a pair of landscape screens in a style like those painted for the screen group prior to his traveling over the previous two years [Figure 69]. The style of this work suggests he continued to work for the patrons he

¹³⁷Otani and Fujita, 1992, pp. 30–2.

¹³⁸Tanaka, 1996, p. 105.

¹³⁹These works are poorly reproduced and difficult to photograph, but they appear to present landscapes similar to imported Zhe school paintings that were common in Kyoto. They are faintly colored and reveal a great deal of fine brushwork.

had known earlier as he reestablished his painting practice in the Kyoto community. Prior to his arrival in Kyoto, he was included in the third-month edition of the *Heian jinbutsushi* [平安人物志] as a painter. His address was listed as Shijō Karasumaru Tōe-ire chō [四條烏丸東へ入町].¹⁴⁰

Upon Buson's arrival in Kyoto after almost two years of absence, he quickly reestablished contact with the members of the Sankasha poetry group, and on the sixth day of the fifth month they once again met at the studio of Hyakuchi to resume their poetry writing. The resumption of this group's activity marks a return to poetry for Buson, as he met with them eighteen times over the next seven months to produce more than eighty individual poems.¹⁴¹ This sudden increase in poetic output coincided with a marked decrease in his output as a painter. There remain no dated works from 1769, and few works seem to be attributable to this period. It is curious that following his inclusion among the well-known painters of Kyoto in the *Heian jinbutsushi* he would seemingly turn away from this vocation to pursue poetry. Perhaps this is merely a coincidence resulting from his having spent the previous years focusing primarily on painting, but it appears that this turn away from painting gave Buson time to explore and reinforce his role as a professional poet and teacher. He had long pursued this dual role as painter and poet. Perhaps seeing himself included in the circle of professional painters of Kyoto caused Buson to temporarily step away from the painter's role to work on his career as a poet, coming to the group with the experiences of Sanuki fresh in his mind.

During 1769 Buson continued to attend meetings of the poetry group, joining thirty-one of these gatherings in total following his return from Sanuki. He produced a total of 104 separate *hokku* during this time and may have written another hundred poems that

¹⁴⁰Matsuo et al., 1990, p. 39.

¹⁴¹*Ibid.*, pp. 39–42.

he chose not to include.¹⁴² This flurry of poetic creation occupied Buson throughout the year, but early in 1770 he returned to his painting. He created several works in a strongly colored style including a figure engaged in rustic activities in a landscape [Figure 70] and a pair of screens based on the Chinese theme of a celebratory gathering [Figure 71]. While he was painting these screens, Buson was urged by his associates in the poetry group to become a professional and to adopt the name of Yahantei II. This name would make him the successor to the lineage of his teacher, Hajin, in Edo. Buson apparently resisted this role, but eventually succumbed to the pressure of the members of the group and the realization that the name might die with Hajin if not adopted by one of his students. Apparently, the name was offered to Kikei earlier, but he refused to take on the role, so it had remained unfilled for twenty-seven years. The Sankasha group needed a formal leader, and Buson, with his renewed energy, was the obvious choice for this role. He formally adopted the name in the fourth month of 1770, which apparently caused him to stop work on the pair of screens [Figure 71]. The left screen was not finished until the summer of 1770, after the events surrounding his becoming a professional poet had been completed.

Even with the adoption of this new name, Buson was apparently uncomfortable with his prominent position within the establishment. His follower Kitō wrote of this time:

...not a few people who admired his style of poetry wanted to enter his gate and take off their shoes in his house. But, averse to the ways of the world by nature, he shunned socializing with ordinary people. So he closed his gate and confined himself to his studio. He would associate only with those who shared his taste; he would enjoy himself by doing only the kinds of things he liked to do.¹⁴³

¹⁴²These numbers are based on the published work of the Sankasha group and later published poems that appear similar in content to these group works, suggesting that they were written at this time. Some of these works may have been written earlier and may have only surfaced in conjunction with one of the thirty-one recorded meetings. Ueda, 1998, p. 51.

¹⁴³Ueda, 1998, p. 61.

Kitō may be exaggerating Buson's personal isolation a little, but it seems clear that Buson was not entirely comfortable with the newfound success he was having as a poet. He seems to have resisted the professionalism of his painting when he returned to Kyoto, and then resisted his professionalism as a poet when it was thrust upon him following his reinvigorated pursuit of writing. It seems that his success was inevitable at this point in time, but it meant he had to accept a new position as a member of the formal establishment. This conflict must have been one that plagued Buson for many years, as he sought to hold onto the outsider position he had embraced so many times in the past. Even with his acceptance of the Yahantei II name and the right that it gave him to charge for his teaching as a professional poet, he resisted the change of the Sankasha name for the poetry group until the winter of 1770.

In the autumn, Buson returned to his painting with continued interest in large figures painted with relatively strong colors. In a pair of hanging scrolls depicting Huang Shi Gong and Zhang Liang leaning on a pine on the right side and Wang Meng discussing statesmanship with Huan Wen while killing lice on the left [Figure 72], Buson revealed his continued interest in Chinese themes while he exercised a style that shows greater and greater distance from a purely Chinese root. As the following discussion of the styles applied in these works will show, Buson moved gradually away from the models he had explored over the years to produce works that were no longer appropriations but entirely new syntheses of his experiences. These works pushed the artist's style ever closer to the hybrid style that became emblematic of Buson's painting. These images also show Buson working with a variety of themes that are far from common in the vernacular world, implying that he was actively reaching in his studies of China to find rather esoteric topics. At about the same time, he painted an image of a drunken Li Bo being supported by attendants and disciples [Figure 73]. In its wavering lines this work shows a return to the

style of figure painting Buson used in the early 1760s, but the richness of color in this work seems to be a newfound form of expression. In a work from late 1770 that depicts an alliance in a peach grove [Figure 74], Buson first inscribed the location Heianjō Yahantei [平安城夜半亭], indicating that he had renamed his studio in accord with his adoption of the Yahantei II name as a poet. At this point in his career Buson accepted his dual role as a professional poet and painter, and the alternation between periods of painting and periods of poetic composition ended.

This period spanning Buson's first thirteen years in Kyoto were particularly important for his development as a painter. He came to Kyoto after residing in Tangō and quickly settled into a new life as a resident rather than itinerant painter. This led to the development of new patterns of patronage. His patronage appears to have had an impact on his painting as he produced for one or more screen groups. With his marriage and the birth of his daughter, Buson took on additional responsibility in life, as he had to support a family. This may have led to his marked increase in productivity and perhaps made necessary his travel to Sanuki, where he found more patrons and students.

The acknowledgment of his dual professional status in last years of this period provided yet another impetus for Buson to develop his painting and poetry. With this last major event, Buson's painting changed in significant ways, as it shifted in tone away from the appropriation of new Chinese compositional forms and approaches to brushwork. His works from late in this period are the most unified, novel creations he had made to this point in his life. They are less and less easily linked to the sources that inspired their creation. As he dwells on the psychological, individual, and poetic nature of his subjects, he begins to create images that are unlike their Japanese or Chinese precedents, but are still able to evoke those precedents in the mind of the viewer.

The works from this period mark an important step in Buson's process of gradually

moving toward a hybrid form of expression. Although the earlier paintings had remained quite close in style to the models Buson was studying, the paintings made in Kyoto demonstrate his ability to isolate portions of works and stylistic traits within works in order to combine them in new paintings. The imagery, however, retains its sources in many of the paintings from this period, which quickly evokes connections to Chinese precedents and known works in the Kyoto area. In addition, the expressions of Buson's themes drawn from his poetry interwoven with Chinese forms of brushwork allows the viewer to imagine both the Chinese and Japanese roots underlying these works through direct reference. While these are not yet fully hybrid in nature, because the individual elements within the works and their subject matter are quite separable and connected strongly to a domestic or a Chinese root, they are a significant move toward smoothly integrated, hybrid works in which the style and subject both mutually evoke connections to Chinese and Japanese artistic traditions. Although there is no reason to believe that Buson was striving to integrate his imagery and subject matter in order to form hybrid paintings, in embracing portions of these works and mixing them with styles and other elements drawn from a wide range of sources, the groundwork is laid for his later production. In essence, these works seem to form a kind of intermediary between the derivative paintings of his youth and the hybrid work of his later life.

Chapter 6: Critical Paintings from Buson's Early Years in Kyoto 1757–1770

The paintings mentioned in the preceding examination of Buson's life in Kyoto between 1757 and 1770 reveal several distinct changes in the artist's approach to image making. The works from this period vary widely in their subject matters and styles, but it is through this experimentation that Buson moves toward a style that would become his most widely acknowledged contribution to the history of Japanese painting. With ideas drawn from Chinese painting manuals, older Japanese and Chinese paintings, and poetry from both China and Japan, Buson's works appropriate imagery in a manner similar to his collecting of experiences as he wandered in his travels earlier in his life. These are paintings that appropriate, combine, and effectively reveal Buson's mastery of a wide range of ideas drawn from Chinese and Japanese paintings.

In talking about these paintings, I will restrict my comments to the works that seem to reveal this appropriation most effectively in their themes and styles. While this select group of works is central to Buson's oeuvre during this period, it is important to remember that there were many undated images created in addition to these examples. Some of the features in this group of dated paintings that appear new and strikingly different from those in the paintings discussed earlier may have precedents in undated images, so it seems best to consider these works as records of the general direction in which Buson's painting was moving rather than thinking of them as entirely new creations. The discussion of these works is presented to show trends that evolved over many years rather than to precisely display each innovation in the artist's oeuvre. As this period was the time in which Buson finally achieved the status of a professional painter, there is a marked growth in the number of works produced each year. This expansion in the number of works produced means that

the following discussion will be progressively more and more fragmented in terms of the relative number of images discussed within the larger body of images Buson produced. With this in mind, the following discussion will include images that indicate both the trajectory of Buson's developing style of painting and the eclecticism of this body of works in order to highlight the range of factors that contributed to the emergence of Buson's mature style of painting.

Poet Paintings

Buson's 1758 paintings of Hanshan and Shide [Figure 25] were painted in the winter at the Shukarō studio where Buson first resided upon returning to Kyoto. In these works the artist moved away from broad landscape paintings with small figures to focus on solitary figures in an undefined space. Each figure adopts a strong stance, with his feet placed near the bottom corners of the two scrolls. The right-hand image of Hanshan presents the poet in a position that suggests he is about to step toward the left side of the image. His feet, drawn precisely with individual toes, toenails, and carefully constructed sandals, protrude from the hem of his garment. The foot at the left side of the image is seen in profile, while the foot at the right is seen from above, as its heel lifts from the ground. This places the figure's weight on the foot at the left, suggesting his movement in that direction. Above the feet are small glimpses of white pants that cover the legs, and a long robe with a dark hem that flows in waves as it encircles the figure. The lines used to draw this robe are distinctive in that they reveal fine outlines defining the heavy cloth of the garment and broad areas of shading applied to give structure to the folds of the material. The lower portion of the robe rises steeply above each foot to disappear behind the long sleeves that fall from the figure's shoulders in a pair of arcs that surround the hands clasped at the center of the image. The arc of the sleeve at the right side of the image cuts across the

lower portion of the body to further suggest the figure's movement toward the left side, while the sleeve at the left forms a point in the space to the left of the figure.

Emerging from the openings of the sleeves are oblong, concentric folds of white undergarments and two rather bony-looking hands. The hands are clasped such that the fingers reach above each palm to rest on the opposing arm's wrist. This awkward clasping of the hands is made prominent both by the fleshy coloring used to differentiate the hands from the undergarment and by the bend of the fingers at the left, which seem to curve unnaturally backward at the first knuckle. Above the hands, a broad swath of white cloth surrounds the figure's neck. Across this white cloth, a cord is tied across the figure's chest, which supports a set of scrolls carried on the figure's back. This cord falls in a "V"-shape toward the right side of the clasped hands, drawing the viewer's eye back to the center of the image. Directly above the hands, the figure's neck and head emerge from the white cloth around the chest. The face is drawn with precision, revealing folds of skin and sunken eyes that seem to be out of alignment with the figure's nose. The eye at the right falls a little toward the chin, while the eye at the left is raised. This gives the figure a slightly comic or maniacal quality. This is in keeping with the personality communicated by Hanshan's poetry and the mythology that had developed around this heterodox Zen priest and poet. The hair on the poet's head is drawn with the same wispy brush strokes that were seen in the image of Feng Gan made while Buson was in Tangō [Figure 23], but as it encircles the shaved top of the figure's head, it seems to reveal an even greater sense of frantic disorganization than we saw in the earlier painting.

The image of Shide presents many of the same features seen in the image of Hanshan, but it is endowed with an even greater sense of dynamism. The feet step toward the right in this image, giving the impression that these two poets will soon join each other in the center between the two paintings. Shide wears a shorter robe, indicative of his role as

janitor to the monastery where Hanshan lived before the two retreated to the mountains nearby. Shide's dynamism is communicated through the lines of his exposed pant legs and the sweep of his arm at the left across his body to grasp the broom at his right side. The broom appears to be moving toward the right side of the image as its bristles bend across the space between the figure's feet. Shide's chest is exposed where his short robe falls from his comparatively squared-off shoulders, and his head turns toward the right, as if looking at Hanshan in the other scroll. His hand at the top of the broomstick is drawn with the same attention to detail that appears in the image of Hanshan, with a similar awkwardness, as the fingers appear to wrap so tightly that the tendons in his hand bulge. His face and hair are like Hanshan's in their presentation of wrinkles and folds surrounded by unkempt hair that fans out to all sides. It is the faces and the apparent interest in the manic psychology of these two figures that distinguish these works most directly from Buson's earlier paintings. In the set of images from Yūki presenting Chinese Daoist figures, Buson relied on the landscape and bodies to speak of the figures' personalities. Here these two poets seem to come alive through the emphasis on facial structure and physical presence. Buson seems to have turned at this time to thinking about the interactions and personalities of the figures in his images rather than merely placing stock figures into landscape spaces.

This change is also relevant in that the model for these figures was most likely not found in the painting manuals that he had been studying for his works made in Tangō. Instead, he seems to be looking at fully realized figure paintings as models, perhaps taking his ideas from Japanese images by the Kanō painters, or figural works by Chinese painters such as Gao Qipei [高其佩, 1660–1734] [Figure 75].¹⁴⁴ While Buson did not yet reach the

¹⁴⁴Gao Qipei was known for his finger painting. He was a Manchurian official in the Qing Dynasty bureaucracy of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Gabriele Fahr-Becker, *The Art of East Asia* (Cologne: Konemann, 1998), Vol. 1, p. 234.

degree of eccentricity revealed in Gao's work, the shift in emphasis from the figure in the landscape to the personality of the individual may indicate Buson's interest in moving away from the old Kanō traditions of Motonobu and others to the contemporary works of Chinese artists that were entering Kyoto at the time of his return. It is also quite evident that he was looking at many different Chinese paintings in Kyoto, for in the following year he created a work that reveals a distinct understanding of the style of painting associated with the Chinese painter Shen Nanpin [沈南蘋, 1682–c. 1760]. Buson confirmed this stylistic appropriation in an undated work from around this time depicting two horses and a figure standing under trees [Figure 76]. He inscribed this work with the statement “the horses are created after Nanpin while the figure is my own creation.”¹⁴⁵

Shen Nanpin-Style Paintings

Buson's 1759 work depicting a horse and groom in Chinese dress standing in a grassy field beneath a vine-wrapped tree [Figure 26] reveals his understanding of the Shen style as it entered Kyoto in the eighteenth century. Shen Nanpin's works gained in popularity among Japanese patrons and painters of the eighteenth century following his sojourn in Nagasaki between 1731 and 1733. Known also as Shen Chuan [沈銓], he created works in a style that led to the rise of a Nagasaki school of bird-and-flower painting, which met with wide acceptance across Japan during the mid-eighteenth century.¹⁴⁶ The style associated with this school presents a contrast between densely painted bird and animal forms and more sparsely rendered landscape forms. The style of Shen's and his followers' works relied on the expressive use of the brush, as seen in much traditional Chinese landscape painting, to create the background landscape elements, but

¹⁴⁵馬擬南蘋人用自家

¹⁴⁶Tsuruta Takeyoshi [鶴田武良], “Sō Shiseki to Nanpin ha” [宋紫石と南蘋派], *Nihon no bijutsu* [日本の美術], no. 326 (1993): p. 19.

used a more highly colored technique of blended strokes to create the animals. This technique gives each animal a striking appearance of solidity. The contrast between the solid animals and comparatively loosely constructed landscape gives these works their appeal.

After returning to China, Shen continued to create works for the Japanese market and seems to have been part of a regional community in Zhejiang province that worked in this distinctive manner.¹⁴⁷ In addition to Shen, Ho Yuanting [何元鼎, dates unknown] and Liang Chi [梁基, mid 18th c.] produced paintings in Zhejiang for sale in the Japanese market. In Japan these artists were followed by many domestic artists, most notably Takebe Ryōtai [建部凌岱, 1719–1774], Yūhi [熊斐, 1712–1772], and Ōtomo Gekko [大友月湖, late 18th century]. The similarities between the works of these Japanese artists and the Chinese followers of Shen in Zhejiang indicate that this style grew out of the blending of Shen's experience in Japan and the styles he practiced earlier in China.¹⁴⁸ The large number of paintings made by Chinese artists working in this style helped develop an export market designed to feed the Japanese appetite for this type of painting. In addition, the Japanese painters' works served to expand the reach of this style and to widely spread interest in these paintings.¹⁴⁹

Shen's style itself has roots in a rather odd Chinese tradition as well, in that it grows out of a following that developed around the Italian Jesuit artist Giuseppe Castiglione (known in China as Lang Shining [郎世寧, 1688–1766]). Prior to his sojourn in Nagasaki, Shen had been studying painting in the capital, where Castiglione was

¹⁴⁷Kondo Hidemi [近藤秀実], "Shin Nanpin no sokuseki" [沈南蘋の足跡], *Kobijutsu* [古美術], no. 93 (1990): p. 12.

¹⁴⁸Kondo Hidemi, "Shen Nan-p'in's Japanese Roots?" *Ars Orientalis*, Vol. 19 (1989): p. 82.

¹⁴⁹Tsuruta Takeyoshi [鶴田武良], "Ka Gentei to Ryōki: Shen Nan-pin no shūhen - Raihaku gajin kenkyū 5" [何元鼎と梁基：沈南蘋の周邊—来舶畫人研究五], *Kokka*, no. 1069 (1983): pp. 39–40.

employed in the imperial atelier. Some scholars believe that Shen's mixture of densely painted animals and contrasting landscape forms [Figure 77] grows out of his exposure to the Italian artist whose works show some similarity to this type of painting [Figure 78].¹⁵⁰ In contrast to this view, it has also been proposed that Shen's style has roots squarely in the painting of the Zhejiang region, with ties back to Zhe school painters such as Lu Chi [呂紀, b. 1477] whose works would have been available for Shen to study as a young painter [Figure 79].¹⁵¹ The styles of Lu Chi and Castiglione both appear to have inspired Shen, and it is perhaps best to see his work as a site where these various interests have combined to produce an extremely popular new style. The paintings Shen produced and those that were made by both his Chinese and Japanese followers were collected by patrons in Kyoto and must have been available for Buson to study by 1759, when he painted the horse and groom.

Buson's horse and groom painting [Figure 26] shows some similarities to the Hanshan and Shide paintings made in the previous year [Figure 25]. The lines used to describe the windblown garments of the groom show the same crisp brushwork and application of colored washes to delineate folds in the cloth that appeared in the two poets' robes. While similar, there seems to be a greater degree of control exercised in Figure 26 as the belt of the figure's robe wraps around his waist, and his sword crosses his legs. In these passages the arrangement of forms and logical placement of folds seem to have been very closely studied. The face of the groom also shows a greater degree of naturalism than the poets' faces, yet the groom's face lacks the dramatic psychological character that the

¹⁵⁰Tsuruta, 1983, p. 39. See also Kanda Kiichirō [刈田喜一郎], "Nanpin henei" [南蘋片影], *Gasetsu*, no. 67 (1942): p. 498. Naruse Fujio [成瀬不二雄], "Shin sen hitsu: Shūkeigunbazu o megutte" [沈銓筆：秋溪郡馬図をめぐって], *Yamato Bunka*, no. 69 (1981): p. 6, and Cécile Beurdeley and Michel Beurdeley, *Giuseppe Castiglione: A Jesuit Painter at the Court of the Chinese Emperors*, (Rutland, Vt: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1971).

¹⁵¹Kondo, 1989, p. 80.

earlier paintings offered. The horse standing behind the groom is largely defined by subtle washes of color with a faint outline used to define the rear haunch and neck of the animal. The mane and hair of the tail show the wispy technique used to paint the hair of the poets, as does the thin beard of the groom. These features allow us to see the links between the images made in 1758 and 1759, but the addition of landscape to the later image helps to separate it from the earlier works.

The landscape in this image shows a great deal of detail. The surface of the ground is covered with thin blades of grasses that bend to the wind blowing from the left side of the image. Rising out of this left side to tower over the horse and groom is a tree composed of multicolored strokes and dots, which give the trunk a distinctly solid form. Twining around this trunk is a withered vine painted with rich black strokes that are restated in blowing branches and foliage at the top of the image. The whole of the image appears to be quite uniform in terms of the treatment of the figure, horse, and tree, making it somewhat different from the Shen style in its most dramatic form. When this style is closely followed, the difference between the techniques used in the animal forms and the landscape forms causes a distinct break in the unity of the pictorial surface that, while visually interesting, is somewhat disturbing. Buson seems to have avoided this visual discord in his early experiments with this style, but his later screens, showing horses in a landscape following the Shen tradition, show him adopting this approach with all of its awkwardness intact [Figure 40].

In 1760 Buson continued his investigation of the Shen style in a work from the spring that may be one of the first paintings done at the Sankaken studio [Figure 80]. This work presents a scene very similar to that seen in the previous example of the horse and groom, but the groom is now turned away from the viewer and an attendant has been added in the lower left corner. The white horse is shown standing in front of the groom with its

head turned to the right so that its muzzle touches the groom's hand. The groom's feet are visible beneath the horse's midriff. These feet are unlike those presented in Buson's other paintings in that they appear tiny and are covered by enormous dark boots into which the groom's pants are stuffed. They appear to be an exaggerated form of the boots that appear in the earlier horse and groom painting, but their effect in this image is to provide a comic touch to the work. In both of these horse and groom paintings, the grooms are standing with their feet rather close together, giving them a top-heavy appearance that suggests their powerful, yet elegant stature.

The attendant at the left side of the work from 1760 is drawn using a figure style that harkens back to the figures painted in Tangō, as his garments lack much of the internal shading that characterized the works from the previous two years. He is painted with a sharp outline, and modulated lines define the folds of his white pants and blue shirt. He holds a knobby red staff that leans toward the left of the image, which creates a visual separation between the horse and groom and this figure. He looks toward the horse and groom with his mouth open, as though he is speaking or laughing at the horse as it nuzzles the groom's chest. The attendant's hair and that of the horse's mane and tail are painted with fine strokes that bear some resemblance to the wispy strokes used in the hair of the figures in the earlier paintings, but these are much more precisely painted. Buson seems to be moving away from the expressive style of the Hanshan and Shide images in this work and toward a more refined and careful manner of painting. The tree at the left of this work rises with the same encircling vine seen in the earlier horse and groom painting and displays the same green foliage and colored fruits that hang above the figures and the horse. The primary difference in this image is the lack of the strong wind blowing from the left side of the image. Where the foliage and branches in the earlier work bent to the right with this breeze, they now hang calmly, and the action is dominated by the horse and his

humorous prodding of the groom.

The horses in both of these images, though different in color, present a similar structure. Their bodies are defined by a thin black line, and their structures are defined by washes that reveal the muscles and bones of their strong frames. In both cases they are drawn with their hind legs splayed below the knee, giving their hind quarters a distinct hourglass shape that seems to have become a standard form for the many horses Buson created in this period. There are at least nine images of horses that Buson made between 1759 and 1763, suggesting that this particular theme resonated with him or with a group of his patrons at the time. He would return to the horse theme later in his career, but his later works focused more often on riders traveling through the landscape or tending their horses in rustic stables. Rarely after this period did he focus on the horse, and only during this time did he invest so much of his attention in painting their physical structure. There may be a relationship between the horses as a theme and Buson's appropriation of the Shen style. Shen painted many horses, and in copying his style, Buson seems to have consistently turned to the theme as well.

In the autumn of 1760 Buson seems to have returned to painting works inspired through his studies of Chinese painting manuals, as he created works dealing once again with mountainous landscapes and rustic dwellings. One of these works, Figure 29, deserves close study, as it presents a form that the artist would use on several occasions later in his career. It shows several figures in the landscape interacting in a variety of ways. On a path in the foreground we see a scholar and his attendant walking uphill to the right. These figures seem to be passing by this area on their way elsewhere, as they show little connection to the valley that opens up behind them. In the valley is a wide river with a boatman poling his craft near the base of a building built out over the edge of the water. Inside this building several figures are looking out toward the boat, as if conversing with

the boat man as he approaches. This middle ground area is bordered by a grove of bamboo, above which more houses can be seen reaching deeper into the valley. In one of these dwellings a single figure in dark clothes sits facing away from the viewer, gazing toward a bank of mist that shrouds the base of a large waterfall that cleaves the center of the mountains to the head of the valley. Above this first waterfall, smaller falls and further mists shroud more distant valleys, ending in a high mountain that reaches up to almost fill the upper portion of the work. At the right and the left sides of the work, mountains rise out of the field of view, yet they guide the eye back down to the activity in the valley below. This work presents a complex layering of mountains, clouds, and trees all forming a large “V”-shape that directs the viewer’s attention to the figures and their activity at the center. In this composition Buson appears to be gaining an understanding of how landscapes can be constructed in order to fill the pictorial space and still guide the viewer to the primary subject of the painting.

Portions of this work show Buson’s continued reliance on the Chinese painting manuals. In the technique used to depict the towering rocky hills, there are repeated linear strokes defining the contours of the land, with many small dots added to create textures on the rocky surface. This technique is taken directly from the imagery of the manuals and can be seen in many of Buson’s later compositions [Figure 81]. The trees at the right side of the foreground also find their precedent in these sources and bear some similarity to those he used in the backgrounds for the horses and grooms. Further in the distance are examples of the black strokes he used to define the trunks of bamboos, and a cloud of green wash provides foliage for these trees. In painting the high mountains he has returned to the linear strokes seen in the foreground, but now they are finer, and the dots that mark their surfaces are placed more carefully to suggest distant trees and other vegetation on the mountain surfaces. At the upper right and left there are flat colored mountain forms that appear to be

far in the distance. These forms reappear throughout Buson's career in his landscape works and seem to have their roots in the styles he developed while traveling. Although this work is still largely appropriated, some of its distant mountain forms and its overall composition would become central to Buson's mature style. A decade remained before Buson would consistently apply this approach to his paintings, but the genesis of the artist's hybrid style may lie in these landscapes.

In the winter of 1760 Buson returned to painting horses, creating at least two more hanging scrolls of this theme [Figures 30 and 31]. These two paintings show Buson experimenting with the theme of horses in two different styles. One work [Figure 30] is derived from the Shen style that he used in the paintings of horses and grooms, but here the grooms are absent, and only the horses remain. Slightly to the right of the center of the work, the horses, one light brown and one dark brown, entwine their necks as if grooming each other. This position of the horses became a stock image for Buson, as he repeated it in at least three other works from this period. The horse closest to the viewer is seen from the back, with its head reaching over the neck of the horse at the rear. The rear horse turns its head so that it wraps over the neck of the other horse and directly faces the viewer. It appears as though the horse seen head-on is looking out of the image with both eyes visible, giving it a distinctly comic quality. Even the angle of the end of its muzzle as it curves to form the lip seems to form a smile that is hard to read as anything but a delicate joke. Far from seeing this position of the horses as awkward, Buson seems to have embraced the image of the horse seen head-on and repeated it many times in his later works. A comparison to a horse painting by Shen serves to highlight this humorous turn in Buson's composition [Figure 82].

The horses in Figure 30 are again painted in the style derived from Shen Nanpin, but the surrounding landscape shows a distinct difference from the earlier horse and groom

paintings. The grasses in the foreground are now painted with gently hooked strokes that, while looking less like the green grasses that surrounded the feet of the grooms, give a sense of movement in their softly bending forms. Around the horses' feet the grasses are supplemented by brown dots that provide color and indicate that this is an autumnal scene. The land rises behind the horses toward the left and is dominated by three large trees. The nearest tree stands at the left with its trunk beginning at the height of the two horses' heads. It rises quite straight up the left side of the image until it branches near the top of the image and fades behind wisps of brownish clouds that shroud the very top of the image. This tree and the two others behind it are painted without outlines, being defined instead by dots of varying tones that form a bristly bark with distinct knots marking the internal portions of the trunks. Directly above the horses a second tree emerges from the rising land and bends to the right, crossing a tree that stands behind it, which bends to the left. The crossing of these trees mirrors the crossed necks of the horses below as the branches and foliage fade into the clouds. Behind these trees the land rises sharply to the right, and a series of pointed blue mountains fills the distance. The rising land and the mountains are created using only wash with no outline. Marking the horizon of the land in the foreground and middle-ground are more of the softly curving grasses, and further white clouds hide the bases of the distant peaks.

In addition to these land forms, a series of rocks that emerge from the base of the image, which balance the two horses. While the horses stand slightly to the right of the center of the painting, the rocks emerge slightly to the left, giving the whole composition a zigzag structure. This structure is further expressed by the foreground horizon moving up to the left and the middle-ground horizon moving up to the right. Even within the rocks the lines that define their structure and the washes of varying tones of brown and black seem to repeat this side-to-side motion, giving the work an internal rhythm. Running counter to this

rhythm is a branch of the tree at the left, which reaches down into the image and guides the viewer's eye back to the horses below.

In this work Buson seems to have developed a distinct compositional approach to which he would return many times as his paintings evolved. Although this work seems to have been a compositional success in many ways, a work from the same period that also presents horses in a grassy field appears as a sharp contrast, and appears to have been comparatively much less successful [Figure 31]. This work presents the two horses galloping toward the left side of the image through a grass-covered field in front of three trees. As in the previous work, it presents the horses in a richly modeled landscape created through the application of washes, and the grasses are made with curving blades, but the overall composition has a very flat horizontal flow. The quickly moving horses now are shown in strict profile, and the rocks that dot the landscape appear in clusters that march up the painting surface. The trees grow from a flat surface behind the horses and bend in unison as they rise toward the top of the image. A single tree rises in the mist in the distance at the right and fades into the clouds like those in the other image, but the effect seems separated from the horses in such a way as to distract the viewer. The rocks and rising trees, here painted with strong outlines, and the horses each seem to fight for attention, with none of the forms coming to dominate the image. In images like this Buson experimented with new ways of depicting the subject of horses. The presence of horses as a major theme at this time and the repeated use of the Shen style suggest Buson was investing a great deal of energy in this pursuit. While the beginnings of Buson's mature style appear in some of these images, the isolation of the horse theme and its connection to the Shen style suggests he was not yet fully able to separate the content from the style in his images. His move out of this appropriative phase to the next stage of his career was marked by his ability to isolate these components and control their use with complete freedom.

Landscape Screens

Late in 1760 Buson painted two large landscape screens that show the diversity of his pursuits at this time. One of the screens [Figure 34] claims to be created in the style of Wang Meng.¹⁵² This painting presents a rather unusually bold form of brushwork that relies heavily on the use of a wide brush with gray, blue, and pink washes to create a steep mountain landscape that falls to a cluster of dwellings and a wide river with boats sailing at the right. The steepest land forms at the left are created with fine linear strokes that define the outline and internal folds of the hills, with a few marks indicating trees growing at the top of the highest peak. These lines are filled with light gray washes applied loosely in wide overlapping strokes that roughly follow the contours of the hills. Rising behind the hills are mountains created solely with the gray washes. Above these, blue wash peaks form a background. As the steep hills descend in the third panel from the left side of the screen, trees defined loosely with black lines emerge in the foreground. The foliage of these trees is varied, but most seem to be willows painted with a wide brush and the same gray wash that was used for the hills. Just to the left of the trees, a white plateau bordered by a pink slope emerges from the low hills. To the right of the trees a woven fence curves up into the scene, surrounding two windowed buildings. The right-hand building has two tiny figures seated inside facing each other, apparently in conversation.

Moving to the right the landscape opens up in the distance as the middle-ground hills descend to the water and a cluster of empty dwellings emerges in the lower foreground. Out of the distance a river emerges and reaches across to the right edge of the screen, where it broadens to fill the foreground space. In the two panels at the right, three boats are moored to the shore, and two more float on the river's waters. Small figures ride in these boats as they move into the river from the right. On the far shore of the river, hills

¹⁵²This large-scale, broadly brushed style is not commonly associated with Wang Meng, whose works appear to emphasize fine brush work and complex textures that create fanciful landscape settings.

rise again from gray washes to emerge as low forms with white tops. Black tree trunks with gray wash foliage line the horizon. Faintly visible, far beyond these hills, are tiny blue peaks that follow the rise in the middle-ground hills. A good deal of empty space is left in the upper portions of these last few panels, where an inscription and signature float above the boatmen.

At first glance this work appears quite simple in its composition and structure, but it is in fact quite arresting. Its large size and bold applications of wash and faint color create an impression of atmosphere and a softly sullen character that is unprecedented in Buson's earlier works. The moisture communicated by the heavy strokes of gray wash seems to fill the scene. While these strokes of ink give the scene its character, they also link the image to the Chinese artist Wang Meng. It is in the rather freely interpreted, open hemp-fiber strokes that define the form of the hills at the left that a shadow of Wang Meng's work may be apparent.¹⁵³ Perhaps Buson understood these strokes and Wang Meng's style in general from printed books, but he expanded the form of the Chinese artist's painting to fill this enormous space and took a great deal of liberty with the style. It appears that Buson understood the Chinese painters he was taking as models, and he was willing to alter their forms of expression while still claiming to be following them. It is clear from the inscription that the link to Wang Meng was important in the creation of this work. For this reason, the style, while perhaps far from the Chinese artist's work, is a prime example of Buson's appropriation.

In the other work from this pair of screens [Figure 33], we see Buson working in claiming a connection to the style of Mi Fu as he creates his own landscape. The landscape in this image is structured around a peninsula of land that drops down to the foreground at the center of the image. To the right and the left, water reaches back into the scene

¹⁵³Sasaki and Sasaki, *Buson*, 2001, p. 58.

stretching far off to tiny distant peaks at the left side. Where the land reaches the water, long, dense, horizontal strokes of ink move from side to side, giving the impression of a low marshy coast. On these low banks, trees with outlined trunks and wet black strokes defining their foliage rise in clusters that diminish in size and intensity as the coast recedes into the distance. Several structures emerge from these trees in the two central panels at the right. Moving into the distance at the left, a tiny figure walks away from the viewer on a small bridge, as he crosses one of several tiny inlets from the large body of water in the foreground. Further along the coast, a pair of boats rests near the right edge of the screen. Rising behind the buildings to fill much of the central portion of the screen are smoothly sloping hills with narrow peaks that are covered in Mi dots of various tones of ink, ranging from pale gray to rich black. Weaving in and among these hills are areas of bare paper that form wisps of clouds wrapping around the tall landscape forms. In creating this work, Buson remained closer to the style associated with Mi Fu than he did to the style of Wang Meng, but the strong treatment of the coastline and the forms of the houses remain his own creation. He seems to have taken the two Chinese artists' styles as a starting point, and then freely explored his own interests and ideas to create these grand landscapes.

Returning to Poets and Birds

In the spring of 1761, Buson returned to painting scrolls that reveal a duality in their approach to the creation of subjects. The styles appear alternately loose and refined, drawing the viewer's attention to a variety of visual effects. The loose style appears in an image of a magpie sitting on a large rock beneath the drooping branches of a withered tree [Figure 35]. This work, dated spring of 1761, shows a sharp contrast between the black ink used in defining the forms and the varied washes, which provide structure for the rock. The strokes that form the outline of the rock emerging from the lower right corner and

projecting up toward the left are strongly modulated and seem to be comprised of many short curving segments. The effect is to give the rock a roiling quality as it rises like a plume of smoke. Complementing this appearance are the internal texturing strokes that similarly curve as they define the folds and crevices in the stone. Unlike some of the earlier rocks that appeared in Buson's landscapes, this stone's structure is less well-defined, leaving areas that appear ambiguously flat. Around the outer edge of the stone, many dark horizontal black strokes appear to project out from the rock's surface. These accents are drawn from illustrations in the Chinese painting manuals, but here they are exaggerated to the extent that they disrupt the visual illusion of the rock and leave its structure ambiguous. The ambiguity of the rock's structure is complemented by the erratic strokes of black used in the withered branch that emerges at the upper left side of the image and wraps around to the right side, with its tips reaching down to cross in front of the rock. The strokes that form the primary branch are longer wisps applied with a wide brush. Unlike the branches executed in the Shen Nanpin-style he had used in earlier images, this branch seems to lie flat on the surface of the image, creating a two-dimensional play of linear forms that frame the bird sitting to the left of the center of the painting. The bird is the most precisely painted element in the work as it stands in profile against the blank area left between the rock and branches. Like the curving strokes that create the internal structure of the rock, the tips of the branches curve and reach out into space all around the bird. This creates a kind of visual noise that fills the space, leaving the bird to occupy the only empty portion of the image. With its mouth open and feathers standing erect along its nasal ridge, the bird appears to be calling, suggesting a noise that parallels the visual noise created by the fine branches and crevices in the rock. In essence, Buson seems to be using the loose painting technique in the landscape to suggest the sound of this bird as it cries alone in its natural environment.

In contrast to the loose style used in the magpie image, Buson explores the potential

of the finer style used in the faces of Hanshan and Shide [Figure 25] in his paintings of Chinese poets created later in 1761 [Figure 37]. This pair of scrolls, depicting Tao Yuanming leaning on a pine and Cong Songfeng seated on a rock, displays a more precise presentation of the figures and their surroundings. The image of Tao Yuanming at the right shows the poet standing on a rising hill with a large pine emerging from behind his body and stretching up to the left. The land is defined by small black dots of vegetation and dry washes applied so that the texture of tatami can be seen rippling across the surface. In the lower right corner, a swirling cloud form hides the lower reaches of the scene, giving the entire image a dreamlike quality. The robes of the poet are drawn with a rich black outline and dry black strokes falling from the waist to suggest folds in the cloth. Above this, the poet's hands are covered by his long sleeves, which come together at his middle. The lines of the sleeves rise to his shoulders and lean to the right, suggesting that his weight is thrust back onto the pine as he looks up into the sky. His head is covered by a black cloth that frames his face. The face itself is carefully defined to show his dreamy gaze, rough beard and moustache, and rounded nose. Emerging from the center of his sleeve at the left is the pine, with a pattern of oval strokes to describe the bark. As the tree reaches into the upper portion of the image, it is surrounded by sharp strokes gathered in clusters to form needles that are then colored by areas of wash. A branch of the pine reenters the image at the center of the upper portion of the work and descends toward the back of the poet's head. In between this descending branch and the rising trunk, a few faint cloud forms are created with wash, enhancing the dreamy nature of this image.

The scroll at the left repeats much of this painting's style, but it is even more strongly exaggerated. The foreground is dominated by the trunk of a large pine that rises in front of a series of rising rocks. The rocks are bordered by curving wet strokes that form grasses growing in the crevices. Seated at the top of these rocks and leaning on the pine is

the young poet with his arm wrapped over the pine's trunk. His legs are covered in white pants that show zigzag lines at their hem, indicating the rumpled cloth as it strikes the ground. His shirt is bordered by a thin wavering line and filled with thin wash to give it color and to contrast with his face. The face of this figure is less precisely drawn, but it suggests that the poet is happily smiling. His tiny eyes and round nose give him a jovial character that is complemented by his relaxed posture. Behind the poet's right arm, the pine continues to rise into the upper half of the image. The trunk is again marked with oval bark and a strong outline that bends and twists as it rises. Emerging from the sides of the trunk are tufts of needles that seem to sprout wherever the trunk bends. To the right side of the poet, another pine tree rises slightly and curves out of the scene. It, too, is covered with the bristling needle clusters, and the trunk shows some washes that give it dimension. Above the point where this second pine grows out of the scene, a white area enters to form a cloud that rises toward the left. This cloud is bordered by washes that fill the sky and darken as they approach the cloud's edges. The white cloud covers one half of the divided trunk of the tree on which the poet leans, and it seems to recede behind the other half of the tree's trunk. This allows for a complex mixture of atmosphere and trees in the upper portion of the image and seems to provide a focus for the gaze of Tao Yuanming, looking in from the other scroll. Spatially, the left scroll is more complex, yet the poet in the lower portion appears less important than the trees and clouds that dominate the top. Buson seems to be working in these images with the space of both scrolls as a single unified space. Visual connections exist between the two scrolls in their similar styles, and spatial links show the figures interacting across the separation between the two works. This interaction across the divide between works becomes a characteristic of several of Buson's later pairs of images and seems to show his becoming more fully aware of how compositional factors can be used to provide a narrative structure for his paintings.

Works for the Kyoto “Screen Group”

While Buson’s continued exploration of compositional and stylistic techniques is apparent in these works, it stagnates somewhat in the years that follow, as he seems to have directed his attention toward painting screens for his patrons. He begins to paint for the “screen group” in 1763, and large landscape screens come to dominate his dated output for several years.¹⁵⁴ A screen dated summer of 1763 shows him retreating from the loose painting style of the magpie and the more psychologically aware presentation of the poet paintings to create precise landscapes with rich color and fine details [Figure 39]. The most striking characteristic of this pair of screens is their blue-green hue and dramatic presentation of high mountains and wide expanses of water. The right screen begins with a steep cliff at the right side above a watery inlet with a large rocky island. The rocks in this passage are painted with sharp vertical lines and dots surrounded by curving outlines that communicate a sense of the drama that will characterize the rest of the scene. Emerging from the rocks are trees with short trunks and clusters of foliage painted in a dark green. The foliage of these trees is created with repetitive forms of drooping leaves that are grouped into clusters. Fainter patches of this foliage seem to recede into the clefts in the rocky surfaces, giving the scene a great deal of depth in even the smallest passages of pictorial space.

As the landscape rises to the left of the first cliff, it fades to a bluish gray created with washes that reveal a waterfall plunging in the distance from a cleft in the high mountains that form the horizon. The top sides of the areas of wash are marked with flowing linear strokes and dots that suggest distant trees growing high on these peaks. To the right of the highest peak in this passage, a faint gray and blue mixture of washes and dots indicates mist-shrouded trees growing behind the foreground cliff as they disappear

¹⁵⁴See the discussion of Buson’s various patronage groups in the previous chapter.

from view out the right side of the painting. To the left side of the first set of peaks, a large overhanging rock juts into the center of the second panel of the screen. This rock is separated from the peak in the distance by a slash of light-colored land that descends toward the left and fades into a cloud form that fills the space beneath the overhanging rock. In this clouded space many tiny birds are seen flying in all directions. Below the overhanging rock a small hut is visible in the middle-ground beyond a grassy knoll that borders the water at the right side of the painting and descends to meet rocks that separate this water from the left side of the screen. Behind these foreground rocks rise many trees with varied foliage and the roof of a second hut that crosses the divide between the second and third panels of the screen.

In the third panel, we see a large waterfront pavilion on stilts with figures seated in three of its rooms. The largest window of this pavilion reveals a solitary figure leaning on the railing, seemingly lost in thought as he gazes out of the building. The drawing of the architecture in this passage is very precise, with contrasts of thatch, wood, and woven roofs clearly defined. Straight-ruled architectural features define the walls and interior furnishings. Below the building, dark rocks mark the edge of another body of water, while above the structure, a massive cliff rises to the center of the panel. This cliff angles back into the fourth panel of the screen to define the receding coastline as it fades into the misty distance. Surrounding this cliff are sharp black outlines and more dots to suggest foliage. Moving further along the scene to the left, a stream emerges and flows down to the water, where more small rocks and another cluster of green trees seems to bend over the water. Above these trees a passage of mist cuts through the mountains, revealing a new series of distant peaks rising high into the fourth and fifth panels. This series of high peaks is defined by wash alone, heightening the sense of this landscape reaching into the far distance. The shoreline rises in the last two panels and becomes more faint as it reveals

bamboos or other low-growing foliage faintly depicted with vertical strokes of gray ink. A last passage of clearly defined rocky peaks appears in the fifth panel, as the distant mountains once again emerge from the mist, showing dark border lines and dots filled with blue washes. The last panel shows faint distant peaks and marshy lowlands fading into mist that totally obscures the landscape at the left edge of the work.

Complementing the faint distance in the last panel of the right-hand screen is a faint distant shore appearing in the right-hand panel of the left-hand screen. This passage presents a slash of shoreline painted in faint colors with willows hanging along the water's edge. Below this, a new foreground cluster of rocks and trees emerges as the right bank of a river that reaches down to the bottom of the second panel of the screen. The water is tinted blue, and a single boatman can be seen poling his craft behind the rocks defining the left shore of the river. The rocks on this shore build and grow to become the foreground space of the third and fourth panels of this screen, with four different types of trees with dense foliage sprouting from the tops of the rocks. Above these trees a passage of mist separates the trees from a background cliff that once again rises to fill the center of the screen. The billowing top of the cliff and a large rocky hill to the left are defined with ropy strokes of black and gray, with many small black dots clustered on the surface. Emerging at the left side of the second hill in the middle-ground of the painting is a solitary pavilion on a mountain path that overlooks a deep valley between the fourth and fifth panels of the screen. The valley is filled with mist as it reaches into the distance. At the mouth of the valley, a thatched building emerges from the right side of the cliff forming the other side of the valley. In the open window of this building a solitary figure looks out of the scene toward the viewer. Below the building a new patch of coastline begins and rises up to the left edge of the screen. The cliff to the left of the building rises sharply with its top side covered by trees with several different types and colors of foliage. Beyond these trees the

landscape fades into misty distance, with high wash-defined peaks in the upper reaches of the screen and a low bridge cutting across a stream in the last panels at the left. A single figure can be seen crossing the bridge and moving back in toward the houses at the right. Beyond this bridge a passage of mist hides the river's upper reaches. Above this mist a final passage of hills and trees faintly emerges to rise to the top of the last panel.

This complex pair of landscape screens displays a style and compositional structure that Buson would build on during the following years. In a work from the winter of 1764 [Figure 44], we can see a very similar approach to the landscape. This landscape presents a similar fading into the distance at the right and left sides of the scenes with layered landscapes rising in the central portions of the scenes. In this composition the two screens do not recede where they meet at the center, but instead create a single large scene of landscape that presents its foreground space across the divide between the two screens. Rather than rising sharply at the right and left sides as the landscape recedes into the distance, the effect of recession is created through a fading, misty haze at the outer edges of the pair of screens.

Looking at the right side of the right screen, it is apparent that this screen presents a more complex array of landscape forms. Water fills the lower portion of the first panel, with faint brownish grasses arranged along the marshy banks of a river that fades into the distance. A thatched pavilion rests among leafless trees, beneath which a path descends to the left. Rising above this passage are high mountains in the distance, which are defined by a faint outline and left almost colorless as they contrast with the brown washes filling the sky. The color in this passage suggests a winter or late autumn scene. In the next panel the path emerges as a bridge across a stream with a mounted rider dressed in white proceeding to the left. More of the brown color filters across the scene beyond the rider and around the base of the bridge. In the distance a series of peaks emerges, with a stronger outline in

black and texturing strokes applied to give a sense of clearing. In these clearing mountains, the upper reaches of the river turn to the left to reach behind mountains that rise sharply in the fourth panel. In the foreground, the path arrives at a series of houses with fences and multiple roofs. In front of these houses, a path leads to an open gate, and two precisely painted trees rise with a complex of layered branches.

A scholar and attendant walk along this path to the right as they approach the houses. Above the houses, the shoreline moves horizontally and is defined by an area of white from which rises a hill painted with texture strokes and dots. This embankment rises in the next panel to become a background mountain. In front of this mountain, the foreground landscape rises to reveal another cluster of houses, and flat, rising plateau-like land forms pile up as the path crosses them near the bottom of the scene. Behind the house another hill rises, while the foreground plateaus build up and support a cluster of trees with some foliage of brown and green left on the carefully painted branches. As the hills rise in the background, they reveal another house's roof emerging from the trees and yet another path cutting like a white zigzag across the top of the hill above this roof. This new path descends to the left behind more trees and emerges as a high bridge above a deep gully with a waterfall pouring down from the distant peaks. A figure crosses this bridge and moves toward the houses at the right. At this point the land rises sharply to meet the land in the next screen, which plunges sharply down to another set of buildings. These are open-fronted buildings with a single figure dressed in orange seated at a table looking out of the open front of the structure. Above these buildings, trees with green foliage pile up, and hills emerge to reveal a high, flat area reaching around the side of the steep passage that began this screen. A stream emerges at the base of this scene, where it is surrounded by low rocky hills that gradually build as they move toward the left. These foreground hills become large projecting land forms and support a number of green trees that enshroud a

path descending toward the left. Another set of buildings emerges from behind these trees at the center of the third panel of the screen, where two tiny figures can be seen sitting inside a large open window. Above these buildings, a further set of high, distant peaks emerge with areas of dark wash applied to define their edges. Here the hills appear darker than the sky, which continues to be painted with the brown washes seen in the sky of the right screen. To the left of this panel, the foreground hills descend to a shoreline with green trees covering their surfaces.

A valley emerges from the middle-ground to fill the lower portion of the scene, and a wide passage of water fills the lower portion of the last two panels. A small boat with four passengers appears on this water in the fifth panel and seems to be moving toward the land at the right. On the far bank of this water, hills defined by long horizontal curving strokes of ink and colored washes support willow trees that droop along the banks. Above the willows a path rises into the hills. An empty pavilion marks the progress of the path toward a pass in the distant peaks. A final passage of water emerges in the last panel between two willows that define its banks with a tiny sailboat visible in the distance. This boat is surrounded by mist that consumes the distant peaks as they rise out of the scene to the left.

The composition in this second set of screens is like the earlier set in that it involves a combination of mountains and water that are populated by small figures and marked by dwellings and paths, but this later screen shows an understanding of landscape composition that was still somewhat weak in the earlier work. The emergence of landscape forms in the foreground, a slow transition to the middle-ground, and the background mountains are carefully planned in this second work to create a seamless illusion of space within which the viewer is encouraged by the figures to wander and progress from one point to another. Parallel to this spatial movement is a progression of time suggested by the

white hills and dark sky indicating winter, through a passage of brown foliage indicating autumn, to the green foliage of summer, and finally to the green willows of spring. In this work Buson combines the temporal progression of the seasons with a visual progression of spaces to create a scene that shows a highly developed sense of compositional technique and thematic understanding. In comparing these works [Figures 39 and 44], Buson's formula for composition emerges. As he appropriated forms from Chinese paintings and other sources, he seems to have combined them in various ways to generate these progressively more complex and interesting works.

While the later work is extremely varied in its structure and subtle in its seasonal suggestion, it is extremely easy to comprehend. The earlier work is arresting in its color and drama, but the more complex, later work seems to be readable at a glance. This is a result of the later work being composed both on a macro scale and a micro scale. The overall movements of the landscape and the minute details of the figures and structures are given equal attention, so viewers are rewarded regardless of the degree to which they focus on the work. While it can be read quickly, it rewards repeated viewing with the discovery of more and more subtle details of the space that give it life and interest far beyond the earlier composition. It is in this combination of both large-scale and small-scale details within the landscape that Buson's growing mastery is most clearly evident.

Shen Nanpin-Style Horse Screens

While Buson's work for the screen group produced these landscapes, he also produced works during this time that allowed him to continue developing some of the other ideas he had investigated in hanging scrolls in earlier years. In addition to painting images of poets and tall narrow landscapes, he returned to painting horses in the landscape. A pair of screens from 1763 reveal him returning to the style of Shen Nanpin and expanding the

theme of the horses to fill this larger compositional space [Figure 40]. These two screens present two distinct compositions, linked by their common subject matter. Because the signature on each of these screens appears in the leftmost panels there is no indication that either screen was meant to be on the left or the right.¹⁵⁵ The decision to display and discuss the paintings as a pair with the waterfall on the right side stems in large part from the bracketing effect created by the waterfall on the right edge of the right screen and the large tree on the left side of the left screen.

Viewing these screens as independent compositions separates them from some of Buson's other pairs of screens, which offer a much stronger sense of progression from one screen to the next. Unlike paintings which show the progress of travelers on a mountain path or the passage of boats on a waterway, which can be easily followed from one screen to the next, these two screens seem to have decidedly self-contained subjects. The collections of horses, five in the right screen and seven in the left, seem to be complete. Each screen presents the horses within a narrow spatial field. The horses do not peer across the divide between the screens, but instead look inward to interact within each of the screens. In essence, there are two herds of horses presented in these screens that are interacting in two distinct, though similar, environments.

There are two groups of horses within the right screen. Two are intertwined at the right side, and three interact at the left. The horses that are depicted closest to the edges of the screen turn toward the screen's center, giving the groups a sense of independent closure and the screen as a whole a central focus. The landscape forms and horses complement each other so that the scene remains balanced throughout. Visualizing the folds of the

¹⁵⁵Several of Buson's screen paintings show this irregularity in the placement of the signature and seals. The placement sometimes appears to be guided by the composition in that the signature and seals are often placed in open space. While the majority of screens show signatures at the outer left and right sides, pairs with signatures appearing at the same side of each screen or at the inner sides of the pair are by no means unique.

screen, which the illustration impairs, the unified nature of these groupings becomes even more pronounced. The outer edges of the rightmost and leftmost panels of the screen would have been angled out, toward the viewer, placing the right-hand pair of horses across the inward fold of the right two panels. The rushing stream falls over the outward projecting fold between the second and third panels, heightening the drama of the passage. The mare and foal near the tree in the fourth panel fill the interior space created by the inward fold of the third and fourth panels, allowing the mare to look in the general direction of the white horse that stands facing it on the other side of the final outward projecting passage between the fourth and fifth panels. The white horse at the left turns away from, but acts as a visual balance for, the signature line opposite it in the last panel. The overall composition, when considered in light of the folds of the screen, is complete and logically arrayed.

Similarly, the horses in the left screen divide into a closely arranged group of five animals and two separated individual horses. The rightmost and leftmost horses in the composition turn inward to unite the herd. In a fashion similar to that seen in the right screen, the five horses in the right-hand group are contained by the inward folding of the first two panels. The white horse at the left edge of this group looks out across the projecting fold of the second and third panels, toward the white and brown horses that face each other in the next inward fold. The white horse in the fourth panel turns back toward the group at the right, acting as a balancing element for the tree that dominates the last two panels. The signature line in the last panel is balanced by the tree in the fifth panel, and the mass of the tree as it passes across the left three panels balances the group of five horses at the opposite side of the screen. Like the right screen, this screen stands alone as a contained and complete composition, allowing little suggestion of the continuation of the scene across the separation between the screens.

Were these two screens meant to be displayed side-by-side as a pair, we might expect to see an openness in the way the horses are arrayed, allowing those in the right and left screens to form one large herd. Instead, there seem to be two rather distinct groupings of the animals. In addition, the trees in each of these screens may indicate that they were intended as independent compositions. In the right screen, the trees are drawn with heavy foliage that displays a slight greenish cast. The tree limbs and trunks appear softened by mist in the distance and are heavily obscured by leaves and mosses in the foreground. These trees seem to indicate the season is spring or summer, which is confirmed by the presence of the foal at the center of the work. In contrast, the trees in the left screen appear gnarled and rough. Their veil of green foliage seems to have been stripped away, replaced here by the reds and ochers of autumn. The mist that obscures the tree in the leftmost panel of this screen appears cold and rigid, unlike the softer mists that blur the distant tree at the left side of the right screen. The season appears to be distinctly different in each of the screens, perhaps allowing the owner to display them independently at different times of the year. Like the array of the seasons seen in the landscape screens from 1764, this work seems to insert a temporal element into its composition, although the unifying spatial composition is absent.

The application of pigment in these two screens reflects two distinct approaches to painting, one exemplified by the painting of the horses and the other by the landscape elements. This pairing of treatments, or manners of application, gives these screens their distinctive character and is the stylistic marker that ties the paintings to the other works Buson explored in his use of the Shen Nanpin style. The horses are painted in a rich manner, with layers of pigment of varying tonalities and colors suggesting the roundness and structure of the animals' bodies. The bodies of the two horses at the right side of the right screen are separated from the background washes and landscape elements by a

delicately modulated black line. This line differs from that which Buson used in some of his other paintings from this time, both in its thinness and in the way it functions as an indication of the rounded three-dimensional structure of the animals. As this line passes over the contours of the animals, it thickens where the animals' coats are darkened to imply recesses in their surface contours, and thins to the point of disappearing where the body is meant to protrude from the planar surface of the work. Within the confines of this boundary line, layers of brown, gray, and white washes display the contours of the animals' musculature. Where a fold in the animals' flesh is implied, the washes and pigments become darker and denser, and the borderline thickens to indicate a natural curve in space. While these effects imply the play of light across the surface of the animals' bodies, it is important to observe that this is not necessarily Buson's attempt to work in a *shasei* [写生], or naturalistic mode.¹⁵⁶

The white horse at the far left of the right screen presents a strong visual contrast, as the black outline stands out from its white coat. The effect of three-dimensional fullness seen in the other four horses is less pronounced in this particular case, yet a series of light brown washes show the rib cage of the animal. In addition, the stark white of the animal's tail contrasting with the body color helps to illuminate subtle color changes that display the contours of the flesh. Perhaps the difference in the manners of depicting the individual horses in this screen is an indication of Buson's interest in exploring a variety of ways of depicting these animals. The contrast between the manners used in the portrayal of the horses and that used in depicting the landscape is an element that identifies the style of these screens as coming from the Shen style. The sharp contrasts seen here form the strongest assertion of this style.

The three dark horses that cluster at the right side of the left screen are modeled

¹⁵⁶Sasaki, 1975, p. 39.

through layered ink washes in the same manner as those in the right screen, but the white horse in the second panel suffers the same apparent lack of substantiality seen in the light horse at the left side of the right screen. This white horse is complex in its posture, but it appears comparatively flat, as dark black lines define its structure, and its white coloring simply fills the internal spaces. In contrast to the awkwardness of this white horse, the white horse at the left side of this screen demonstrates how Buson was able to convey a solid form even within a range of extremely light colors. The startlingly white coat of the horse is composed of layers of gray and brown washes with a bright white used for the areas which protrude most from the picture plane. The horse's rib cage is visible, like that of the light horse in the right screen, but the contrast between the body and the dark outline is minimized by a gradual transition from stark white through a series of grays, which indicate the roundness of the form.

Each of the horses in these two screens presents a slight difference in color, and each stands in a distinct position with respect to the surrounding space. The effectiveness of each horse as a three-dimensional representation is dependent on the color choices, range of ink tonalities used, and finally on the relationship to the surrounding landscape elements. The brown horse at the center of the left screen is perhaps the best example of the effect the surrounding landscape can have on the ability of the horse to appear as a solid form. The view of the brown horse is cut off by a rise in the middle-ground landscape. The ground is separated from the body of the horse by a series of short curving ink strokes representing grasses that project upward from the ground line, but the ground itself is depicted with little, if any, variation in tonality. The effect is of a flat plane slicing the solid body of the horse, leaving no space within which to imagine the continuation of the horse behind the grassy land form. This section of the painting demonstrates one of the most striking features of Buson's use of the Shen style in this work, as it presents the juxtaposition of

two distinctly different systems of representation. The horse is modeled in a manner that relies in part on shading to indicate a solid form, but the ground plane is painted using washes, linear outlines, and tonal variations to define the borders of spaces. Where these two systems meet, the visual contrast suggests an apparent slicing of the horse's body. Complementing the awkwardness of this horse's appearance is the apparent smile on the horse's face, which gives this animal a comic appearance. The white horse to the right of this brown one is also marked by this sense of humor, as its mouth is open and seems almost to laugh at its compatriots. It is as though Buson has taken the interest in the psychology of some of his human figures in the years before painting for the "screen group" and applied it to the faces of some of these horses, providing them with humor and animated expressions.

The lines used to depict the rock forms in the lower part of the rightmost panel of the right screen are executed in a manner that is linked quite firmly to Buson's earlier studies of Chinese landscape depictions, as communicated by the painting manuals. The highly modulated lines draw their power and effectiveness from the fluctuating movements of the brush. The line that defines the rocks stands out from the surrounding colored washes of ink defining the edges or fractures in the surface. The area surrounding this defining line is filled with a mixture of ink washes, which give the rocks texture, and small ink dots, which imply vegetative growth. The washes surrounding the rocks differ dramatically from those that fill the interiors of the boundary line of each of the horses. By visually separating the rocks from the surrounding features, it becomes clear that they occupy space in a manner wholly different from that implied by the horses. The foreground set of rocks seems to either jut upward from the ground or to slant backward into the distance, depending on how we interpret the surrounding features. The rocks also seem to occupy a different space from that implied by the placement of the feet of the nearest horse.

Rather than appearing to rest beside the horse, the rocks seem to express their roughness and solidity, indicating their spatial presence through a variety of distinct brush strokes.

Where the rocks meet the young bamboo plants, growing between the uppermost boundary of the rocky outcropping and the leg of the brown horse in the right-hand panel of the right screen, a stylistic transition takes place. The bamboo is painted in an exacting manner where it obscures the horse's leg, with each leaf being finely drawn in ink and colored in with green pigment. As the bamboo moves near the rock, it becomes a tightly packed cluster of patterned ink strokes, with green wash to indicate the color of the leaves. This transition effectively moves us from the shaded body of the horse into the sharp ink strokes that form the rock. This type of transition that is missing in the left screen, where the brown horse's body appears cut off by the ground rising at the center of the work. Transitions in the landscape also take place where the two horses at the right of the right screen obscure the view of the rocks and waterfall. Where the lines of black ink and dots of vegetation that define the rocks come close to the boundary lines that define each horse, the ink tonality fades. The horses not only obscure the lines where they cover them with their bodies, but seem to be surrounded by a narrow aura of mist or a neutral passage of space. This effect appears in works from many schools of painting, and can be seen in Kanō Motonobu's paintings at Daitoku-ji [Figure 15]. In Buson's screen it takes on the added role of acting as a transitional device that moves the eye across the stylistic division between the horses and the landscape elements. This device, like that of the bamboo, helps to maintain the illusion of solidity created in the horses.

The waterfall is depicted in a manner that once more denies that this painting could be an attempt at "naturalism." It is composed of a series of gray and blue strokes and a spray of white pigment that rhythmically cascades down the face of the rocks and becomes a winding stream in the third panel. The water is then obscured by a foreground rock that

transforms it into a series of finger-like projections that seem to grasp the rock and project the stream out from the bottom of the scene. The finger-like passage of water is constructed exclusively of the ground color of ink wash and a smoothly flowing black outline. The water is separated from the ground by an ink wash that fades from near black where it meets the water, to the neutral ground color before it reaches the horses' hooves. The movement of the water in the third panel serves to create a sense of recession in the scene as its banks narrow, and move diagonally up the panel. This creation of space is aided by the reappearance of young bamboos, like those in the rightmost panel. The trees at the center of the screen appear to grow in this space created by the recession of the stream.

The trees are depicted with a highly modulated, almost jagged line of black ink and a series of washes that roughly define their structures. The trunks and limbs are shown primarily as flat silhouettes with very few places in which limbs obscure the structure of the main trunk. The leaves of the trees are formed by dots of colored pigment and areas of greenish wash. The tree at the center of the fourth panel is the site of another complex juxtaposition of the horses and the landscape. The horse that twists from behind the tree to obscure a portion of the trunk with its head appears cut by the trunk. Unlike the fading of the tree trunk just before it is obscured by the horse's head, the horse's body and its strong color collide with the line that forms the border of the tree. The interior of the tree trunk is primarily composed of the color of the background wash prevalent throughout the screen. The placement of this color on the trunk of the tree creates an ambiguous passage that appears to form a gap in the solid body of the horse. The breaking of the illusion established by the horse results in an awkward discontinuity. The tree, on the other hand, due in part to its loosely painted style, easily continues its illusion, even when it is obscured by the horse's head. In this small passage there are two distinct manners of painting and two different approaches to creating a visual illusion. The structure of the tree

is flexible and can be obscured by the horse without losing its integrity, but that of the horse is dependent on the continuity of the animal's depiction.

In addition to rocks and trees, depictions of grasses feature prominently in these two screens. These grasses are consistently shown as short hooked strokes of ink that project up from the ground surface and bend at their tops. They appear to denote variations in the ground surface and, as mentioned in the discussion of the brown horse in the left screen, serve as transition elements. The grasses are highly patterned in their appearance and show little variation, whether they appear in the foreground or, as in the last two panels of the right screen, in the distant background. The grasses play an essential role in the imagery of these two screens as they, like the horses, serve to unite the two screens and provide a continuity across the two separate scenes. Where the grasses fade and the ground surrounds the horses, the ground is mottled with horizontal dots that capture the colors of the grasses but simply move across the surface of the ground.

In the leftmost panels of the left screen, a pair of large trees displays Buson's virtuosity in creating this powerful natural form. The trunk is richly mottled with brown and gray strokes of ink that give texture and structure to these old trees as they rise into the sky. Twining around the trunk are several vines that end in clustered fruits marked by red and white spots as they hang in and among the many branches. The upper reaches of these trees fade into clouds like those seen in the landscape screens, but here the clouds appear as mere wisps, causing the color of the branches and their faded leaves to dissipate in the cold atmosphere of the scene.

With these trees Buson has completed the complex scenes presented in these two screens and has effectively made the forms of his earlier hanging scrolls in Shen-style monumental. This is yet another step in Buson's process of moving from appropriative work to fully realized new images. These works are more closely tied to Buson's earlier

Shen-style works than they are to Shen's works themselves. This is an example of how Buson began to use his own earlier paintings as models for his later works. Buson's choice to work in this style on such a grand scale appears only once, as his work for the "screen group" returned to landscapes and reached in new directions to capture other Chinese themes he had been exploring in his hanging scrolls.

Figures in the Landscape

In the winter of 1764, Buson created two pairs of screens [Figures 45 and 46] that allowed him to focus again on human personalities as he depicted figures walking along paths and riding in boats among willows. These screens, while differing slightly in their compositions, reveal virtually the same subject. Blowing willows and low-lying, marshy landscapes dominate both sets of screens. The green color of the willow leaves and softly bending green grasses appearing in patches throughout the scenes give both sets a subtle melancholic character, which is confirmed by the faces and postures of the large figures that populate these marshy areas. In the set of these screens in the Freer collection [Figure 46], Buson seems to have been exploring a new type of composition as he depicted the marshy willow banks and wandering Chinese figures. The right-hand screen of this set presents a long path rising from the left side of the screen in a gradual, winding manner to the upper right side of the screen. As this path winds its way across the panels, its two sides are surrounded by substantial willow trees, with their branches drifting toward the right. A pair of figures appears on the path at the center of the screen. The larger of these figures is dressed as a scholar in a long robe with dark trim and a dark cloth covering his head. As he walks up the path toward the right, he turns to look at his smaller associate, who carries a staff and a broad straw hat in his arms. The figures appear to converse while they continue to follow the path. To the right of these figures, a large cluster of earth and

three trees emerge at the far side of the path, creating a visual break between the two figures and a third, who is crossing a small bridge to the right of these trees. As the path moves toward this figure, it rises to reveal a lower bank and stream that flows out of the scene to the right side. The figure on the bridge turns away from the viewer and wears a straw hat that obscures his head. On his shoulder is a staff and bundle that mark him as a traveler working his way across this landscape, seemingly oblivious to the conversation taking place behind him on the path. The figure moves toward the far bank of the stream that rises quickly and becomes obscured by mist as it exits the screen to the right.

The left screen presents more of this marshy landscape that descends quickly at the right to a shallow stream. Across this stream, a boat with a passenger dressed in robes with dark trim similar to the traveler in the other scene, is being poled toward the left. This low lying boat is being poled into the wind by a figure dressed in a shorter, darker robe, whose face shows his struggle to move the vessel. At the center of the boat are a pair of large baskets suggestive of fishing weirs. The boat and its passengers move toward a willow-covered bank and an additional figure dressed like the boat driver, who clutches an umbrella as he looks to the right toward the approaching boat. This figure stands on a slight rise in the land, which is surrounded by water bordered by windblown grasses. The water flows off to the left deeper into the scene, where it is bordered by further rises in the land as it leaves the viewer's sight. Like the right screen, this scene presents a relatively low-lying landscape with very little sense of any distant land forms. These scenes form narrow slices of the landscape cutting across the foreground in front of a broad flat sky that fills the upper portion of the scenes. This compositional form gives the paintings a horizontal flow with only slight rises at the extreme right and left sides. Buson seems to have moved sharply away from the grand landscape format that he used in the earlier works for the "screen group" to capture this atmospheric scene populated by figures. In his

representations of these figures, Buson recaptured some of the psychological presence of the poet paintings made earlier. Like the screens of horses, these works seem to limit their vision to the primary subjects. They provide just enough landscape to give each figure a comfortable space within which to act, but in these works the figures interact only inside the painted space. This is a distinct shift from the poet-focused works, in which the figures stared out to engage the viewer.

In another example of work focused on individual personalities, Buson painted a pair of screens at the end of 1764 and beginning of 1765 that reveal his continued interest in the poetic subjects he knew from the Chinese classics [Figure 47]. In this pair of works, a narrow landscape stretches across each screen, and a variety of precisely drawn Chinese figures interact with each other and the viewer. In the right screen, a poet is resting on a large rock at the right, and a large flowering plum tree stretches across to fill the center of the scene from the left. Above the trunk of the plum, two Chinese beauties stand and coyly look through the plum branches toward the poet. As the poet thinks about this view, he looks out of the scene toward the viewer, as if to ask which of these beauties he should address, the trees or the women. In the upper-right corner of the work, a Chinese text explores the idea of sitting under plum blossoms and drinking wine. The text explains the content of the image, detailing the presence of the tree and the women. It appears that Buson chose this passage of text and then illustrated it carefully to reveal the component images present in the writing. The left screen follows this same pattern, as Buson inscribed a passage about seeing attendants sweeping fallen plum blossoms in the garden. Here we see a poet standing beneath a large old tree at the left looking across a smaller plum tree to meet the gaze of two workers with a broom and pan to clear away the fallen petals. With the textual passages written on each of these screens, Buson has revealed that he derived his inspiration from texts with which he had some familiarity. He seems to have taken these

texts as a resource, and then inserted figures that reveal his continued interest in personality and individuality expressed by the faces and gestures of his characters.

Buson continued this practice in the summer of 1765, when he painted hanging scrolls that similarly present figures interacting with each other and the viewer in a very direct fashion. In a work he entitled *Ankyō Kirin* [行宮倚林], this emphasis on the figure is clear, as three travelers rest by the trunk of a large tree growing in the foreground [Figure 50]. In this work the faces of the figures are clearly depicted as they look at one another or directly out at the viewer. The figure on the right side of the work is dressed in dark clothing with a broad hat laid on his knee and a sword hilt projecting out of his belt. These features identify him as the master in this scene and offer a striking similarity to the groom in the earlier image of a horse and groom from 1759 [Figure 26]. What separates the figures in these two paintings are their faces, as the later work reveals a softer and more personalized image of this figure, in contrast to the stoic presentation seen in the earlier example. Accompanying this figure are two porters with open shirts and large bundles that they have set down beneath the trees.

The porter in the foreground hunches and lifts his head to look at the other figures. This posture gives his head a flattened appearance, similar to that seen in the 1755 painting of Feng Gan and the tiger [Figure 23]. While this flattening of the head gives the figure a slightly awkward appearance as he looks up at the others, it is much less awkward than the position presented in the earlier image. The cheeks of this figure are marked with red patches that seem to reveal the strain he has been under as these figures have traveled. By using color in this manner, Buson has moved away from using strictly linear marks to show the character of the faces he is presenting. Like the faces of Hanshan and Shide in the poet images of the preceding several years, Buson has revealed an even stronger interest in presenting these figures' conditions and personalities. Seated behind the other two figures

and looking downward is a much older porter leaning on his carrying basket. This figure crosses his arms in front of his body, revealing the muscles and flesh of his bony frame. His head seems to sag between his shoulders, as if to show he has been carrying loads of this size for many years. His face is wrinkled and worn with age and labor, and he appears exhausted as he sits next to a second large tree reaching up the left side of the scroll. Behind this figure, a landscape form rises to the right, where it intersects a third tree that fills the upper right portion of the scene with its patterned leaves woven in and around the leaves of the tree upon which the leader of this group is leaning.

The trunks of these three trees are painted with many strokes of ink that seem to twist around the tree surfaces as they rise toward the leaves. The edges of the trunks are marked with dots, giving the impression of bark flaking from the aged wood as it endures the weather. Like the three different figures presented at the bottom, the three trees present three distinct types of leaf patterns, creating a visual balance for the figures. The simple nature of this composition and the limited amount of surrounding landscape allows us to focus on the figures. By focusing in this manner, the personalities of these people are brought forward, and their expressions become the primary subjects of the image. They relate to the viewer and communicate their experience of wandering in the landscape. It is as though Buson has taken his own earlier interest in travel and wandering as an itinerant lay-priest and made it into the subject of his investigation into the personalities of these figures. We might ask at this point whether these figures are Japanese people wandering in the world, like Buson himself, or Chinese figures taken from the classics that inspired the screen painting made earlier in the year. The dress of the groom in Figure 26 suggests a Chinese-inspired figure, but these people seem to be ambiguously presented, creating something of an autobiographical nature presented in the form of a fantasy.

A similar approach appears in a painting from 1766 that presents an old traveler on

horseback crossing a stream among willows [Figure 59]. Like the earlier image of travelers resting among trees, this work shows the main figure staring out of the image at the viewer with a subtle grin on his wrinkled face. To the right and the left of the figure, large willow trees rise and angle in both directions. Their trunks are painted with rich washes of varying shades of gray and orange. Their trunks rise and divide to end in wisps of green wash dotted with black curving strokes that form the fluttering leaves of the trees. Where the two trees spread apart, the mounted figure and his attendant emerge. They are both drawn with a modulated line that flows back and forth to describe their wrinkled gray robes and white undergarments. The old traveler has a white beard marked with thin black hairs that trail from his chin and moustache. His head leans slightly to the left, and his eyes focus squarely on the viewer. He holds a rein in his hand that curves down toward the attendant, with a bundle on a stick carried over his shoulder. The attendant seems oblivious to the viewer's presence as he looks to the left of the scene and tries to navigate the deepening water. In his outstretched left hand he holds a stick, which he may be using to judge the depth of the water ahead. Just above the attendant's head the eyes of the horse seem to look forward like the horses shown head-on in some of the paintings in the Shen Nanpin-style. This binocular view of the horse adds a degree of humor to this scene, which is strengthened by the grin on the face of the old traveler. The horse itself is brown, with slight variations in the darkness of the wash used to color the hair and suggest the body structure. Unlike the Shen-style horses of three years earlier, this horse seems somewhat awkward as its skinny legs reach down from its body to disappear into the swirling water. Both the old traveler and the attendant are painted with a pinkish-orange skin color, giving them a very hearty appearance. However, the addition of white body hair to the old man's chest, arms, and leg, and the accompanying black lines to indicate wrinkles, reveal that he is somewhat frail. Above the two figures, the landscape continues at the right side of the

painting as mounds of earth form the continuation of the river bank, from which sprouts another old willow. The branches and foliage of this willow stretch into the upper portion of the scene and obscure the view of the distance, where it would recede to the right. To the left side of the image, a wide open space fades away, leaving the viewer to wonder how wide this river might be. In this painting Buson captures something of the willow screens painted in 1764, but by focusing even more closely on the figures and their expressions, and connecting with the viewer through the gaze of the mounted traveler, he seems to make the experiences of travel and age the subjects of this particular painting.

In contrast to this closely studied presentation of figures traveling in the landscape, Buson also painted several tall landscape scrolls with high mountains and tiny travelers in this year, which continue his study of the landscape based on Chinese paintings and manuals [Figures 48, 51, 52, 53, and 54]. These scrolls are all dominated by tall mountain forms that rise up the center of the scenes to fill the space with complexly furrowed rocky forms. Near the base of each image a path emerges and small figures walk, are carried, or seem to gaze out at the grandeur of the natural scenes surrounding them. Waterfalls and streams flow down from the high peaks, and small dwellings or pavilions nestle in the folds of the monumental spaces. While executed in a manner that reveals Buson's continued interest in exploring Chinese landscape painting techniques, they show few new ideas entering the painter's repertoire. These landscape paintings seem to form a set of images that, like the screens for the patron group, reiterate similar subjects and styles repeatedly. Perhaps a patronage group emerged for these scrolls in 1765 that led Buson to paint this theme over and over to meet its demands. As a professional painter, the nurturing of new patronage circles would have been necessary for the artist to survive, but it is only in a few works made around this time that we see new ideas being tested and explored. This period is, therefore, primarily one of appropriation and reiteration in which Buson

became familiar with these styles and compositional structures. He would later return to these themes, but his mature approach to them would much more freely draw off many works simultaneously.

Images from Chinese Literary History

A new subject for Buson at this time was his image of the *Gathering in a Peach and Plum Grove*, painted in the winter of 1765 [Figure 57]. In this work Buson adopted a broader format for the hanging scroll and filled the scene with people engaged in a host of activities. The scene emerges at the base with a passage of water bordered at each side by rocks painted in strong black ink. The rocks reveal richly complex surfaces and a multitude of crevices from which many peach trees sprout. Crossing the water at the base is a horizontal wooden bridge, which turns toward the viewer as it reaches the left edge of the painting. A single figure crosses this bridge and leads us up toward a stone and wood balustrade that cuts across the stream parallel to the lower bridge. To the left of the balustrade, the stream disappears into a stone cave.¹⁵⁷ Beyond the balustrade, a clearing opens at the center of the work, where scholars can be seen sitting in chairs as many attendants wait on them. Peach trees grow on all sides of this clearing, and a large *taihu*-style rock emerges from the trees at the right. It is as though we are seeing a garden grove nestled in the mountains that is separate from the world outside. At the back of the grove a second balustrade cuts across the scene, and we look out toward a deep valley filled with clouds. Rising above the clearing and beyond the valley are high mountain peaks that reach to the top of the painting at the left and descend, leaving only a small patch of sky to either side of a high peak at the right. This composition is new for Buson, but it is nearly a copy

¹⁵⁷This element echoes the theme of the *Peach Blossom Spring* drawn from Chinese literary history. The scholars in this image would be the Taoist immortals living in a utopian realm of peach blossoms. Perhaps this stream and cave are indicative of the conflation of these themes in the hands of both Chinese and Japanese painters.

of a work by Li Shida that became famous among the *bunjin* in Japan [Figure 58].¹⁵⁸

Buson took from Li's work several new features that he would apply to his later paintings. In comparing the two artist's paintings, it is clear that there were some elements that Buson chose to alter, such as the form of the rising peaks to the right and left sides of the scroll. He may have been drawn to this work because it allowed him to explore the figure in Chinese scholar's dress in the complex landscape of the peach grove. Buson's copying of this image suggests he was quite actively studying images during this time, and it may suggest that other works from this period that appear to be novel compositions are in fact copies of now lost Chinese works.

A similar work is the pair of screens painted in 1766 depicting the *Orchid Pavilion Gathering and Meandering Stream* [Figure 61]. This work features excerpts from the *Orchid Pavilion* text on each of the twelve panels of the screens and a multitude of figures in Chinese dress seated among rocks, trees, and water. The right screen opens with a figure dressed in blue and two attendants in pink and white peeking over the top of two large trees growing at the right edge of the screen. They look across a series of rocks to three seated figures in robes of various shades of blue, red, and white. These figures sit on a rock at the edge of a meandering stream. Floating in the stream are cups of wine, which drift beneath the overhanging branches of green leafy trees. The red-robed figure looks directly out of the scene toward the viewer and appears to have a shocked expression on his face. His long pointed beard gives him the appearance of a wise scholar resting with his associates. In front of him, a white-robed figure sits with his back to the viewer and his face in profile facing toward his red-robed associate. To his left, a blue-robed figure turns his head away from the other two and looks across the stream to three other figures seated on the far bank. These figures are dressed in gray and white robes and appear to be

¹⁵⁸This direct imitation was noted by Paul Berry as he read an earlier draft of this text. He recalled several versions of this work by *bunjin* from the nineteenth century.

studying a text laid on the ground in front of the gray-robed man. He has his back to the viewer and faces a white-robed man, who looks downward toward the text. These figures sit on mats, made of grass in the case of the white-robed figure, and blue and red cloth in the case of his gray-robed associate. To the left of these two figures, another figure sits with his white robe open to his waist and a cup of wine in his hand. He looks away from the figures gazing at the text, and leans heavily on his left arm. His gaze is fixed on a small blue-robed attendant who is partially obscured by a tree at the left. The attendant is prodding the floating wine cups with a long stick. Bamboo and a pair of large trees fill the left side of this screen and guide the eye back into the center, where the figures sit.

The left screen begins with a small pink-robed attendant looking to the left toward a pair of figures and a white-robed attendant standing on the far bank of the meandering stream. An orange-robed figure in this group is about to write on the rock face of a small cliff that rises to his left, as a gray-and-blue-robed man looks on from his right side. Standing behind the orange-robed man, his white-robed attendant holds his massive ink-stone on his right shoulder. The stream then cuts back across the scene, and a cluster of six figures can be seen in the foreground seated near a red table with wine vessels. The rightmost of these figures again has his robes open and one sleeve pulled up to his shoulder as he leans toward the left. His head hanging between his shoulders makes him appear quite drunk with the freely flowing wine. To the left of this figure, a seated man in a faintly blue robe sits on a low stool and plays the Chinese version of the *shamisen*. Seated at the table is a green-and-gray-robed man who is grinding ink to begin writing on a piece of paper laid on the table. This figure wears a brown hood and looks across the table at the musician while patiently grinding his ink. To the rear of the table, a man hunches over as if to see the paper on which his associate will write, but he looks up to meet the viewer's gaze as if to ask what we think we are looking at in this scene. To the left of the ink grinder, an

attendant in a light blue robe leans over the table, and beyond him another figure in an orange robe leans on the far corner of the table. This figure appears to be looking back toward the musician, leading us to focus our view back into the scene. To the left of these figures, rocks and trees rise to form a boundary beyond which the meandering stream with one final wine cup emerges to flow out into our space. Buson ended this image with the offer of a cup of wine for us to enjoy as we join these poets and musicians in their idyllic pastime.

The style used to create these scenes is more precise and refined than that used in many of the landscape images Buson had been creating in the previous year. The trees appear clearly with rich healthy foliage, and the figures are defined by very thin precise lines that describe the flowing quality of their robes. The colors used are widely varied and repeated across the two screens to create accents and harmonies that make the scenes seem gentle and melodious. This is a utopia of poetry, like the land of the immortals painted in Buson's *Peach Blossom Spring* paintings. It is suffused with a pastel light that fades in the distance above the heads of the figures to become a humid haze. This haze obscures faintly washed peaks that border the left screen, while a thin fog fills the distance on the right. In the space between the peaks and rising tree tops, text excerpts were inserted to recall the stories that are depicted below. With this image and another painted in the spring of the same year that depicts the pleasures of drinking tea and wine [Figure 60], Buson revealed his skill as a figure painter who is able to take the ideas of individualized personality and insert them into images of the mythology surrounding classic Chinese poetry.

Within the scene of the *Orchid Pavilion Gathering*, Buson seems to have fully grasped the idea of contemporizing this ancient scene by having the figures look directly out of the image. With the first trio of figures at the right-hand edge of the right screen, we see one of the small attendants, whose face is partially obscured by a tree branch, notice the

viewer by peering with arched brows directly at us. Following this lead, figures in each of the groups look at us as if to include us in their game. This recognition of the viewer makes the scenes come to life and suffuses them with a personal quality that tends to deny the separation that scenes set in ancient times, or in this case in the mythical past of a foreign land, might tend to present. Buson seems to have realized that by connecting the viewer to the painted subjects, he could make these scenes contemporary and physically present in his own life. Perhaps this practice reveals to us Buson's own yearning to be like these classic poets as he wrote and associated with his own group of poets in Kyoto. We may be seeing in the gazes of these Chinese figures a vision of what Buson wished to create among his fellow writers as he worked to hone his skills as both a painter and poet.

Paintings from Sanuki

In the paintings made during Buson's trip to Sanuki late in 1766, he can be seen to have explored further the idea of presenting the direct gaze of figures his images. His triptychs of Jurō flanked by deer and cranes display this feature, and even the animals stare out of these scenes [Figures 64 and 65]. In Figure 64 the old sage stands at the center, leaning on a rock to the left with a tall rising rock form to the right. The figure is drawn with a modulated line that suggests the rumpled nature of his robe, and fine lines of gray and white that form his large beard. His eyes look out from the many wrinkles of his aged face into the eyes of the viewer, making him appear to acknowledge the viewer's presence with a slight smile. In his hands he holds a scroll that points the viewer toward the deer standing in the scroll at the left. This deer, a stag with sharp antlers curving up from its head, brushes against a large rock that supports a tree wrapped with a vine that fades into mist at the top of the scene. The deer's eyes are visible on both sides of its head, giving it the appearance of looking out toward the viewer from the left, as though it knows we are

standing in front of the image of the sage. At the right the image of a doe is seen from the back with its head turned to the right so that one eye can look out toward us. This animal has less of a presence than the other deer and the sage, but it provides a balance for the other deer in this set of images. Oddly, the neck of the doe seems to have provided Buson with a challenge, as it appears to rise thickly from the animal's shoulder. Unlike the carefully painted horses of Buson's earlier paintings, this animal appears awkward as it stands alert beside a windblown pine. The animal's ears seem to emerge from the top of its head, reinforcing the awkward appearance of the neck and head. Since the stag has antlers emerging at the top of the head, its ears emerge lower on the skull, but this doe presents ears that liken it more to a rabbit. Perhaps Buson was again experimenting in this image as he strove to broaden his repertoire while traveling in the south.

Another example of this broadening of his range of subjects appears in his tiger painting of 1767 [Figure 66]. In this work the animal stares out at the viewer, lending the scene both a comic feel and the potential to appear threatening. With its head down at the right side of the image and its ears laid back against the sides of its head, this tiger is an image of power and strength crouching in the wind which whips around the rocky hill to the right. Animating this scene is a waterfall, speckled with drops of white pigment, surging out of the rocks at the right to disappear behind the tiger's shoulder. Moving to the left, the tiger's body rises up on its back legs with its tail curving high above its back. A pair of large green bamboo rise to partially hide the tiger's back leg and angle up to the left out of the scene. The few leaves that emerge from the bamboo trunks are pushed strongly to the left by the wind that blows over the tiger's fur. A series of rocks forms a narrow space at the bottom of the image between the viewer and the tiger, giving the animal a rough surface for its formidable claws to grip. The color used in the tiger's fur is a rich orange that contrasts with the green foliage and gray rocks that surround it. This orange is

picked up in some of the small bamboo leaves that emerge alongside the waterfall, as the lower surfaces appear orange and the upper surfaces a deep bluish-green. The tiger's eyes display this same coloration, with green around the eyes' yellow centers, marked with sharply curving pupils that seem to focus on us as we study the image. Below these eyes, the sharp whiskers of the cat arch away from its broadly grinning mouth. The mouth gives the tiger the appearance of a sly and quite strongly anthropomorphized beast fully aware of our presence. The body of the tiger is defined by thin lines of fur that suggest the nap of the hair as it covers the limbs and torso of the beast. No outlines are used to separate the animal from the background space, heightening the presence of the fur covering the body. The style of this work is again similar to that presented in the works of Shen Nanpin, but in this case Buson explored his own ideas, which seem to emphasize the connection between the viewer and the painted scene.

Among Buson's other works from his time in Shikoku are the screens for Myōhō-ji. These screens present faint landscapes in ink that show high mountains and dwellings among trees drawn in a linear style with many dots to indicate foliage and rock forms. These works show Buson to be working in a variety of styles while in Shikoku. Unlike the bold presentation of the tiger and Jurō with the deer, Buson seems to retreat to create softer landscape images evocative of a distant land of misty mountains and rustic evidence of people living on the land. These works are now in poor condition, so it is difficult to know what their impact would have been when they were created.

Paintings Made After Returning Home

Shortly after the screens for Myōhō-ji were painted, Buson returned to Kyoto, where he once again turned to landscape screen painting in a form like that used in earlier years for the "screen group." In Figure 69 we can see the return of high mountain forms

built up in the centers of each of the screens with dwellings, people, and water in the foreground spaces. Unlike the earlier screens, these two works seem to show an even greater understanding of how the painter can create a smooth transition from the foreground into the far distance. In the right screen, Buson has begun at the right with a descending series of hills that lower our view to a small inlet of water and a cluster of buildings that hug the shore. Above the buildings to the right, a mist-filled valley moves off into the distance, while a progression of hills and mountains moves up to the left. Directly to the left of the dwellings, the land once again moves down the image to the foreground, where it forms a second shoreline moving up to the left. Along this shore a boat is moored with its prow pointing out toward the misty water and tree-lined shore curving into the distance. Above this shoreline the mountains rise to the center of the screen, creating the impression that the highest hills are at the center of the scene, with deep recessions into space occurring at both the right and left sides. In the left screen, this unified flow of space is presented in an even more complex fashion, as the landscape emerges in the distance at the right, above an ox-bow in the river below. This provides a distant starting point for the scene that gradually moves forward to a series of rocks and a mountain path with figures appearing in the foreground. High, distant peaks continue across the top of the center of the screen, while trees fill the middle-ground space and the path continues along in the foreground. A second passage of water enters the scene at the bottom as the path leads into the distance, and a second passage of trees screens off a series of dwellings beneath a mist-shrouded mountain waterfall in the leftmost panel of the screen. This scene is extremely complex in its composition, demonstrating that Buson has retained his earlier interest in the landscape screen form and continued to develop his skills in terms of depicting space.

Following his return to Kyoto, Buson resumed painting figures in Chinese dress in shallow landscapes. He painted a pair of screens of an elegant gathering in the spring of

1770 [Figure 71], which appears similar to the *Orchid Pavilion Gathering* painted before he traveled to Shikoku. In this work many figures in fine robes and scholar's hats are seen leaving a dwelling in the right screen and arriving at a pavilion in the left screen. The right screen progresses from the left to the right with figures exiting the gate of a large dwelling surrounded by large rocks and richly painted trees. The architecture is painted with fine ruled lines and depicts strong tiled roofs. Exiting the gate behind the group of scholars is a porter carrying a large white bundle on a stick. One scholar turns back to the left to look at this figure, while four others and two attendants move off to the right. In this group one scholar turns to the viewer and gazes out of the painting. The group crosses behind a large tree that arches to the right, where rocks emerge in the foreground and curve up to the right, guiding our view to a pair of scholars who appear to be writing on a rock face. In front of this rock, two more porters carry the scholars' belongings off toward the right edge of the screen. The curvilinear rock forms and dense foliage of the trees give this scene a rich quality of fantasy and elegance within which the figures converse and slowly proceed on their journey.

In the left screen, the progress of the figures is stopped, and the tree and rock forms rise vertically to convey the stable nature of this scene. Beginning once again at the left, the scene opens with a clump of bamboo and a sharply rising rock that flanks an open path. Standing on this path are three scholars who appear to have been interrupted in their conversation by the presence of the viewer. A single scholar has his back to the viewer, and two others face directly out to look at the viewer. They stand by the first of five large trees that lead the eye into the misty depth of the scene. At the right edge of these trees, three more scholars stand and face a figure in a pavilion at the right. The pavilion is drawn with the same ruled lines that the gate of the dwelling in the other screen presented. Its roof is low-pitched, with tiles running in parallel lines down the slope to the right. The man in

the pavilion is large and wears a dark robe. He faces the approaching scholars and presents a rolled scroll in both hands. At the right an attendant holds a long pole, which will likely be used to display this scroll as it is unrolled for all to see. The pavilion is surrounded by large rocks that rise to obscure its right side and fill the background space, where thin wisps of white mist drift across the tree branches and rocks. These scenes recall the interest Buson has shown both in the interaction between the viewer and the painted subject, and in using a shallow space for large figures to interact and display their scholarly pursuits. This type of scene becomes rare in Buson's later paintings, but it seems to be an arena in which Buson learned several critical characteristics that would contribute to his mature style of painting. In these works he explored the psychological presence that could be expressed by his painted figures. In addition, it is in these figural paintings that he became comfortable with the presentation of figures looking out of the scene to engage the viewer. This practice allowed his later images to retain their contemporary feel while they presented images drawn from Chinese and Japanese literary history.

In the autumn of 1770, Buson continued to explore figural themes in a pair of paintings depicting people drawn from his knowledge of Chinese history [Figure 72]. In the right scroll of this pair, the sage Huang Shi Gong and strategist Chang Liang rest among trees and rocks. This scene presents a very shallow space within which the figures rest, with a large, oddly formed rock jutting up at the left and another protruding into the scene at the right. Between these rocks Chang Liang crouches with his back to the viewer and his face turned out toward the viewer as he holds a tablet with cryptic marks on its surface. His face does not directly stare at the viewer, but we are allowed to see his features and the intensity with which he studies his tablet. His robes are a faint blue color with black trim, and his hands and face are a rich orange color. The lines of the robe are precisely painted, with gray washes applied where folds and creases would create shadows on the

cloth. His hair is painted with fine strokes of black ink that form a fringe as they fly unkempt from the surface of his scalp. Above Chang Liang, Huang Shi Gong leans to the left on a rock, his brown straw sandals hanging from his clasped hands. His robes are slightly darker blue and fall in large sweeping billows as they emerge from behind the rock. On the ground in front of the crouching Chang Liang, we see the orange, bare feet of Huang, as he appears to scratch one foot with the toes of the other. In the upper left portion of the scene, the sage's face is shown staring out of the scene to the left. He seems to look across the divide between the two scrolls to the figures of Wang Meng and Huan Wen in the other image. His face is softly modeled with orange pigment, revealing the wrinkles of his eyes and the wispy gray hairs of his beard and moustache that covers his gently smiling mouth. His head is wrapped in a dark gray cloth that appears to be striated or quilted, as its loose end falls down his back. Around the sage's face is a cloud of green leaves defined by small triangular strokes of gray ink. The leaves hang from a descending branch of a tree that rises behind the sage and fills the top right quarter of the work.

In the upper portion of the left image, a different type of tree struggles to emerge from behind an overhanging rock. Below the overhang of this rock we see the face of Huan Wen, with deep wrinkles and a bulbous nose accentuated by the grimacing frown he adopts as he kills lice crawling on the robe he has removed from his torso. He wears a cloth on his head like that worn by Huang Shi Gong, but it appears to be wrapped irregularly to form a gray pile on his head. His face and body present the same orange tone seen in the other scroll, and his robe is a faint gray with black trim and a brown lining. It hangs in broad folds from his hands and lays beside his one exposed white pant leg. Below his pant leg a single gray shoe emerges with a curled toe and brown sole. To the left of Huan Wen, Wang Meng stands with his hands behind his back and a scroll tucked in the sleeve of his blue robe. He wears the hat of a scholar, with a long tail hanging down over

his right shoulder. His face is seen in profile as he focuses on the lice killing, which seems to have consumed these figures. Behind Wang appears a rock, like those in the other scroll, defined by layered washes and linear texture strokes that curve as they describe the surface contours of the stone. These two scrolls display Buson's continued efforts to use people from Chinese history to explore methods of creating personalities and individual psychological characteristics in his figural paintings.

Later in 1770, Buson continued to explore figure painting that illustrated characters from the Chinese classics and further explored the presentation of their faces, as he seems to have worked to understand how these figures could be made to speak to the viewer. He seems to have worked through the first decade of his life in Kyoto to expand his repertoire through practicing landscape styles drawn from Chinese painting manuals, observing old as well as new Chinese paintings in Kyoto by artists such as Shen Nanpin and others, and experimenting with his own nascent ideas revealed in his figural works. His style seems to emerge in stages, with several similar works being created in rapid succession. He then appears to have moved on to other styles, and only later blended the ideas he had learned years earlier into a unique style of painting. This style of painting would continue to emerge throughout the 1770s to finally become Buson's mature style in the final years of his life. With his succession to the Yahantei title and its associated professional-poet status, Buson became a strict professional in both his painting and his writing. As a result, his works in both media increased in number each year, and he quickly came to have a large following among painters and poets. With this change, his works rapidly expanded in terms of their diversity in both subjects and styles, but within this expanding array of paintings, we can find a large body of dated works that reveal Buson's passionate interest in things Chinese. These works reach beyond mere stylistic imitation and thematic appropriation to reveal an honest desire to speak in the idiom of Chinese painting. It is at this point that we can begin

to see Buson adopting forms of the Chinese painting to express something that is characteristic of Buson himself. In the last thirteen years of his life, Buson began to speak through his Chinese images in a way that is born out of both his explorations of Chinese and Japanese painting and his own experiences in eighteenth-century Japanese society.

Chapter 7: Buson's Life in Kyoto

1771–1783

With his adoption of the title *Yahantei II* in 1770, Buson formally entered the world of the professional poets. In conjunction with his role as a professional painter, acknowledged late in the 1760s, he became a recognized, professional Japanese literatus, or *bunjin* [文人]. By producing paintings, publishing poetry, and perhaps more importantly, being sought out as a teacher and mentor, Buson's professionalism was widely recognized by his associates. This pattern is indicative of the Japanese *bunjin's* work, yet it is quite different from its Chinese analogue. The Chinese idea of the *wenren* [文人] was ideally a dedicated amateur poet and painter. Buson understood this Chinese model through his studies of imported books on painting and his wide exposure to literary and historical texts from China. The inclusion of figures such as Li Bo and Tao Yuanming in Buson's painting and the mention of painters such as Mi Fu and Wang Meng suggest that Buson was well aware of the literati tradition, yet he chose to make painting and poetry his professions in direct opposition to the ideals put forward by writers on Chinese literati painting. This difference between Buson's practice and that of the Chinese *wenren* is important in that it helps to illuminate the nature of his position as an artist and the meaning of his use of Chinese styles in his paintings.

Although there were painter-poets in Japan, for example Yanagisawa Kien [柳沢淇園, 1706-1758] and Gion Nankai [祇園南海, 1677–1751], who worked in association with the military elite and had the personal financial means to live a life parallel to the Chinese amateurs, Buson did not have this social standing. Perhaps during his early years in Edo and Yūki, while he lived off the wealth of his father's family, Buson lived as an amateur painter and poet mirroring the Chinese model, but it became inevitable that he

become professional if he wished to continue his artistic pursuits. Buson, like many of his associates and followers, lived a life that was defined by his art, and his art was all he had to support himself. In order to earn a living and continue to paint and write, he had to sell his services. He did not have a great deal of freedom of choice as he made paintings for sale, and the large number of landscape screens from the 1760s made for the “screen group” attests to this fact.¹⁵⁹ Yet, throughout his time spent painting for specific patrons in Kyoto and elsewhere, Buson continued to explore new and inventive ways of expressing his vision in verse and painting. He came to live as a professional *bunjin* who practiced his arts in the only manner that his social standing and the Japanese social system would allow.

As a professional painter, Buson made a choice to work in styles derived from Chinese sources of inspiration, and it is this choice that we must examine closely. As his early paintings reveal, he learned to paint in styles associated much more closely with Japanese traditional painting, but he did not turn to these forms of painting as a professional. Similarly, he learned the practice of writing *kanshi* [漢詩], or Chinese verse, but chose instead to work predominantly in the *haishi* [俳詩] form of Japanese poetry. These choices reveal Buson’s desire to speak through his art in specific ways that defined him as a *bunjin* through the last twelve years of his life. He became a model of the Japanese *bunjin* who was neither amateur nor Chinese imitator. Instead, Buson worked with ideas that have their roots in both Chinese and Japanese traditions, but which produce unique expressions central to the cultural climate of Tokugawa-era Kyoto.

In the first month of 1771, Buson was referred to as a *haikai* master and critic in an anthology entitled *Haikai kafu shūi shū* [俳諧家譜拾遺集].¹⁶⁰ This confirms the

¹⁵⁹See the discussion of the “screen group” patronage discussed in chapter 5.

¹⁶⁰In the tenth volume of this anthology, Buson is included as follows:

蕉村 与謝民、当春点列二加エラレシ由、未ダ告ゲ来ラズト雖モ、風聞二任セテコレヌ記ス。

prominence of the role he was occupying as a professional poet. His address was also given as a rented dwelling on Muromachi-dōri at Ayanokōji in Kudaru-chō.¹⁶¹ This was a move from the Shijō Karasumaru address he had occupied prior to his trip to Sanuki, indicating that his life with his family was continuing to change as he took on new roles and responsibilities in his work. The reference to this dwelling as a rented location may indicate that Buson was keeping multiple residences, perhaps dividing his work as a painter and a poet between two separate locations.

Among the many expectations that a professional poet faced was the annual publication of New Year collections of poetry, or *saitanchō*. Buson had been included in several of these anthologies in past years, but early in the spring of 1771, Buson put together his first independent *saitanchō*, which included poems sent to him by associates from Edo, whom he knew many years earlier when he studied with Hajin.¹⁶² He also included works by poets from the Yahantei group in Kyoto, and works by poets he had met in Sanuki. He seems in this work to have been reconnecting to the broader Hajin lineage and his associates throughout the region as he emerged as the leader under the Yahantei II title. Included in this *saitanchō* were works by most of the poets mentioned in the previous chapters. In addition, Buson seems to have become associated with the *haikai* poets Donshi [呑獅, d.1789], the master of Kikyōya [桔梗屋], and Tokuya [徳野, d.1809], the master of Sumiya [角屋], in the licensed entertainment district of Shimabara [島原]. These poets provided Buson with the patronage of the brothels and gave him an introduction to the owners of other entertainment houses. His works are still held in the collection of Sumiya, where Buson must have spent a significant amount of time in his later years. By the inclusion of works created by performers from Kyoto and Edo in the

¹⁶¹Tanaka, 1996, p. 120.

¹⁶²This *saitancho* was published on the fifteenth day of the second month, 1771. Ueda, 1998, p. 62.

collection presented in his *saitanchō*, Buson also reveals his associations with *kabuki* actors popular at this time. The *saitanchō* contains poems by the Osaka performer Nakamura Kumetarō [中村桑太郎] and the Edo performer Ogami Kikugorō [尾上菊五郎], as well as others. Kitō, writing about Buson in 1784, noted that Buson was a big fan of *kabuki*, favoring Ogami in particular.¹⁶³ By including works connected to *kabuki* and the brothels of the licensed district, Buson demonstrates his broad-reaching interests and his willingness to bring poets from a range of social positions together under his critical eye. Like other professional poets' *saitanchō*, this collection formed a portrait of Buson through his choices of which poets to include. He presented his social group as it was created through his poetry and his friendships. This is central to the life of the Japanese *bunjin* in that it becomes a means of autobiographical expression and a form of collective promotion of the included group of poets.

In the eighth month of 1771, Buson further revealed his professional status. He and Ike Taiga worked together to produce twenty paintings for an album entitled *Ten Conveniences and Ten Pleasures* [十便十宜], generally following the text *Ten Conveniences and Twelve Pleasures of Rural Living* [伊園十便十二宜詩] by the late Ming Dynasty Chinese poet Li Yu [李笠, 1611–1680] [Figures 83 and 84]. Li Yu was thought to have written the *Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting*, and, as its writer, he was respected deeply by painters like Buson and Taiga. Buson completed the ten pleasures portion of the album, painting individual scenes focused on the pleasures of spring, summer, autumn, winter, evening, night, clearing, wind, clouds, and rain. This set of works is at present the only one of Buson's creations to have received the Japanese government's National Treasure status, and as such it has been written about at length by many scholars and fanciers. Each of the leaves of the album is inscribed with Li Yu's

¹⁶³Tanaka, 1996, p. 127.

poetry above an abbreviated landscape. Buson explained a method he may have used in painting these scenes in the transcription of a conversation he had with Shah around this time. He told the other poet:

Seek out Kikaku, visit Ransetsu, recite Sodo, and accompany Onitsura. Meet those four elders every day. Go far away from the marketplace, stroll among the trees in the garden, hold a banquet by a mountain stream, and enjoy a conversation over wine. More than anything else, it is important to remain unprepared for verse writing. Spend days in this way, until you meet with those four elders again. As before, you will keep a leisurely frame of mind and enjoy the beauty of nature. Close your eyes and try composing a verse. When you have come up with one, open your eyes. Suddenly the four elders will be gone, disappearing somewhere unknown. You will be left alone in a trance. Then the fragrance of blossoms will come drifting in the breeze, and the image of the moon will be seen floating on the water. That is the realm of *haikai* you are to enter.¹⁶⁴

In explaining the practice of *haikai* composition to his friend, Buson revealed what may have been moving through his mind as he created the album leaves. He appears to have read the poetry of Li Yu and allowed his mind to form images growing out of his reading. Then, in this state of mental separation from the mundane world, he painted the mental landscapes as they appeared to him. This technique has a great deal in common with Buson's approach to *haiga*, or abbreviated paintings to accompany poems. In these *haiga* Buson formed images that grow out of the poetic allusions without necessarily depicting images directly expressed by the poetic lines.¹⁶⁵

Buson and Taiga were commissioned by Shimogō Gakkai [下郷学海, b.1742], who had been a student of Taiga's in Kyoto.¹⁶⁶ This explains the commissioning of Taiga,

¹⁶⁴Ueda, 1998, p. 68. This conversation was recorded by Buson in 1778 in his *Yahan meiwa* collection of conversations and other miscellaneous writings.

¹⁶⁵Cleopatra Helen Claire Papapavlou, *The Haiga Figure as a Vehicle of Buson's Ideals: With Emphasis in the Illustrated Sections of "Oku no hosomichi" and "Nozorashi kiko"* (Ph. D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1981).

but a deeper link may have brought him to Buson. One of Gakkai's ancestors named Chisoku [知足, dates unknown] had been a student of Bashō, and it may have been in part this connection that drew him to Buson as the carrier of the Bashō tradition.¹⁶⁷ Buson and Taiga's collaboration on this work is the most obvious connection between these two artists, but Buson later included several of Taiga's poems in his collections of 1774 and 1776, indicating that they remained in close contact until Taiga's death in 1776. Although they both shared interests in Chinese-inspired painting and *haikai*, and were primary figures within the *bunjin* tradition of eighteenth-century Kyoto, Buson's and Taiga's approaches to painting differ in several ways. The most obvious difference lies in Taiga's interest in painting images of specific identifiable locations, or *shinkeizu* [真景図], in contrast to Buson's more mentally focused creations relying on imagery inspired by poetry or trance-like thought.¹⁶⁸

In the autumn of 1771 Buson's close associate Taigi died, and a few months later Shōha also passed away. These deaths must have left Buson in a state of despair, as these two poets had played central roles in the formation of the Yahantei poetry group. Buson wrote long introductions to collections of each poet's works as a tribute to their accomplishments. He continued to paint through this period, completing several landscape images that appear similar to those he had been making during the previous year, but his overall production of paintings seems to have fallen off somewhat from the pace he had kept up after his return from Sanuki. He completed a few landscapes and other themes similar to those painted prior to his travels, but his work progressed at a much slower pace [Figure 86]. Perhaps his role as a professional poet restricted the amount of time he had

¹⁶⁶Yoshizawa, 1981, p. 107.

¹⁶⁷Tanaka, 1996, p. 130.

¹⁶⁸Melinda Takeuchi, *Taiga's True-Views: The Language of Landscape Painting in Eighteenth Century Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), p. 142.

available for painting, or perhaps his income was being supplemented by his poetry at this time to the extent that he could allow himself to divide his time between poetry and painting more evenly. It is clear from the increased volume of poems published late in 1771 that he was actively writing, so the reduction in the number of dated paintings from this period could be related to his taking on the dual role of the *bunjin*.

The Yahantei group continued to meet following the deaths of the two poets and completed a New Year collection of poems for 1772. Later in the year the group gathered again to compose a collection of verses to commemorate the thirteenth anniversary of the death of Kikei. In this set of verses Buson created two images, one depicting Bashō teaching Kikaku and Ransetsu and the other depicting Hajin teaching Kikei. In these images Buson revealed the history of his *haikai* lineage as it passes from one generation of teachers to the next. Buson was of the generation of Kikei, as they both studied with Hajin. Buson included with these images verses by Kikei's son Kitō, who represented the next generation, having studied with Buson. It is as though Buson was reflecting on the position that he now held as the transmitter of the tradition. He was also posthumously acknowledging the importance of Kikei in this lineage as his equal. Perhaps he was even indicating his own trepidation at having taken on the Yahantei II title, which Kikei had himself rejected, feeling unworthy of the honor. Reflecting on his role, like Kikei's rejection of the title, were responsibilities of the professional poet. This subtle self-deprecation and acknowledgment of the successes of others would characterize much of Buson's later career.

At this time Buson painted an image of two figures in a landscape that showed him expanding the boundaries of his style and subject matter once again [Figure 87]. In this work two figures appear on opposite sides of a flowing stream. It is possible that these are images of Buson's mother on the right and his father on the left, divided by the stream.¹⁶⁹

Reading the image in this manner, it becomes a reflective personal moment in the artist's life, as he recalls the separation of his parents in the days of his youth. With the memorializing of Kikei and the thoughts of his relationship to Kitō fresh in his mind, Buson may have been driven to think back on the life he led as a child. If this image is an autobiographical account of his parents, Buson appears to have been expressing a melancholic sadness about the past, as he presented his parents separated by nature and physical space. The house in the hills behind the man at the left side of the image is presented as unreachable, even though the other figure at the right appears to look longingly up toward that space. With this image Buson may finally have reached a point in his painting where he was able to use the styles he had learned from Chinese paintings to create scenes drawn from his personal history. In essence, this work goes a step beyond appropriation to become a hybrid work drawing equally from Buson's study of Chinese painting and his own lived experiences.

A contrary reading of this painting suggests that Buson shifted his focus in another direction. Since the two figures occupy separate spaces and are engaged in similar acts of gazing into the distance, this scene might reveal Buson's willingness to combine images drawn from separate sources. This would be parallel to the kind of borrowing from Chinese poetry that appears in his poetry. He took one image and juxtaposed it with another to allow us the opportunity to think about the intersection of these ideas. In poetry, as in painting, this is the outgrowth of his appropriating Chinese forms. The right-hand figure, shown from the back gazing at the waterfall, invites the viewer to share in this trance-like experience with nature. The other figure, resting on a rock and looking out, forces the realization of the viewer's position outside the scene. The juxtaposition of these two kinds of identification within the painting places the viewer in a state of tension, where

¹⁶⁹Takahashi, 2000, pp. 217–18.

identifying with one figure is challenged by the other figure's stare out of the work. This produces a state in which the viewer needs to follow Buson's advise to Shōha and leave the world of the mundane to enter a realm of thought where poetry can arise.

Finally, another interpretation suggests that this may simply be a work in which Buson has tried to reach too far in his claiming of Chinese themes: he brings these two figures together but leaves their interaction ambiguous, which results from the awkwardness of the composition.¹⁷⁰

Later in 1772 Buson painted a series of four landscape images depicting the four seasons [Figure 88]. These album-sized paintings are each accompanied by Chinese text that provides the inspiration for each scene. As in the *Ten Pleasures* album, Buson appears to have read the text and created fantastic images reflecting his personal vision of the space. His style varied with each image, capturing the mood of the text in each of the passages. The seven separate texts are excerpted from Tang and Song Dynasty writings, revealing Buson's continued deep interest in classical Chinese poetry. Although a handful of other images are dated to this year, Buson may have continued to focus primarily on his writing in this period, as few new ideas emerge in his painting. He continued to create images of large figures traveling in the landscape, as he had in the previous several years, but they show the less vivacious images of a despondent rider on a horse traveling through a landscape dated to the summer [Figure 91] and a solitary figure in a riverside hut painted in the winter [Figure 92].

In 1773 new members emerged within the Yahantei group, including Matsumura Goshun [松村吳春, 1752–1811]. In addition, Buson's student Kitō formed his own poetry circle, called the *Shunyarō* [春夜樓]. These changes reflect an apparent effort among these poets to return to the core of Bashō's teachings. In a poetry compilation

¹⁷⁰Cahill, 1996, p. 160.

entitled *Akegarasu* [あけ烏], edited by Kitō, statements suggest that the included poets were those who emulated Bashō's true style.¹⁷¹ In this compilation Buson contributed four *hokku* that he had written in earlier years and a new poem with a headnote that refers to the writing of the Song Dynasty Chinese poet Su Shi and the Japanese writing of Sei Shōnagon [清少納言, 10th–11th century].

A certain Chinese poet put high value on the evening hours of a spring day, while a certain Japanese author adored the purple sky of spring dawn.

春の夜や宵あかつきのその中に

What about spring night lying between the evening and dawn?¹⁷²

Buson asserted in this poem and its headnote a blend of Chinese and Japanese literary images that gave form to his poetic vision. He saw, in the space between spring evening and spring dawn, a gap parallel to what he saw between the classical Chinese writer and the classical Japanese writer. Buson himself preferred the night, where he was freed of the bustle of the city to think and write in solitude. His focus on this space between allowed him to draw off both earlier images while forming a contemporary vision that resonated with these ancient images. He was reacting in the present to these utterances of the past to comment on his personal status and his individual preferences.

While contributing to this and other poetry collections and composing his own

¹⁷¹In the preface to this anthology, Kitō voices the opinion that Bashō's teachings had been forgotten by many of his followers over the century following his death. Bashō had stressed the idea of *fueki-ryūkō*, or eternal-momentary. Kitō states that Buson had repeatedly told him that poets across the country understood something of this teaching, but that they did not know how to apply this idea to its fullest extent. Louise Erica Virgin, *Yosa Buson and The Dawn of the Bashō Haikai Revival: A Surimono of the Cuckoo Bird Singing in a Tree with Fresh Foliage* (Ph. D. diss., University of Chicago, 1992), p. 246.

¹⁷²Ueda, 1998, p. 79. Alternate translations of this poem interpret the line as follows: "The night of Spring, Oh, between the night and the dawn." "Why need we call thee fair, O night of Spring? Dost thou not lie between Spring evening and dawn of Spring?" "Night in the springtime— evening falls, and then the dawn; before you know, it's gone." Zolbrod, 1990, p. 615. These translations all present the juxtaposition of spring night and dawn that forms the primary image of the poem and the headnote, but they place varying degrees of emphasis on the desire to focus on the intersection of the love of evening and dawn.

anthologies, Buson continued to paint many images. In the spring of 1773 he created another set of four images of the seasons that presented small rustic figures among large rocky landscapes with trees and water [Figure 93]. About this time he was commissioned to paint many large *fusuma* for Jisshō-ji depicting small Chinese figures in landscapes, large figures walking with attendants among large trees [Figure 94] and magpies flying among palms [Figure 95]. These works fill three rooms of the temple and appear next to a room painted by Taiga featuring the four pastimes of Chinese gentlemen, *kinkishōga* [琴棋書画].

In the first month of 1774, the seriousness with which Buson took his role as a professional poet emerged as he wrote a letter to Chora [樽良, 1721–1780] about a rumor he heard describing a conflict existing between the two poets. Buson urged Chora to join him in quelling this rumor for the benefit of *haikai* in general, as he saw this rumor as a threat not to himself, but to the image of the Bashō tradition.¹⁷³ In concluding this letter, he wrote:

二もとのむめに遅速を愛すかな

Two plum trees, one blooming before the other— I love them both.¹⁷⁴

Buson took the perceived conflict between the two poets as an inspiration for this poem, and made it clear that there was room for difference in the *haikai* realm without destructive effect. The two would later meet to compose verses with Kitō in the fifth month of the year shortly before Chora left Kyoto. With this meeting they displayed their similar approaches to the *haikai* tradition as they composed poems whose allusions reached to the Chinese poet Tao Chien and the Japanese poet Kakinomoto Hitomaru.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³Otani and Fujita, 1992, pp. 59–61.

¹⁷⁴Ueda, 1998, p. 81. This poem has also been translated to read: “The two plum-trees, I love their blooming. One early, one later.” “What taste my plum-trees show by blooming, one now, the other later on in the spring.” “Two flowering plums, one later than the other— how I love them both.” Zolbrod, 1990, p. 620.

In his *saitanchō* for 1774, Buson revealed that he was thinking further about his position and his own history as he signed his poems with three separate names, including Buson, Setten [雪店], and the name Saichō [宰町]. He had used this third name thirty-six years earlier when he studied with Hajin in Edo. This return to using his earlier name was not to become a standard practice for the poet, but rather seems to have been an effort to recall his roots and bring them into his current poetic output. Perhaps it was the approach of the thirty-third anniversary of Hajin's death coming during the summer of this year that led Buson to reflect in this manner, as he would soon gather with many of the followers of Hajin to commemorate the late poet's life.

During the summer Buson painted yet another set of landscape images of the four seasons with figures [Figure 96]. In these works the artist moved away from the album format he had used in the previous two years to paint large hanging scrolls with rich pigmentation and relatively complex compositions. The four scrolls appear to have been made as two pairs of images with dates and names inscribed on the spring and autumn paintings and only names and seals placed on the summer and winter scrolls. This set of images presents a motif of fathers and children that Buson came to use frequently in this period.¹⁷⁶ While this motif may be mere coincidence, Buson may have been expressing his own relationship to his daughter, who was by this time in her early teenage years. She would marry two years later and move temporarily to Osaka, leaving Buson somewhat worried about her future.¹⁷⁷ The poem written to Chora revealed an effort to use his poetry as a vehicle for speaking about a condition of his daily life, so it is not surprising to see him using his painting in a similar fashion. It is in keeping with Hajin's teaching that Buson

¹⁷⁵Ueda, 1998, p. 82.

¹⁷⁶Takahashi, 2000, p. 255.

¹⁷⁷Otani and Fujita, 1992, pp. 172–4.

returned to making his art speak of immediate experience while still allowing it to resonate with the past through the style and composition.

During the summer and autumn of 1774, Buson painted several hanging scrolls that continued to focus on mountain landscapes with travelers and scholars moving among buildings and trees. Among these works two stand out for their virtually identical compositions and subjects [Figures 97 and 98]. These two paintings show figures crossing rustic bridges toward a cluster of dwellings in which one tiny figure sits beside a window. Rising above the dwellings are high peaks, a tiny pavilion, and a distant waterfall, which appear with only slight variation in each image. These two paintings continue the pairing of figures seen in the four seasonal landscapes, but in this repetition of scenes Buson moved toward a programmatic type of painting in which a set of stock themes was repeated to meet patron requests. Although there are many other images dated to this year, they appear to have been made in several very similar versions. A case in point is Buson's painting of colorful birds in trees in the Shen Nanpin style [Figure 99]. This composition appears in at least three versions with only slight variation. This suggests two possibilities. Buson may have been repeating his works to save time and meet a growing demand for his paintings. This is likely the case in some instances, as there are many repeated images later in his life. Another, perhaps discouraging, possibility is that this portion of Buson's oeuvre is marked by many close copies of his paintings.

As works from the mid-1770s through the end of the artist's life reveal him to be in his most inventive and technically proficient phase of his career, imitations of them would have become most desirable during his lifetime, as well as through the centuries that followed. The challenge is to decide which of these works are most likely Buson's creations and which are not. Some works are easy to exclude on the basis of their presentation of seals and calligraphy, which show marked differences in comparison to

those appearing on the bulk of Buson's work. Aside from the works of suspicious authorship, it seems wise to question the works that repeat compositions and styles very closely but present different dates. Although it is possible that Buson was specifically asked by his patrons to recreate images, his own philosophy, revolving around the creation of poetry that reflects the circumstances surrounding him at the time of the writing, argues against painting the same image in different years. Although it is not absolutely necessary to exclude every reiteration of paintings that appear in the later years of the artist's life, it seems important that we consider these works more suspect than other works purportedly by the artist. The paintings discussed here from the last decade of the artist's life have been culled from a large number of dated works in hopes of avoiding as many of these questionable images as possible, but the consequence of this may be to restrict this view of Buson to one narrow slice of his artistic career.

By early 1775, Buson had apparently moved once again to a new home. His address is recorded in the *Heian Jinbutsushi* as Bukkō-ji Karasumaru Saie-ire chō [仏光寺烏丸西へ入町].¹⁷⁸ He had been listed at his previous address by this annual publication for the preceding two years, but sometime late in 1774 or early 1775 he must have relocated. As the year progressed, Buson fell ill and had to cease painting and writing poetry until late in the autumn.¹⁷⁹ He painted a pair of landscapes in the twelfth month in which he continued to work with the theme of travelers in landscapes with tall mountains and waterfalls [Figure 100]. In the right-hand work, a figure high in the hills peers off into the distance as a deer forages in the foreground. This image seems to capture a reflective quality that may have grown out of Buson's health challenges as he was recovering. In a letter to Kitō written in the second month of 1776, Buson discussed several topics that

¹⁷⁸Otani and Fujita, p. 272.

¹⁷⁹Buson explained this illness and its effects in a letter to Masana written on the eighteenth day of the tenth month of 1774. *Ibid.*, 1992, pp. 171–2.

were weighing on his mind at this time. He thanked Kitō for his assistance with a banquet for his daughter, noting the great expense of the event.¹⁸⁰ This was likely the banquet for his daughter's marriage to the son of a wealthy merchant's chef.¹⁸¹ It was delayed by her apparent illness, which was finally resolved at the end of the year. In addition, he discusses writing *kanshi* at Kompuku-ji [金福寺] in northeast Kyoto.¹⁸² This temple would become one of the focal points of Buson's later years, and is the site of his grave as well as those of many of his close associates. Somewhat later in the spring, Buson continued to think about his illness and the suffering he saw around him in Kyoto. He wrote in a letter to Issō [一鼠] of his own illness in the fourth month and of the many people ill in Kyoto at this time.¹⁸³ Apparently, many people died of this illness in 1776 as it swept through the community, suggesting that this was a serious health condition that left Buson incapacitated for many months. It may well have been this illness that took the life of Ike Taiga in 1776. Buson addressed this loss to the Kyoto painting community in a postscript to a letter to Kafu [霞夫, 1749–1784] in the fourth month. He added that Taiga passed away on the thirteenth day of the month and that this loss of one of Kyoto's unusual people was regrettable.¹⁸⁴ In this letter Buson also addressed his own struggle to get back to painting as he referred to the many requests he had to leave unfilled during his illness and the relative poverty this produced as he faced the coming year. He seemed to be complaining in this letter about both the pressure to create many images described in terms of their subject matter, style, and size, and the challenge of living without the steady income that these paintings would have produced.¹⁸⁵ Thus, Buson openly discussed the challenges of the

¹⁸⁰Otani and Fujita, 1992, pp. 111–12.

¹⁸¹Ueda, 1998, p. 99.

¹⁸²Otani and Fujita, 1992, pp. 111–12.

¹⁸³*Ibid.* pp. 118–20.

¹⁸⁴Takahashi, 2000, p. 278.

professional painter at this time, and provided an image of the way in which he came to agreements with his patrons about the appearances of paintings. In another letter to Kafu from the sixth month, Buson specifically mentioned Northern and Southern Song-style landscapes that were requested from him in this time.¹⁸⁶ There is no mention of the specific content of these images, but their styles must have been firmly compartmentalized within the minds of Buson and his patrons.¹⁸⁷ We might imagine a request for a Shen Nanpin-style work or a work in the abbreviated *haiga*-style being presented, leaving Buson to decide on the specific content of the images.

In a letter to Kafu that Buson sent just two weeks earlier in the sixth month, he addressed the idea of rebuilding the Bashō-an [芭蕉庵] structure at Kompuku-ji.¹⁸⁸ This building would become the focus of the poetry circle in 1781, but at this early date Buson addressed the building in his thoughts and presented it as a subject for Kafu to consider. A group of Bashō followers began to gather at the site, where a hut had been built in memory of the late poet. Buson must have been seriously thinking about the reconstruction of this building because he wrote at length to Kafu, who lived far away in Tajima in modern Hyōgo prefecture. Kafu's home was near Ama-no-hashidate, where Buson had spent time during his sojourn in Tangō, and it was at that early date that Buson met his family. Although Kafu was then a young boy, he had grown into a dedicated poet, and Buson seems to have favored him among the many connections he kept to the people in Tangō. Although Kafu could not have helped Buson with the rebuilding of the Bashō-an, Buson felt it important enough to discuss this plan with his friend.¹⁸⁹ He simultaneously wrote to

¹⁸⁵Otani and Fujita, 1992, pp. 121–6.

¹⁸⁶*Ibid.* pp. 138–42.

¹⁸⁷In this letter Buson specifically wrote:

此度相下候山水幅は、北宗家之画法にしたゝめ申候。

¹⁸⁸Otani and Fujita, 1992, pp. 135–7.

others in the Yahantei circle and to poets he met during his travels, but the majority of these other letters were brief and focus more specifically on poetry or painting without the broad coverage of both that Buson addressed to Kafu.

During this period Buson painted a number of works depicting landscapes and a pair of scrolls dated to the third month of 1776 that present magpies in plum trees [Figure 101]. In this work Buson captured a poetic image of the birds as they cry and tussle isolated in the tangled branches of these old plum trees. In these paintings, Buson seems to have moved away from the grandeur of nature expressed in his landscape images toward a more intimate observation of the natural world. These paintings may be among those mentioned in Buson's earlier letter to Kafu, as he listed the many works he had been requested to make.¹⁹⁰ He would continue this close viewing of nature in several of his later painting, which focused on these birds and others arrayed in complexly presented tree branches.

In the winter of 1776, Buson reinterpreted the focus on birds with a pair of scrolls depicting a kite in a willow tree and three crows in a persimmon tree [Figure 102]. This work is perhaps the one referred to in a letter Buson wrote to Kitō in the ninth month.¹⁹¹ The pairing of these birds appeared in several of Buson's works, but seems to have been of particular interest to him in this period. These various images reveal that Buson was working in a manner that relied on his ability to freely move between a wide range of styles and formats in his repertoire. He seems to have entered a position at this time that made him

¹⁸⁹The idea to restore Bashō-an was not originally Buson's, but was suggested by one of Buson's friends named Higuchi Dōryū. Ueda, 1998, p. 92.

¹⁹⁰Hayakawa Monta [早川聞多], *Suibokuga no kyoshō: Buson* [水墨画の巨匠：蕉村] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1994), p. 103.

¹⁹¹Otani and Fujita, 1992, p. 160–3. In this text the letter is illustrated with a similar pair of paintings of crows and a hawk, but the illustrated image must have been made several years after the letter was written. As the pair illustrated in Figure 102 is dated mere months after the letter, it is much more likely the painting to which Buson referred.

more than just a professional painter. As he wrote to his associates describing his paintings in terms of their styles and their subjects, he adopted the role of the painting teacher, paralleling his role as poetry master overseeing his many associates' products.

Later in 1776 Buson hosted the wedding of his daughter with what must have been an elaborate ceremony. He wrote in a letter dated to the twelfth month that thirty-four or thirty-five people attended to hear a renowned *koto* player and to be entertained by five or six *maiko*, resulting in several days of exhaustion.¹⁹² The marriage of his daughter and her subsequent move away from home seems to have been hard for Buson. A poem he composed just after her marriage reflects some of the feeling with which he was burdened as the New Year approached:

去年よりまた寂しいぞ秋のくれ

Lonelier still than last year, you know, this autumn evening.¹⁹³

Buson expresses loneliness over the loss of his daughter from his home, revealing just how closely he held her in her youth. Buson seems to have spent a great deal of time and money on the marriage, but felt little joy when the event had passed, dwelling instead on the empty home that he and his wife now faced.

In 1777 Buson seems to have met the many demands placed on him by his poetry and painting with renewed vigor. During this year he composed as many as 451 of the 2880 poems he is thought to have written throughout his lifetime.¹⁹⁴ As the year began Buson was working on the New Year's *saitanchō* that he was expected to produce for the Yahantei group, and he was working on an anthology entitled *Yahanraku* [夜半楽], which

¹⁹²Tanaka, 1996, p. 195; Ōtani and Fujita, 1992, pp. 172–4.

¹⁹³Zolbrod, 1990, p. 596. This poem has also been translated to read: “Still lonelier than last year; Autumn evening.” “Compared to last year, this has even more loneliness— Autumn evening.” “Still more than last year, it makes me even more lonely— evening in autumn.”

¹⁹⁴Leon Zolbrod, “The Busy Year: Buson’s Life and Work, 1777,” *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* (4th series, volume 3, 1988), p. 55.

would be published in mid-spring. Although this book was a small publication of only ten pages, it would become one of Buson's most critically acclaimed and influential works. Buson urged his close friend Kafu to contribute to this volume, but Kafu's father had just died, and his death seems to have been devastating for the young poet. After receiving a letter from Buson in the early spring urging him to include his poetry even as he grieved, Kafu stopped writing and cut off his contact with Buson.¹⁹⁵

This sad event aside, *Yahanraku* was published, and it contained Buson's blended Chinese and Japanese verses entitled *Shunpū batei kyoku* and *Dengaka*. The form of these poems became the models for the future development of poetry in the *haikai* tradition, making Buson the founder of a new form of poetic expression.¹⁹⁶ With these poems Buson created a hybrid form of expression that was neither traditional *haikai* nor Chinese *kanshi*. It was something in between that drew off the aesthetic traditions of both forms, yet blazed its own path that would live on long after Buson's death. These hybrid poems took Chinese poetic images and forms of construction, combined them with Japanese verses, and incorporated subject matter drawn from Buson's life. In taking this path, Buson began by looking back at his own childhood through allusions to his years in Kema. We learn about Buson's enigmatic past as he takes on the persona of a young man returning to the Yodo River to visit his home. As he walks along the river he meets a young girl returning from her employment as a domestic servant to visit her parents. Buson captures the mood of the girl in his free mixture of Japanese and Chinese verse to convey the bittersweet pleasure with which this girl anticipates her return. Throughout the eighteen verses that comprise this work, Buson juxtaposes images of delight and sorrow as the girl walks the banks of the river.

¹⁹⁵Otani and Fujita, 1992, pp. 203–5.

¹⁹⁶Zolbrod, 1988, p. 63.

In these poems' reflections on Buson's childhood home, we cannot help but think about his own daughter, who was far from home. It is as though Buson relied on his personal experience and thought more directly than he had in any of his earlier works. While remembering his past, he connected to his current experience through subtle allusion. Buson explained the thoughts behind this work in a letter to Ryūjo [柳女, dates unknown], a female poet in his group:

As for "Spring Wind on the Riverbank of Kema," Kema is my home village. When I was a child, on lonely spring days I always went to this river bank with friends and played there.... This poem is about a journey of a girl from Naniwa going to her parent's village home. And the landscape is like the one in a *kyogen* theater. The theater owner is this fellow, Yahantei. You may laugh about it. In fact, this poem is done because of the yearning of this foolish old man for the past.¹⁹⁷

Even as he lightly addressed his role as writer, Buson made it clear in this letter that this work was a blend of fiction and autobiographical reflection. This blending of the created and the remembered parallels the blending of Chinese and Japanese forms of expression, allowing us to see the many layers of Buson's poetry disguised by deceptively simple surface appearances.

Following this series of poems, a second series of verses entitled *Dengaka* explored the experience of a courtesan as she addressed a man leaving her to travel by boat down the Uji River to the Yodo River and on to Naniwa. In this work Buson also blended Chinese poems with Japanese forms to create a dense set of images. In his exploration, Buson brought the ideas of Chinese poets such as Wang Wei and Cao Zhi into his work while placing the narrative in his own world and connecting it to his own life.¹⁹⁸ This free blending of Chinese verse and Japanese poetic forms became one of the primary modes of

¹⁹⁷Edith Shiffert and Yuki Sawa, *Haiku Master Buson* (Union City, Calif.: Heian International, 1978), p. 31.

¹⁹⁸Zolbrod, 1990, p. 66.

expression attached to Buson, but he reached even further in an undated ¹⁹⁹ work to create in a mode of purely free verse that Japanese followers would not reinvestigate until the late nineteenth century, under the influence of Tennyson and Longfellow. Buson's free play with styles and forms of poetry demonstrated his strong conviction that the student must break from the model of his master in order to achieve a form of expression that truly reflects the author's immediate experience.

One further poem from Buson included in *Yahanraku* was entitled "The Old Nightingale":

春もややあなうぐるすよむかし声

Spring is almost gone— too bad for poor nightingale, who's lost his sweet song.²⁰⁰

This verse reveals Buson's belief that he had entered a late stage of his life, and he took on the guise of a bird whose voice had failed with the forward march of time. Of course, Buson was in his early sixties and at the peak of his career at this time, producing as much if not more poetry and painting than he had in any other year. It is as though he wished to see this period as the final phase of his work in which he would be able to relax and reflect on his past. Although retiring might have seemed appealing to Buson, he would not have the time to actually pursue this, as he soon embarked on a poetic creation that, in its conception, would become his largest body of collected poetry.

Following the publication of *Yahanraku*, Buson worked with Kitō, Tairo, and Goshun to create a two-page set of poetry and imagery evoking the cherry blossoms of Yoshinō.²⁰¹ This work took Buson a great deal of time, which led him to write a letter to

¹⁹⁹Shiffert and Sawa, 1978, p. 32. Shiffert and Sawa refer to a free verse entitled "Mourning for the Old Poet Hokuju" published in 1793, but possibly written as early as the 1730s. This was Buson's only experiment with purely free verse and was not studied by his followers until a century later, when the Western poets' works were being studied by the later *haikai* poets in Japan.

²⁰⁰Zolbrod, 1990, p. 616.

²⁰¹This kind of collaborative work was common among the subgroups of poets in Buson's circle.

Korekoma [維駒, dates unknown] that he would have made more money had he spent this time painting, but he let himself get trapped by his love of poetry.²⁰² He faced additional pressures on his time shortly after composing this work when his daughter left her husband and returned home because her new husband's household was apparently too focused on money, and she felt trapped.²⁰³ She divorced her new husband and came back to Kyoto to be with her parents. It is also possible that her health problems had returned, making it more desirable to be with her parents rather than trying to run her husband's household.²⁰⁴ Following Kuno's return, Buson set himself the task of writing ten poems a day for one hundred days to compose a notebook he would call *Shin hanatsumi* [新花摘]. The goal was to write one thousand poems, but Buson completed only seventeen days of composition before his previous health problems returned. It is possible that he was suffering from rheumatism resulting from the serious illness he had faced two years earlier.²⁰⁵

Buson filled the remaining space within his *Shin hanatsumi* with essays relating his experiences as a young man. This eventually formed a reflective text dedicated to the memory of his mother. The form of this text was based on works by Unribō, who it is recorded spent a summer secluded and composing poetry that he kept in a notebook, and a work by Kikaku entitled *Hanatsumi*, which contained one hundred verses dedicated to the memory of his late mother.²⁰⁶ Buson took these master's works as a model and tried to

He would follow this work with several others that were created by groups with entirely different memberships.

²⁰²Otani and Fujita, 1992, pp. 191–2.

²⁰³Buson wrote about this in a letter to Kitō dated to the seventh month. *Ibid.*, pp. 207–9.

²⁰⁴Buson wrote of her return with a mixture of joy and sadness as he explained the difficulty she faced with her new family in a letter to Masana dated to the 24th day of the fifth month. *Ibid.*, pp. 200–3.

²⁰⁵Ueda, 1998, p. 89.

²⁰⁶These texts were both products of the Hajin tradition and were likely quite familiar to Buson.

create a long work to remember his own mother. In the end he was not able to write all of the poems he wished to write, but he did, through poetry and prose, record much of the information we now have about his life as a young man. Although his failing health and the return of his daughter to his house were major factors in the decision to abandon the effort to write for one hundred days, Buson also faced the demands of his patrons for paintings and further writing, which hindered his attempt to isolate himself.

He wrote to Masana [正名, dates unknown] and Shunsaku [春作, dates unknown] in Osaka at the end of the fifth month that he had been so busy with his painting that he had time for little else and could hardly find time to write. He had promised these Osaka patrons a good painting soon, but expressed that he was feeling very melancholic and that his painting was suffering.²⁰⁷ He had already completed several paintings in the early months of the year, including an image of the Daoist warrior Guandi painted in the first month and an autumn landscape dated to the second month [Figures 103 and 104]. He also painted one of three versions of Mount Fuji emerging above pines in the fifth month [Figure 105] that would have been finished around the time of this letter. Although few other dated works seem to have been made during this time, several more paintings were likely made in the spring and early summer of this year, as Buson seems to imply that his painting was consuming a great deal of time. At the same time Buson continued to meet with the Yahantei group on a monthly basis, and in the summer he made an excursion to Osaka with his friends Kitō and Tairo. This excursion was apparently meant to resolve an argument that had arisen in the previous year in which Tairo had become involved with two courtesans who were also closely tied to a patron in Osaka. Buson had introduced Tairo to these women and seems to have felt responsible for the conflict. This situation resulted in Buson painting a work for one of the courtesans and attempting to reconcile the conflict

²⁰⁷Otani and Fujita, 1992, pp. 200–3.

with all of the parties involved.²⁰⁸

This kind of social awkwardness was something that must have been weighing on Buson's mind for some time, as it was through his solid social relationships that he was able to count on continued commissions. By having a rift evolving between people he had introduced, he ran the risk of alienating potential patrons in Osaka, and so he felt he had to fix the problem. Unfortunately, on this trip, Buson once again fell ill, and he wrote of his desire to return home to rest.²⁰⁹ Perhaps owing to his illness, Buson was unable to patch up the relationship between his friend and his patron to his satisfaction. He simply noted in a letter written after his return to Kyoto addressed to Masana and Shunsaku that he supposed that they had heard of the affair and then quickly changed the subject to poetry, as if to dismiss the event in its entirety.²¹⁰ With this event, Buson's struggle to keep the matters of his life in order became evident, and he seems to have needed some time to recover from the strain. He wrote to Kitō toward the end of the summer that he simply was without the energy to find poetic inspiration.²¹¹

Later in the year Buson's busy schedule continued to plague him as he completed further landscape paintings [Figure 106] and wrote a preface for *Shundei kushū* [春泥句集], which was written by Korekoma to memorialize his late father, Shōha. In this work Buson urged poets to use plain language and to search out inspiration in such distant places as the Chinese classics to produce poetry with a richness of allusion and immediacy drawn from their own experiences.²¹² With this writing Buson saw the year come to an end, but he continued to work on a large project that he started in 1775. In this work he illustrated

²⁰⁸Zolbrod, 1988, p. 74.

²⁰⁹Otani and Fujita, 1992, pp. 209–11.

²¹⁰*Ibid.*, 1992, pp. 214–16.

²¹¹*Ibid.*, 1992, pp. 207–9.

²¹²Zolbrod, 1988, p. 80.

the poetic travel journal of Bashō entitled *Oku-no-hosomichi*, which traced the poet's journey through northern Japan. Buson illustrated this work in six separate versions using the abbreviated *haiga* style to capture the poet's experiences. The earliest of these works appeared in 1776, but they continued to be produced until 1779 [Figure 107]. These paintings appear to be Buson's own personal effort to praise Bashō rather than a response to a particular patron's request. As a result, the task progressed slowly, often being put on hold as the many constraints on the artist's time forced him to focus on other projects.

In the third month of 1778, Buson once again traveled away from Kyoto with his friend Kitō to Osaka and the shore near modern Kobe. They traveled to meet with associates in the area and to compose poetry with these friends. In all, this trip took Buson out of Kyoto for about two weeks, giving him time to relax from the many pressures of his daily responsibilities. He wrote to Masana about the trip, focusing on the food he was able to eat while on the shore.²¹³ In the fifth month, after returning to Kyoto, Buson completed a pair of screens entitled *Nozarashikikō* [野ざらし紀行] [Figure 108]. Again working in the *haiga*-style, Buson created a work that took Bashō's text as a starting point for illustration, and he stated in a letter later in the year that he believed this to be his finest work to date.²¹⁴ In this pair of screens, as in the *Oku-no-hosomichi* illustrations, Buson revealed his love of Bashō's writing while bringing it into the present through quick, gestural drawings evocative of his idea that one take from the past and create in the present.

Around the same time, Buson painted another work of a traveler in the landscape that revealed his blending of the *haiga*-style with his more Chinese-derived landscape style [Figure 109]. Dated to the summer of 1778, this painting appears to replicate the compositions that Buson had been making for several years, but the horses and the traveler

²¹³Tanaka, 1996, p. 213.

²¹⁴Muramatsu, 1990, p. 129.

were drawn in an abbreviated manner that appears comic, rather than in the style he had nurtured since he began painting horses twenty years earlier. In this work his references to the art of Shen Nanpin are entirely absent; instead, he offered a novel form of expression that he would leave for his followers to appreciate and imitate. This work is signed with the name Sha Shunsei [謝春星], but in the following months Buson would turn to a new form of personal reference to coincide with the new stylistic mix he was investigating. A mountain landscape painted in the seventh month of 1778 first presents the name Shain [謝寅] in the signature on the work [Figure 110]. This signature may relate to the Ming Dynasty painter Tang Yin [唐寅, 1470–1523], who was then known in Japan as a “town painter” [市中の画家]. He was referred to by Takebe Ryōtai as one who lived in the city and sold his paintings to the town-folk as a means of supporting himself.²¹⁵ Buson must have seen himself as working in the same vein at this time, as he adopted his new name through combining the *Sha* of Yosa and the *in* of Tang Yin.²¹⁶ Buson would continue to use the Shain name through the end of his life as the most common self-reference on his paintings.

In the winter of 1778 Buson painted a work that does not present the new Shain name, but reveals him still working with a wide variety of styles [Figure 111]. In this small landscape, Buson’s brushwork and composition appear to have narrowed in their range of expression as he explored the mood of the scene, dwelling on the empty pavilion in the rich atmosphere of a forest grove. This work may have been produced about the time Buson’s close friend Tairo died at the age of forty-nine. This death, like so many that had occurred within Buson’s circle of associates, left him greatly saddened, as Tairo had been one of the founders of the Yahantei group. As seen in the conflict between Buson’s patrons and Tairo

²¹⁵Takahashi, 2000, p. 413.

²¹⁶Tanaka, 1996, p. 215.

two years earlier, he had been a friend who Buson would go to great lengths to assist. Perhaps the solemn and cold character of the small painting of an empty pavilion is a reaction to the loss of this close friend and the immediate realization of his own mortality, which Buson must have been feeling as he struggled with his own health conditions.

Buson continued to meet with the members of the Yahantei group through the end of 1778 and into 1779, when he and his associates Kitō, Korekoma, Dōryū [道立, 1738–1812], Hyakuchi, and Gekkyo [月居, 1756–1824] formed a *renku* writing group called *Danrinkai* [檀林会]. For this group, the poets established a set of seven rules that demonstrated the seriousness with which they undertook this effort:

1. The traditional rules of *haikai* are never to be broken.
2. Critique of the *renku* and *hokku* is to be done by general discussion of the members.
3. If someone is absent, his verses may be composed jointly by other members present at the meeting.
4. Members will take turns in writing the opening verse.
5. The workshop will meet on the twentieth of each month. A meeting is to be held even when there are only two members present.
6. No reminder about the meeting date will be sent. Members should reserve the designated date and attend the meeting without prior notification. If a meeting has to be canceled for some reason, the secretary of the workshop will inform the members. A meeting will convene after breakfast and adjourn at the end of the day.
7. The membership fee of one hundred *hiki* should be paid to the secretary biannually. The fee will be the same regardless of the member's attendance record.²¹⁷

This set of rules spells out the rigid guidelines under which these poets worked. As the names included reveal, these are all friends of Buson who had engaged in other poetry gatherings, but these rules suggest that a standardized system was necessary to ensure the

²¹⁷Ueda, 1998, p. 123.

poetry was written. As the leader among these poets, Buson would be expected to attend monthly, but it is clear from the records of the meetings that he frequently was absent.²¹⁸ In addition, the annual fee for membership indicates that there was always a cost these poets had to face in order to pursue their art.²¹⁹

The *Danrinkai* met at Daimonjiya [大文字屋] in Kyoto throughout the rest of 1779, but the group failed to complete the thirty-six verses that comprise a complete *kasen*. At the first meeting they completed twenty-five verses, and at the second meeting they similarly finished only a portion of a *kasen*. As they strove to create a full set of verses while critiquing their creations, it became clear that the group, while rigidly organized, was a bit more loosely structured than the rules suggest. At the seventh meeting only two members were in attendance, and it would take until the last meeting of the year for them to actually write a full *kasen*.²²⁰ This slow and seemingly focused effort led to the writing of some successful individual poems, but overall it was not a broadly successful endeavor. This may have been due in part to the rigidity of the rules the poets established and to Buson's many obligations to paint and write for other poets' anthologies and collections of verses.

During the period of these meetings, Buson painted further *Oku-no-hosomichi* images and several other works that reveal his broad use of many styles. A painting dated to the spring of 1779 shows Buson working in a refined Chinese style as he created a work of three figures in a peach grove [Figure 112]. This work was followed later in the year by two paintings that take plums and rocks as their focus [Figures 113 and 114]. Finally, a

²¹⁸Oiso Yoshio [大磯義雄], *Yosa Buson* [与謝蕪村] (Haikai shirizu [俳諧シリーズ], Ōrisha, 1966), p. 98.

²¹⁹Although an explanation for the use of the funds raised through collecting this fee is not recorded, it was likely used to offset the costs of publishing the poetry written by the group.

²²⁰Ueda, 1998, p. 124.

landscape depicting a deer in an autumn forest shows Buson in command of an extremely diverse range of techniques and approaches at this time [Figure 115]. This seems to be a period in which his life had settled into a pattern of painting for commissions and writing when he was free to think, but he seemed to have lost some of his vigor, and now produced his works in a more gradual fashion. Although new images appeared with some regularity, they seem to have reiterated themes and styles that had been a part of Buson's working manner for a number of years. He would not display a significant change in his work until late in the following year, when he began another phase of intensive painting. This active push to complete many works seems to have lasted until he fell ill for the final time in 1783.

In the spring of 1780, Buson continued to be involved in the *Danrinkai* meetings and produced many *hokku* with the members of the group, but the idea of producing *renku* seems to have fallen by the wayside, as they only mentioned one event where a full thirty-six poems were attempted.²²¹ Instead, Buson seems to have begun to focus on producing *renku* privately with the assistance of Kitō in a series of letters that allowed the poets a great deal of time to think about their compositions. In these letters we also learn about another interest of Buson's that seems to have consumed a great deal of time in the early months of the year. He wrote about a number of women in the tea houses, in particular stressing his enjoyment with Koito [小糸, dates unknown], Kohina [小雛, dates unknown], Ishimatsu [石松, dates unknown], and Kotono [琴野, dates unknown].²²² These women were twenty years or more younger than Buson, and they seem to have led him to spend much of the money he had on hand at the time. Buson's engagement with these women suggests that he was far from being a retiring old man. He retained his love

²²¹*Ibid.*, p. 127.

²²²Mentioned in a letter to Dōryū dated to the fourth month. Tanaka, 1996, p. 229.

of life and of entertainment as he aged and, even in the face of the many demands on his time, he found the means and time to play in the Kyoto tea houses. Perhaps this love of expensive entertainments explains why there were several paintings dated to this year made for Sumiya [Figure 116], where Buson may have had debts that his paintings could cover.

As the year progressed, Buson and Kitō produced a pair of *kasen* published late in the year under the title *Momo sumomo*[桃李] or *Peaches and Plums*. This work came about through the exchange of at least eighteen letters between the poets. They refined their work and came to agreement on a final version to which Buson would append a preface explaining his views on how poetry should be created.

I do not know exactly when, but I used to have four sequences of *kasen* that corresponded to the four seasons. Of those four, the ones on spring and autumn have vanished, leaving only the summer and winter ones. Someone wanted to engrave these *kasen* on wood blocks for publication. But someone else tried to dissuade me.

“It has been some years since these *kasen* were written,” he said. “Very likely they will look obsolete in comparison with the style of *haikai* now in vogue.”

“*Haikai* is an open-minded fellow,” I replied, smiling. “It may seem there is a specific style of the day, but actually there is not. This can be compared to a line of people running round in a circular course. The runner heading the line looks as if he were following the last runner, who is lagging one lap behind. How can we tell which is the leading poetic style? All we can do is copy out what lies in our minds day by day. Today produces today’s *haikai*, and tomorrow will lead to tomorrow’s *haikai*.”²²³

In this preface Buson first distanced himself from the production of these poems by noting that the first *hokku* in each work was written several years earlier, but simultaneously he misled the reader by implying that the entire composition was written earlier. This was not

²²³Ueda, 1998, pp. 131–2.

the case, but it strengthened the point he stressed in saying that there was no real separation between that which was new and that which came earlier. By saying this, Buson was entering again into a pattern of reflecting on his own course of development in creating new works. He did the same in his painting of this period, as he returned to some of the compositions he had used in earlier years. Although he repeated some aspects of his earlier works, he made them new by wrapping the old themes with a contemporary aura derived from his immediate experience in the present.

Buson painted a variety of works in 1780 that display his use of old and new ideas simultaneously. A set of small sliding doors decorated with images of rocks and trees with a small empty pavilion, based on the images of Tang Yin in the *Hasshu gafu*, seems to capture this blend clearly [Figure 117]. In other works he returned to the figure style he had practiced during the previous decade, as he painted images of Hanshan and Shide paired with an image of a village leader [Figure 118]. These paintings appear to capture the wavering line of his earlier paintings with a close study of the figures' faces and a vibrant style used to depict the rocks, similar to that used in his works of the previous year. Still later in the year, he returned to painting tall landscapes with rustic figures and animals [Figures 119 and 120]. These appear to capture something of his studies of the Chinese painting manuals while revealing a new bluntness in the depiction of the figures and horses, which relates to the *haiga* style. All of these works are signed Shain and reveal Buson to have been in a period of reflection as he created them. The works reveal within themselves layers of blending. He blended the styles of his paintings made as a young man with those he painted as a more mature artist. In addition, he began to blend the styles of Chinese painting with those of Japanese sources, such as the Kanō school and the *haiga* tradition of which he was a leading member. These blended forms became fully hybrid as

they incorporated themes drawn from Buson's past and present. He found inspiration in the imagery of Chinese poetry and history, but conflated these sources with imagery drawn from Japanese tradition to create a rich tapestry of ideas that would come to define his career for those who followed him.

Following the completion of *Momo Sumomo*, Buson dedicated less time to poetry and turned to painting with greater intensity. The *Danrinkai* group met only once for the New Year of 1781, and then may have fallen apart, as Buson and his colleagues pursued other interests. In the spring of 1781, Buson painted several large landscape screens similar to those painted in the 1760s, indicating that patron requests may have continued to place demands on his time. In the second month he painted a pair of scrolls depicting the *Peach Blossom Spring* [Figure 121], which reveal the manner in which Buson could bring together the forms of his older and newer works. In this work the highly modulated lines of Buson's earlier figures stand alone without an effort made to depict the folding of the cloth with washes of varying tones. Instead, Buson used a broad wash to fill the spaces within his images, giving them a simplified form that recalls some of his Kanō-inspired works. Yet, the faces of these figures are shown with a distinct personality that seems to suggest the figures' joy as they converse beneath the flowering peaches. Buson produced many paintings dealing with aged figures in scenes like this during the spring, perhaps as a reaction to his own advancing age. These paintings continue into the fifth month, when the reconstruction of Basho-an once again came to take up a great deal of his time. Six years earlier, Buson and his associates had decided to rebuild the hut on the grounds of Kompuku-ji, but it had languished until now. The return to the restoration of this building led Buson to write a revised version of his *Record of the Reconstruction of the Basho-an in Eastern Kyoto*, which commemorated this building and paid homage to Bashō's

leadership.²²⁴

At about this time Buson painted several more works dealing with aged figures in blossoming peach groves [Figure 122]. In these works he returned to a more refined line to depict the garments of these Chinese figures, but their faces are those of Buson's later paintings, in which the personalities and idiosyncrasies of these men are made evident to the viewer. He continued in this vein as he painted several images of Guo Zhi [郭子], a commander of the Tang Dynasty, surrounded by attendants and scholars [Figure 123]. These images show a return to the figure style of the 1770s, with a precise and refined line and graded washes to suggest the undulating folds of the figures' robes. Buson here seems to have been continuing in his focus on aged figures living lives filled with prestige and joy. In another vein, Buson completed a pair of screens [Figure 124] that show a similarity to the work of Maruyama Ōkyo [円山応挙, 1733–1795], who worked a few minutes away from Buson in Kyoto. There are records of these two artists having collaborated in the writing of poetry, but their painting styles differed in most cases, as Ōkyo pursued a form of painting derived from Kanō and other Japanese sources. Buson's student Goshun would later move to study with Ōkyo following Buson's death, suggesting that these two artists were closer than their imagery may suggest in the modern day.

In the sixth month Buson painted yet another image of the *Peach Blossom Spring*, focused this time on the figure of a boatman poling his way toward the cave that leads to the land of the immortals [Figure 125]. In this work Buson returned to dwelling on the face as a means of displaying the figure's humanity as he drifts toward the utopia ahead. This work was made for the Sumiya, where Buson continued to spend a significant amount of time in the company of young women.²²⁵ A similar approach appears in a pair of images of

²²⁴Ueda, 1998, pp. 92–3.

Wan Zuyu visiting the recluse Dai Andao in winter [Figure 126]. In this work the figures are comparatively small, but Buson's characteristic figure is staring out of the image toward the viewer as he is poled along in a low boat. Buson was still focusing on aged Chinese figures in these works, but it becomes difficult to separate these figures from images of Buson himself as he lived the life of the retiring scholar, playing when he was not painting or writing.

He created another pair of images of Hanshan and Shide in the eighth month [Figure 127]. These showed a looser style of painting in which the faces of the figures became almost ferocious in their withered age. Looking back over the many images of these poets that Buson painted throughout his career, it is as though the poets aged along with the painter to become these gnarled figures standing in their rumpled robes. About this time, Buson joined Kitō and Gekkyo in their ten-round *hokku* contest [十番句合]. Buson functioned as the judge for this event as he evaluated each of the poet's contributions. In his comments Buson spelled out the allusions of each poet's work and went on to decide which poems were most in keeping with his values in writing *haikai*.²²⁶

In the tenth month Buson returned to painting landscape imagery, and he created a pair of spring and autumn images with small figures and flowing land forms that revealed his comfort with this theme [Figure 128]. This work was followed by another pair of images of a figure returning to his home in a mountain valley and a deer in an autumn landscape [Figure 129]. These works show Buson at his best, as he created complex scenes with figures engaged in their surroundings. A soft use of the brush gives a sense of

²²⁵Buson's reasons for spending a significant amount of time at Sumiya and other entertainment establishments were most likely more complex than I have suggested here. The entertainers were a source of pleasure and became students. The owners were patrons and, in some cases, students. Buson managed to both work and play at these establishments through the final years of his life.

²²⁶Ueda, 1998, 136.

fantasy to these places, coming not from Chinese models or Japanese tradition, but from Buson's own spirited sense of composition. A set of four sliding doors with landscapes and figures painted in the winter of 1781 [Figure 130] also reveals this approach to painting. The spaces, which might once have been filled with monumental land forms and complexly arrayed structures and foliage, now were sparsely painted, with carefree figures walking along a shallow landscape space resting in a misty environment neither connected to the world of the viewer nor an identifiable distant land. These are landscapes of Buson's mind, and they captured his sense of vitality tinged with the wisdom of a seasoned painter and imagistic poet.

In the winter Buson wrote a preface for his friend Kyōtai's unpublished thirty-three-volume commemoration of Bashō's death entitled *Fūra nenbutsu* [風羅念仏]. In his preface Buson likened this collection of Bashō's poetry to the *Kūya nenbutsu* [空也念仏, 10th century], in which the hymns of the itinerant monk Kūya were collected and recited to invoke the favor of the Buddha Amida.²²⁷ Here Buson connected his early life as a lay-monk in the Pureland tradition to his later life as a poet, and drew the parallel between praise of Bashō and praise of Amida.

As the year came to a close, Buson once again fell ill. By this time he seems to have been afflicted regularly in the cold months, as his health gradually worsened. In the spring of 1782 Buson recovered once again, and he had the time to paint several images of Jurō [Figure 131] and rice bales [Figure 132]. These relatively simple paintings have an immediacy that is like *haiga*, but they are unaccompanied by poetry and stand solely as images. At the same time Buson painted a work depicting a rustic farmer feeding a horse [Figure 133]. In this work Buson moves far from the Shen Nanpin-style that he had used

²²⁷Matsuo et al., 1990, pp. 95–6.

in the past in favor of a comic style that reveals a strongly anthropomorphized presentation of the horse and a similarly animal-like presentation of the farmer as he moves toward the stable. Following his engagement with the Yahantei group to compose poetry for the New Year, Buson finally had the time to enjoy himself, so he made a trip to Yoshino to view the cherry blossoms. He had been wishing to make this journey for some time but had been too busy to travel.²²⁸ He stayed at Yoshino for some time, returning to Kyoto on the seventeenth day of the third month. He composed a poem on his return that expresses what he saw:

花を吞で雲を吐なりよしの山

They swallow the blossoms and belch forth the clouds— the Yoshino hills.²²⁹

In this poem the heavy atmosphere of rainy mountains in Yoshino is presented as swallowing the cherry blossoms while clouds emerge from their valleys. This poem parallels another that may be a reworking of this verse:

雲を吞で花を吐なりよしの山

They swallow the clouds and belch forth the blossoms— the Yoshino hills.²³⁰

These two versions of the poem are extremely close, but they show Buson to have been working with these ideas and revising them carefully to evaluate the subtle differences of meaning. This is parallel to the practice he seems to have followed in making several subtly different versions of some of his paintings. Perhaps he hit upon versions he liked better than others, but in many cases it is difficult to evaluate them beyond saying that they differ

²²⁸Buson describes this trip in a letter to Dōryū dated to the fourth month of 1782. Ōtani and Fujita, 1992, pp. 337–8.

²²⁹Ueda, 1998, p. 138.

²³⁰This poem has also been translated to read: “Mount Yoshino has swallowed up the clouds and now spits cherry-petals forth in crowds.” “Swallowing the clouds, vomiting forth cherry-blossom, Mount Yoshino!” Zolbrod, 1990, p. 597.

slightly in their structure or mood. A second image of the farmer feeding the horse mentioned above was painted in this manner, where the primary subject matter is replicated while the surrounding landscape is slightly altered [Figure 134].

Later in the spring of 1782, Buson compiled a volume entitled *Kachōhen* [花鳥篇], or *Birds and Flowers*. This volume was entirely transcribed and illustrated by Buson, and the poets whose works appear were joined by those of several of the women with whom Buson had been associating over the past two years. Included in this work are poems by Ume, Kotonō, Koito, and Ishimatsu.²³¹ These women's works are intermingled with the poetry of Buson and Kitō, but it was the erotic overtones of some of the poetic exchanges between Buson and the women that gave this spring volume its power. The work was published at the end of the fifth month. At around this time Buson seems to have been wrestling with the apparent conflict between his love of entertainment and the company of women and the aesthetic sentiment of *sabi* praised by Bashō. Although it is clear Buson followed Bashō's work as his primary model, he seems to have been unable to separate himself from the enjoyment he found in the pleasures of more common people. He wrote in a letter to Dōryū in 1780 that he understood how his relationship with Koito appeared and that he would restrain himself in his interactions with her.²³² Now, two years later, he seems to have continued his affair with Koito and drew her into his work as he published her poetry in *Kachōhen*. This episode reveals a central facet of Buson's life: he remained tied to his love of the mundane world in a manner that ran counter to the ideals of the Bashō tradition. Buson's individual character came through as he played in the entertainment

²³¹Matsuo et al., 1990, p. 97. Buson's relationship to these women was both as a customer and as a mentor or teacher. This type of relationship was likely not that unusual, as the entertainments of *haikai*, the theater, tea houses, and brothels were all part of the fabric of Kyoto life. Buson's affair with Koito is an example of just how close these worlds were.

²³²Otani and Fujita, 1992, pp. 288–90.

district and formed relationships with people far outside the traditional realm of *haikai* to create a circle of associations that blended the high and low in a song of praise for the enjoyment of life.

This unstoppable joy and constant willingness to play is as apparent in Buson's painting of his later years as it is in his poetry. In a painting of a traveler on horseback and a porter beneath the branches of a peach tree, some of this joyful quality is expressed by the smiling face of one of the figures as he stares out at the viewer [Figure 135]. This type of image became the norm for many of Buson's later paintings, as he seems to have been engaged in playing with his imagery as he enjoyed his free time in his waning years. A pair of large screens painted around this time reveals how he took this joyful stance even in painting landscape imagery [Figure 136]. In this particular work, Buson paints on a surface of silver leaf that gives the work a shimmering quality as the ink slides across the smooth medium. In the small spaces surrounded by buildings in each of these screens, people interact and enjoy their lives as they look out of the image. This image, like the images of the *Peach Blossom Spring* made in the previous couple of years, presented a utopia within which the figures live a charmed life. It is as though Buson took the imagery of fantasy from Chinese fables and made it contemporary by depicting common people engaged not in struggling to survive, but rather in enjoying the pleasures of their lives.

The enjoyment of these pleasures appeared central to Buson's life in this year, but he was also aware of the need for temperance in his activities. He wrote to Kitō in the eighth month that from that day forward he would stop drinking.²³³ His love of women and pleasure was not to end, but Buson saw a need to control his life. From this point forward Buson did not seem to suffer from the illnesses he had faced in earlier years as he

²³³Tanaka, 1996, p. 243.

aggressively pursued his writing and painting. Perhaps the illnesses that had plagued him for the last decade were in part exacerbated by his enjoyment of drink, but it is clear that, because of his advancing age, he faced the need to restrain himself in order to continue his work.

About this time, Buson wrote a preface to *Haikai seimei* [俳諧正名], or the *Correct Use of Haikai Topics*, published by Yamamoto Rokyō [山本鷲喬] in the ninth month, in which he addressed the idea of *sarikirai* [去嫌], which prohibited the repeated use of the same words in verse:

The rules of *sarikirai* that appear in many *haikai* books should not be violated. On the other hand, *haikai* is a living thing. If the occasion warrants, breaking the rule should become the rule. A *haikai* rule is like a season that changes with the passage of time. What *sarikirai* stipulates is like the weather, which may bring wind, rain, heat, or cold. It changes infinitely.²³⁴

In this passage Buson demonstrated how he justified his own practice, as it occasionally violated the standard rules of *haikai* composition, but he also urged younger *haikai* students to follow the rules until they achieved the status of mature poets. In this statement Buson continued to fill his role as the leader of his circle while leaving room for his own eccentricity in *haikai* composition. Late in the year, Buson began work on an anthology of his own poetry that he hoped to publish, but it would remain incomplete at the time of his death and would have to be finished by Kitō in the following year.

At this time Buson painted several works, including a depiction entitled *Gathering of One Hundred Old Men* [百老聚星], which displayed more than eighty figures arrayed in a rocky landscape [Figure 137].²³⁵ This painting provided Buson with the opportunity to

²³⁴Ueda, 1998, p. 143.

²³⁵The title of this painting is inscribed on the work as *One Hundred Old Stars*, but in counting the figures, it appears to present only eighty-seven. The use of “one hundred” and “stars” in the title is simply a manner of saying “many old men.”

represent many aged figures engaged in a host of different activities as they interact in their landscape environment. Although many of the hundred figures are practicing writing or are drinking together around tables, some of them once again stare out of the image to connect with the viewer. It is as if the old men of the painting were connecting with the old painter sitting before this image. The activities displayed in this image are those of the Chinese scholar and sage, but among these figures are several symbols of age, which may have been Buson's primary focus. At the center of the image a crane stands in a small clear area among the old men, and at the upper left of the image a cluster of figures surrounds Jurō as he reclines among the rocks. The inclusion of these symbols makes clear that this image is not simply a presentation of Chinese scholars, but is specifically an homage to the triumph of old age and the importance of aged people. Even as he presented these old figures, Buson retained his light and humorous quality as he displayed some of his figures leaning on each other and laughing as they interact.

As 1782 came to a close, Buson remained healthy for the first time in several years, perhaps due to his new temperance. In the first month of 1783 he painted a bold work depicting large rocks floating in an undefined space [Figure 138]. This painting was a large-scale re-creation of a compositional type Buson had practiced several times in the preceding years, but it took on a powerful and exotic character in this presentation. The imagery for this screen was drawn directly from the illustrations in the *Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting*, but it shows Buson adopting a form that the Chinese composer of the manual did not likely intend. The bold brushwork and dynamic array of forms across the surface of the screen create a fantasy world like that of his figural paintings, but the subject is now almost purely abstract. It is as though he allowed the eccentricity of some of his poetry to enter his painting fully in this work as the rocks float in the unbounded space of the paper screen.

Buson joined his associates for a meeting of the *Danrinkai* in the first month of 1783 to compose a New Year's collection of poems, which indicates his continued vitality. He joined this group again in the third month to commemorate Bashō in a centennial celebration of the great poet.²³⁶ The poets met seven times to compose verses dedicated to the memory of Bashō, and Buson was present for at least two of these events at Kompuku-ji in the newly restored Bashō-an.²³⁷ Buson's poetry for these events followed the lead of Ryōtai, who functioned as leader of these events. Having arrived from Nagoya, he was met by Buson's large contingent of followers and seems to have found great support for his praise of Bashō at these meetings. Following the celebration at Kompuku-ji, Buson met with the Yahantei group regularly through the late spring and summer and continued to create many of his most thoughtful poems.

At this time he was commissioned by Gichū-ji [義仲寺] in Ōtsu to paint a set of *fusuma* depicting mountain peaks entitled *Kōgaku rochō* [衡岳露頂] [Figure 139]. This work, now mounted as a pair of two-panel screens, revealed a sparse style. It depicts the peaks through flowing linear strokes and clusters of black dots, which indicate foliage emerging through the mist, hiding the distant mountains. Like the abstract rocks painted in the first month, this work used landscape forms to create an abstract pattern of shapes and textures flowing across the space. The style of these screens might be derived from the painting manuals, but it is with an eye to the abstract play of forms and brushwork across the surface that the artist has turned in these bold compositions.

As the summer progressed, Buson continued to meet with his associates and to paint, creating another image of the hundred old men in the autumn and a painting of an autumn landscape with figures returning to a rustic hut, which would be his last dated

²³⁶It had been only ninety years since Bashō's death, but on the insistence of Kyōtai this event was called a centennial. Ueda, 1998, p. 146.

²³⁷Ueda, 1998, p. 146.

painting [Figure 140]. This work offers a kind of closure to the many years of painting the artist accomplished. In this image a small figure walks away from the viewer as he approaches a rustic hut. He is like the many figures who have been shown peering out of Buson's images to look the viewer in the eye, but he is now turned away, leaving us to imagine his progress to another place within the fantastic world of Buson's landscapes. After painting this work, Buson traveled to visit friends in Uji outside Kyoto, where they went to the forest to hunt for mushrooms. Although this was a successful hunting trip, the impact it had on Buson's health was dramatic. He wrote to Kitō in the eleventh month that he was suffering from a chronic ailment that gave him great pain in his chest. He believed he would not recover from this sickness and that his days were drawing to a close.²³⁸ Buson was correct, for he died at the age of sixty-eight on the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month of 1783 (January 17, 1784, by the Western calendar). In the hours prior to his death Buson had Goshun come to his bedside to take down his last poems. He wrote:

冬鶯むかし王維が垣根哉

Winter warbler ages ago, on the hedge of Wang Wei.²³⁹

うぐひすや何ごそかす藪の霜

Warbler, what are you doing to cause that rustle? Frost in the bush.²⁴⁰

しら梅に明くる夜ばかりとなりにけり

From now on every night will dawn with white plum blossoms.²⁴¹

²³⁸Otani and Fujita, 1992, pp. 383–4.

²³⁹Ueda, 1998, p. 153. This poem has also been translated to read: "Winter nightingale— ages ago you would sing in Wang Wei's hedgerow." "Winter uguisu— long ago in Wang Wei's garden hedge too!" Zolbrod, 1990, p. 619.

²⁴⁰Ueda, 1998, p. 153. This poem has also been translated to read: "Uguisu! What is that rustling? Frost on the bushes." "Little nightingale, why are you fidgeting in your frosty grove?" Zolbrod, 1990, p. 564.

²⁴¹Ueda, 1998, p. 153. This poem has also been translated to read: "Every night from now will dawn from the white plum-tree." "White plum blossoms— in the night I thought I saw the light of dawn."

With his final poem recorded, Buson expressed his knowledge that his time was short and spoke his last words. “The time has come for me to leave this world. Is the night still deep?”²⁴²

“For white plum blossoms, time has come for the day to break.” “White flowering plums— already the time has come for the night to end.” Zolbrod, 1990, p. 574.

²⁴²Ueda, 1998, p. 153. 今ぞ世を辞すべきの時なり、夜はまだ深きや？Takahashi, 2000, pp. 531–2.

Chapter 8: Selected Paintings

1771–1783

The paintings from the last thirteen years of Buson's life remain in part imitative and in part appropriative, but these compositions manifest the artist's greatest contribution to the development of Japanese literati painting. Through their blending of approaches to image-making, themes drawn from a range of Chinese and Japanese sources, and a characteristic mood that emerges from Buson's individual personality, these works embody the hybrid style of the Japanese *bunjin* painter. In his youth Buson was primarily a follower of Chinese painting traditions, as well as a Japanese poet, but during the last thirteen years of his life, he brought these different roles together in creating the paintings that form the mature portion of his oeuvre. In his maturity he managed to cull through the various ideas he had mastered earlier to create works that, while still resonating with the various sources of his inspiration, present a body of unique creations that became a model for several generations of followers. This discussion of a few major works from this period is intended to explore the range of styles and compositions that contributed to the formation of Buson's hybrid style of painting.

Ten Pleasures

A fitting beginning for an analysis of Buson's mature paintings is his set of ten album leaves entitled *Ten Pleasures* [Figures 83 and 84]. To understand this set of works, it is first valuable to look at the set as a whole as it moves through the various presentations of the pleasures of rural life. Each of the images is approximately eighteen centimeters square and is created on slightly rough paper that has browned with age. Their small size gives these images an intimate quality that draws the viewer into the scenes in order to

study the jewel-like representations of landscapes, and in the cases of summer, evening, wind, and night, small figures engaged with their surroundings. The brushwork in each of these images and the application of color are varied to fit with the distinct pleasure being presented.

The willows in the spring scene are colored with green washes surrounding the clustered marks of their twigs, and the summer image reveals yellow, blue, green, and gray washes applied over black leaf shapes. In the distance the summer leaves have been depicted with tiny dots of blue and green pigment. The autumn scene reveals leaves emerging from the major branches of the trees, painted using orange and yellow pigments. This approach was abandoned in the winter scene, as the color was replaced by various tones of gray and black to depict the cold of the season. Color reappears in the evening scene as a faint blue wash surrounding the leaves of a single tree, and faint colored lines and dots mark the surfaces of the ground and the wall of a structure. In the pleasure of wind scene, color is once again prominent and used to depict the branches of a willow and to color the trunk and surround the needles of a pine at the right. It is also used as a green and brown wash to color the ground surfaces in this image, giving the scene an idyllic character. The final four images of clearing, night, rain, and solitude are painted with primarily gray ink and some slight use of orange and blue pigments. The use and variation of these colors propels the viewers' eyes from leaf to leaf through the album, creating a rhythm of images shifting slightly with the changing sentiments of the scenes.

This rhythm is also expressed through the individual brush strokes used in each scene. Spring displays a crisp, dry brush line used in short strokes to depict willows along a shore. In the image of summer, a similarly dry brush line is used to create the tree trunks, but a much wetter line depicts the leaves of several types of trees created through patterns of round, hooked, and hanging forms. The dry brush of the spring scene appears in the

land and hut in the autumn scene, but its appearance is diminished in the winter scene to the point where only a few strokes of this type are visible in the texturing of the mountain forms and in the ground surface at the lower right. In the evening scene, the dry brush is once again dominant, and the tree, rock, structure, and figure are all created with scratchy, dry lines. In the wind scene the lines are almost entirely devoid of the dry character and reveal instead a wet flowing line that depicts each of the forms. For the scene of clearing, Buson used the dry brush extensively to depict the churning mountain forms, with only a slight bluish wash in the valley and on the distant peaks. The night scene, in contrast, was created entirely with moist strokes that flow over the many land and tree forms emerging in the light of the moon. In the last two scenes of rain and clouds, the dry brush lines are mixed with moist washes to depict the rain and with wet black strokes to texture the hills. Dense gray washes are used to depict the clouds. The presence of dry lines and moist washes, as well as thick wet brushstrokes, appear to emerge and fade as the scenes progress through the various pleasures, giving the entire set visual rhythms that emerge and fade as the album progresses.

The rhythm of brushstrokes is complemented by the rhythm of the compositions, which move from close-up presentations of the landscape appearing to connect with the space of the viewer to distant landscapes, above which the viewer hovers to observe the space. Beginning with spring, the land emerges at the right side as a rising slope that gradually recedes to the willow-covered bank. A path moves our view along this bank as it curves into the scene from behind the first rise of the land and recedes back toward the right, behind the branches of a foreground willow. The distance is left empty, making this entire scene appear to lie within our reach. This close presentation of the landscape is repeated in the summer scene, as the land rises in the foreground and is marked by large trees and a hut, within which a figure sits staring out at the viewer. Behind the hut more

trees rise to cut off our view in the middle-ground, placing all of this image in a shallow space, as in the previous scene. The figure in this scene helps to reinforce this close-up presentation as his gaze becomes the point of primary focus in the work. He is shown with a slight red smile and a posture that suggests complete contentment. His garments slide off his right shoulder, leaving his chest and arm bare, and he is slumped to his right in a comfortable posture suggestive of the heat of a summer day.

The closeup composition is pushed slightly further into the middle-ground in the autumn scene. Rocks and a few trees emerge in the foreground, and a garden wall or fence crosses the scene, descending from the right in a broad curve to a gate at the left. This dividing line separates us from the middle-ground space, which reveals a hut at the right and dense foliage to the left. Beyond this space, high textured mountain peaks rise at the right, and wash-defined peaks rise at the center of the image. In this scene we are drawn into the space by a path that approaches the gate at the left, but we are then propelled into a distant space that seems much less closely associated with our viewing location. The depth of this scene is enhanced even more in the winter scene. We now seem to float in the air above a landscape emerging as a set of hills, which we look down on in the foreground. A cluster of houses in a grove of tall trees in the middle-ground rests at the right. At the left, a mountain rises to fill the scene with complex curving lines and horizontal slashes that suggest vegetation growing in the distance. At the right side above the trees, we can see far into the distance across a blank area that suggests water with rising hills on its far shore. These distant hills appear as low-lying horizontal strokes of ink fading into a hazy background. In this scene we are kept at a distance by our high vantage point and the lack of an obvious path leading into the scene.

The pattern of closeup presentation, middle-ground presentation, and distanced presentation of the landscape is repeated in the later images in the series. The next scene,

evening, is again a closeup presentation with no depiction of the distance. The effect of the wind is depicted in the middle-ground space with a sharply rising landscape that cuts off our view of the distance. A far range of hills, indicated by a few wavering lines of ink at the left of the painting, faintly suggest depth. The pleasure of clearing is presented as a distanced view observed from a position above the landscape, and the pleasure of night is once again presented in a closeup fashion. In the night scene, we are also presented with a view into the distance, but the uniform use of wet gray ink in the foreground and in the distance seems to reduce the sense of recession within the scene. Perhaps to imitate moonlight flooding over the land forms in this scene, Buson used a uniform color and brushwork to paint this image. To connect this scene with the viewer, he again used a figure staring out of a hut at the left side of the work, giving us the sense that we are a part of this image. In the final two scenes, the viewer is again placed in an elevated position looking down into the landscapes. The pleasure of rain allows us to enter the scene along a stream flowing out through the right corner of the painting. Beyond the stream a crude pavilion stands among trees, and a band of mist descends to separate this space from the distant mountains. In the pleasure of solitude, we are lifted even higher in our view as we look down on a set of roofs in the foreground and a bridge that emerges at the center and curves up to the left. At the right, further roofs emerge from behind trees and disappear into a thick band of clouds that crosses the scene from the right side to the left. Above this white band a series of distant peaks rises at the left, marked by dark horizontal strokes that suggest trees and clouds covering these forms. In each of the scenes the viewer is moved to a new position, which allows the experience of a variety of different vantage points and distances that progress through the pages of this album.

Although much of the rhythm of this album has precedence in Chinese and other Japanese painters' works, it is critical to note some of the more inventive aspects of these

images. In the pleasure of evening, the representation of reflected light making patterns of waves on the surface of a plastered wall is particularly interesting. The orange lines undulating across the scene in front of the hunched figure walking in his garden suggest Buson was thinking about the play of light in the evening as it tinges the world with color. These waves of light become the focus of both the figure in the scene and the viewer, as the wall fills a majority of the right side of the image. The entire scene is suffused with this orange light that touches the trunk of the tree to the left of the figure and the edge of the pond in the foreground. By connecting the various parts of this scene with orange light, Buson created an image that is both visually intriguing and warmly inviting in its subtle presentation of the feel of this moment near the end of the day. Like the novelty of the light in this scene, the sense of flat moonlight presented in the pleasure of night is particularly interesting. In this image the use of uniform brush strokes and ink tonalities, repeated in the foreground and distance, effectively communicates the experience of viewing the landscape at night. Even the moon hanging in the sky is painted with the pale gray that appears throughout this scene. It is as though the world is transformed by a silvery light that only fades in the shadows of the trees and rocks closest to the viewer. This is a place that cannot be reached by the moon's light, and so it is plunged into darkness with rich black ink. Buson created a reversal of what one expects in a daytime scene, as the image communicates a light emerging from the moon out toward the viewer rather than a light pouring into the scene from the viewer's position. Unlike the evening view, where the figure is seen by the viewer as a kind of surrogate for our presence in the scene, the figure in the night scene stares out at us again. The staring of this figure follows the moonlight as it pours out of the scene toward us and presumably illuminates our faces as we approach the image.

These innovations are largely the product of Buson's own creative impulses, and in

the rephrasing and recombining of brushwork and composition taken from a range of works he had studied, they are ideal manifestations of the hybrid style he developed. Here the artist was not merely imitating Chinese works or appropriating portions of other artist's creations, but he was instead taking the essence of the works he studied and using them to inspire a novel set of expressions. In the rhythm of the scenes, the layered inter-textual referencing found in Buson's linked poetry emerges in visual form. Similarly, in the individual scenes the brushstrokes and compositions resonate with Chinese landscapes as well as the works of Ike Taiga, who painted the other half of the album.²⁴³ While some of Buson's earlier works might well be confused with the works by the artists he followed, in the hybrid style of this album there is no doubt that the work is a product of Buson's mind alone. In comparing Buson's work to one of the leaves by Taiga [Figure 85], it is immediately clear that each artist had his own personal vision and touch. What Buson's style reveals might best be described as the many echoes of the works he studied over the decades leading up to the creation of this work.²⁴⁴

Figures in the Landscape

The rich variation of the landscapes and the novel approaches to depicting these scenes makes the *Ten Pleasures* album one of Buson's most arresting works of art, but it is not alone in its ability to capture the imagination and draw the viewer into the fantasy of imagined places. In Buson's image of two figures in a landscape with a waterfall, we see a similarly intriguing presentation [Figure 87]. This painting, as mentioned above, may present Buson's commentary on his parents' separation.²⁴⁵ The reasons for reading this

²⁴³For a discussion of the joint effort in making this album, see chapter 7.

²⁴⁴See Fujita Shinichi [藤田真一], "Jūben jūgi gajō" [十便十宜画帖], *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō* [国文学解釈と鑑賞] 837, vol. 66, no. 2 (2001), pp. 128–35.

²⁴⁵Takahashi, 2000, pp. 12–13.

work as a commentary on the artist's parents lie in its unusual conflation of two separate scenes, but this conflation is also a central aspect of the hybrid nature of Buson's mature work. At the right the standing figure faces away from the viewer, turning slightly toward the left as he gazes into the distance.²⁴⁶ He stands on a rock that emerges from the lower right corner of the painting, and his head is framed by a bank of mist that separates him from the rest of the scene. He may be looking at the waterfall that descends into the bank of mist far in the distance at the right. In the foreground, this figure's space is separated from the left side of the scene by a stream flowing over rocks toward the viewer. To the left, a series of rocks painted with flowing linear strokes and dots to accent their surfaces rises from the bottom of the image. Among these rocks a contorted tree emerges with twigs and clouds of wash to indicate foliage. Behind this tree a path rises steeply up the hill around the left side of more rocks piled in the center of the image. At the top of these rocks a figure emerges from behind and rests his arms on the top surface. He stares out of the painting toward the viewer, drawing us in to look at the open space behind him as it rises to a fence and a house tucked in a crevice between large rocks rising toward the top of the image. At the left, the rock rises in a series of curves filled with washes of varying tones. Above the house we can see bamboos growing in the distance and more large trees reaching into the sky. These trees have leaves painted with patterned strokes of black ink surrounded by pools of wash to provide color. As we move further to the right, the rock behind the figure at the center of the image rises and then recedes behind the trees. Dark clouds emerge where the rock fades into the sky. These clouds connect to the scene at the right as they stretch out from the left to hover over the waterfall and distant peaks.

Color is used sparingly in this image. It appears muted in the black and gray strokes used to depict the landscape forms and the figures. The orange used to color the walls of

²⁴⁶I will refer to this figure as "he" rather than following the reading of this figure as a representation of the artist's mother.

the house and the blue used to paint one of the distant hills at the right emerge as the strongest colors in the scene. Their contrast helps to reinforce the separation of these two views of the world. Thinking about this image as a pairing of scenes, we can see a contrast of compositional structures used to stress the separation. At the left the predominant motion of the scene is upward, as the rocks pile one on top of another. As these forms rise, they tend to curve to the right, forming a shape like a hand with its fingers bent at the center of the painting. In contrast to this rising form, the landscape at the right recedes quickly into the distance, with a ridge of peaks forming a relatively low horizon. The passage of mist through the center of this part of the image makes the extent of the recession ambiguous, but it is clear that the predominant motion of the scene is horizontal as it reaches back into the distance.

In pairing these scenes, Buson has managed to conflate two visual structures and to present two different emotional characters that might be ascribed to the figures in each landscape space. The left side seems to present a close view of the land, which is embracing and dense. The figure is wrapped in the landscape space, giving him a calm yet powerful position as he appears to control the space. In contrast, the right side of the image presents an exposed landscape that seems lonely and bare. The figure stands in the open, appearing to gaze into the void of the distance as an isolated and vulnerable individual. Although the right-hand figure appears weak and exposed, drawing us in to empathize with the feeling of insignificance in the face of the power of the world, the left-hand figure seems to command the space and to reach out to the viewer, as if to wonder why we would be looking into his scene. The embrace of the house by the mountains behind the figure at the left further heightens this impression of separation. It appears to be a safe refuge that the exposed figure at the right can never approach. Regardless of whether this is a scene of Buson's parents or not, it is a presentation of opposites and of isolation. Like the various

leaves of the *Ten Pleasures* album, this work offers us contrasts that draw us in and place us in different positions with respect to the land and the figures. Whereas in the album Buson altered the viewpoint from one scene to the next, in this work he brought the different views together to function on the two sides of this single painting. Like the function of allusion in linked verses repeating literary images while changing the surrounding context, this work appears to rephrase and shift the viewer's position within a narrow space. This is evidence of the poet's mind creating with the hand of the Chinese painter to create a hybrid glimpse of Buson himself.

Seasonal Landscape Sets

In several of Buson's paintings of this period, he worked to juxtapose Chinese styles of painting in landscapes that captured his vision of the shifting moods of the seasons. A set of landscapes of the four seasons from 1772 reveals how these styles were gathered together [Figure 88]. These horizontal images with associated Chinese text appear almost as studies of distinctly different stylistic models. Although the styles differ markedly, and the set suggests an image for each season, it is sometimes difficult to determine exactly which season is being presented in each of these paintings.²⁴⁷ The styles of these images are kept internally consistent, as each scene depicts dwellings among mountains and water. In the spring scene, the image is depicted with quick, faint strokes of ink that present a hill rising at the center of the image in the foreground with a grove of willows emerging at the top. To the left, a passage of water separates us from a steeply rising hill, above which a portion of a red plastered wall with a tile cap can be seen rising to the left edge of the scene. Above this, passages of bare silk indicate bands of mist

²⁴⁷For this discussion I will refer to the images by the seasonal labels Sasaki Jōhei has applied in his presentation of these images in his *Buson Zenshu: Kaiga Iboku*, 1998, pp. 178–9. the seasonal associations in each of these images is achieved through a combination of trees associated with the seasons, color associated with the seasons, and human activities that have seasonal specificity.

paralleling the slope of the wall; green and gray washes suggest trees, and orange washes fill the emerging hills. Rising to the right of the wall is a flat-topped hill with a small empty pavilion at its peak. This hill rises at an angle opposite that of the rising wall, creating a dynamic contrast of diagonal lines. To the right of this hill, the land descends to reveal more of the red wall, with the roof of an elaborate Chinese gate emerging from behind the willows. The landscape in the background at the left descends to become the middle-ground space of the right portion of the scene. The wall disappears behind a small clump of willows, and a building with a single figure in a window emerges at the right edge of the scene. Above the building, blue-washed peaks can be seen in the distance. A pair of boats rests at the shore in the foreground at the far side of another passage of water that parallels the one on the left side. The scene is dominated by diagonal movements. The land rises and falls and moves from distance to the foreground in broad sweeping motions similar to the brushstrokes used throughout the image. A few dots of black ink scattered over the surfaces of the various land forms contrast with the diagonal sweeping strokes.

As if to capitalize on the effect of the dots in the spring scene, the autumn scene is speckled with tiny black dots. In this scene we enter at the right through a confusing tumble of circular rock forms, which are depicted with long sinuous strokes curling over each other to create a complex terrain. Along the sinuous strokes of gray, orange, and blue are many small dots that seem to cluster where shadows might fall in these rocks. Emerging from the top of the right rock cluster are several pines, which are depicted with long gray outlines and brown washes marked by small dots to suggest bark. At their tops, black needle clusters emerge, and pools of blue-green wash color the foliage. Among these trees a precisely drawn house can be seen nestled in the pine grove. Above the trees a series of blue peaks seems to pour down from the distant sky, and a cloud depicted with curling lines of gray ink guides us to the center of the image. This portion of the work is dominated

by a tall rocky outcropping that bubbles up into the sky like a cloud of smoke. The rocky form is like the cloud in its substance, but it is marked by dots similar to those that appear in the foreground. To the right of the large rock, a smaller rock protrudes toward the viewer, and its sinuous strokes swirl around to form concentric rings of rocky crevices dotted with tiny black spots. As the rock emerges, it guides the eye to a solitary figure dressed in a pinkish robe, who is seated on a sloping patch of ground, gazing away from us toward a waterfall at the right. The waterfall commences as a stream in the distance at the top of the scene and plunges over rocks into another cloud created with swirling strokes of gray ink. This cloud, which resembles a cluster of tangled noodles, rises to the right side of the image, where it covers the base of more rocks created with sinuous strokes and dots among green-topped plateaus. These plateaus each present cliff-like edges marked with sharp strokes of black ink to indicate grasses. Unlike the diagonal movements of the earlier scenes, the bubbling forms of the rocks and clouds rising from the base of the image like billowing smoke dominate this utopian scene.

The diagonal motions of the spring image and bubbling quality of the autumn painting are absent in the summer scene, where the dominant motion is a large C-shaped arc. This scene is filled in the foreground by long horizontal strokes of gray ink crisscrossed by brown paths and filled with green grasses. From this land form emerge bamboos painted in black ink with a wash of blue that fades to a green tone to the left. Beyond these bamboos at the left side of the image, a thatched pavilion with a large round object resting at its center stands before three large trees. To the right of these trees and above the bamboos in the foreground, a large open space of bare silk forms an open waterway on which a single boat with a pilot drifts toward the left from the right edge of the painting. Moving up the image, the land forms curve back from the left to reveal more bamboos and low-lying grasses or reeds in the marshy areas around the water. At the right

the marshy land lies low enough to see far into the distance, where gray and blue peaks form a distant horizon. The feel of this image is calm and still even as the grasses seem to bend before a wind blowing from the left side of the image. The empty water and the gentle colors of the bamboos give this scene a tranquil, placid quality.

The final image in this series reveals to some of the dynamism of the spring and autumn scenes, but the winter scene is not as dramatic. The scene opens in the foreground with a passage of water painted with blue washes applied in horizontal bands, leaving slight empty areas that suggest waves. To the right and left rise hills painted with curving gray, green, and yellowish strokes that are marked with horizontal black and gray ovals, which are similar to the Mi Fu–style dots Buson used in his youth. Along the waterfront at the right, a path leads to a clearing at the center of the work, where houses are clustered around the bases of hills rising sharply from all around the clearing. The houses trail off to the right side of the image as trees emerge to fill a valley. Above these trees a passage of bare silk suggests a cloud above which mountain peaks rise to the sky. At the head of the clearing we can see far into the distance, where a gray-washed peak descends to the houses and blue-washed peaks fill the even more distant spaces. The blue of these peaks echoes the blue of the water and the blue of several of the houses' roofs. To the left of the houses, a large anvil-shaped hill rises to fill the left side of the scene. This hill is painted with long faint strokes that provide its shape, and more of the horizontal Mi dots in its shadowed crevices. Where this large hill descends at the left, it cuts back toward the center of the scene to reveal a little more of the blue water and further low rocks descending to the foreground. The muted colors and the repeated horizontal Mi dots give this scene a stability even as its hills rise sharply into the sky. It is as if the village in the center of the scene is embraced by these hills, making the scene appear relatively calm in the face of the massive land forms.

These four scenes reveal Buson's facility with Chinese styles, which he must have learned from painting manuals and observing Chinese works. While precise models for each of these scenes may have existed, it is more likely that these works were created through Buson's hybrid approach to painting, relying on appropriated imagery and invention to produce these works. The texts included on each image are drawn from published anthologies of Chinese writings, and the images appear similar to works by Yun Shouping [惲壽平, 1633–1690] imitating Cao Zhibo [曹知白, 1272–1362] [Figure 89], Wang Meng [Figure 90], and others. What is most interesting about these paintings is the manner in which they were brought together. Instead of using a single style to depict these four scenes, Buson chose to use styles that would complement his various compositions and their individual moods. It is clear that he understood the specific impact each style would have on the viewer, and by bringing these styles together, he was able to create a powerful set of scenes that harmonize style and mood in a manner reminiscent of his approach to poetry. Some of this stylistic mixing is seen in the *Ten Pleasures* album, but it is in this set of four images that the full impact of his command of distinct styles becomes evident.

A year later, in 1773, Buson again created a set of images for the four seasons that reveal yet another manner in which he could combine ideas in his scenes [Figure 93]. This set of four images is again painted on small pieces of silk approximately thirty-seven centimeters square. Each image is accompanied by Chinese text copied from published anthologies in lines to the right or left of the image.²⁴⁸ The style used to depict each scene is the same throughout the series, but like the technique used in the *Ten Pleasures*, our point of view shifts as we move from one scene to the next. In the spring scene the viewer is placed high in the air, looking down on a mounted traveler riding up a path that enters the

²⁴⁸Ogata, Sasaki and Okada, 1998, p. 328.

scene at the lower right corner. Ahead of the rider the brown path leads up to the left, toward several flowering peach trees with pink and white blossoms. These trees are depicted with black and gray trunks that rise in a jerky motion from the base of the image and from behind several rocks. The branches divide repeatedly to form a brushlike arrangement of stems that are surrounded by a pinkish wash and specks of white pigment. Where one peach tree rises from the bottom of the image, grass blades cover the ground and bend to the right as they rise. In the bottom left corner a yellow and brown rock rises into the scene. Its surface is marked with rich dark strokes, which provides structure for the washes that give the rock its form. This rock is paralleled by several large rocks that rise above the rider on the far side of the path. A large rock at the center of this cluster dominates and appears to protrude toward the viewer. Concentric wavering lines form an oval within the rock itself. Beyond the rock, another peach tree emerges, and the land seems to rise in the upper right corner of the work. The scene was painted with a relatively wet brush that flowed over the forms, giving this scene and the others in the series a moist atmosphere and relatively rich coloration.

In the summer scene, a fisherman in a low-lying boat poles his way up a steeply sloping stream. The boatman occupies the center of the bottom of the scene and is surrounded by rocks and willows blown to the lower right by a wind that seems to flow downhill with the river. The willows, like the peach trees, are depicted with black and gray trunks and branches surrounded by green washes to color the foliage. The trees emerge in the lower right to obscure the stream, in the middle left to hide the upper reaches of the stream, and on the top of large rocks that form a cliff on the far bank of the stream. The arrangement of these trees follows quite closely the arrangement of the peach trees in the spring image. The figure, like that in the spring image, also is seen from the rear, his head turned to reveal a profile as he struggles to pole his boat against the current of the stream.

This presentation of the figure allows the viewer to engage with the scene and enter the space as the figure does, and to join in the experience of the shallow landscape. It is in the alteration of these landscapes that the subtle combination of ideas in this work makes itself known. The style used in the rocks of the spring scene is repeated in the summer scene, but the strokes that give the rocks their form are even wetter and more broadly applied than in the earlier scene. It is as though the moist weather of summer has crept into the artist's brush to fill the scene with humid warmth.

In the autumn scene, the weather clears and the atmosphere becomes crisp. Large rocks pile up from the bottom of the image, creating a natural seat for a reclining figure to the right of the center of the image. He turns to look at the upper portion of a waterfall pouring from a space between the rocks at the left. The figure appears comfortable as he rests in his large, slightly orange robes. Below this figure, an attendant in a green robe sits on another rock and looks down into the flowing water, where it exits the scene to flow out into the viewer's space. Above the waterfall a large pine and the branches and leaves of a deciduous tree cover the upper reaches of the waterfall, which can barely be seen pouring straight down from the top of the image. To the right of the tree, the rocks rise to the top of the painting and an open passage of sky marked with sharply defined white clouds surrounded by gray washes. There is no visible horizon far in the distance; instead, the distance is cut off by the rising of the rocks that form the large figure's seat. The style of this image is close to that of the spring and summer scenes, but the lines forming the rocks, water, tree, and clouds are more sharply drawn and the contrasts of light and dark are exaggerated, giving the scene the feel of crisp autumn air surrounding the figures and natural forms. The viewer is drawn into this scene from the bottom, where the attendant appears facing into the scene, but attention is quickly drawn to the large figure. He is seen from the front, but because the viewer is led into the scene by the attendant figure, the

larger figure appears observed rather than someone to be joined in the scene. With this frontal presentation of the figure, this is the shallowest of the landscapes in this series, and the rocks and figure cut off our view into the space shortly after we enter this world.

The shallowness of the autumn scene is given greater depth in the winter scene, where a single figure walks up a steep path to the right. This path winds through clumps of bamboos that emerge to the left and right in the lower portion of the image. Within these clumps clouds of black strokes indicate leaves, and green pools of wash convey a sense of the foliage filling the air. The bamboos are dark near the foreground and become fainter and more blue than green as they recede into the space. To the left and the right of the path as it rises through the scene, strokes of brown and gray ink form a slope descending from each side. The path leads to a large cliff rising at the right. In the distance, the path reemerges in a small arc as it climbs into the high mountains. A figure with his back to the viewer looks up at this reemergence of the path as if he realizes the task that is ahead of him. On his shoulder he carries a stick with a large white bag hanging over his back. The viewer is drawn in to identify with the figure as in the other scenes, and the colors and brushstrokes are similar to those in the earlier scenes, but in this work the palette is muted and appears to possess the chill of winter. The rising path now moves through a cold atmosphere filled with the faint mist of winter moisture. The brown of the ground and the rocks displays the lifeless quality of winter, when only the bamboos retain their leaves.

The subtle changes that appear in this series of images display how Buson would alter his images to harmonize with the subject being presented and how he could use the visual images to communicate the experience of each of the seasons he was presenting. Like the earlier album leaves, these are intimate works into which we can peer to experience the seasons and marvel at the details of these little landscapes. The limited space of each image and the repeated presence of a figure seen from the rear allow us to enter the scenes

and provide us with enough information to begin to experience the landscape. The viewer is left to imagine the farther reaches of these spaces, but this omission of the background distance evokes a greater sense of the world, rather than appearing fragmentary or cut off. As in his poetry, Buson gives us just enough visual information to be able to understand the concept or feel of the image and to propel our imagination to fill out the rest of the scenes. The subtly changing application of ink also imparts information that guides the viewer in thinking about these seasons, but the precise interpretation of each image is left to the viewer.

In another set of seasonal images dated 1774, Buson combined characteristics of the previous two sets [Figure 96]. These paintings are larger hanging scrolls, each measuring approximately 105 x 41 centimeters. Their styles are drawn from the range of approaches presented in the 1772 set and the wetter techniques that appeared in the 1773 set. In the spring image, a complex landscape image appears with figures engaged in thatching a roof at the right and a man sweeping the ground outside a hut beside a river. The painting is centered around a stream that flows in a curve to exit the image in the lower left corner. Across this river a small bridge crosses from a thatched storehouse at the left to a string of houses with thatched and tiled roofs on the right bank of the stream. A small figure with a broad straw hat on his back is crossing the bridge toward the houses at the right, and a variety of trees grows from both sides of the stream to obscure our view as the water emerges from the mountains in the background. Among the houses at the right are a pair of large flowering trees surrounded by a pink wash that recalls the pink of the peach trees in the spring image from 1773. Unlike the former trees, these are mature plants with black outlined trunks and gray wash filling the trunks and branches. Emerging from these branches are straight sticks that are marked with white dots to suggest flowers blossoming before the leaves have had a chance to mature. The other trees in the scene are fully covered

with leaves of green and blue, giving the scene a soft, colorful feel suggestive of spring. Just below the branches of one of the peach trees, a rustic worker replacing the thatch on a roof looks out at the viewer and draws our attention far into the middle-ground space.

This middle-ground space is already deeper than the space created in the earlier seasonal landscapes, but it is extended by rising mountains and a waterfall at the left, which falls from a high valley. The mountains echo the colors of the trees and the land in the foreground. Vertical strokes of ink provide a structure for the rocks, and dots accent the crevices in these massive forms. Blue-gray washes fill the mountain peaks and become fainter as further ranks of peaks emerge in the upper portion of the work. High above the waterfall a tiny hut can be seen on a patch of high ground, beyond which mists and further steep peaks rise and fall. To the right side of the image, a patch of bare silk is left between the houses and the high peaks, which appears visually confusing. Perhaps this area represents a passage of water stretching into the distance where horizontal tongues of land rise to form a far shore, but the spatial distance suggested by this passage seems to conflict with the gradual recession established in the center of the image. Buson fills this space with his inscription of the date, name, and his seals, but it remains a void in the painting. This void provides an accent in what is otherwise a very soft and warm scene. Buson has, to a degree greater than in any of the other seasonal landscape sets, created a vision of spring that grows out of the suggestions of the brushstrokes, colors, and activities of the figures.

In the summer scene, the deep view into space is cut off in the middle-ground, and the soft colors and fine brushstrokes are replaced with deeper colors and broader, wetter strokes of ink that suggest the close, humid atmosphere of the season. A stream again occupies the center of this image as it flows out the bottom of the scene. In the middle of the stream a man stands with his feet visible beneath the water's surface. He looks out at the viewer and smiles as he holds a net out to fish in the river. Behind this figure the left

bank of the river rises steeply in a series of large rocks painted with broad strokes of gray and black ink. The approach to the rocks in this image is almost identical to that used in the summer scene from 1773. The water is painted with black hooked strokes and blue strokes that suggest the swift moving current as it arcs to the right and back to the left to pass the fisherman. Willow trees on the banks of the river fill the left side of the image, and a pair of thatched structures emerge at the center of the image, one on each side of the river. From the structure on the left bank of the river a deck on poles juts out into the river. On the woven mats that cover this deck, a man dressed in dark gray reclines and looks out at the viewer. Two cups sit before him, and a stack of books can be seen in the hut beside his wine pitcher. He seems to be a scholar relaxing in the cool air of the stream as he drinks away the heat of summer. Beyond the figure emerges the roof of the structure on the right bank of the river, and more windblown willows reach into the sky. The remaining third of the silk is left blank with faint washes streaking through the sky from the upper left to the lower right, suggesting wind in the humid atmosphere. Two black birds, their wings arrayed in different positions, flap their way out of the scene to the left. These birds are similar to others Buson painted in his younger days, but here they simply add to the summer feel of the image rather than become the focus of the painting. Like one of Buson's poems, the birds enliven the image by forming an accent in the open sky. They also create a subtle resonance with his past to add richness to the hybrid nature of his work.

The relatively shallow view presented in this summer scene is made all the more striking by the two figures staring out of the image. They draw the viewer into the space and create an intimacy that is in keeping with the feel of summer. Buson created a work that draws one in to join in the warmth and close feeling of the season, but his addition of the birds as they fly in the sky allows us to cast our gaze into the infinite distance of the sky as it stretches beyond the landscape. This creates the potential for a mental distance that

contrasts with the illusionistic distance presented in the spring image. By offering us a view into the private world of the two figures, we are brought close and then we are gently lifted away to follow the birds to the next seasonal image in the set.

In the autumn scene, Buson has retained the rich color of the summer scene, but returned to the illusionistic distance of the spring image. This image also centers on a river, but now a calm body of water winds among steep rocks rising into the sky. At the bottom of the image, a rock supports three pines whose reddish trunks with fine outlines and tiny circular bark rise in gentle arcs to support clusters of black needles surrounded by clouds of rich green wash. Behind the trees a boat emerges on the calm blue water carrying a scholar bundled in a white robe, looking up to the sky at the left, and a pilot in dark gray with a long pole, staring out at the viewer at the right. The rocks that surround these figures are drawn with fine black outlines and dark black dots scattered along their surfaces. The interiors of these rocks are colored with faint washes of blue and a faint orange that gives them a cool, solid appearance. Looking deeper into the scene, more pines emerge from the cliffs at the left side of the river, and a few red maples can be seen shading the roof of a small pavilion above the river. Clouds fill the space beyond the branches of the pines and seem to suggest that the river moves smoothly into the winding spaces between the rocks on either side of the river. As these rocks pile up, they reach into the upper portion of the work, where a darkened sky reaches down to the border of the clouds, and a crescent moon hangs in the upper reaches of the river's course. At the right side of the image, the rocks continue to pile and rise with more trees and sloping plateaus, which allows us to see how we might reach the highest peak were we to climb this massive landscape form. Beyond the central peak, faintly washed peaks of gray and blue reach into the distance to form a background that is extremely far from the figures near the bottom of the image.

The twisting and rising motion of this image creates a dynamic presentation calmed

by the colors and the use of fine lines and dots to create the rocky landscape. The image captures the effect of an autumn evening in which cool, dry air fills the world as it gradually marches on toward winter. As in the summer scene, the moon and the empty pavilion appear as poetic sidenotes that provide a richness to the image beyond the presentation of the figures in the boat in the foreground. It is as if Buson is drawing together a set of allusions to make this autumn scene resonate with a sense of loneliness and calm that differs markedly from the earlier scenes. We might compare the effect of the empty pavilion in this image with the tiny hut seen in the upper portion of the spring image. In the spring image it appears as a small part of the world that has yet to emerge from its winter hibernation, but in the autumn scene the empty pavilion becomes a harbinger of the desolation that is to come as the world slows down for the cold months of winter. They are essentially the same form, but by placing them in different contexts, their effect on the overall sense of the painting is changed. Although they may both relate to winter, the earlier image appears as a memory to heighten the joy of spring, and this later pavilion is a reminder of the inevitable cycle of the seasons.

As the cycle is completed in this series of images, we see the landscape open dramatically to present the cold of a lifeless winter scene. In this scene there are no people at all but many reminders of their presence, including an empty pavilion in the foreground. A bridge crosses a river at the right, and withered old trees rise at the left to fill the foreground space. The palette for this last image is restricted to gray and black with a faint brown color and blue for the water. The blue of the water in the last three of these images is nearly identical, but the juxtaposition of this blue with other colors makes the water in the winter scene appear colder and more still than in the summer or autumn scenes. The foreground rocks in the winter scene are painted with a jagged black outline that moves in a jerky fashion over the surfaces of the forms. Where the old trees emerge from the rocks,

their roots seem to claw at the ground for support, and light passages at the tops of each root and rock suggest snow covering the land. The branches of the trees are painted with dark outlines and white interiors that again suggest snow. To heighten this effect, Buson used washes of dark gray to surround the tree branches so that they stand out from the frozen atmosphere. Paths move among the trees at the left, guiding our eye into the middle-ground, where the landscape opens up to reveal low-lying fields and pathways that surround passages of water as they gradually rise to the right side of the image. More water fills the space beyond these fields, and a high mountain rises to the left side of the top of the painting. To the right, small white mountains emerge along the horizon, leading our eye far off into the distance, where a dark sky hangs low over the landscape. The trailing off of this image to the right leads us back to the earlier scenes, completing the circle of the seasons and making this set of images appear as a kind of visual form of one of Buson's linked verse compositions. Like linked poetry, these paintings reiterate and recast images that at once relate to the seasons being painted and allow us to see the changes from one season to another.

In looking at these three sets of seasonal images in Figures 88, 93, and 96, we can begin to see Buson's breaking with Chinese models to create hybrid images. He used Chinese brush techniques and Chinese visual forms in a manner similar to his use of Chinese poetry and Japanese historical figures or events to create expressions of great novelty and deep resonance. In these works the styles, coloration, compositions, and approaches to individuals create poetic painting cycles that, while visual appealing on their surfaces, work to make an even greater impression when considered as a group. As we look at each of these sets of images we are taken on a visual journey, and our eye is led to various places by various means to produce a rich aesthetic experience that functions through internal resonances in addition to their broader relation to traditions in China. It

appears that in these seasonal sets, Buson created the equivalent of linked poetry in imagery. These works reach outside the seasonal theme to capture and reuse ideas from other paintings. This is not the first instance of this poetic approach to painting in Buson's oeuvre, but his earlier works failed to seamlessly blend his ideas, styles, and themes to produce such clear and comfortable images. These works resonate with the past, but also stand alone, demanding no support from the works of the past they evoke.

Repeated Landscapes

Although Buson continued to paint in this style, he also approached single paintings in a manner parallel to his revision of single *hokku*. In a pair of paintings made in 1774, the artist worked with the same image, altering tiny passages to create multiple forms. The first of this pair was painted in the summer [Figure 97], and the second was painted in the eleventh month [Figure 98]. The subject in both images is a figure walking from the left across a bridge to a set of buildings, in which we can see another figure sitting inside a window at the lower right. The buildings rest behind a rising rocky patch of land at the bottom of the image. A single tree emerges from this rock at the point where the bridge meets the land at the right. At the left side of the bridge, further rocks and trees rise up. Above these trees a passage of mist obscures our view into the distance. Above the mist a vertical waterfall pours down in several straight courses from a dark crevice in a range of mountains surrounded by more mists. At the right, rocks rise sharply behind the houses, and a small plateau cuts into the scene. On this plateau an empty pavilion rests in front of another passage of mist, beyond which gray and blue-washed peaks rise into the sky. Almost one quarter of the painting is left blank at the top to form the sky, which is attached to the clouds of mist at the left edge of the painting. This connecting of the distant sky and the mists in the middle-ground has the effect of dividing the scene into compartments that

float in an ambiguous distance from the foreground realm of the figures and houses.

In Buson's later version of this painting [Figure 98], the angle of the bridge is flattened so that it no longer rises steeply to the right as it approaches the houses. The outlines of the rocks are darkened and broadened, making them appear to emerge more forcefully at the center of the painting. The waterfall is more faintly painted, suggesting that it lies further in the distance. The rocks around the waterfall move to the left edge of the painting so that the sky and the lower mists no longer connect with one another. This has the effect of making the illusion of spatial recession more smooth and uniform as it moves into the distance. The peaks at the right above the empty pavilion descend immediately above the pavilion's roof, drawing attention to the structure on the high plateau. In the earlier version of the painting, the distant peaks descended to the left of the pavilion to a valley that descends to the houses below, causing the eye to move past the pavilion without notice. Perhaps Buson found this passage of the viewer's eye over this tiny structure to be a fault that he could remedy in the later work. In addition, the fragmenting of the surface of the image by the mists and the sky is resolved in the later image. The landscape is kept solidly together, and the sky is separated from the land by a constant horizon that moves fully across the upper third of the painting. Beyond these small revisions, Buson kept most of the painting intact and used a very similar style in both paintings. It appears that he was looking at his images, thinking about their impact, and returning to make slight adjustments to create a new expression that reveals slightly different stresses and a different reading of the overall scene.

This is parallel to his poetic practice. He both wrote his own poems and worked as a teacher, reading and critiquing his associates' poems. These paintings present a largely Chinese-derived form of brushwork derived from Buson's study of paintings and printed manuals, but the creative process appears to have progressed in a fashion parallel to the

practice of the *haikai* poets in the Buson circle. It is in this paralleling of painting and poetry that the hybrid nature of Buson's work begins to come into focus. Although revision is not uncommon for painters in most traditions, Buson's shifting of small details to create subtle shifts in mood and overall feeling closely mirrors his repetitions in poetry.

Birds

Another presentation of Buson's hybridity appears in his mixing of styles within works that seem to follow particular Chinese models. His Shen Nanpin-style painting of birds in flowering peach and willow trees from 1774 is a case in point [Figure 99]. In this work, two elaborately colored and carefully painted birds are perched on the branches of trees, which are painted in a much more expressive, brush-focused manner.²⁴⁹ The trees rise from the foreground, where their trunks blend into several large rocks. Both the tree trunks and the rocks are painted with wet strokes of brown and gray ink that flow along these forms in short curving motions. The effect of these strokes is to create a pattern of textures that twist and wind as they move up the image. Both along the tree trunks and in the recesses of the rock surfaces, small dots of black and green provide a unifying texture visible throughout the image. To the right of the rocks and in a small patch at the left edge of the scroll, grasses emerge from the ground surface in a variety of green, orange, and brown strokes that rise to the right and bend over at their tops. These grasses indicate a gentle breeze blowing through the scene from the left side of the image and suggest a receding ground plane, which reaches a short distance past the trunks of the trees. The breeze that bends these grasses does not seem to have a significant impact on the draping foliage of the willow, which falls in clusters to the right and left of the two birds. These leaves are painted with black strokes that define the leaf shapes and green washes that

²⁴⁹See the discussion of Buson's use of the Shen Nanpin-style in chapter 6.

surround the ends of the branches. The suggestion of a thick atmosphere flowing through this scene is accomplished in the upper reaches of the scroll. Here a cloud, delineated by a horizontal line, cuts through the brown wash of the air and obscures the rising willow tree at the left side of the painting. This horizontal line is crossed by a branch of the willow in the center of the scroll, making the band of light-colored, bare silk at the top of the painting appear as a cloud reaching through the center of the willow as it moves across the scene. The suggestive manner used to paint this cloud and the trees is challenged by the precise clarity of the birds. The bird in the upper reaches of the willow is painted with a complex mix of brown and black ink washes, and fine white lines that define the bird's individual feathers. Its feet wrap around the branch on which it sits and its tail feathers fall behind the branch, providing balance for the curved head and beak of the bird. The curve of the bird's green beak and the stare of its round eye catch the viewer's attention and guide us to look down toward the other bird.

The second bird rests at the center of the scroll on a branch of the lower flowering peach. It is bright white, with striking black wings that hug its long body. Its tail feathers reach to the right to cross behind a twig of the peach tree with pink blossoms. Each tail feather is marked with a blue dot, which fades toward the end of each feather. The feathers themselves are each painted with extremely fine strokes of white pigment that follow the individual barbs emerging from the central quill. This level of detail is continued through the bird's body and red striated legs. The head is a rich brown with black at the cheek and a white spotted crest reaching to the right. This white bird opens its beak as if it is crying as it looks out at us with its precisely painted eye. Even the tongue of this bird is visible, and the tiny feathers emerging at the bridge of the bird's nose can be seen standing out from the body. It is in the contrasts of the smooth green washes of the background sky, the calligraphic strokes of the rocks and trees, and the minute precision exercised in painting

the birds that the Shen Nanpin–style makes itself known, but Buson has added to this pairing of birds a narrative element that seems to tie the image back to his own approach to the arts. The white male and brown female are arrayed so that the curves of their bodies and their echoes of similar coloration allow us to begin to see the relationship between them. It is as though these two birds enter into a conversation in which the male bird in the lower position is speaking to the higher and more calmly presented female bird. They are then associated with the peach and the willow, which both relate to the spring. The diminutive peach is flashy in its display of colorful blossoms, and the more subdued willow towers over the pair of birds in a manner that suggests a balanced control of the scene. In this work Buson has taken the style of the Chinese bird and flower painter and constructed an image that suggests a broader commentary. This practice is again similar to the approach Buson took to *haikai* composition in this period, as his poems strove to convey a longer narrative within the limited scope of the *haiku* form.²⁵⁰ Although largely a Shen-style painting, the birds and trees can be seen as a commentary on the relationship of the birds and by extension the relationships of people in the broader world of Buson's experience.

Buson's paintings from 1775 and 1776 show that he had moved away from the Shen style to explore more calligraphic images. His paintings of magpies in blossoming plums from 1776 reveal just how far he could range in his presentation of the bird and flower theme [Figure 101]. This pair of hanging scrolls focuses on two sets of birds in a single plum tree that stretches across the two scrolls. In the right scroll three birds sit on a thin branch of the tree that rises in a curve mirroring a large rock that protrudes into the scene from the right edge. This rock is painted in wet gray strokes that move vertically and horizontally in an irregular fashion, leaving slashes of the background silk to accent the

²⁵⁰Ueda, 1998, pp. 52–5. Buson's approach to poetry seems to have led to the suggestion of narratives within the brief presentation of images in the *haiku*. This practice he derived in part from Bashō's style of writing, but in Buson's hands the suggestion of a broader narrative seems to have been central to much of his best writing.

texture of the stone surface. In the merging of these wet strokes, passages of dark black and fainter gray blend together in pools of moist strokes that seem to structure the rocks in a natural manner as they emerge into the scene. The loose organization of the ink strokes in the rock are continued in the trunk and branches of the plum as it reaches up from the bottom of the scene to stretch toward the left. From the wet strokes of the trunk, black dots indicate the irregular structure of the plum tree and its thorns. These dark dots are interspersed with long strokes of ink to form smaller branches that stretch out into the open space at the center of the painting, where clusters of blossoms cling to their supporting twigs. The birds cling to one of these branches and look to the left scroll in a posture of calm observation. Each bird is painted with an undercoat of gray ink and dark feathers arrayed to indicate their wings. Unlike the birds in the 1774 painting, these creatures are presented with an almost human appearance. Their eyes are painted with large bare spaces surrounding their pupils. Their eyes do not look out from the sides of their heads but forward toward their beaks and upward, as if rolling in their heads. From the tops of their beaks large tufts of feathers emerge. The lines of their beaks seem to form frowns as they look out to their counterparts in the other scroll. Even the posture of the uppermost bird seems to suggest that it is rearing up in judgement of the other birds, which are engaged in a tussle.

Looking to the left scroll, the plum tree enters the scroll at the center of the right edge and quickly reaches out to fill the space with a tangle of sharply angled branches. The trunk decreases in size quickly as it approaches the left side of the scroll and turns up to end abruptly, keeping the image firmly confined by the scroll's borders. At the center of the tangle of branches, four birds are engaged in a fight, with their wings spread and their beaks locked in battle. At the left of this cluster of birds, one faces the viewer and a second bites its beak, turning its head to the left. The forward-facing bird is also tangled with

another bird as their feet grab at each other, and the fourth bird spreads its wings and cries with an open beak. These birds are joined by a fifth in the upper reaches of the plum; this bird clings to a branch and spreads its wings slightly as it turns downward to face the fighting crowd. In this scroll the predominant characteristic is the noise and commotion of the fighting birds, made all the more dramatic by the dense tangle of branches that surround them. Each bird is painted like the calm creatures in the other scroll, with expressive beaks, large tufts of feathers at the tops of their beaks, and eyes that seem to glare forward as they engage each other. In the two scrolls, which need to be hung simultaneously to form a complete composition, we can see a contrast of stability and dynamism. In the creation of this contrast, Buson's control and understanding of the visual impact of his brushwork emerges. Buson has used his brushwork to heighten the impact of these images. The jagged strokes and open space of the right scroll prepare us for the even more jagged strokes and complex array of forms present in the left scroll. The calm birds at the right function to prepare the viewer for the drama of the fight in the left scroll. A narrative plays out across the space, with an introduction and climax presented in the limited space of these two images. The entire display takes place in a narrow visual space with no attempt made to present the landscape context of the space; the artist focuses on the birds and tree slicing across the visual plane in front of a neutral background. Like Buson's poetry, the images are isolated and presented so that they can be read quickly, but with some close observation, the depicted story becomes richer and more complex than one might expect on first viewing the images.

Buson again created works of great complexity by arranging simple forms in a shallow space when he created images of a kite and crows [Figure 102], which he mentioned to in a letter to Kitō written in 1776. In this pair of images the shallow space that appeared in the magpies and flowering plum image was used again to create these dynamic

images. The kite perches in a willow tree above a few young bamboos and is blown by a wind from the left side of the painting. The bird sits just above the center of the scroll and faces into the wind. Its feathers splay slightly as this wind pulls at its wings, but its beak and eyes remain fixed in their determined, almost stoic pose of strength. The bird is painted with several tones of ink to suggest the complex layering of the feathers, but unlike the Shen-style birds of earlier years, the bird's structure is suggested instead of being meticulously drawn. Like the bird, the willow tree and the bamboos are depicted with flowing outline strokes and various texture strokes added to suggest the age of the plants and the effect of the wind on their delicate foliage. The willow leaves appear as clusters of horizontal strokes that engulf the ends of the branches like clouds whipped down and to the right as the wind blows.

Following the defiant glare of the kite, we are drawn to the left scroll, where three crows are displayed in various poses in the branches of a persimmon tree growing to the left of a series of rocks and grass-covered earth. These rocks rise from the bottom of the image and fill the lower right portion of the painting, where a crow stands with its head bent down to the left to peck at a fruit held in its feet. To the left of this bird the persimmon emerges in a tangle of branches, twigs, and thin vines. Sitting on a large branch of the tree, a second crow faces the right in a posture similar to that of the bird below. Above the head of this bird, the persimmon branch sweeps in a heavy curve across the painting to the right. A third crow perches at the center of the painting, with its head and tail curved up to mirror the curvature of the branch. This crow contrasts with the lower crow as their postures appear to mirror one another. Following the head and beak of the upper crow, we are led to the upper right corner of the scroll, where the persimmon tree begins to branch and divide into a cluster of fine twigs, vines, and broad leaves, shown from a variety of vantage points. The cluster of vegetation in this corner directs the viewer back to the kite painting at

the right, which links the pair to form a complete work. Unlike the kite painting, the crows are shown in a still atmosphere, which is given life and dynamism by the postures of the birds as they forage in the tree. In this pair Buson juxtaposed different approaches to communicating the atmosphere of the landscapes within a shallow space displayed before a neutral background sky, which places the painted subjects in an undefined location.²⁵¹

This pair of scrolls is reminiscent of Buson's linked poems, which present a series of images tied by a single idea [Figure 102]. In this case the theme of birds is obvious, but the juxtaposition of different birds and associated trees leads us first away from the starting point with the kite, through the crows and persimmons, and back to the kite. In this process the climate changes and the relative sparsity of the kite image is filled by the density of the persimmon tree and its trio of birds, giving the sense of a progression playing out in the limited space of these two scrolls. Because the images provide a satisfying cluster of distinct yet related forms, the lack of a surrounding landscape to provide context and fill out a view of the world is easily overcome. By incorporating the small sprigs of bamboo in the kite image and the grasses in the crows image, Buson has revealed subtle additions to this visual display that are similar to his inclusion of subtle allusions in poetry. Like Buson's poems, these paintings present broad themes and supplement them with small additions that can take the imagination of the viewer and propel it in broader and broader circles around the central theme while allowing us to remain focused on the primary subject.

²⁵¹This discussion might also be addressed to an undated pair of paintings on the same theme of the kite and crows in wind, rain, and snow. The pair, not illustrated here, has received significant attention in the scholarly literature. The compositions in this undated pair are similar, but the kite is shown in an even more powerful form in one painting, and a pair of crows huddled in the snow dominate the other image. There remains nothing to argue for one pair or the other being the prototype, but there is general consensus that the undated pair is qualitatively a much stronger painting. That said, I have not included the undated pair simply because it does not meet the criteria established at the outset of this project.

Mount Fuji and Travel Images

Buson used this poetic approach in his paintings of Mount Fuji from the late 1770s, when he again reduced the visual material to present the mountain as a simple white silhouette surrounded by a dark sky hovering above abbreviated depictions of pines. In Figure 105, and in two others that reveal virtually the same scene, Buson used dense washes to paint the sky with subtly modulated grays that slide to the edge of the mountain and end with no firm dividing outline. The mountain's form is left entirely blank, forming a flat area of stark whiteness stretching through the center of the painting. Below the blank space of the triangular mountain form, pines are painted in rich strokes of black ink. Long strokes indicate the sides of each of their trunks and horizontal branches. At the ends of these branches, small clusters of black strokes emerge like fingers arrayed along the top surfaces of each branch. These ends of the branches are surrounded by gray-green washes that float across the foreground and fade at the left and right, as more distant pines appear to fade in the mountain mist. The trunks of these pines are filled with orange washes and black dots, giving the image a bold quality of repeated, colorful vertical lines marching across the foreground space. Like the bird paintings of the previous two years, this image appears reduced in terms of the information it communicates about the natural environment. It displays the primary subjects of the mountain, the sky, and the pines in a spatial array that does not strive to depict illusionistically the experience of viewing the mountain, but instead strives to convey the feel of the viewing experience. As we gaze at the empty mountain form, the surrounding sky and pines provide a visually complex array of textures and patterns that effectively reveal the heavy atmosphere and solitude of the pine forest. In this work Buson has used his poetic approach to image-making to create an abbreviated view of the famous mountain that suggests the core meaning or feel of the experience that viewing this mountain had come to have for Japanese viewers over many centuries.

Thinking about this work in the context of the Chinese painting manuals and Chinese works that Buson was using as inspiration in his earlier years, it appears that the artist moved away from the Chinese-inspired approach to investigate a kind of shorthand method of conveying experience through his images. He reduced the view of the landscape to a two-dimensional plane across which simplified forms were used to propel the viewer's eye and mind to the realm of remembered experience and culturally rich visual association. Like mentioning Sekigahara (the site of Ieyasu's victory that saw the ascendancy of the Tokugawa family to the shogunate) in a poem to push the reader's mind to a specific time and place with rich historical resonance, this simplified presentation of Mount Fuji used a reduction of the image to evoke cultural memory. The viewer sees only a shape and an abbreviated forest to evoke this mountain that, even without detail, is unmistakable within the image. As outsiders we can look at this mountain and see any conical peak rising from a pine forest, but within the context of Japanese society, this image could be none other than Mount Fuji. Buson explored the limits of reduction in this image as he stripped away all of the associated land forms that might be visible in this scene in favor of a focus on the mountain alone. This allowed the viewer to fill in the many cultural and historic associations connected to the mountain, and to experience a presentation that was in fact richer in visual meaning than a precise painting of the location would have been.

The reduction of the image to a form that suggests a place or event using a minimal number of ink strokes and washes of color is common in Buson's *haiga* from this period, including the large screens and scrolls from 1777 through 1779 that depict Bashō's *Oku no hosomichi* and *Nozarashi kiko* [Figures 107 and 108].²⁵² While Buson worked on these large productions he explored the abbreviated style and its potential, but he also continued

²⁵²These extraordinary screens present the *haiga* style Buson developed. I will not discuss this style here or invest much time in these screens in that they are not central to the development of Buson's hybrid *bunjinga*. That said, I do want to draw attention to how the style of these works was partially absorbed into the artist's literati paintings as another element in the hybrid mixture of styles and references.

to work within a more complex landscape format. One of these landscapes from the summer of 1778 [Figure 109] reveals Buson's willingness to combine a figure style similar to *haiga* and a landscape style more closely associated with his earlier presentations of mountains and water. In this image, a rider on a light-colored horse followed by another smaller horse move through a clearing covered with grasses. The figure and horses appear very similar to the *haiga*-style representations in the screens, but to the right and left, the rocks and trees are painted with modulated outlines and texture strokes like those in Buson's earlier Chinese-derived paintings. At the right side of the image a large overhanging rock emerges from the ground with crisp angular outline strokes and dots to indicate the rough texture of the swelling form. The rock hangs over a receding ground plane that stretches to the left, where it meets a small stream. This stream exits the scene in the lower left corner of the painting, where it crosses behind a tall tree and runs under a small bridge, marking the course the rider will take as he moves along his path. The tree is rooted in the lower left on a series of rocks embraced by claw-like roots. As the tree rises, its black outlines flow over its rough surface, and washes color the bark. The tree guides our eyes up to its leaves hanging in clusters from the tangled branches in front of a high round-topped cliff that rises from the far bank of the stream. This rocky form emerges from the ground as a series of faint washes that follow the crevices and folds in the stone surface, but as the rock rises, it becomes more fully detailed with crisp outlines and dots over washes, which creates a complex surface rising and guiding our view back to the right. The rising rock follows the angle of the stream that emerges from a rise in the land at the center of the painting. To the right of the stream's origin, a small empty pavilion sits on a flat patch of ground. This pavilion again appears in the abbreviated style of the horses and rider. Beyond the pavilion, the land appears to fall away, leaving a passage of mist that divides this middle-ground space from distant rising hills painted in subtly modulated

washes. High on the left side of the image a second cliff rises with long ropy strokes marking its surface. This cliff is painted in a lighter gray ink, giving the impression of atmospheric interference as we strain to view this distant mountain.

This work as a whole is arrayed as a series of zigzag lines cutting back into the space of the landscape, like the images of Buson's last decade of painting. Here however, he has moved markedly away from the Shen-style horses and precisely drawn figures in favor of a much more abbreviated form. In some of his earlier paintings, Buson used abbreviated figures, but in those works he often presented the figures as simple forms, like those seen in the painting manuals. This figure differs in that we can see the features of his face and the trappings of his horse, as well as his traveling garments. Although these features are visible, they are drawn in a manner that appears flat and simplified. It is as though Buson has once again created a hybrid form that draws off his work in two distinct painting styles. To see this hybridity, a detail from Buson's 1779 *Oku no hosomichi* [Figure 141] beside a detail of this rider reveals the similarity of the *haiga*-style image to this landscape painting. In images from the end of this decade, Buson's mixture of approaches and styles remain separable. As seen in Figure 109, it is as though he has taken images and allowed them to collide in a manner that we can visually divide to see the separate sources for his paintings. By remaining separable, these styles and approaches evoke distinct memories and responses in the viewer. In essence, there become multiple paths for reading these images through the various components brought together to form hybrid expressions. With these separate components, there also emerged a new path for viewing the work that could only exist within the hybrid itself.

Empty Pavilions and Isolated Rocks

Although combining his separate image-making techniques appears to have been

one of Buson's approaches to painting at this time, he also seems to approach some of his Chinese-derived works with an eye to simplifying them so that they resemble his *haiga*. In a landscape with an empty pavilion in a wintery grove, Buson displays this kind of reduction [Figure 111]. In this painting from the winter of 1778, he paints with a relatively dry brush. In the foreground, brushstrokes of faint gray move horizontally in slight curves, suggesting a ground plane rising at the center of the scroll. A tree emerges from the bottom of the scene, implying by its cropped appearance that it is rooted well out in the viewer's space. This draws us into the space where more trees rise with roughly painted trunks and twigs, surrounded by washes that appear like pools in each tree crown. At the center of the scroll surrounded by the trees is a faintly painted pavilion with thin support poles and very little detail. To the left the land rises steeply in long arching strokes, which are filled with gray wash and horizontal texture strokes. From here a cliff rises above the tree tops. This presentation is very simple in comparison to Buson's other landscape images of the period, but it is clear that the techniques used were derived from his work with Chinese paintings. He took the Chinese-inspired style and simplified it to create an intimate view that demands close attention but also leaves an empty, forbidding space. It is as though Buson has reduced this image to its essential structure, leaving a field within which the viewer is invited to wait for something or someone to arrive.

Although this scene is not a *haiga*-style work, it shares with *haiga* a simple, direct quality that was uncommon in the artist's earlier works. In this work and others, Buson moved toward a type of painting characterized by the conflation of his various styles that emerged as distinct forms of his hybrid manner of painting. Moving along this course, Buson seems to have explored a number of unusual ideas derived from both his studies of Chinese painting and his thoughts on poetry. In a series of works depicting rocks floating in an empty space, one of these approaches is evident. In 1779 he painted a hanging scroll

of rocks [Figure 114], and he continued working with this theme several more times until the spring of 1783, when he painted a screen with floating rocks arrayed across its surface [Figure 138]. Focusing on the later screen, it becomes apparent that Buson took this idea directly from the *Mustard Seed Garden Painting Manual*, where illustrations of rock types are presented in this isolated manner [Figure 142]. In the printed illustration, it is clear that the Chinese artist's goal was to show the approach to rock depiction in a graphic manner. Buson has taken this illustration and made it the primary subject of the large painting. The rocks appear in varying tones of gray and black ink, with swirling lines and washes to provide texture and dimension to these forms. Only the smallest rock in this cluster was colored, perhaps to emphasize it or give it visual strength in contrast to its small size. At the right the rocks appear high in the screen and faint gray, as if somewhat distant from our space. As we move to the left, the rocks are clustered, and some appear near the bottom of the screen. Although it is possible to see these lower, larger rocks as lying in the foreground, each rock seems to be isolated in its own space, and the arrangement of solitary rocks to the left seems to deny the reading of this as a coherent spatial array of stones. It is as though Buson allowed small passages of space to emerge where rocks are clustered and overlapping, but then has denied that space as he moved to other rocks. The effect is one of creating pockets of space within an overall flat presentation of the subject. Buson varied his approach to the painting of the rocks as he moved from one to another, but it appears that he isolated this theme, taken from a Chinese source, to present something uncommon in Chinese painting. Perhaps this is one of Buson's most effectively hybrid creations, as he was able to achieve a great deal of evocative suggestion through an unusual subject taken from his study of Chinese painting. In a *haiga* work depicting even more simplified rocks, Buson wrote:

柳ちり清水かれ石ところどころ

The willow tree bare, the clear stream shrunken; lone rocks here and there.²⁵³

This poem reveals some of the allusion that underlies the depictions of these rocks [Figure 143]. In his headnote to this poem, Buson referred to his favorite passage in the *Prose Poems on the Red Cliff*, which he quoted, “The mountains rise high, the moon looks small, and the water falls between the rocks.” He went on to explain that “long ago when I was on my way to the province of Michinoku, underneath the Pilgrim’s Willow Tree, I thought of a verse on the topic of rocks strewn about.”²⁵⁴ In this passage Buson revealed that these rocks related to a poem Bashō wrote when he visited this site and that the rocks, while distantly tied to China through the allusion to the *Red Cliff*, are in fact Japanese rocks in a stream he visited during his youthful travels. Buson was therefore bringing together in the rock paintings aspects of his youth, his studies of Chinese literature, and his observations of Chinese painting manuals to create a set of works that stand on their own as unique expressions with rich underlying layers of association within the broader world of his literary and artistic interests.

Animals and Figures in the Landscape

Although the rocks present a striking form of painting with only a few precedents in the work of artists in Japan or China, Buson’s landscape paintings from the early 1780s

²⁵³This poem has also been translated to read: “Willow leaves fallen, clear waters dried up stones, one place and another.” “Willow leaves have fallen, clear stream dried up, and stones are scattered here and there.” “The willows are bare, the water dried up; stones here and there.” “The willow-tree bare; the fountain dried up; stones here and there.” “Stones are protruding from the river-bed; along its banks are willows drooping, dead.” “Willow-trees are bare— dried the water, and the stones lying here and there.” “Willow leaves are gone, the fresh brook has now run dry— rocks scattered here and there.” Zolbrod, 1990, p. 557.

²⁵⁴赤壁前後の誣訃賦字々みな絶妙 あるか中に山高月小 水落石出といふものことにめてたく孤雲の群鷄を出るかことし むかしみちのくに行躰さしに遊行柳のもとにて忽右の句をおもひ出て. Translated in Leon Zolbrod, *Haiku Painting* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1982), p. 11.

reveal a more subtle originality that requires some close observation. The works that best reveal Buson's creative force and original thought fall within the final period of his life, when he began to use the Shain signature. This signature appears on his painting of a deer in an autumn landscape with high mountains and a dramatic waterfall cutting through the scene [Figure 115]. Although the theme of this work is not new to Buson, the dramatic form of the composition and the comfortable placement of the *haiga*-derived deer in the comparatively detailed landscape indicate the artist's mature form of expression.

In this deer painting, the landscape emerges from the lower right corner of the scene, forming a wave-like sweep of grassy earth and rocks. The wave of land breaks, and trees obscure parts of the middle-ground. The deer stands behind the leftmost trees with its spindly legs splayed, as if it is running through this autumn-colored space. The animal stands on a path behind the wave of land at the right to sag across the middle-ground. Beyond this space, mist hides the receding land, which rises in further waves to disappear into denser clouds that swirl around the tree branches. At the right side of the image, a stream pours out from the middle-ground. Following this stream into the scene, another grove of trees appears at the right edge of the scene, and the upper reaches of the stream lead the eye up to a waterfall at the left. Clouds wind through the branches of the more distant trees in a zigzag pattern, and a high mountain rises to embrace the waterfall. The rocks around the waterfall form a large X-shape in the upper portion of the work, which vies with the deer for the viewer's attention. This form is created by the dark outlines and rich washes in the crevices of the mountain. The surfaces of the mountain are marked with browns and grays that appear to depict a more solid and architectonic form than Buson had previously used in his paintings. As the dark top of the mountain descends at the right, it forms a saddle far in the distance where the clouds rise to reach out of the scene into the valleys beyond our view. The novelty of this painting lies in the depiction of the deer and

its harmony with the surrounding landscape. Also, the dramatic slicing and churning of the landscape space, as boldly colored areas collide with empty space depicting clouds, produces a new kind of dynamism within the work without appearing contrived or cartoonishly awkward.

This painting and a collection of similar landscapes from the following year that depict figures and animals in high mountains reveal the full force of Buson's hybrid blend of Chinese painting and his own sense of poetic painting, which becomes visually dense and deeply evocative of the rustic experience of the world. To see the full impact of these new images, it is valuable to examine some of the landscape images with rustic figures that Buson painted in his younger days. Looking back at his 1766 image of a mounted rider crossing a stream [Figure 59] and his four seasonal landscapes from 1774 [Figure 96], it becomes apparent how his later landscapes [Figures 119 and 120] introduce a new sense of the relation of the figures and the land. The 1780 painting of a figure crossing a stream on horseback [Figure 119] shows some similarity to the 1766 painting of the same theme, but the dramatic zigzag of the stream and the fantasy-like display of willows and other trees surrounding distant views of fields and white passages of clouds, all arrayed beneath the peaks of distant mountains, reveal a much more complex approach to the theme. In the later painting, the wave-like emergence of the land in the foreground seen in Figure 115 is repeated, and the figure shows some similarity to the *haiga*-style figure seen in the 1778 scene of a mounted rider [Figure 109]. It seems that Buson has taken the features of several of his earlier paintings and brought them together. In this image he has created a dramatic presentation of a deep landscape that evokes the sense of utopian idealism common in his later works. Again in the manner of a poem, he brought together allusions to his earlier paintings and created a narrative view of the world that approximated the complexity of a *kasen*, with its connected ideas moving from one location to another through the visual

field.

The 1780 painting of a farmer and his horse among rustic buildings in the shadow of tall trees and high mountains continues this complex combination of images [Figure 120]. This work is structurally similar to the spring image from the 1774 four seasonal landscapes, but the landscape has been opened in the later image to suggest a much greater depth of field, and the high mountains rise far in the distance beyond the foreground buildings. Buson's use of strong color in the horse's coat and in the various greens of the trees at the left give Figure 120 two distinct points of focus that lead the eye up the painting, where it then follows the light colors of the mountains to the right, to finally reach the blue-washed mountain in the distance at the upper right. Our eyes move through this scene in the same zigzag fashion that Buson presented in many of his late images. In this case, the eye is stopped at the turns of this zigzag motion by accents, including the figure in the hut at the left and the small brown rodent on the roof of a thatched house at the right. These accents slow the viewer looking through the scene, emphasizing the effect of the space opening as the scene reaches into the distance. In Buson's earlier works the flow of the eye into the distance was often smooth. Occasionally he achieved the illusion of deep recession, but in these late works the recession takes place in a very limited physical space on the painting. He used the angular movement of colored forms and patterns of light and dark to propel us gradually into the space. By then adding small details to slow our following of these diagonal movements, he suggested a far-reaching move through this fantasy space. The colors and the activities of the figures all suggest a realm of fantasy and joy, which these paintings present with great consistency.

Peach Blossom Spring and Other Chinese Literary Themes

Buson's interest in fantasy and utopian visions during this period appears in his

many images of the *Peach Blossom Spring*, which he painted during the last three years of his life. In this legend a rustic figure accidentally discovers a land of immortality in which blossoming peaches dominate the landscape. He frolics with the immortals and then returns to his village to tell his community about his discovery, but is never able to find the utopia again. Buson took this theme and built several fine works that reveal aged, Chinese-dressed figures among blossoming peach trees. In a pair of scrolls from 1781 [Figure 121] he painted several aged Chinese figures in the peach grove and included long passages from the text of the Chinese fable. This presentation of the theme appears filled with the light pink of the blossoms and a pale blue used for several of the figures and the steeply rising ground-plane. Buson used a fine but assured line to define the figures' robes and the outlines of the tree trunks, which he then filled with washes of varying tones of brown, blue, and gray. The trunks of the trees were given further texture with strokes of dry ink that spiral as they rise around the figures. Unlike the zigzag into distance that he used in previous landscapes, these paintings were given a dynamic appearance by the interaction of the figures and the interplay of forms in a complex pattern of layered lines. Even within the robes of the figures, the strokes of wash that color the robes were applied so that they left small patches of bare paper to provide a sense of the surface texture of these people's garments.

This pair of peach blossom paintings was followed by a horizontal scene depicting Chinese figures in a peach grove seated around a table covered with books and drink [Figure 122]. In this work Buson again turned to the peach grove as a setting for his figures and, while they are not necessarily related to the Chinese tale of the immortals, these figures resonate with the idea of a utopia of art and pleasure peopled by Chinese men of leisure. This image relates to Buson's earlier screens depicting Chinese gentlemen engaged in drinking and enjoying the pursuit of various arts, but now the scene seems to

stress the utopian vision of the Chinese poet Li Bo. Buson's inscription is taken from Li Bo's writing on a spring evening in a peach grove, and the figure at the center facing the viewer appears to be Li Bo himself, with his writing clasped in his left hand. The image is suffused with green that colors the ground plane and the robes of the two attendants as well as the cover on the books resting on the table. The rock at the right corner and the peach trees were painted in a wet gray ink with washes to fill their modulated outlines, and the figures were painted with smoothly flowing lines reminiscent of Buson's paintings from a decade earlier. It seems that he combined several of his earlier approaches in this work, but the overall theme is solidly in the cluster of utopian visions that proliferated during this period. Buson returned to the use of eye contact between an attendant at the far end of the table and the viewer which he had explored between 1768 and the mid-1770s. This allows us to enter this scene in a manner quite different from that used in the landscapes of the past two years. Although this image might seem to be a return to the earlier style of Buson's painting, with little tie to the new form of expression that he seems to have been exploring, the angles of the trees and the contrasts of the figure style with that used in the landscape reveal his continued effort to bring together ideas from the past with new dynamic compositions. This painting was replicated in a vertical format with the text hanging above the figures in precisely the same positions, indicating that the artist continued to paint and revise his works in subtle ways as he was generating these mature works.

One further work on the theme of the *Peach Blossom Spring* was painted in 1781 for Sumiya and depicts a boatman pushing his craft into the open mouth of the cave that will lead him to the land of the immortals [Figure 125]. This painting, like the image discussed above, is in a horizontal format, which shows the river flowing across the foreground into the cave. The figure stands in his boat and looks out at the viewer as he leans on his pole. The cave was painted with long strokes that rise and fall, echoing the

shape of the opening of the cave, which appears like a curved flow of stone arching its back toward the sky. From the rocks surrounding the cave entrance, flowering peach trees emerge and reach up into the mist-filled sky. Moving to the left past the cave entrance, the rope-like strokes depicting the cave continue through several curved rock forms, with more trees emerging from their tops and a marshy area appearing behind the rocks at the far left. In a narrow space at the left side, a distant hill rises and is obscured by a cloud hanging thickly over its surface. Above this, still more peach trees can be seen in the far distance. The land at the left seems to reach behind the cave and rocks at the center of the painting. This makes the cave and its rocks appear like a tunnel that strangely leads to a space disconnected from the surrounding landscape. Following the story, which suggests the cave leads to a world separate from that of the mortal world, this cave leads into mists and suggests no outlet in the visible world.

The color used in this scene provides a distant feeling that helps assert the fantasy of the theme. The boatman's stare also draws the viewer into the utopian realm. Buson used the undulating forms of the rocks and the emerging forms of the trees to give this scene a dynamic energy, providing a strong narrative drive within the image through the flow of the stream and penetration of the figure's boat into the mouth of the cave. We can see the inevitable progress of this figure toward the utopia within the cave, but he has been captured at the moment before his discovery, allowing us to join in the progress toward his goal.²⁵⁵ While this scene is primarily concerned with the story of the discovery of the land of the immortals, it is hard to overlook the sexually suggestive quality of this painting. It was painted during the period of Buson's close relationship with the women of the pleasure districts of Kyoto and Osaka, and it seems he has woven his interest in their profession into

²⁵⁵Of course, the boatman in this scene would need to lie down in his boat in order to enter the cave. This seems only to heighten the sexually humorous nature of the work, as the figure looks to us before proceeding on his way.

his presentation of this scene. Although it is not necessary to belabor the point that there are sexual overtones to this imagery, it is important. Through this overlaying of his personal circumstances onto the traditional theme, Buson has again revealed how he willfully contemporized his imagery, even as he retreated in this painting to a closer following of Chinese-derived brush techniques. The hybrid nature of these works lies in the weaving together of tradition and immediate experience to create works that resonate widely with literary and historical traditions.

Although Buson's paintings of 1781 show a return to close following of Chinese models in their brushstrokes and in the repeated use of themes like the *Peach Blossom Spring*, he continued to embrace a more eclectic personal style of painting in some of his creations. His painting of Wang Tzuyu [王子猷] visiting Tai Andao [戴安道] in the winter [Figure 126] reveals a very personal manner of painting and shows a more secluded and retiring side of the aging artist's personality. This painting, like the old men in the peach grove illustrated above, is largely painted in soft, pale blues and grays that flow smoothly across the scene. At the right, the gate and house of Tai Andao rest among several abbreviated trees, weighed down by snow hanging in their branches. In the upper branches of the trees, both blank silk and thin strokes of white pigment surround the short black strokes that form the twigs of these dormant plants. The earth's surface appears painted with pools of wash that flow around the trees to provide a sense of the cold, snowy ground. The complexity of the house and trees at the right contrasts with the wide open space of pale blue water at the left. Near the bottom of the painting, a boat drifts across this water away from the house toward the left side of the painting.

At the left end of the boat Wang Tzuyu sits bundled in white and gray robes that cover his head and face, leaving only his eyes to stare out of the painting at us. A pilot stands at the opposite end with his back to the viewer, pushing the craft through the still

water. The water itself is painted with long horizontal strokes that leave occasional passages of bare silk, which suggests the rippled surface reflecting the sparse light of winter. Moving into the distance across the water, the land encroaches at both the left and right, where wet gray strokes of ink flow over the forms of rocks and hills and trees are painted as simple vertical trunks with horizontal branches. These trees and low land forms are surrounded by dark washes that fade to bare silk as they rise toward the top edge of the painting. Soft, wet outlines border these bare patches, forming a set of distant peaks that hang in a dark sky. At the left, the moon shines in the dark washed sky, and at the right, a larger mountain rises with dots of dark ink and white accents to suggest clumps of snow. Throughout this scene there is a sense of frozen motion and a melancholy entirely absent in the contemporary peach blossom paintings.

Buson seems to have altered his style and composition in this work to accord with his understanding of this episode drawn from Chinese literary history.²⁵⁶ He painted the cold scene with uniformly wet strokes and a slow progression into distance through predominantly horizontal movements of the brush. These techniques give the painting a very slow and quiet quality, and the use of dark washes in the sky and shadowed ground infuses the scene with a subtle sorrow or loneliness. This lonely feeling is made all the stronger by the gaze of Wang Tzuyu, which seems not to draw the viewer in, like many of his other figures, but to peer out, communicating his isolation within this empty landscape. Buson made another version of this scene that follows the composition virtually stroke for stroke, suggesting that the subject determined the style of this scene, rather than this being a haphazard use of an eclectic style. In thinking about the painting styles Buson used in 1781, it is most important to consider his dwelling on Chinese themes and his choice of

²⁵⁶In this episode, Wang Tzuyu travels far to see his friend Tai Andao, but after traveling through the bitter winter, he knocks at the gate of Tai's home and receives no reply. Wang turns and departs, retracing his steps in silence.

approaches to image-making that reflect his thoughts on the meaning of each individual theme. His repetition of the *Peach Blossom Spring* shows his own thoughts on age and mortality, and this painting of Wang Tzuyu's visit reveals the melancholy that the aging artist felt as he faced the many responsibilities of his poetry and painting in the last years of his life.

Diversity of Moods in Buson's Mature Paintings

As the year continued, Buson used the wet strokes of the Wang Tzuyu painting to complete a pair of spring and autumn landscapes that, while they rise dramatically in a zigzag progression into space, also show the growing melancholy in the artist's work [Figure 128]. These paintings appear similar to the seasonal landscapes of earlier years in terms of their compositions, but the individual ink strokes are broader and wetter than most used in his younger days. The figure staring out of the house surrounded by bamboos in the spring landscape, and the figure crossing a bridge in the foreground of the autumn landscape, both appear to convey the melancholic character of Wang as he crosses the water. To help push forward this emotional character, Buson painted the remaining portions of the landscape with washes and wet strokes that move horizontally in the spring landscape and bubble up slowly to reach the high mountains in the background of the autumn scene. These melancholic works form a sharp contrast to a pair of scrolls depicting Hanshan and Shide that Buson painted at this time [Figure 127]. In these works Buson used the same layered washes to fill the figures' garments that he had used earlier in the year when he painted the old figures in a peach grove [Figure 121]. He focused in the later work on the two Chinese poets alone, with no suggestion of landscape or a ground plane. Hanshan appears with his back to the viewer and his face in profile, while Shide faces forward with his head turned to look at an angle toward Hanshan. Hanshan's robes were

painted with highly modulated lines that suggest the many wrinkles of the fabric as it falls toward his feet. In the blue-gray of the poet's shirt, many scratchy strokes layer over one another, leaving bits of white exposed on the cloth's surface. The effect is to suggest a texture similar to burlap. To achieve this, Buson used a highly sized paper and many strokes of relatively dry ink that contrast with the wetter outlines of the figure's robes. He used the same dry brush to depict both figures' hair, and smudges of brown color to mark their faces, hands, and feet. The jagged lines of Hanshan's robes contrast with the robes of Shide, which are painted with equally wet outline strokes, but flow in vertical curves as they fall from his sleeves and down the front of his garments. Shide's shirt was painted with the same dense, scratchy, gray cluster of strokes that appeared in the Hanshan image. Overall, the scratchy surfaces and the many wrinkles of the figures' clothes make these two figures appear strikingly aged as they continue their poetic practices.

Buson had been painting this theme throughout his career, but in no other image do we see these poets painted in this style, and in no other do they appear as old as they do here. It is as though the Chinese poets have aged along with the painter. He has painted them as old men with eccentric garments and withered flesh, but within their eyes and the stark presentation of the figures, with no surrounding contextual landscape, we can see the spark of their poetic inspiration thriving as they face their waning years. Buson's presentation of these figures becomes almost autobiographical as these old poets become surrogates for the old poet making the paintings. This practice parallels the practice seen in the Wang Tzuyu painting in that the subject guides the style used for the painting. As Buson taught his followers and as he learned from Hajin, he reacted to his circumstances by changing his style and approach to fit each individual painting.

In 1782, Buson continued this variability in his style to complement his subjects as he painted several versions of a farmer feeding his horse [Figures 133 and 134]. In these

paintings the primary subject is identical, with a farmer at the left and a horse in a stable at the right. The horse stretches his head toward the farmer, who carries a barrel toward the stable. Above the farmer a house stands among trees, and a small rodent runs along the ridge of the roof toward the left. Buson painted a similar scene in 1780 with each of these components of the subject in a slightly different arrangement [Figure 120]. In the later versions of this painting, the primary difference from one image to another appears in the background mountains, which rise above the trees and houses in the foreground, and in the direction of the flow of a fragmentary stream in the foreground. In Figure 133, the structures are arrayed in front of a passage of mist rising above bamboos and leafy trees. These trees hide the lower reaches of mountains painted in washes that pile up toward the upper left corner of the painting. In Figure 134, the trees surrounding the buildings are leafless, and clouds seem to reach down into their branches. From these trees, a path rises in an S-shape at the right, toward a high peak with dark strokes of ink falling from its summit. In the former image, the stream in the foreground slopes down to the left as it crosses in front of the horse, and in the later image, the stream slopes down to the right in front of the farmer. This placement of the stream has the effect of moving the viewer's position to the right in Figure 133 and to the center in Figure 134. Buson may have been trying different arrangements in painting these works to capture a vision that pleased him, and it seems he may have been building this image over time as he replicated the subject and made the background progressively more complex. In a third undated version of this image [Figure 144], this increasing complexity appears as the stream returns to the right side of the foreground. In this work the background landscape reveals a deep movement into a passage of fields and raised dikes, with a pathway snaking off to the upper right. Although it is possible that these paintings were made in an order other than that presented here, the date of the simplest of these images [Figure 133] is inscribed as the first month of

spring 1782 and the more complex image [Figure 134] is inscribed as having been painted when the artist was sixty-seven years old, or 1783. This suggests that the paintings could have been made in this order. Figure 144 is difficult to place in this series, but if we are to see this as a progression from a simple presentation to more and more complex presentations, it would postdate the second dated work.

In making these paintings, Buson returned to using a wet brush to define much of the landscape and the horse, and a more textural fine line to depict the trees and the details of the figure's clothing. This combination of brush techniques is similar to that seen in the deer in an autumn landscape painted in 1779 [Figure 115]. In the combining of an abbreviated style for the lines of the house and stable with contrasting fine strokes to define the branches of the trees and distant land forms, Buson's personal approach to painting seasonal landscapes has reemerged, and something akin to poetry in painting once again reveals itself. Buson's reuse of the structures, figure, horse, and other small details is like the recurring theme of a series of poems within which other images are expressed to enrich the presentation of the scene. The farmer and the horse are clearly the primary image, but the stream and the distant mountains appear to be stated in different manners to complement the primary subject and to make the set of scenes appear like a series of poems following a figure through seasonal or spatial changes as the verses progress.

In the summer of 1782, Buson created two screens on silver leaf that can be read in the same manner as the set of farmer and horse images [Figure 136], but they require a broader examination to see where the component parts of the poetic image were first introduced. This pair of screens is particularly striking in its appearance. The flow of predominantly black ink strokes across the surface is clearly limited in terms of the amount of tonal variation that was possible, given the nonporous nature of the metal surface, but the artist managed to suggest a dynamic move into space in both screens. The right screen

opens with a passage of water painted with a faint blue wash rising into the distance. Three boats carrying figures and cargo move to the right and left. At the right edge of the screen, a passage of land emerges with a small pavilion, like those seen in Buson's earlier landscapes. The pavilion houses several packages and is surrounded by piles of other goods, suggesting that this is not the empty pavilion on a distant hill seen in some of the traveler paintings, but a place that is actively being used by the figures in this work. The land around this pavilion swells at the right to stretch into the distance and is painted with long, thin, hemp-fiber strokes and dots. As the land recedes, it becomes faint, painted in pools of wash that sit on the metal surface. This creates dramatic effects of light and dark as the pools of ink darken around their edges. To the left, a spine of land emerges at the lower edge of the screen and climbs to the left. Another pavilion, housing a number of wicker baskets, is tucked into the side of the rising land in the third panel of the screen, and a path built on a set of poles follows the rising land to the left.

A tiny figure with a yellow robe and straw hat walks along this path toward the right and appears to be about to pass behind a rock in the foreground. Trees emerge from the tops of rocks that form the right side of the path, and more figures can be seen under their branches, moving along the path to the left. A rock divides this path from a cluster of houses arrayed along the right side of the path to the left of the rocks. These buildings are carefully painted in a style like that used in the stable and house seen in the farmer and horse paintings. In one of these houses, a small figure sits and converses with another figure along the path. The buildings stretch up into a valley that lies at the heart of a collection of high peaks painted with the hemp-fiber strokes seen at the right. The path continues high into these mountains and leads to a distant peak painted in wash, with pools of ink providing texture and visual intrigue. Far below these peaks, another open house sits beside the shore of the passage of water at the center of the image, and a single figure can

be seen peering out of his window to look across the water to the space of the viewer. To the left of this pavilion, trees and hills rise as the distant mountains trail downward and fade at the left edge of the screen.

In the left screen, another path commences at the right, and faint washed hills fill the distance. At the base of the screen a small hill rises to hide a portion of the path. This hill is painted with Mi-style dots of varying ink tones and feathery strokes, indicating grasses reaching above the ground surface. The path emerges from behind this hill, and a mounted rider, similar to the *haiga*-style riders painted in 1778 and 1779, moves along the path to the left. Beyond the path, a low-lying stream flows out of the image to the right. The far bank of the stream is painted with long, thin strokes, and a thicket of bamboo rises to obscure the lower reaches of the distant mountains. To the left of the rider a tiled roof emerges from a depression on the far side of the path, and a hill with trees and more Mi-style dots marking the land surface rises toward the sky. Along the path are a pair of men walking toward the rider from the left. The figure wearing a blue shirt looks out at the viewer while the other faces him, his gray back visible as he talks with his associate. To the left of these figures, the land on our side of the path rises again, and trees with blue-green leaves obscure our view of the path as it moves toward a series of houses to the left of the center of the screen. In these houses small objects painted with faint blue and pink can be seen resting on tables and stored under the shelter of the roofs. Three figures dressed in pink, yellow, and blue stand in the clearing surrounded by these houses, and two other figures can be seen conversing to the left. In each of these groups one figure looks out of the screen to the viewer. These looks from the tiny figures draw our attention to the buildings, which are backed by a thicket of bamboos and a high rising hill marked with Mi-style dots that continues up to fade out of the scene at the left edge. Below the rising hills on a level patch of land, a farm appears with paddy fields stretching down toward the

bottom of the screen. At the left of the farm another passage of land rises to stop our view and redirect us back to the activity at the center of the screen.

In thinking about these screens it is important to look back, as Buson seems to have been doing, to his early screens in Mi Fu's and Wang Meng's styles from 1760 [Figures 33 and 34] and the landscape screens painted for the Kyoto screen group in the mid-1760s [Figure 44]. In these comparisons, we can see how the artist embraced some of the compositional ideas from his youth in his later paintings. It is also important to note how elements drawn from the *haiga*-style screens [Figures 107 and 108] have been used in painting the houses and figures of Figure 136 as they trail across the landscape. In the merging of these styles and in the clear adoption of painting techniques derived from the observation of painting manuals and actual works from China, Buson has created a painting with compositional elements formed throughout his career. In this work he fully combined his ideas to create landscapes that are at once powerful and monumental in their high mountains, and calm and reflective in the passages of water and low hills. They reveal a love of travel in the lone figures on the moving paths and a deep sense of the joy of community in the clusters of houses and interacting groups of people. Like a summary of the many individual ideas Buson presented in individual works, Figure 136 seamlessly merges the many aspects of the artist's oeuvre in one remarkable presentation. We are led through these spaces along a narrative guided by the horizontally moving paths, but then allowed to stop to see other events taking place in the painted world, peopled by rustic figures engaged in the pursuit of their various activities. Like an encapsulation of his other paintings, these works more than any other seem to reveal just how effectively Buson could convey his poetic vision in his imagery. These are the landscapes of Buson's prose poetry that, like the long writings of 1777, serve as a touchstone for understanding just where his style came from and where it would ultimately end. These works are expressions

of the hybrid style that contains a nearly limitless number of connections to the artist's past and the pasts of his many inspirations.

In the last year of his life, Buson created several more landscapes that rival the 1782 screens in terms of revealing the finest of the artist's work. Many, however, seem to simply repeat the compositions of earlier years. One final set of works that deserves note is the set of *fusuma* painted for Gichū-ji in Ōtsu entitled *Kōgaku rochō* [衡岳露頂] [Figure 139]. Although these works are now in poor condition, it is still evident that Buson chose to paint only the peaks of these mountains as they reach up the paper surfaces of the *fusuma*. With many hemp-fiber strokes and dots of black ink, Buson suggests the atmosphere of these high mountains and their precipitous plunges into steep valleys that lie in the viewer's space. The isolation of the mountain peaks provides a kind of focus that the previous screens lack. Whereas the silver leaf screens might be seen as the equivalent of prose poems, these are mere poetic allusions floating without the associated images that would make them complete poems. Parallel to Buson's eclecticism in his forays into free-form verse, these *fusuma* are like free-form painting. They are ungrounded like the floating rock paintings, but here the space is abbreviated to an even greater extent as the peaks emerge as texture almost without form rising toward the emptiness of the sky. The interiors of the mountain forms are equally empty, creating a visual tension in which the images both emerge as mountains and fragment to become mere ink strokes as the eye shifts across the surface.

In these final two paintings, Buson worked in two directions. He created complexly layered works that reach both into his own past and his knowledge of the history of Chinese painting, and dramatically simplified works in which the world was stripped bare to reveal the void that surrounds everything and fills it with nothing. By freely playing with ideas of rich narrative and drastic reduction, we are shown the two sides of the artist's

understanding in this painting. Uniting these approaches is the hybridity of his late works. The simple and the complex resonate with a common set of diverse inspirations drawn from Buson's life and his observations of art from China. In Figure 139 he has followed the tradition with faith and passion, but simultaneously denied the traditions of painting to create a work in which the abstract flow of ink becomes the subject as much as the depicted landscape space. With these contrasting moves in his painting and his unfaltering efforts to teach the traditions of poetry while freely violating the established rules, it becomes evident that Buson was engaged in a complex process of visual and literary creation that freely embraced ideas and practices derived from traditional China and his contemporary Japan without showing obvious bias for either. With his deep knowledge of poetic and painting traditions, Buson was able to draw together these diverse approaches to create hybrid expressions that combine the literary and visual, the Chinese and Japanese, and the traditional and contemporary.

Chapter 9: Conclusions

Having surveyed some of the major events in Buson's life and looked closely at several of his surviving paintings, it is fruitful to step back and observe the implications of understanding these paintings as progressively more and more hybrid in their constitution and impact. Considering Buson's paintings in terms of their relationship to Chinese painting traditions, demonstrates how this eighteenth-century Japanese artist interpreted the art of his continental neighbors. Looking specifically at Buson's poetry as it coexisted with his painting reveals how he interpreted the poetic traditions of the seventeenth-century *haikai* masters and used their ideas to structure his visual images. Finally, looking at events that shaped the artist's life provides some insight into the individual experience of this urban artist in eighteenth-century Kyoto as he painted and interacted with his many patrons and followers. Each of these component parts of Buson's recorded history expresses something of historical importance, but thinking about this information in a broad sense and detecting the impact that these separate components had on his paintings begins to suggest the hybrid nature of these images. This hybridity finds, at its root, elements drawn from many times and places. With an understanding of the range of ideas and events that contributed to the creation of these images, it is possible to conceive of Buson as having engaged in a discourse with these images. Through his painting, he adopted images and styles drawn from his understanding of the past to form hybrid works. Working from this hybrid position, he was able to function simultaneously as a traditionalist reaching to the Chinese and Japanese pasts, and as a contemporary critic addressing his experience as a professional artist in Kyoto. Just as the artist's works function both as historically grounded statements and as contemporary records of experience, our viewing of his paintings speak both about Buson's time and the present, as

the works continue to resonate with the experience of cross-cultural and cross-temporal interactions. In essence, the narratives that can now be told through observation and interpretation of Buson's imagery form both a primary observation of the art of eighteenth century and a secondary commentary on the histories revealed in Buson's rephrasing of the past. Meaning in the paintings lies now not only in their recording of artistic production of the eighteenth century, but also in their ability to bring a still contemporary sense of cultural and social commentary being played out through the visual narratives of Buson's hybrid expressions of Chinese and Japanese histories.

The hybrid position that Buson occupied was a partial result of his interests in poetry. During the later seventeenth century, Japanese poets had turned to China as a source for inspiration. The *haikai* tradition had existed for centuries among the literate elite of Japan, but it was not until the advent of the Tokugawa era, and its liberalization of educational institutions providing common people with the opportunity to become literate and to study recent Chinese thought, that the poetic form could emerge as a type of popular literature. Economic reforms and a burgeoning urban population led to the rapid spread of interest in *haikai* among the growing middle class, and in turn, poets found the necessary support to seek a livelihood writing and publishing. The growth of book printing and publishing supported these new poets, and their popularity grew quickly among the masses. As the *haikai* poets were providing popular art to a mass audience rather than the traditional elite audience, they needed to change their forms and content with great regularity to maintain the interest of their patrons. By turning to Chinese poetry (*kanshi*) as a resource, they were able to mine the wealth of Chinese writing that had to date been unexplored in popular Japanese literature. The interests of the government in both urbanization and Chinese thought meant that the poets met with little if any resistance from officials as they created for the new class of readers and taught a large number of

followers.

Buson participated in the second century of this development, when the profession of the *haikai* master was common and the patronage patterns were well-established throughout Japan. In his work he delved into Chinese and Japanese tradition to express his individual ideas, and it is in this reaching to various traditions to create contemporary poetic and visual images that his hybrid position became evident. This suggests some interesting possible patterns of interpretation with respect to the paintings that record Buson's various ideas and expressions. It is important that the hybrid work be comprised of distinct, identifiable precursors located in different cultural positions. This is the case in poetry, which follows the *haikai* tradition of Buson's time, and in the *bunjin* painting tradition, which effectively speaks of Japanese ideas in a Chinese language of forms. Buson began moving toward the hybrid position as his interest in the arts was located in realms of poetry and painting that were, by their nature, blends of Chinese and Japanese concepts. Yet, it is not this simple blending of Chinese and Japanese tradition that is central to Buson's work. It is in his use of these blended forms to address his contemporary experience that the hybrid works become compelling. He becomes a cultural hybrid in his embrace of the pasts of both China and Japan as he forged new expressive forms that resonated with his patrons' interests.

Although this activity is interesting in its own right, Buson separated himself from the many poets and painters working in hybrid traditions by embracing an image within his life that is closely tied to the itinerant experience of traveling. His efforts to position himself as an outsider in the various communities in which he worked reveals his awareness that his hybrid works could best be produced by a visitor rather than a resident artist. He appears to have been uncomfortable with the idea of occupying a position of authority, preferring to retain the identity of a traveler even when he was rooted in the Kyoto

environment. He essentially created for himself what Haruo Shirane has called an “imagined community” in which he is the outsider offering his views to the urban patrons who supported him.²⁵⁷ Even in his interactions with his students and close associates, he held himself at a distance. In his many interactions that we can see the imagined nature of his position. His correspondence with friends from the time he left Edo presents this conscious distancing with great regularity. These efforts helped to enhance and effectively use his hybrid position, as he could speak of the here-and-now while imagining himself being neither there nor then.

Buson’s combination of the traditional and the contemporary has roots in his unwavering dedication to the Bashō tradition of poetry. Bashō practiced *haikai* in the new social world of the Tokugawa period, which saw the rise of a literate, wealthy class of common people who could support the production and publication of texts at a rate never before seen in Japan’s previous thousand years of literary history. As Shirane revealed in his study of Bashō and his legacy, the poet’s emergence was largely a result of the social reforms of the Tokugawa.²⁵⁸ The new commoner consumers of poetry rose in the society, and their tastes guided the poets of the period, including Bashō, to create work that both delved into the past and lived in the popular imagination. Bashō rose from the common roots of a low-born samurai in Iga near Kyoto to become a *haikai* professional in Edo. He produced poetry as a form of popular literature for the emergent class of common people. His poetry focused on a juxtaposition of images drawn from Chinese classical poetry, Japanese classical poetry and prose, and an exalting of the rural rustic, all framed in the context of a contemporary vision.²⁵⁹ Stressing the immediate in his personal vision while

²⁵⁷Haruo Shirane, *Traces of Dreams: Landscape, Cultural Memory and the Poetry of Bashō* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 2.

²⁵⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 3–4.

²⁵⁹*Ibid.*, p. 74.

alluding to a rich tapestry of references to the past, Bashō's style provided the model for Buson's combination of temporal modes in his artistic endeavors.

Although this model provided Buson with the hybrid image for much of his work, his early life reveals an important contrast with Bashō. The former poet emerged from a low social position to become a giant in the world of popular poetry of his day, but Buson came from a family of some wealth. If we trust the story presented by Kitō, Buson would have been the recipient of the wealth of a village leader. In his early years, after leaving his mother's home, he seems to have been in the position of the many students of teachers like Bashō. Buson was not the self-made *haikai* innovator, but rather one of the many commoners who embraced the popular literature of the period. He soon squandered his fortune, and, it would seem, by choice placed himself in an impoverished position like that of the young Bashō. There is thus a degree of artificiality, or imagined reality, in Buson's formative years as he distances himself from his actual childhood. Although Buson proclaimed his close connection to his mother repeatedly throughout his life, it appears that this connection served to enforce his adopted position as a low-born commoner from the province of Tangō, rather than stressing his position as the son of a community leader from Kema. This move alone reveals Buson's conscious desire to craft an identity that mirrored Bashō's life as a self-made poet. Although there may be many other factors involved in this act, including the historical silence surrounding the legacy of Buson's father, it is important to consider how the identification with Yosa helped to craft Buson's identity.

Shortly after losing his financial stability in Edo, Buson displayed another facet of his developing identity when he traveled to Yūki and the provinces to the north. He again mirrored Bashō in his love of travel and the gradual accrual of experiences that would later fill his poetry with allusions to Japan's historical and physical past. At this time he also began a long period of adopting names in his writing that placed him as an outsider. He

called himself by names that connect him to back to Edo and, in a parallel fashion, he linked himself to Kyoto while living in Tangō several years later. These acts are evidence for Buson's wanting to place himself as a speaker coming from outside the community where he lived. The effect of this act is unclear, but it implies that Buson wanted to be seen as somehow distant from those who surrounded him. Throughout his life he was relatively silent about his youth and family, further emphasizing the distant position from which he wished to speak. There is a strange paradox raised by this conscious distancing in that Buson would reluctantly become a professional poet and painter, which required a great deal of close association with students and patrons in order to maintain a healthy livelihood. Buson, in following Bashō's model, should have wanted to become a professional poet, but his efforts to resist the Yahantei appellation and the rank of a professional argue against his willing pursuit of this career path. Perhaps this resistance is a further effort to make himself appear as a distant figure, writing from the margin, rather than occupying the seat from which the tradition would grow. It seems Buson consciously followed Bashō's model to a point, but, perhaps unconsciously, came to embody one of Bashō's literary personae. In his *Oku no hosomichi*, Bashō adopted a voice that was simultaneously the contemporary *haikai* poet and an embodiment of the late Heian period poet Saigyō.²⁶⁰ This double identity in the poem is a mark of Bashō's approach to the popular travel literature of his day. Buson, in looking at Bashō's model, seems to have embraced one of the earlier poet's identities while resisting the more direct one by becoming a professional *haikai* teacher. In the end, Buson became a professional just like Bashō, but this came about only through the apparent pressure of his followers. The effect of his resistance was to make it clear that society was forcing Buson into the position of leadership over his objections. With his resistance obvious to all who surrounded him, he was able to be both the

²⁶⁰Shirane, 1998, p. 5.

professional poet-painter and the itinerant traveler even as he stayed for years in the Kyoto environment.

From these facets of Buson's life history emerges the image of a person dedicated to the idea of resisting social pressure until it becomes impossible to avoid, and then taking up progressively more significant positions of authority within the artistic community. This same form of resistance appears in the paintings that Buson created as a young man. The works he made in Yūki that present the Kanō-style, and his later works made in Kyoto and Tangō that follow Chinese traditions suggest that he would have become a traditionalist in his painting, but his embrace of contemporary Chinese style in his Shen Nanpin-inspired paintings reveals he was actively pursuing modern trends in the popular painting of his day. His subsequent turns away from each of these traditions and his willingness to recombine elements of these various forms of painting in novel works reveal that he consciously wanted to occupy a position outside any one of these traditions. Looking specifically at Buson's image of people playing with battledore and shuttlecocks [Figure 3] and his later set of images of Chinese figures and landscapes [Figure 8], it is immediately evident that Buson was able to work in a diversity of styles that he learned in Edo. As he moved to the west he carried these styles with him, but he quickly learned the styles of paintings in the Kyoto area, and he embraced new styles tied more closely to Chinese prototypes, as revealed in his painting of Li Bo watching a waterfall [Figure 18]. These works are for the most part tied to identifiable traditions of painting, but by the mid-1750s, as seen in his painting of the *Dengaku Chaya* [Figure 21], Buson was obviously reaching to a diversity of traditions to create images that appear like a mosaic of different sources. This combination of styles drawn from Chinese and Japanese paintings to represent a scene of contemporary life in rural Japan reveals some of the first glimmers of the hybrid style that would become Buson's signature approach to image-making.

In combining various styles and shifting his approach to painting over time, Buson revealed his dedication to creating in a mode that is constantly reacting to the painted subjects and to the patrons that surround him. It is largely after his return to Kyoto in 1757 that broad patterns of painting began to emerge. Among the recurrent themes in his paintings are images of the Chinese poets Hanshan and Shide, Feng Gan, Li Bo, and Tao Yuanming. The beginnings of the Chinese poet theme in Buson's work can be seen in one of his earliest paintings [Figure 4], but they emerged as a dominant theme in the late 1750s. From that point forward, he continued to create images of the poets in various forms, but the style of each poet painting seems to have followed his particular feeling toward each figure at the time they were created. Looking at the paintings of Hanshan and Shide from 1758 [Figure 25] and the same theme from 1761 [Figure 41], it becomes evident that the figures, while readily identifiable, are being seen in strikingly different manners. In the earlier work they stand defiantly with wild facial expressions and flowing garments, and in the later image they appear tired and sullen, and wavering lines flutter across their heavily hanging garments. In these two images we can see Buson approaching these figures in different ways and projecting two distinct impressions of these two poets. Looking further forward in time to 1780, another image of the two appears [Figure 118], but they have returned to their lively appearance as they march up a mountain path. The style of this later work returns to the precise linear depiction of the 1758 painting. Finally, in 1781 another pair of poet images [Figure 127] displays the poets as aged and confident, and the style merges the confident lines of the earlier works with the wavering lines of the 1761 image. In each of these poet images a slightly different personality is suggested for the poets, and their activities are varied as they interact with each other, and in some cases, with the landscape elements. It is as if Buson was thinking about the poets in each case and reacting in his painting to his personal feeling toward the poets at the moment of each painting's

creation. This willingness to react to each theme in an immediate fashion while maintaining a mastery of a wide range of styles is evidence for Buson's active combining of traditions embodied in the subject and the style with contemporary ideas expressed through the choice of how to create each painting. In this practice Buson inserted himself into the paintings and made each image a part of his broader approach to living as a professional artist. In essence, he took these historical figures from the Chinese past and made them his contemporaries living in his present.

His crafted narrative in these images of Chinese poets was in large part a reflection of his evolving view of the earlier writers. This practice of recreating Chinese themes and figures in a manner that spoke of experience in Japan is central to work of the *bunjin* in general. They were Shide living in the relatively closed world of the Tokugawa society. From this position, they generated their own narratives of the Chinese past that resonated with the Chinese images they saw and the Japanese history they lived.

Buson was able to evoke a past rich with cultural resonances and express a contemporary awareness that tied him directly to the conditions of living in eighteenth-century Kyoto. The choice to create images of the poets is tied to Buson's poetic interests, but his presentation of the figures in their various environments reveals a facet of his perception of these figures as living people rather than mere historical icons. As the Chinese poets are brought into Buson's eighteenth-century present, it becomes important to think about the mythology surrounding these figures. They were, like Buson's imagined self, outsiders ejected from their temple dwelling to live in the surrounding mountains as artistic recluses. In essence, they became further models for Buson's fantasy of the outsider creating beyond the bounds of tradition and social structure.

It is likely that Buson felt it necessary to maintain his outsider status to convey to his patrons the validity of these images. While the poet images may be seen as

autobiographical fantasies, Buson's landscapes offer an even more powerful image of his imagined world. In his paintings for the Kyoto screen group [Figures 33, 34, 39, 40, and 43–47] he effectively created fantasy locations that are seemingly Chinese in their topography. Although this link to China is communicated through the painting styles and compositions, these are again made contemporary through Buson's fantasies of rustic living. They become escapist images within which an idealized rusticity can be felt as a contrast to the urban experience of the artist and his patrons. Were he seen as an urban resident, like the purchasers of the screens, the fantasy images would have lost some of their power to project a created reality lying outside the urban location. For the most part, Buson's imagery stayed away from recording actual locations in the tradition of "true-view" (*shinkeizu*) paintings, which gained popularity at the hands of Ike Taiga during the mid-eighteenth century.²⁶¹ By remaining in the realm of fantasy, Buson's landscapes were able to retain a sense of being commentaries on living and the condition of society. Images of real places have the potential to evoke memory-derived responses, but Buson's paintings, by creating their own unique spaces, are controlled by the artist alone. They are fully imagined in the mind of the painter and presented to the viewer as complete narratives of space and activity that convey targeted messages localized within the imagined world of the painter.

As figures stroll, travel, drift, or ride through these images, we are confronted by a world that is unlike the actual experience of living in eighteenth-century Kyoto. If we consider the effects of Buson's working in a hybrid fashion, the images become more than mere escapist fantasies. The high mountains and narrow paths along rivers and bays were a reaction to the urban experience and a cry for the idyllic life of the rustic living in ancient

²⁶¹These works gained popularity for their ability to recall specific sights popular for the eighteenth-century traveler. The growth of popularity of these *shinkeizu* parallels the emergence of travel literature as a major literary form in Japan. Takeuchi, 1992.

China without the control of urban society. Rarely in Buson's oeuvre do images of the urban environment appear. His interest in creating contemporary images in the popular vein would be quite effectively met by images of urban Kyoto. Instead, Buson frequently looked outside the urban environment and often outside Japan itself, perhaps to critique the growth of the urban centers. This act again appears as a significant facet of Buson's life in that he spent most of his life living in these centers and found the support necessary to pursue his art in the concentrations of wealth that the cities made possible. It appears that Buson used his outsider position, and his control of the visual language of Chinese painting, to create images that reached outside the cities to embrace an imagined utopia of rural life that never existed outside the mind of the urban artist.

In doing this Buson exercised the full potential of the hybrid image to mediate the pressures of the urban environment created by the Tokugawa social reforms, constituting a pastoral utopia through the simple mechanism of juxtaposition. In essence, Buson's work became an escape from the urbanization of Japan. It fed off the inherent desire of urbanized society to find reclusion in the rural fantasy. By taking this reading of the screen group images and applying it to Buson's mature paintings of the 1770s and 1780s, it is possible to envision these works as protests and commentaries on a wide range of social conditions. In general, the later works continue to present the fantasy of Buson's imagined utopia of rural life, but they also become effective presentations of a variety of new urban and personal concerns. In his image from 1772 of two figures in a landscape separated by the flow of a waterfall and a river [Figure 87], one of these personal concerns is presented as the divide between the traveler and the hermit.²⁶² At the same time, the image presents the figures in the rural landscape, evoking the fantasy of a utopian world cut down the middle by the symbolic river. The river in this reading becomes the un-traversable gulf that divides

²⁶²Following Takahashi's reading of the painting, it is possible to see the Chinese-inspired landscape functioning as a commentary on the artist's past and society's effect on his parents' lives.

individuals in the contemporary world as the societal effects of urbanism intrude on the desires for a happy life felt by the common citizens. In Buson's fantasy, the rustic figures live a harmonious life in their rural dwellings, but this was not the life Buson experienced as a young man. He lived close to the urban center of Osaka, on the path followed by the rural peasants who traveled to work in the urban center. Living in this area, he saw the difficulties growing out of the societal complexity of the urban world.²⁶³ As he moved with his mother to the more rural village of Yosa, he would have seen firsthand the different life lived by people far from the cities. In incorporating this experience into his imagery, Buson explored the differences in these life-styles and the gulf that existed between the residents of these locations.

These kinds of layered meanings can be seen throughout paintings from the later years of the artist's life. His mature paintings are the expressions of a socially minded producer of fantasy feeding the commonly held desire for escape from the conditions of modern life. Even today, we can see these images as creations of a fantasy of escape from the controlling effect of urban life. They simultaneously transport us to Buson's time, to a fictional Chinese past, and to a world in which time is irrelevant as life proceeds as it always has in its natural state. This is the essential power of the hybrid works. They evoke responses of fantasy and memory that transcend time, culture, and place. Looking at the figures gazing out of Buson's paintings, we are invited, as the Kyoto patrons once were, to journey as travelers to the realm of Buson's thought. Here we explore his fantasies and escape our own complex lives. As the fisherman searches for the utopian realm of the land of the immortals [Figure 125], he bids us to join him in this eternal journey, which is as enticing today as it was for the Kyoto patrons and for Buson himself. Similarly, as the porter looks to us to join in his master's travels [Figure 135], we are shown the way out of

²⁶³This is made clear in the text of Buson's *Shumpū bateikyoku*.

the complexity of modern life. As we engage with these images, we are embraced by the smiling faces of Buson's figures as they make the traditional imagery of Chinese paintings into contemporary popular scenes of real people lifted from the world of fantasy. As hybrid images these works evoke memories of Chinese paintings, Chinese literary history, Japanese history, and eighteenth-century fantasy. These paintings repeatedly ask the viewer to wander among layers of fantasy to discover the many narratives of the past that Buson mastered.



Figure 1: *Autumn Landscape*, 1772, Ink and color on silk, 63.5x44.3cm,
Kurt and Millie Gitter Collection.



Figure 2: *Amadera ni...*, 1738, Woodblock print, from *Utsuki teikin*.



Figure 3: *Battledore and Shuttlecock*, Color on cedar panels, n.d., 167.1x84.1cm.
private collection.



Figure 4: *Tao Yuanming Triptych*, Ink and color on silk, n.d., 100x40.9cm, Nakamura Bijustu Salon.

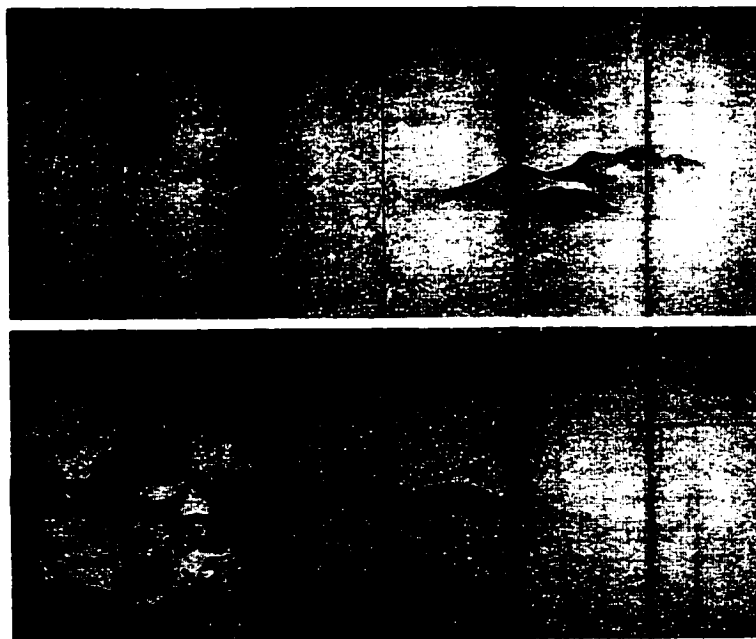


Figure 5: Kano Naonobu (1607-1650), *Viewing Fuji and Visiting Ohara*, Ink and color on paper, 155.8x363.4cm, Private collection.



Figure 6: *Ink Plums*, n.d., Ink on paper, 137.5x71.5cm, Gukyo-ji.

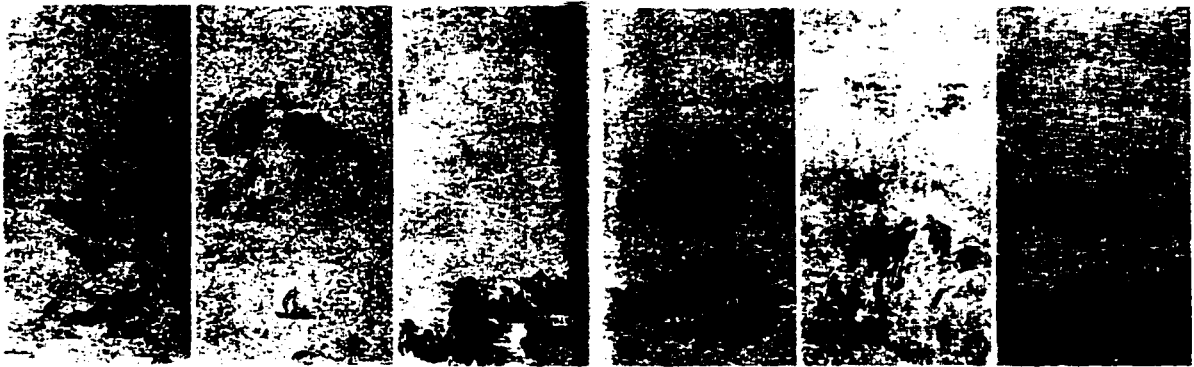


Figure 7: *Buildings and Landscapes*, n.d., Ink on paper, Gukyo-ji.



Figure 8: *Four Daoist Immortals*, 1750, Ink on paper, 122.5x48.9cm, Private collection.



Figure 9: Hishikawa Moronobu, 1695, *Sugata-e* from *Hyakunin Isshu Zosan Sho*.



Figure 10: Kano Tanyu, *Winter* from *Birds and Flowers of the Four Seasons*, 1634, Ink and color on paper, Nagoya Castle.



Figure 11: Detail of *Four Daoist Immortals*, 1750.



Figure 12: Detail of *Four Daoist Immortals*, 1750.



Figure 13: Detail of *Four Daoist Immortals*, 1750.

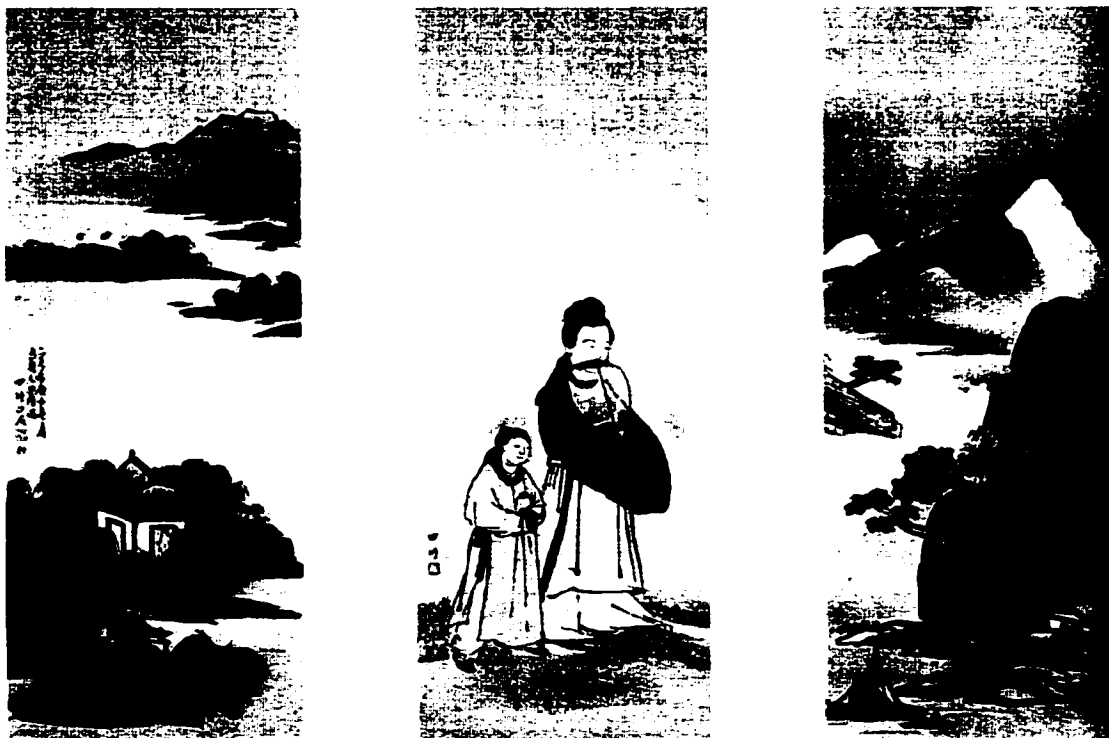


Figure 14: Detail of *Four Daoist Immortals*, 1750.



Figure 15: Kano Motonobu, *Flowers and Birds*, 1513, Daisen-in.



Figure 16: *Three Haikai Poets*, n.d., Ink and color on paper, 25.2x53.7cm., Private Collection.

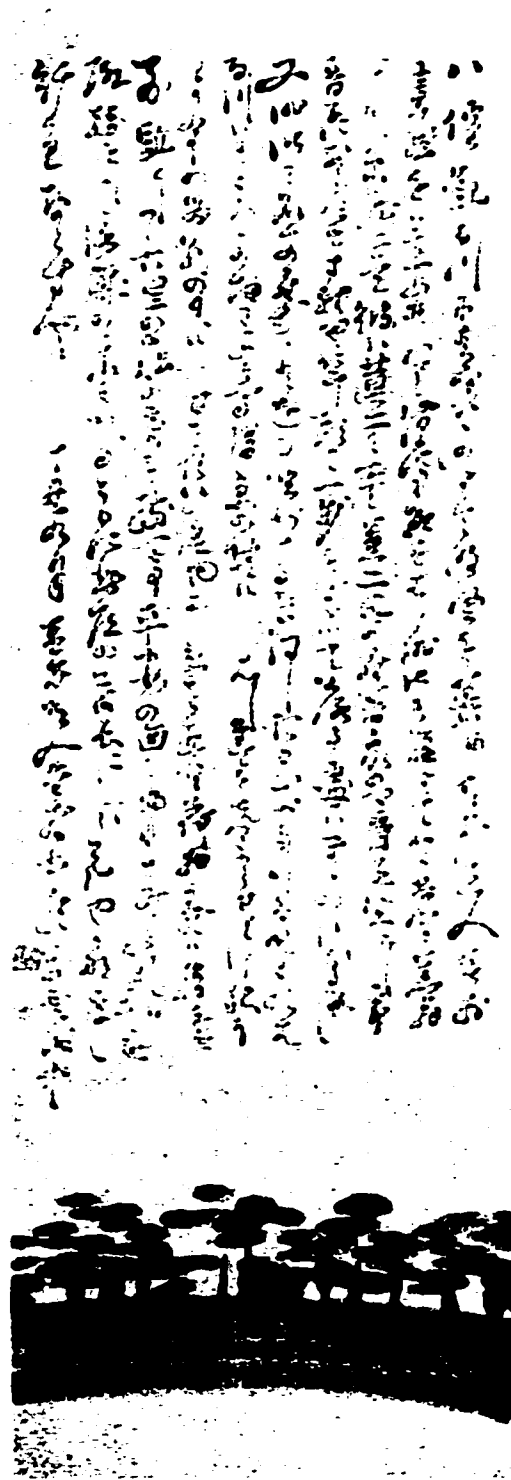


Figure 17: *Ama-no-hashidate*, 1757, Ink on paper, 85.8x27.8cm., Private Collection.



Figure 18: *Li Bo Viewing a Waterfall*, 1755, Ink and color on paper.



Figure 19: Page from *Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting*, 1885 edition, Volume 1.



Figure 20: Brushstroke forms after T. C. Lai.



Figure 21: *Dengaku Chaya*, n.d., Color on paper, 128x266.6cm, Private Collection.



Figure 22: Anonymous, *Fuji musume*, Otsu-e, 18th century, color on paper.



Figure 23: *Feng Gan and Tiger*, 1755, Ink and color on silk, 96.5x32.3cm, Private Collection.

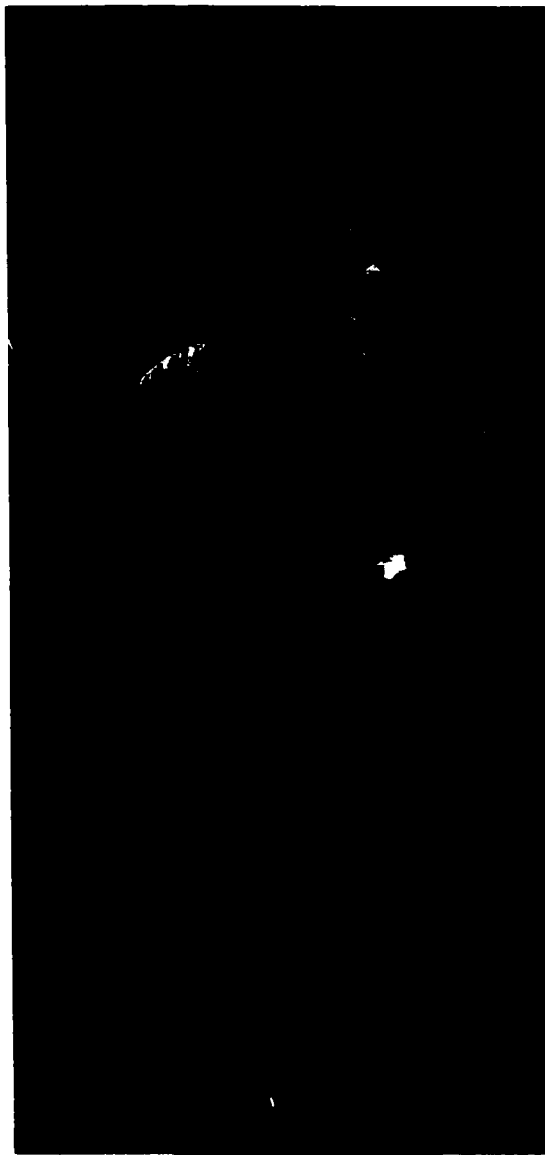


Figure 24: Anonymous, *Juichimen Kannon*, 8th century, Wood and dry lacquer, H:215.0cm, Kongosen-ji, Nara.



Figure 25: *Hanshan and Shide*, 1758, Ink and color on silk, 90.9x37.9cm.



Figure 26: *Horse and Groom*, 1759, Color on silk, 123x51cm.

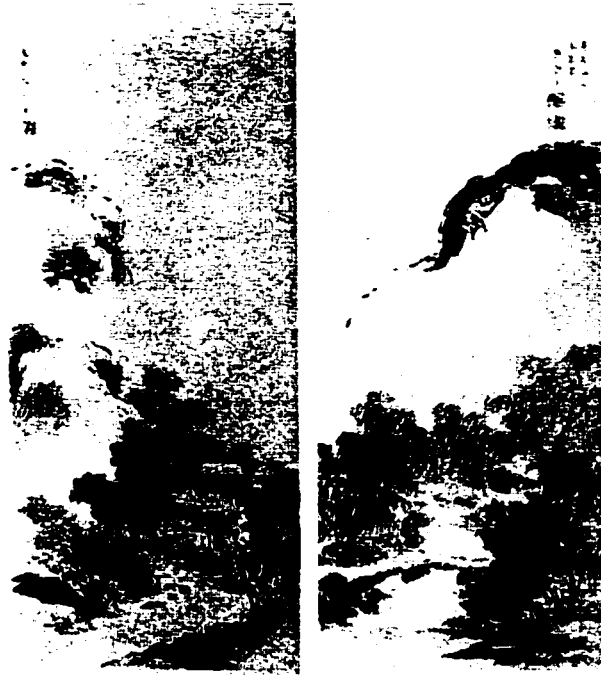


Figure 27: *Landscapes*, 1760, Ink and color on silk, 83.6x36.7cm.



Figure 28: *Autumn Landscape*, 1760, Ink and color on silk, 106.7x42.4cm.



Figure 29: *Landscape with a Bamboo Grove*, 1760, Ink and color on silk, 123x62.8cm, Noto Museum Collection.



Figure 30: *Wild Horses*, 1760, Color on silk, 110.9x40.9cm., Private collection.



Figure 31: *Pair of Horses in a Forest Clearing*, 1760, Color on silk, 112.4x42.5cm.



Figure 32: *Sprouting in Early Spring*, 1760, Color on silk, 108.2x51.5cm.



Figure 33: *Mi Fu-style Landscape*, 1760, Ink and color on paper, 144x339.5cm.,
Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



Figure 34: *Wang Meng-style Landscape*, 1760, Ink and color on paper, 144x339.5cm.,
Kyoto National Museum.

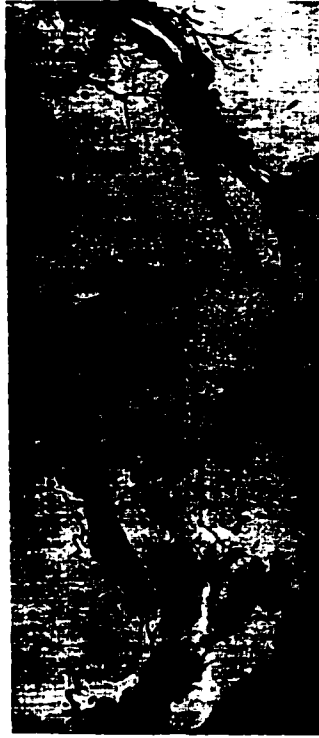


Figure 35: *Magpie on a Rock*, 1761, Ink and color on silk, 123.3x50.3cm.



Figure 36: *Leaning on a Pine*, 1761, Ink and color on silk, 97x25.5cm.



Figure 37: *Tao Yuanming and Attendant among Pines*, 1761, 133.3x48.5cm.



Figure 38: *Reeds and Geese*, 1761, Color on silk, 129.6x72.6cm., Private Collection.



Figure 39: *Landscapes*, 1763, Ink and color on satin, 166.6x378cm., Idemitsu Art Museum.



Figure 40: *Wild Horses Screens*, 1763, Ink and color on satin, 166.5x366cm.,
Kyoto National Museum.



Figure 41: *Hanshan and Shide*, 1761, Ink and color on silk, 115.2x50.9cm.



Figure 42: *Solitude in a Cold Forest*, 1763, Ink on paper.

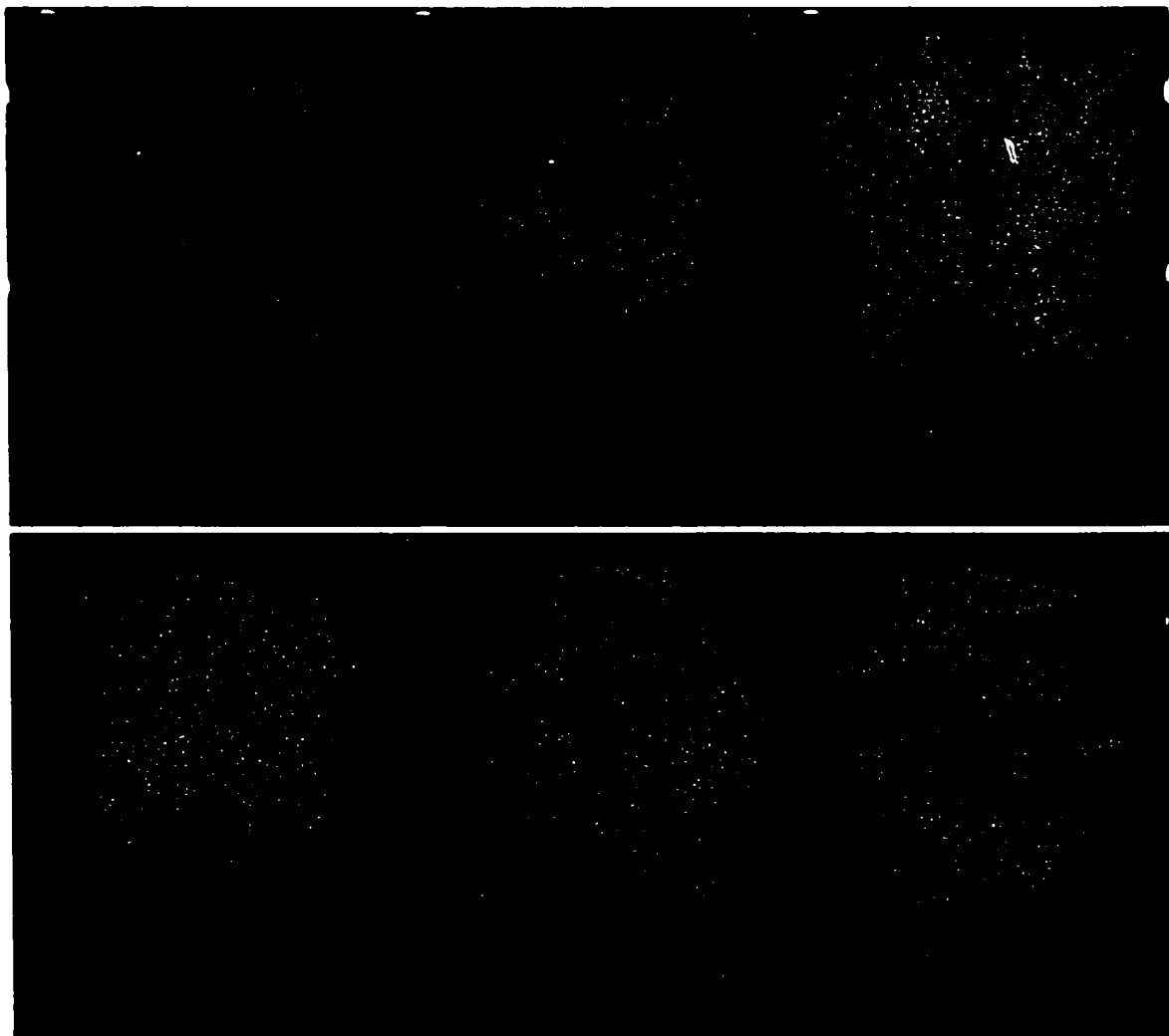


Figure 43: *Landscape Screens*, 1764, Color on satin, right: 144.2x319cm., left: 144.5x354cm., Kyoto National Museum.

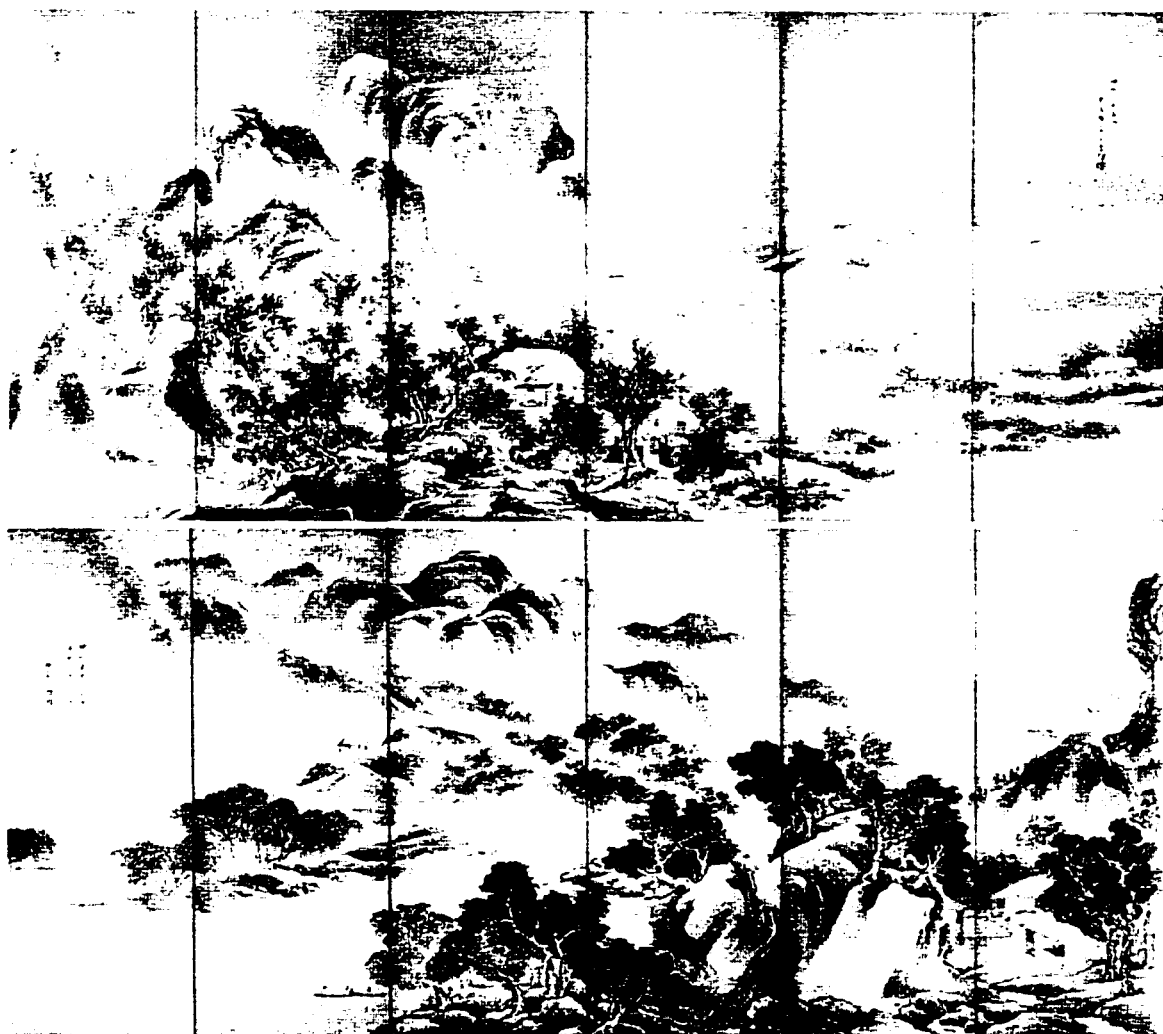


Figure 44: *Landscape Screens*, 1764, Color on satin, 165x358.8cm., Private collection.

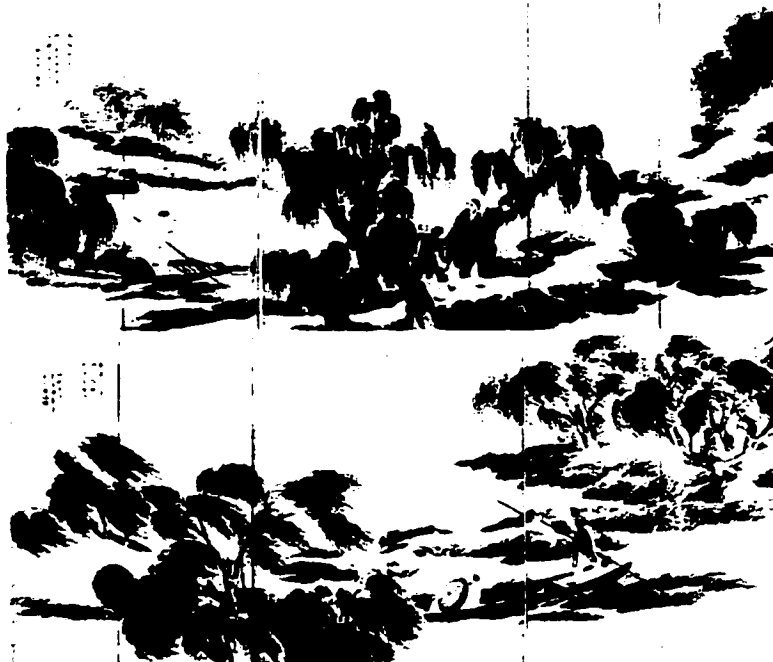


Figure 45: *Boating and Walking among Willows*, 1764, Ink and color on paper, 165.8x375cm., Private collection.



Figure 46: *Boating and Walking among Willows*, 1764, Ink and color on paper, 165.8x357cm., Freer Gallery.



Figure 47: *Hermit Lo Fo and Ho Sun Tang*, 1764/65, Color on Satin, Private collection.



Figure 48: *Landscape*, 1765, 115.5x27.3cm.



Figure 49: *Landscape*, 1765, Ink on paper, 134.2x28.8cm.



Figure 50: *Envoy Resting in a Grove*, 1765, Color on silk, 119.1x51.2cm.



Figure 51: *Blue-Green Landscape*, 1765, Color on silk, 143.3x41.2cm.



Figure 52: *Fisherman Returning Home Through a Valley*, 1765, 169.7x65.2cm.



Figure 53: *Viewing a Waterfall*, 1765, Color on silk, 110.9x35.5cm.



Figure 54: *Climbing a High Mountain Path*, 1765, 158.5x47.3cm.



Figure 55: *Autumn Landscape*, 1765, 163.9x44.5cm.



Figure 56: *Houses in a Bamboo Grove*, 1765. Color on silk, 113x40.6cm.



Figure 57: *Gathering in a Peach and Plum Grove*, 1765, Color on silk, 165.8x100.6cm.



Figure 58: Li Shida, *Gathering in a Peach and Plum Grove*, c. 1620, Formerly in Kyoto.
Image after *Shinbi taikan*, vol. 12.



Figure 59: *Crossing a Stream on Horseback*, 1766, Color on silk.



Figure 60: *Drinking Wine and Tea Screens*, 1766, Color on satin, 167x376cm.

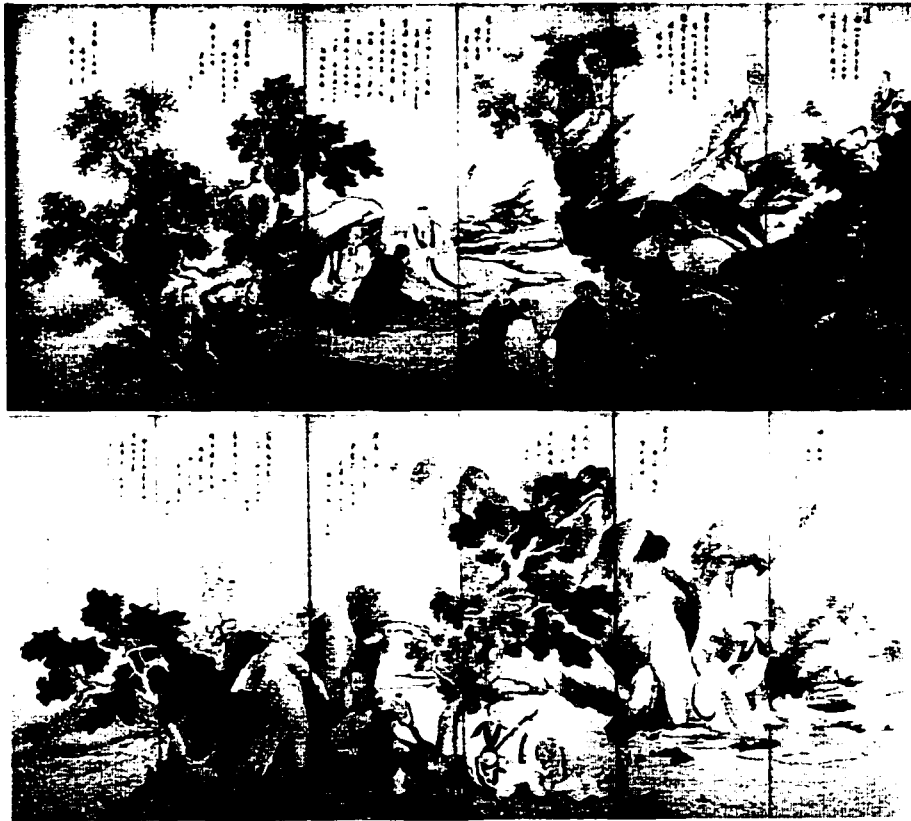


Figure 61: *Orchid Pavilion and Winding Stream*, 1766, Color on satin, 167x358.8cm.,
Tokyo National Museum

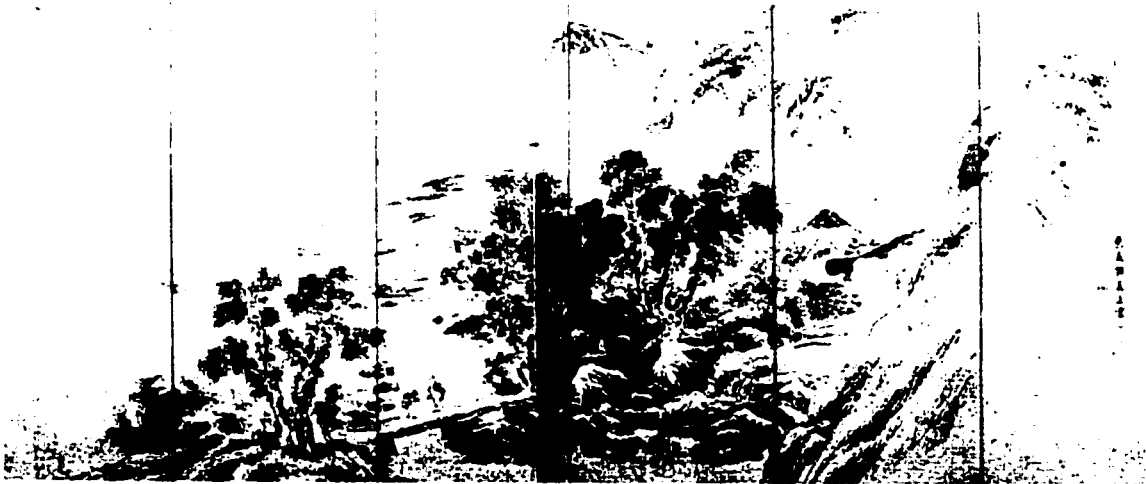


Figure 62: *Autumn Landscapes*, 1766, Color on paper, 154x337cm., Honma Art Museum.



Figure 63: *Spring and Autumn Landscapes*, 1766, pair of two-fold screens.



Figure 64: *Juro and Deer*, 1766, Color on silk, 111x40.8cm., Private collection.



Figure 65: *Juro, Deer, and Crane*, 1767, Color on silk, 110x38.2cm., Private collection.



Figure 66: *Crouching Tiger*, 1767, Color on silk, 115x135cm., Private collection.



Figure 67: *Autumn Landscape*, 1767, Ink and color on paper.



Figure 68: *Horizontal Landscape*, 1767, Color on silk, 53.9x138.2cm.

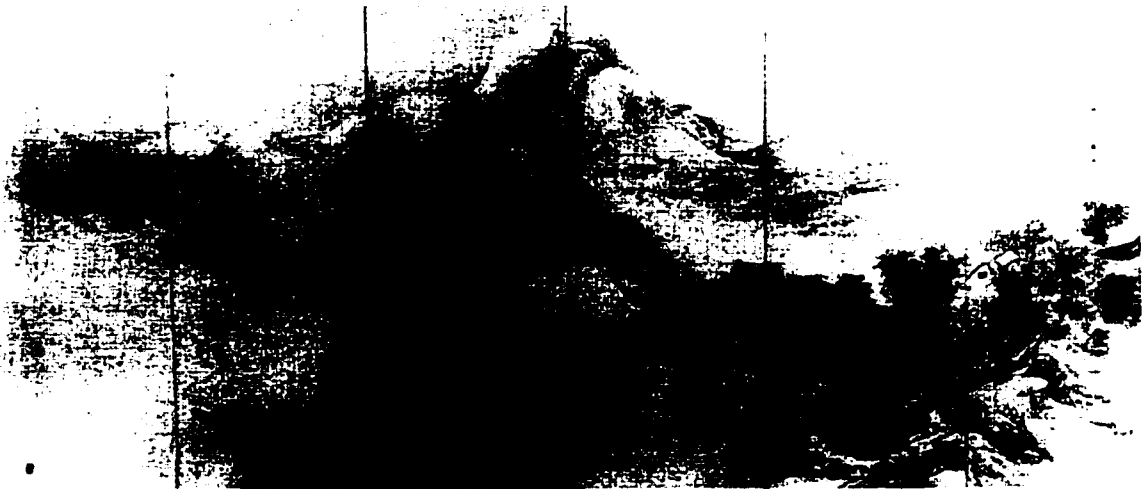


Figure 69: *Spring and Autumn Landscapes*, 1768, Ink and color on satin.



Figure 70: *The Sixth Patriarch Pounding Rice*, 1770, Color on silk, 116.6x43.9cm.



Figure 71: *Elegant Gathering of Chinese Poets*, 1770, Color on silk, 167.6x370.9cm.



Figure 72: *Huang Shi Gong and Chang Liang* (right) and *Wang Meng and Huan Wen* (left), 1770, Color on silk, 115.2x27.6cm., Private collection.



Figure 73: *Drunken Li Bo*, 1770, Ink and color on silk, 107.3x44cm.



Figure 74: *Alliance in a Peach Grove*, 1770, 116.1x49.4cm.



Figure 75: Gao Qipei, *Hanshan*, Ink on paper, Oriental Museum, Budapest.



Figure 76: *Horses and Groom*, n.d., Color on silk.



Figure 77: Shen Nanpin, *Wild Horses*, n.d., Color on silk, 153.1x43.5cm.



Figure 78: Giuseppe Castiglione, *Eight Horses on a Riverbank*.



Figure 79: Lu Zhi, *Birds and Flowers*.



Figure 80: *Horse and Groom*, 1760, Color on silk, 109.5x48.9cm., Private collection.



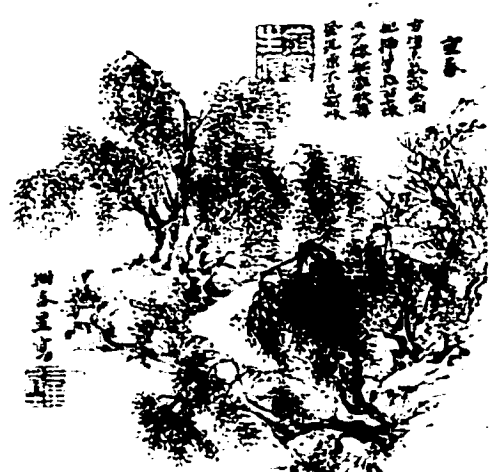
Figure 81: Page from *Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting*, 1885 edition, Volume 1.



Figure 82: Shen Nanpin, *Horses in an Autumn Valley*, 1737, Yamato Bunkakan.



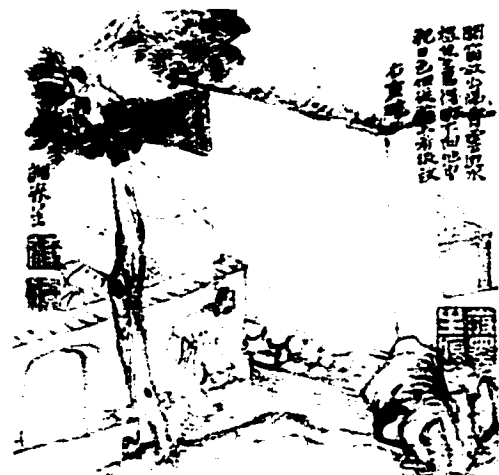
Winter



Spring



Summer

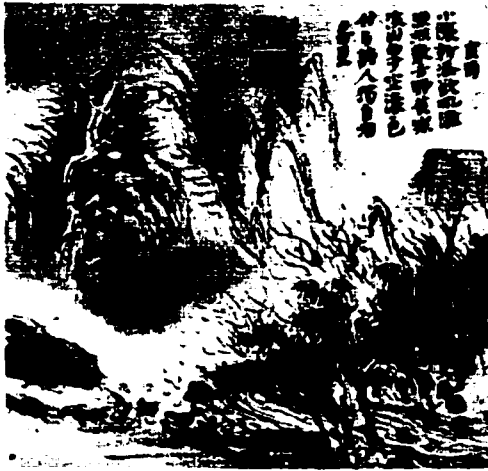


Evening



Autumn

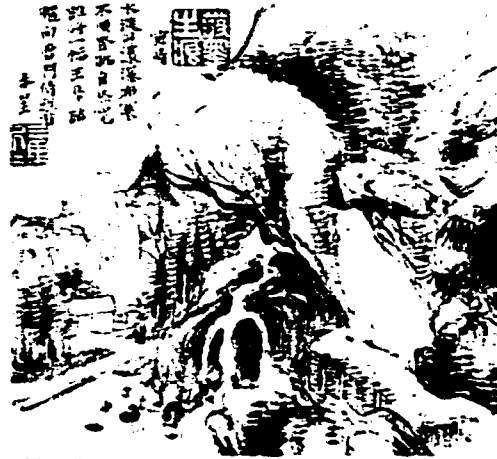
Figure 83: *Ten Pleasures of Rural Living*, 1771, Ink and color on paper, 17.9x17.9cm., Kawabata Yasunari Kinenkan.



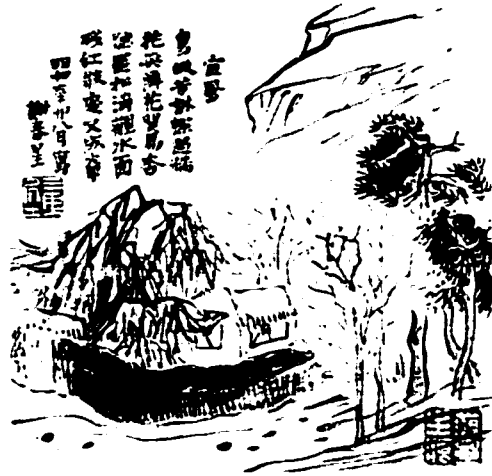
Rain



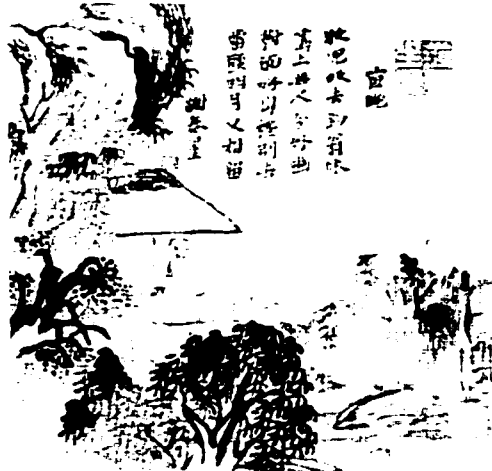
Solitude



Clearing



Wind



Night

Figure 84: *Ten Pleasures of Rural Living*, 1771, Ink and color on paper, 17.9x17.9cm., Kawabata Yasunari Kinenkan.



Figure 85: Ike Taiga, from *Ten Conveniences of Rural Living*, 1771, Ink and color on paper, 17.9x17.9cm., Kawabata Yasunari Kinenkan.



Figure 86: *Traveler in Spring*, 1771, Bunkacho.



Figure 87: *Autumn Landscape*, 1772, Ink and color on silk, 63.5x44.3cm., Kurt and Millie Gitter Collection.

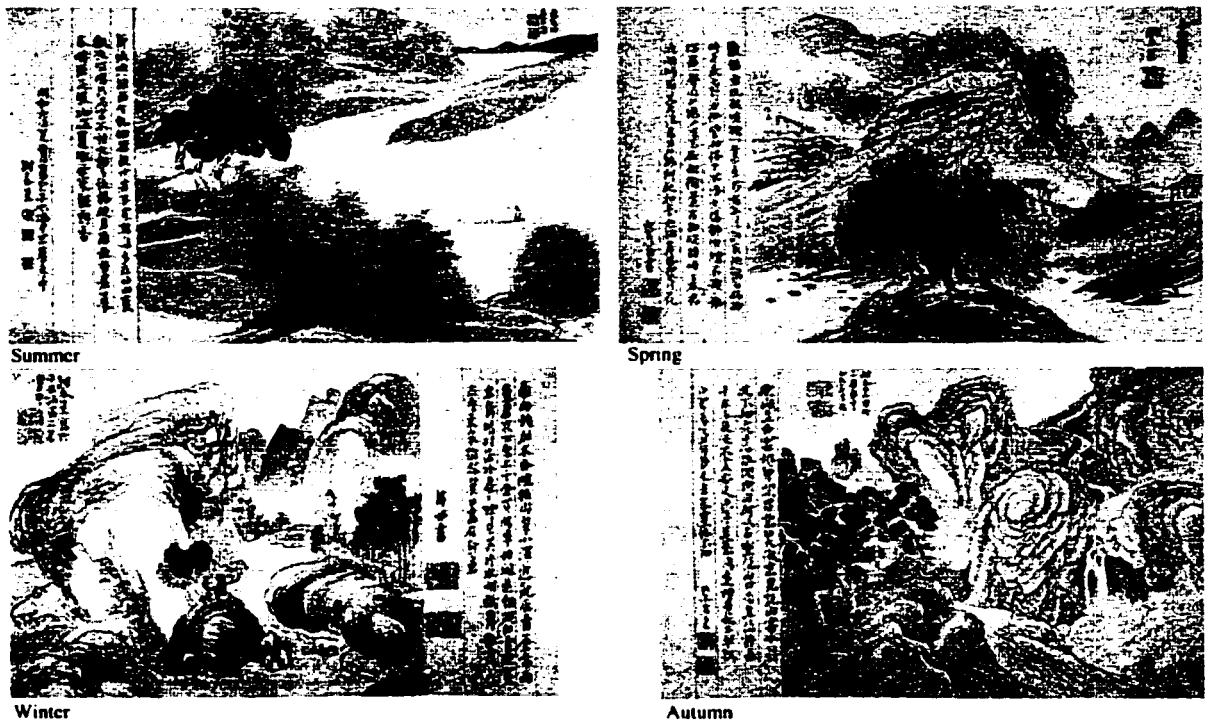


Figure 88: *Four Seasonal Landscapes*, 1772, Ink and color on paper, 23.7x37.2cm., Private collection.



Figure 89: Yun Shouping, *Little Dwelling in the Mountains without a Neighbor*, after Siren, Volume 6, Plate 419.



Figure 90: Wang Meng, *Su-an Homestead*, C.C. Wang C., after Siren, Volume 6, Pl. 110.



Figure 91: *Returning from Fishing in Spring*, 1772.



Figure 92: *Summer Landscape*, 1772, Color on silk, 109x34.6cm.



Summer



Spring



Winter



Autumn

Figure 93: *Four Seasonal Landscapes*, 1773, Color on silk, 40.9x40.9cm.

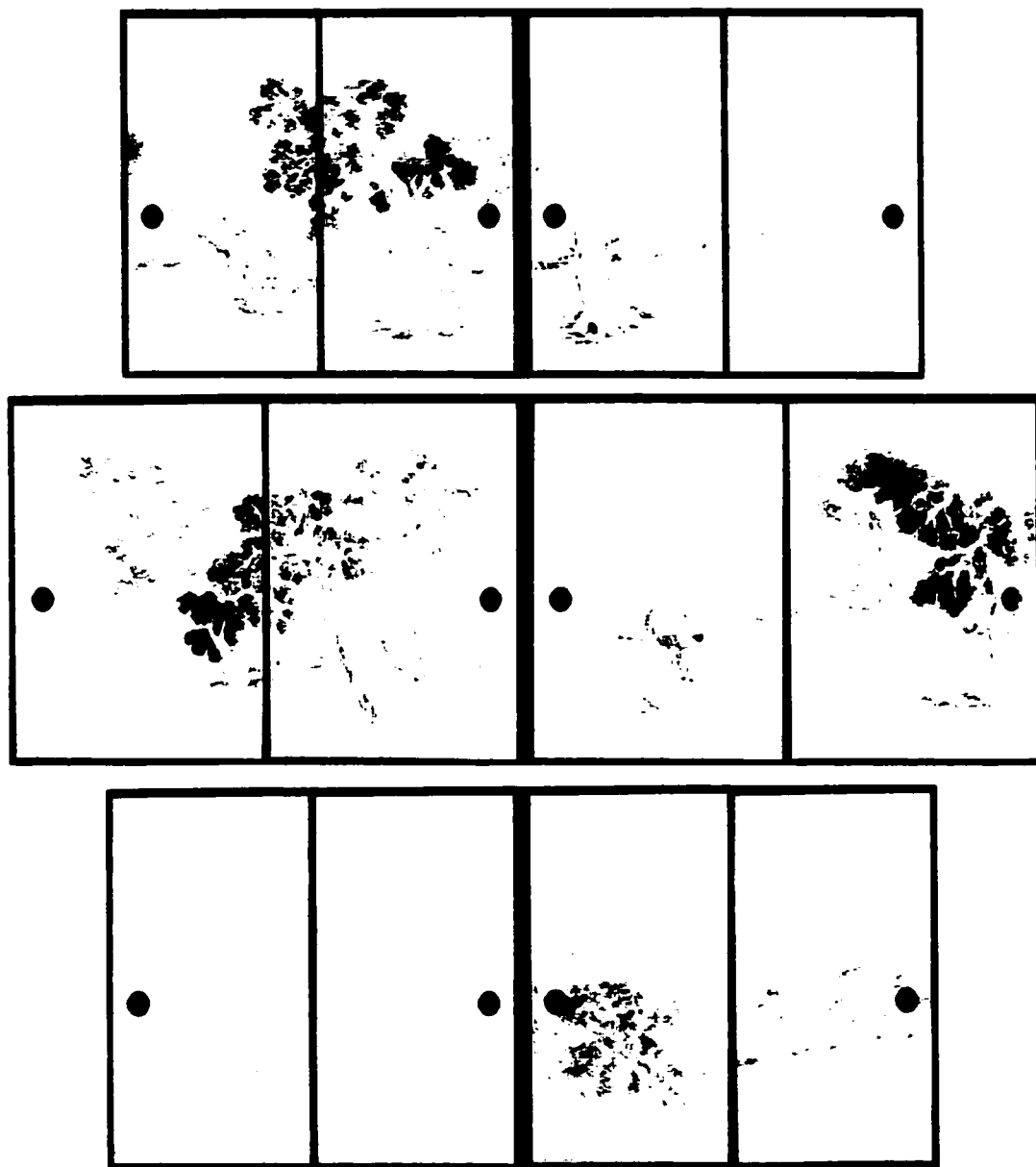


Figure 94: *Eight Immortals of the Wine Cup*, n.d., Ink and color on paper, H: 176.6cm., Jissho-ji, Kyoto.

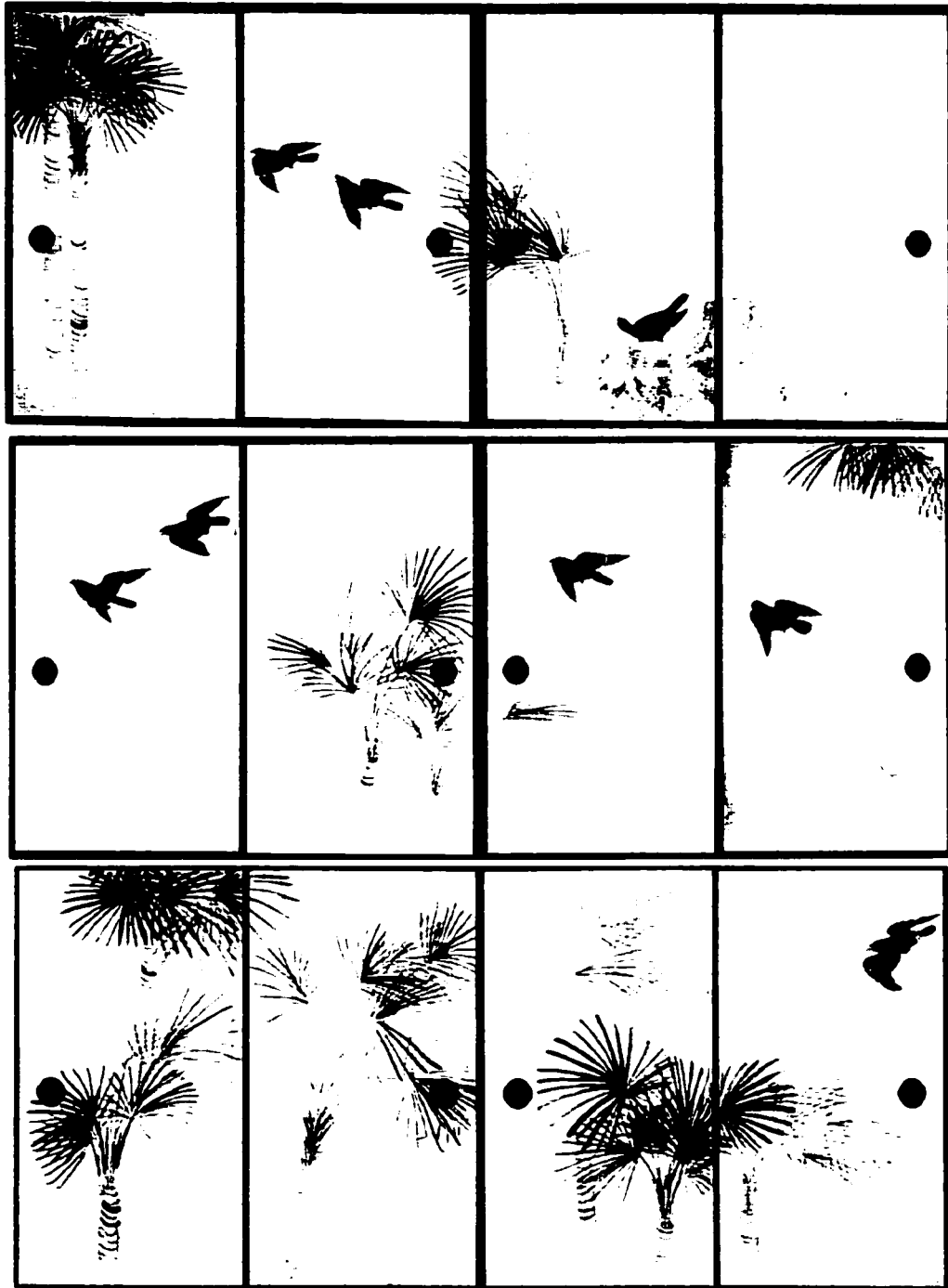


Figure 95: *Magpies and Palms*, n.d., Ink on paper, H: 176.6cm., Jissho-ji, Kyoto.

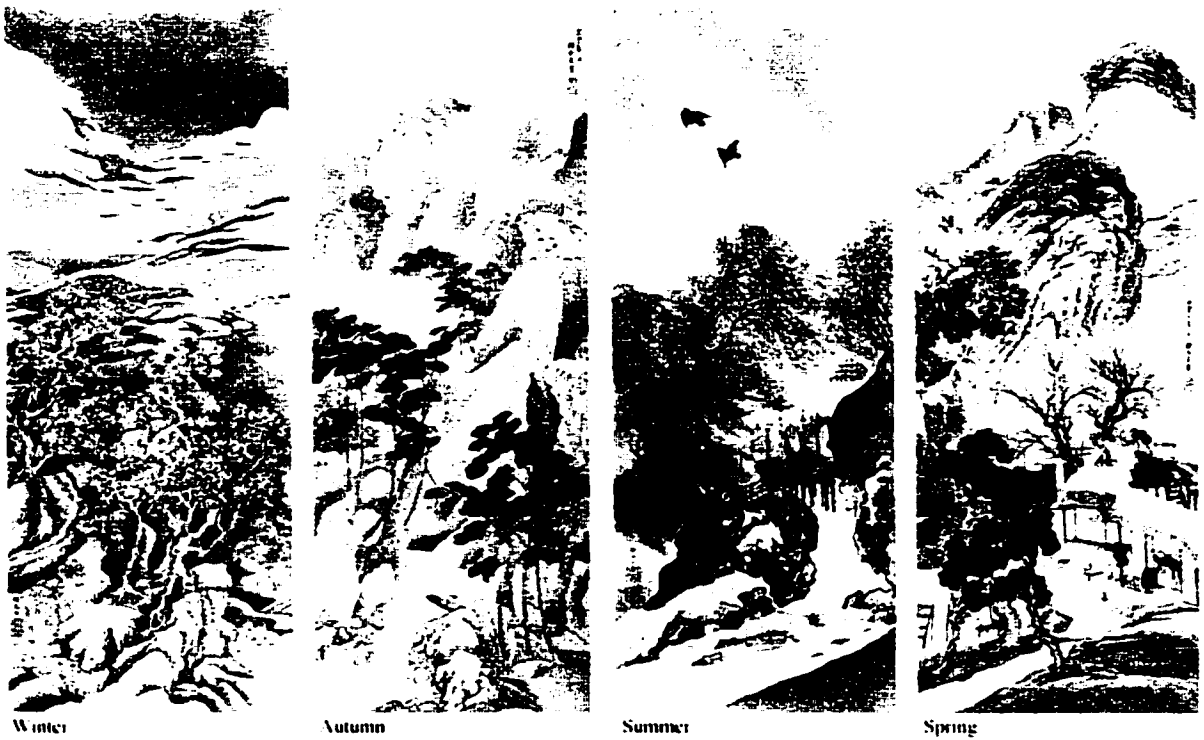


Figure 96: *Four Seasonal Landscapes*, 1774, Color on silk, 105x40.8cm., Private col.



Figure 97: *Figure in an Autumn Landscape*, 1774, Ink and color on satin, 136.4x59.4cm.



Figure 98: *Spring* from a pair of seasonal, 1774, Color on silk, 97.3x38.5cm.



Figure 99: *Birds in Flowering Peach and Willow Trees*, 1774, Color on silk, 128.5x69.9cm., Mary Burke Collection.



Figure 100: *Woodcutter in Autumn and Blue Mountain*, 1775, Color on silk, 109.7x44cm.



Figure 101: *Magpies in Blossoming Plums*, 1776, Ink and color on silk, 106x43cm.,
Private collection.



Figure 102: *Kite in a Willow and Crows in a Persimmon Tree*, 1776, Color on silk, 143.9x63.6cm.



Figure 103: *Guandi*, 1777, Color on silk, 140.3x52.1cm.



Figure 104: *Autumn Landscape*, 1777, Color on satin, 119.2x52.6cm.



Figure 105: *Mt. Fuji with Pines*, 1777.



Figure 106: *Hermitage in a Pine Grove*, 1777, Ink and color on silk, 127.7x53.3cm.,
Seikado Bunko.

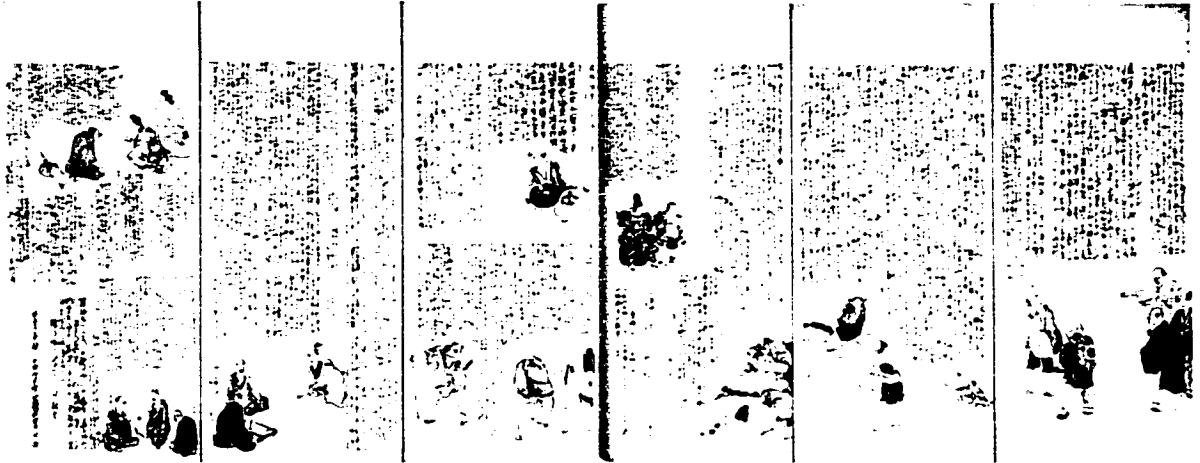


Figure 107: *Oku-no-hosomichi*, 1779, Ink and color on paper, 139.3x350cm.,
Yamagata Art Museum.

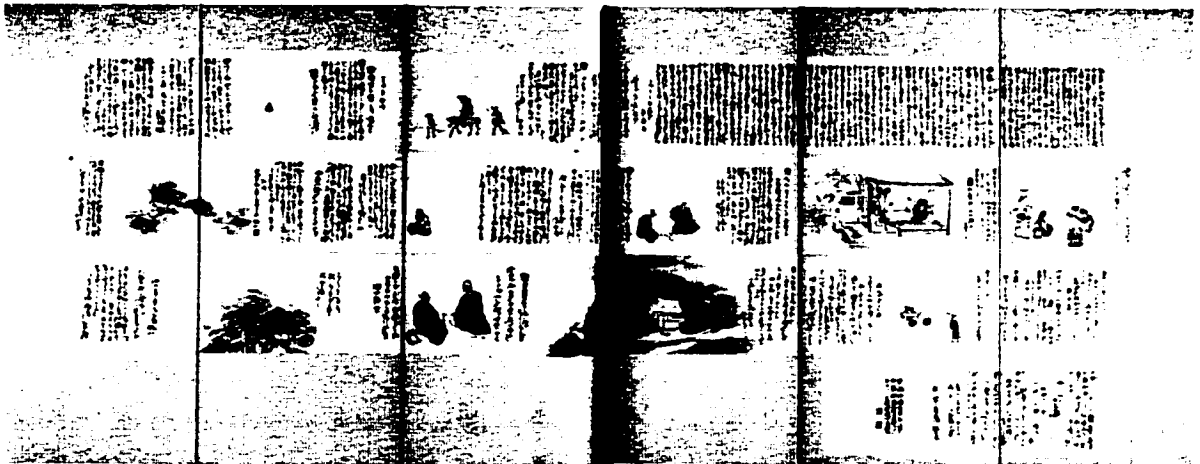


Figure 108: *Nozorashi-kiko*, 1778, Ink and color on paper, 139.5x348cm.
Private collection.



Figure 109: *Riding a Horse through a Mountain Grove*, 1778, Color on silk, 115.3x44cm., Private collection.



Figure 110: *Landscape*, 1778.



Figure 111: *Pavilion in a Cold Forest*, 1778, Ink and color on paper, 54.2x28.3cm.,
Private collection.



Figure 112: *Alliance in a Peach Grove*, 1779, Ink and color on silk, 122.4x61.8cm.



Figure 113: *Plum*, 1779, 134.8x29.4cm.

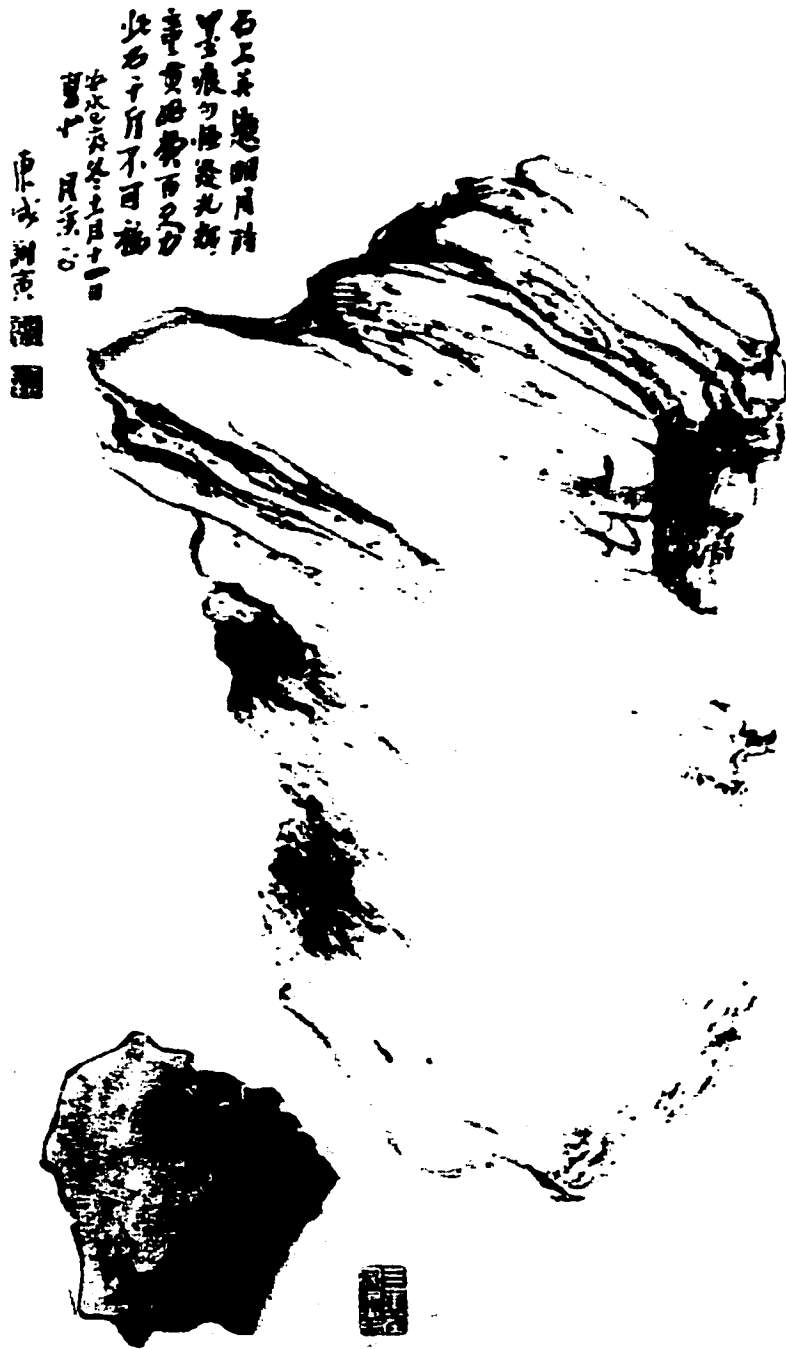


Figure 114: *Pair of Rocks*, 1779, Ink and color on paper.



Figure 115: *Deer in Autumn*, 1779, Color on silk, 111.6x48.9cm., Idemitsu Art Museum.



Figure 116: *Sudden Shower in a Landscape*, 1780, Ink on paper, 166x92cm., Sumiya.

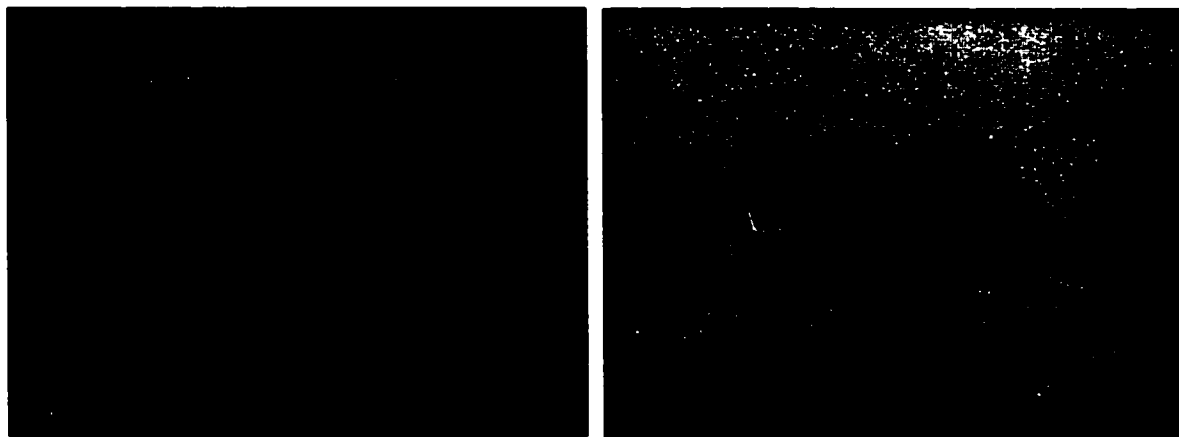


Figure 117: *Landscapes*, 1780, Ink and color on silk, 33x44cm,
Cologne Museum of Asian Art.



Figure 118: *Hanshan and Shide and a Rural Ambassador*, 1780, Ink and color on paper, 134.6x58.5cm.



Figure 119: *Crossing a Stream under Willows*, 1780, Color on silk, 121.9x37.8cm., Seikado Bunko.



Figure 120: *Horse in a Stable*, 1780, Color on silk, 121.5x47.7cm., Kanazawa Shiritsu Nakamura Kinen Art Museum.



Figure 121: *Immortals of the Peach Grove*, 1781, Color on paper, 137.8x58.2cm, Private collection.

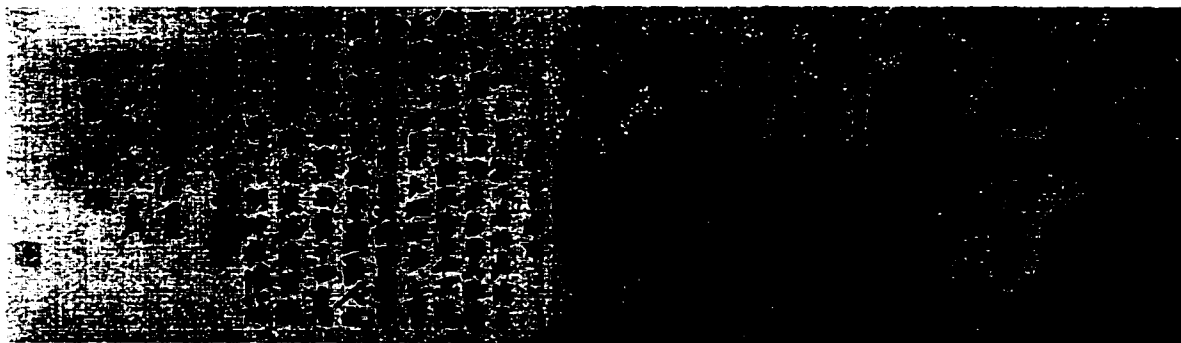


Figure 122: *Spring Evening under the Peach Blossoms*, 1781, Color on silk, 33.2x108.5cm., Sumiya.



Figure 123: *Guo Zhi*, 1781, Ink and color on silk, 119.7x63.6cm.



Figure 124: *Old Pines*, 1781.

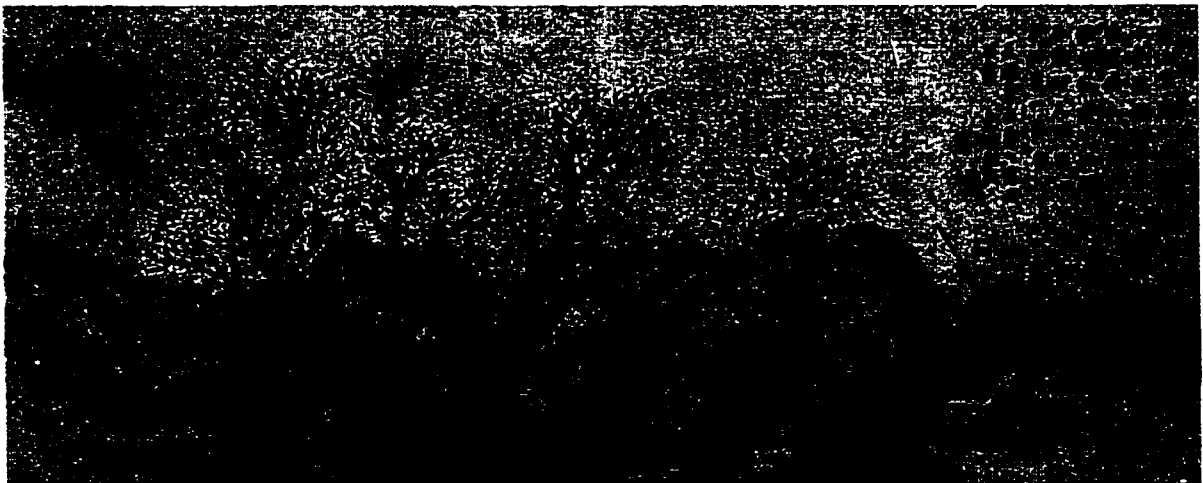


Figure 125: *Peach Blossom Spring*, 1781, Color on silk, 51.5x120.5cm., Sumiya.



Figure 126: *Wang Tzuyu Visiting Tai Andao*, 1781, Ink and color on silk, 37.8x52cm.,
Private collection.



Figure 127: *Hanshan and Shide*, 1781, Color on paper, 134.7x58.1cm., Private collection.



Figure 128: *Spring and Autumn Landscapes*, 1781, Color on silk, 108.1x28.2cm.



Figure 129: *Evening Return to a Valley Village and Autumn Mountains*, 1781, Color on silk, 104.9x45.3cm.

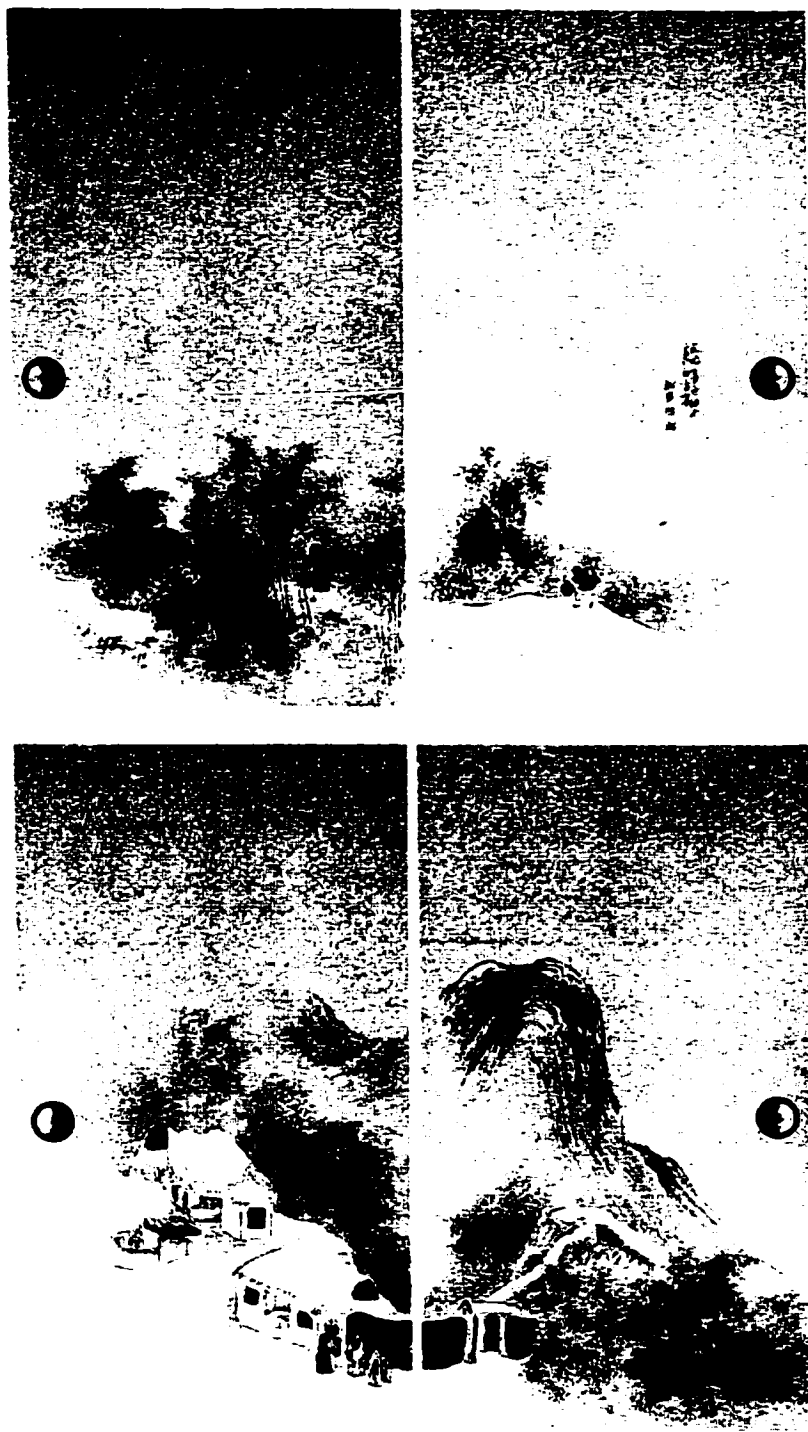


Figure 130: *Landscapes*, 1781, Color on paper, 171x92cm., Private collection.



Figure 131: *Juro*, 1782, Ink and color on paper, 135.2x57.7cm., Private collection.

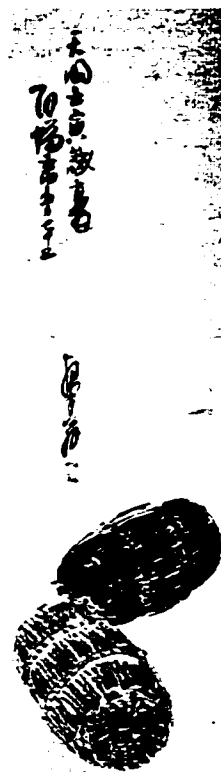


Figure 132: *Rice Bales*, 1782, Ink and color on paper, 104.2x29.5cm., Sumiya.



Figure 133: *Feeding the Horse*, 1782, Color on silk, 123.3x47.5cm.



Figure 134: *Feeding the Horse in Autumn*, 1782, Color on silk, 109.1x46.4cm.



Figure 135: *Traveling on Horseback through a Peach Grove*, 1782, Ink and color on paper, 107x43.5cm, Itsuo Art Museum.

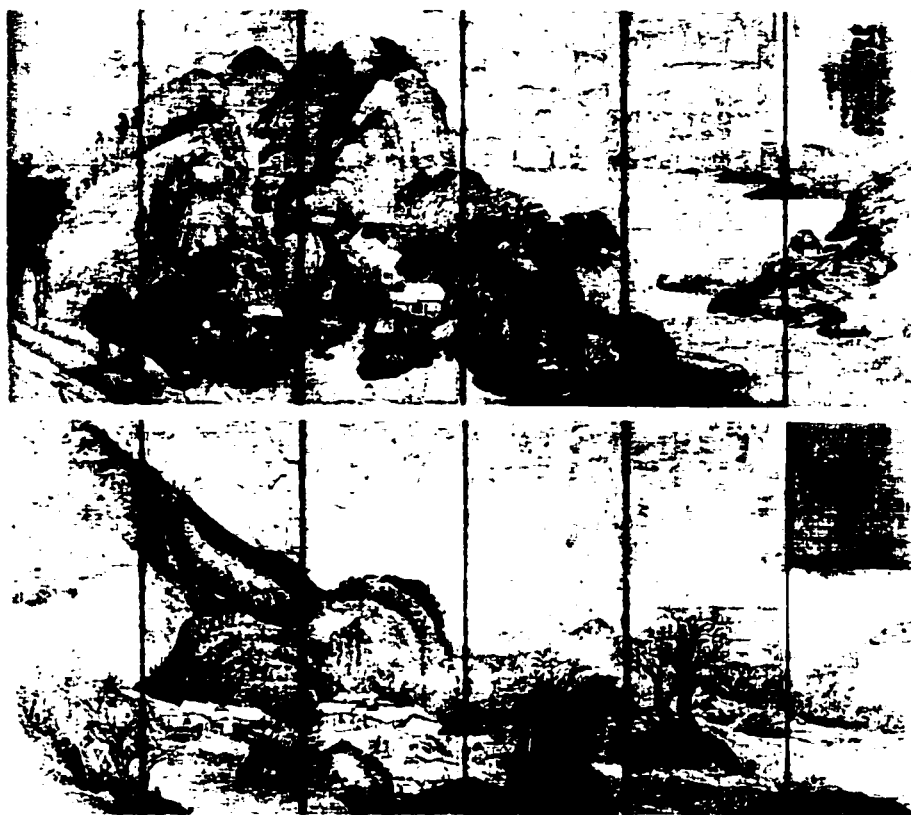


Figure 136: *Landscapes*, 1782, Ink and color over silver-leaf on paper, 151.5x337.4cm, Private collection.



Figure 137: *One Hundred Old Men*, 1782, Color on silk, 116.7x96.1cm.



Figure 138: *Rocks*, 1783, Ink and color on paper, 154x358cm, Kimiko and John Powers.

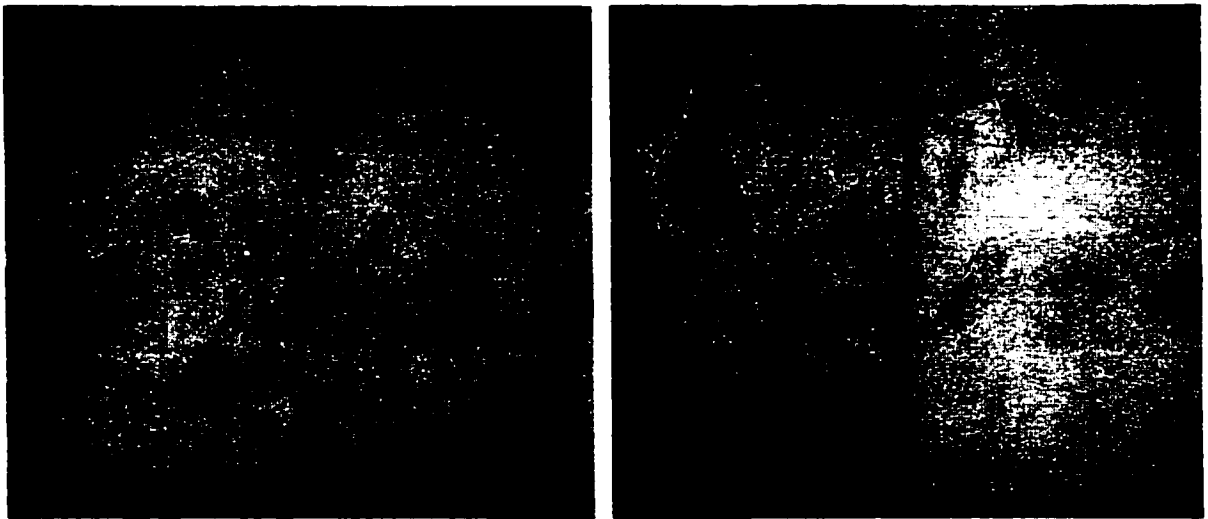


Figure 139: *Kogaku Rocho*, 1783, Ink and color on paper, 154.1x169cm.



Figure 140: *Calling on a Friend in an Autumn Valley*, 1783, Color on silk, 124.8x41.2cm.



Figure 141: *Oku no hosomichi* (detail of Figure 107).

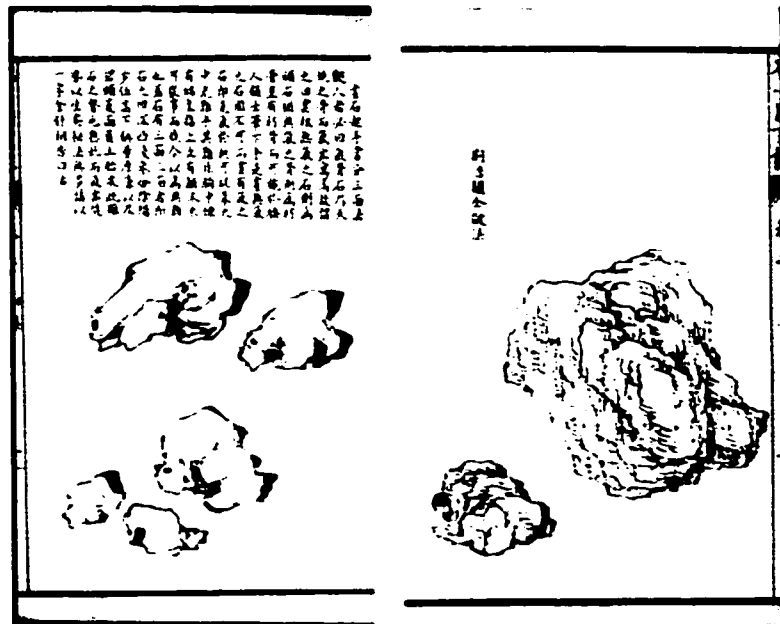


Figure 142: From the *Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting*, 1885 edition, Volume 1.

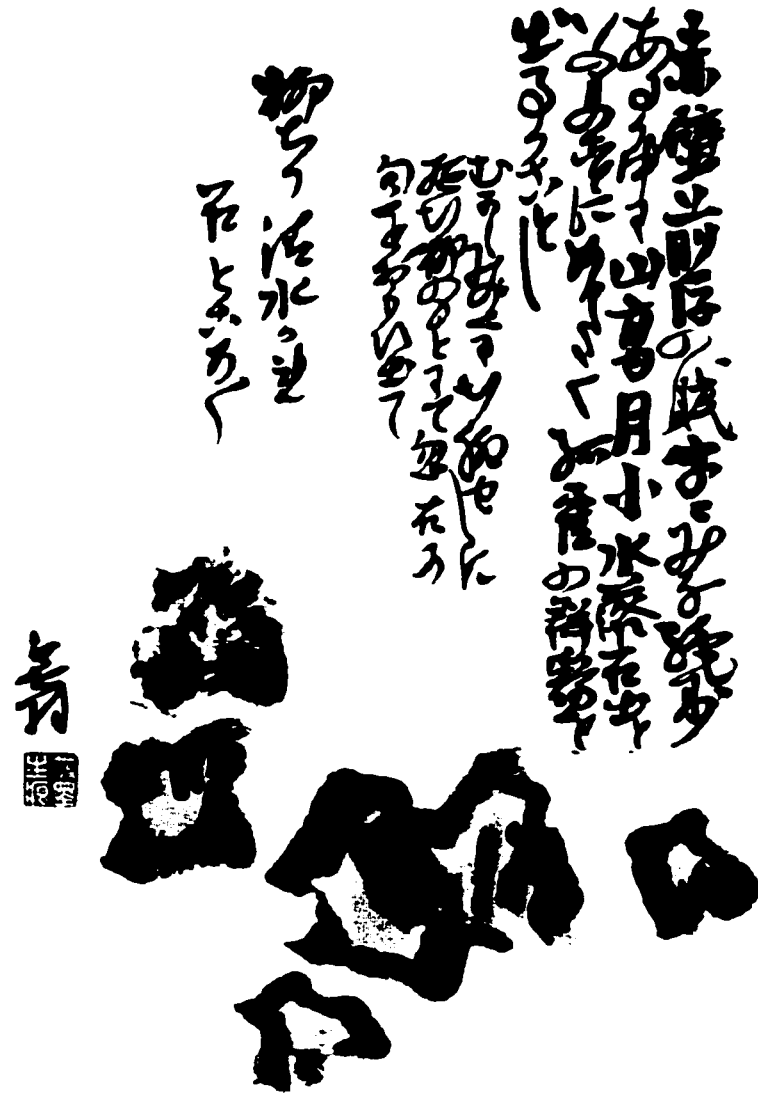


Figure 143: *Rocks Scattered Here and There*, n.d., Ink and color on paper, 58.6x36.7cm., Itsuo Art Museum.



Figure 144: *Feeding the Horse*, n.d., Color on silk, 109.1x46.4cm.

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The degree of Bachelor
of Arts in the field of
Literature and Language
Studies is hereby conferred
upon the candidate

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