### The Mystery of the Qingming Scroll and Its Subject: The Case Against Kaifeng

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The weight of received wisdom hangs heavy on the enigmatic scroll housed in the Beijing Palace Museum.¹ Even though its date is uncertain and its painter unknown, most scholars believe that the Qingming shanghe tu 清明上河圖 shows Kaifeng in the years before the fall of North China in 1127, that the painting was commissioned by the Emperor Huizong (r. 1100-1126), and that the term qingming in the title refers to the Qingming festival.²

This argues against these long-standing assumptions. A fresh examination of the scroll, and the considerable secondary

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies in April, 1991, in New Orleans, where I learned much from my fellow panelists, Joseph R. Allen III, Lin Xiaoping, and our commentator, Paul J. Smith.

Roderick Whitfield's "Chang Tse-tuan's 'Ch'ing-ming shang-ho t'u"" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1965), his "Aspects of Time and Place in Zhang Zeduan's Qingming shanghe tu," in Toyō bijutsu ni okeru fūzoku hyōgen 東洋美術における風俗表現 (Toyonaka-shi: Kokusai kōryū bijitsushi kenkyūkai, 1986), 40-46, and his "Chang Tse-tuan's Ch'ing-ming shang-ho t'u," in Proceedings of the International Symposium on Chinese Painting, June 18-24, 1970 (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1970), 351-90, provide an excellent introduction to the scroll, the colophons on it, and the later versions it spawned.

In all quotations throughout this article, Wade-Giles romanization has been changed to Hanyu Pinyin for consistency, but I have not altered either authors' names or book titles.

<sup>1.</sup> This paper has been long in the making, and I have received help from many, many colleagues and students, including Miyazaki Noriko, Peter Sturman, Sarah Wang, Wu Hung, and the anonymous JSYS reviewers. I am especially grateful to Dick Barnhart, who, over seven years ago, warned me that the painting was not a photograph, who has talked with me many times since, and who allowed me to see his own manuscript about the scroll. Liu Heping generously provided several crucial references, as did Wu Pei-yi, who also suggested the new title for the scroll.

<sup>2 .</sup> For Chinese texts and English translations of all the colophons on the scroll, see Whitfield, Ph.D. diss., 151-76.

literature about it, suggests three new readings: (1) the city shown in the scroll is not Kaifeng, but an idealized city; (2) the painting was done not before 1126, but after; and (3) the word *qingming* does not mean Qingming festival, but instead peace and order. We can no longer accept the notion that because the scroll looks like a Song painting, and because it depicts a city, it must show Kaifeng.

### The Evidence Against Kaifeng

If a draftsman as skilled as Zhang Zeduan 張擇端 had wanted to represent Kaifeng, he would, of course, have had to distort the city's actual layout to fit the spatial limitations of a handscroll. Still, he could have painted any number of landmarks that would have alerted the viewer to the city's identity. The enormously gifted painter of the Qingming scroll, however, includes nothing incontrovertibly from Kaifeng. No pagoda, no temple, no building, and no palace can be identified as a landmark. The rainbow bridge is perhaps the most striking sight in the scroll, but it was not unique to Kaifeng. There were several in Kaifeng, and other northern cities had such bridges, too.<sup>3</sup>

Everything in the painting is generic. The shops, the inns, the gates, and the rainbow bridge were all present in any twelfth-century city. Even the restaurants in the scroll bear generic signs denoting the branch wineshop (jiaodian 腳店) and the larger wholesaler (zhengdian 正店). Because Zhang Zeduan's goal was to paint a cityscape, not Kaifeng, he has deliberately left out all identifying marks.

Some features of city life are actually inaccurate: the wooden gates that stood at the ends of Kaifeng streets do not appear in the painting. As early as 1970, René-Yvon D'Argence voiced his reasons for believing the scroll did not show Kaifeng:

On the other hand, it would have been so very normal for the painter to make a direct reference to a city gate, a palace or anything that would have revealed the metropolitan nature of the city. As you know, the entrances of all the important streets of Bianjing [Kaifeng] and Lin'anfu [Hangzhou] were marked with gates with gate signs. Neither the gates nor the signs appear on the painting.

The general feeling of the city depicted by the scroll is that of a fairly prosperous canal port, not of a capital. The texts tell

<sup>3.</sup> Whitfield, Ph.D. diss., 119, 122.

us that both Northern and Southern capitals had many multistoried buildings, which do not appear in the scroll and the activities of those people suggest a fairly flourishing prefecture, rather than what was, after all, one of the largest and most sophisticated cities of the world, namely the capital of the Northern Song dynasty.<sup>4</sup>

D'Argence's objections are telling. The omission of street gates, gate signs, and multi-storied buildings are further evidence that

the depicted city cannot be Kaifeng.

Many analysts have cited one source from the Southern Song—Meng Yuanlao's 孟元老 nostalgic memoir entitled A Record of Dreaming of Hua in the Eastern Capital (Dongjing meng Hua lu 東京夢華錄)—as a check on the scroll's veracity. They have noted that the shop signs in the painting follow the same pattern as those mentioned by Meng (last name-household [jia 家]—item for sale), but that no sign in the painting exactly matches any in the memoir. Roderick Whitfield makes the excellent point that replication in the scroll of any item mentioned by Meng often points to a later forgery, for unscrupulous artists could consult Meng just as easily as modern scholars! Meng's description does tally with the scroll on certain points. Of the seven types of vehicle mentioned by Meng, five appear in the scroll.

### Painting an Ideal City

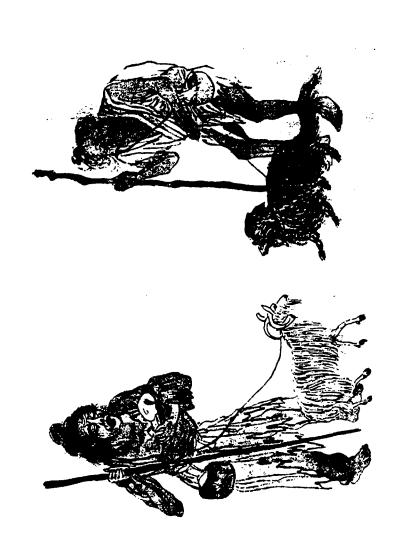
While the painter has omitted all landmarks, he has included many broad hints that the city shown is an ideal city. The scroll is so realistic that many assume the painting is true-to-life. But the more one looks at it, the more one notices how perfect the depicted city is.

Zhang left out any of the poor or sick people who must have been part of twelfth-century streetlife. Zhang paints no obviously suffering or handicapped individuals, no one like the crippled and ragged street people of Suzhou that Zhou Chen 周臣(?-1536) was

<sup>4.</sup> Whitfield, Proceedings paper, 368.

<sup>5.</sup> Whitfield, Proceedings paper, 369.

<sup>6.</sup> Whitfield, Proceedings paper, 367; Whitfield, Ph.D. diss., 135-37.



ink and color on paper, 1516, overall 31.9 x 244.5 cm. Zhou Chen, Chinese, ca. 1450-after 1536, Ming dynasty. © The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1995, John L. Severance Fund, 64.94. Fig. 1. When Zhou Chen painted these street people in 1516, he added a colophon explaining them as a "warning and admonition to the world." He may have exaggerated their misery in order to heighten his social critique, but their overall condition indicates a destitution totally absent from the Qingming scroll. Beggars and Street Characters (detail). Handscroll,

to paint three centuries later (Fig. 1).<sup>7</sup> Equally idyllic is the low degree of security in the city. The scroll shows no soldiers except for a few guards ostentatiously taking naps outside the yamen, with jagged ceramics sticking out of what must be a jail wall.

Almost everyone in the scroll seems happy, even the laborers on the boats and the coolies pulling the boat upstream. And everyone looks clean, too. Just as unrealistically, everyone wears clothing entirely in keeping with his or her social position. Zhang paints people of different social strata so that they are immediately recognizable to his viewers. Peasants and oarsmen have on round sun hats or kerchiefs, short tops, and rolled-up trousers. Townsmen also wear kerchiefs, with long shirts and trousers. Shop assistants are clad in long gowns and simple hats, while the Daoists in the last frame of the scroll have robes with long draped sleeves. The low-level officials, clerks, students, and examination candidates all sport kerchiefs tied over a stiff black form (putou 幞 頭).8 People of different attire and different social status eat at the same restaurants and walk along the same streets, but, significantly, they do not speak with one another. Is this because the painter disapproved of mixing among social groups?

The gate to the city holds a lone tourist looking down at the city, and the wall itself has fallen into disrepair, with a barber shop built into its foreground. The scroll's wall in no way resembles the actual walls that surrounded Kaifeng during the eleventh century. From its designation in 960 as the Song capital, this was a city intermittently under siege, and troops manned its walls at all times, especially in the difficult years of the emperor Huizong's reign. A drawing of a wall from a strategic manual shows how sophisticated ramparts were in the eleventh century. Unlike the enormously complicated gate shown in Fig. 2, the wall in the

painting is not fortified at all.9

<sup>7.</sup> These paintings are reproduced in Jay A. Levenson, ed., Circa 1492 Art in the Age of Exploration (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 443-45. James Cahill has pointed out that Zheng Xia painted homeless people in the Song dynasty, but his painting is no longer extant. See Cahill's "Political Themes in Chinese Painting," in Three Alternative Histories of Chinese Painting (Lawrence, Kansas: Spencer Museum of Art, 1988), 13.

<sup>8.</sup> Angela Sheng analyzes the clothing in the scroll in her "Textile Use, Technology, and Change in Rural Textile Production in Song China (960-1279)," Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1990), 133-36.

<sup>9.</sup> Shown in Ihara Hiroshi 伊原弘, *Chūgoku Kaifū no seikatsu to saishi* 中國開封の 生活と歳時(Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppansha, 1991), 55, citing Zeng Gongliang 曾公亮(998-1078).

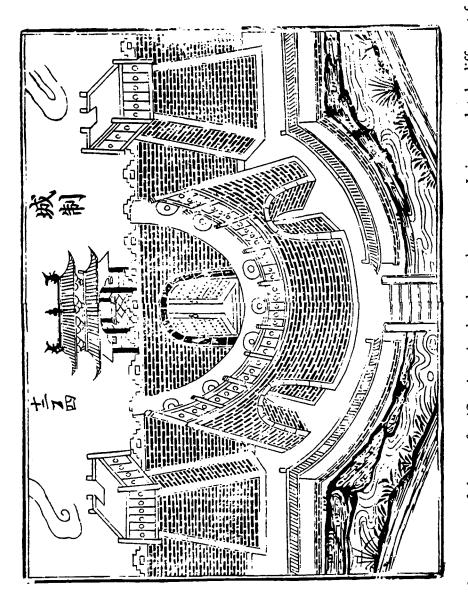


Fig. 2. This picture shows state-of-the-art fortifications in the eleventh century. It is completely different from the undefended wall shown in the scroll. Rpt. from Zeng Gongliang 曾公亮 (998-1078) Wujing zongyao 武經總要 (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1959) 12: no page.

The deserted wall provides another clue that the scroll shows an idealized cityscape, not Kaifeng. The scroll shows only one wall, even though two walls surrounded historical Kaifeng: the original was built in 781, with the second in 955 to include the newer districts. 10 One Chinese scholar, Yang Xin, draws largely on the A Record of Dreaming of Hua in the Eastern Capital to identify the site of the scroll. Of the fourteen bridges that lay between the city and its suburbs, he concludes the bridge in the painting is the one closest to the interior wall. The suburbs shown at the beginning of the scroll, he contends, actually lie within the confines of the outer wall, which is not shown in the painting. 11 Ultimately his ingenious solution fails because it cannot account for the artist's omission of both the exterior wall and the remaining thirteen bridges. Whitfield raises another objection to the identification of this bridge: a wide moat lies between the bridge and the city in the scroll, whereas in Kaifeng the moat lay beyond the bridge. 12

All efforts to locate the scroll in a specific location in Kaifeng are bound to founder on this type of problem. Kaifeng had two walls, fourteen bridges, and many different waterways—none in the exact configuration shown in the scroll. One can identify a given element (be it wall, bridge, or waterway) as something in historic Kaifeng, but then everything else in the scroll will be out of whack, and one will need to make more and more contorted

adjustments.

A simpler solution presents itself. One can conclude the Qingming scroll is a carefully crafted composition, which happens to be painted in a realistic way. The scroll divides easily into thirds. The first shows the outskirts of the city, the second the canal and the shops outside the wall, and the third the interior of the city. The bridge bisects the middle third, and so marks the half-way point on the scroll. Just at the end of the scroll comes a distinctive figure on a donkey who wears an elongated sombrero. In a witty conclusion to the scroll, this man is about to see everything the viewer has just looked at. The perfect spacing of these scenes indicates that Zhang Zeduan has deliberately constructed a fictive cityscape. The scroll is no more an accurate depiction of Kaifeng than

<sup>10.</sup> E. A. Kracke, "Sung K'ai-feng: Pragmatic Metropolis and Formalistic Capital," in John Winthrop Haeger, ed., *Crisis and Prosperity in Sung China* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1975), 49-77.

<sup>11.</sup> Yang Xin 楊新, "Qingming shanghe tu dili weizhi xiaokao" 清明上河圖地理位置小考, Meishu yanjiu (1979.2): 75-76, 52.

<sup>12.</sup> Whitfield, Ph.D. diss., 123.

<sup>13 .</sup> To borrow the phrase of Joseph R. Allen III.

traditional landscapes of fantastic scenery show actual mountains and villages.

The Portrayal of an Idealized City

James Cahill reminds us that political painting in China looks quite different from what we might expect of Western protest art. Rather than directly criticize a ruler, as Zhou Chen did with his unusual *Beggars and Street Characters*, most artists painted highly idealized scenes. Cahill goes on to suggest the Qingming scroll may have been painted "after the northern capital had been abandoned to an invading non-Chinese people, the Jin." Cahill's hypothesis explains the high degree of romanticization in the scroll: Zhang Zeduan painted the scroll after the fall of the north in order to express his longing for a bygone era, and implicitly to criticize the reigning powers. He did not paint the scroll for the emperor Huizong before 1126.

This suggestion fits nicely with the scraps of biography given in the first colophon:

Hanlin 翰林 Zhang Zeduan 張擇端, styled Zhengdao 正道, is a native of Dongwu 東武 (now Zhucheng 諸城, Shandong). When young, he studied and traveled to the capital 京師 for further study. Later he practiced painting things. He showed talent for ruled-line painting (jiehua 界畫), and especially liked boats and carts, markets and bridges, moats and paths. He was an expert in other types of painting as well.

According to "A Record of Mr. Xiang's Views on Paintings," Regatta on the Western Lake (Xihu zhengbiao tu 西湖爭摽圖) and Peace Reigns Over the River (Qingming shanghe tu) are placed in the category of inspired paintings. The owner should treasure it.

On the day after the Qingming festival, in 1186, Zhang Zhu 張著 from Yanshan 燕山wrote this colophon. 15

Zhang Zhu's notice provides the only extant biographical information about the painter but does not give Zhang Zeduan's dates. Tantalizingly, Zhang Zhu prefaces Zhang Zeduan's name with the term Hanlin without specifying which type of Hanlin.

<sup>14.</sup> Cahill, "Political Themes," 13.

<sup>15.</sup> Yang Xin 楊新, "Zhang Zeduan Qingming shanghe tu" 張擇端 清明上河圖, Zhongguo wenwu 3 (1980): 7-8, reproduces and transcribes this colophon. It is also translated in Whitfield's dissertation, 53.

Was he a Hanlin scholar, who had passed the doctorate of letters? Or was he a Hanlin artist, who had been recruited into the imperial painting academy? Because the rest of the text talks about him as both a scholar and as a painter, either reading is possible, and we cannot know with any certainty whether or not he was a court painter.

Even though this colophon does not specifically identify Zhang as a member of the imperial painting academy, some have pointed to the massive size of the scroll (25.5 centimeters by 5 meters) as evidence that Zhang was a court painter. The ruled-line style, though, is not like other paintings produced by academy painters, who were selected on the basis of their ability to do flower-and-bird paintings. Another argument can be made against imperial patronage. Later versions of the scroll, sponsored by the court, show the emperor's palace, but Zhang Zeduan's version does not. This painting is so long that it probably took a team of artists months to complete, but its length does not necessarily mean the emperor paid for it. Is it possible a rich merchant sponsored it?

### The Problem of Dating

The historical evidence for dating the scroll to the Northern Song is thin. The first colophon provides the surprisingly late date of 1186 at which time Mr. Xiang's now-lost book must also have been written. A 1352 colophon says the front of the painting originally bore a title by the Song emperor Huizong, but Huizong's characters do not appear on the scroll. Because this unsupported claim would certainly have enhanced the value of the painting, and because it was put forth two centuries after the original time of composition, it must be viewed with much skepticism. It is much more likely that the painting was done privately

<sup>16.</sup> Ju-yu Scarlett Jang, "Issues of Public Service in the Themes of Chinese Court Painting" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1989), 25-53, discusses the imperial painting academy of the Song. Robert Maeda's "Chieh-hua: Ruled-Line Painting in China," *Ars Orientalis* 10 (1975): 123-41, surveys this tradition and suggests why its popularity died out after the twelfth century.

<sup>17.</sup> Joseph R. Allen III, personal communication, April, 1991. Whitfield discusses the later versions of the scroll in his Taibei conference paper.

<sup>18.</sup> Roderick Whitfield cites Xu Bangda 徐邦達as identifying this Mr. Xiang with a Song figure, Xiang Ruobing 向若冰, who had written colophons on two paintings in the Liaoning Museum, but does not give any supporting evidence except for the last name Xiang. See Whitfield's "Aspects of Time and Place," 40.

<sup>19.</sup> Whitfield, Ph.D. diss., 163-65.

after 1126, remained in private hands throughout the Jin, and entered the imperial collection only during the Yuan. (It then moved back and forth between private collectors and the imperial collection, until 1925 when Pu Yi took it to Manchuria, where it was discovered in 1945.)<sup>20</sup>

### The Nostalgic Impulse

The idealization of the city gives the scroll a nostalgic effect visually similar to that Meng Yuanlao attained in his memoir. Meng does not explicitly state his affection for the lost city of Kaifeng, for that affection underlies his entire account. Wu Pei-yi has recently offered an explanation for the unusual quality of Meng's narrative: "The secret of the book's appeal to both contemporaries and posterity lies, I believe, in the elements of style that it shares with the modern art of photography: the vivid and minute inventory of visual detail, the refusal to delve behind the facade, the preoccupation with the present moment, and the concealment of a narrator." His remarks apply uncannily to the scroll as well. Like Zhang Zeduan's, Meng's was a selective account: "What Meng ignored were the unattractive aspects of Kaifeng," Wu Pei-yi reminds us. "With a population density estimated at 210 people per hectare, the old inner city must have had its share of crowding, poverty, and crime. This we do not see at all in the *Dongjing meng Hua lu*."<sup>21</sup>

If Zhang Zeduan and Meng Yuanlao shared the same longing for the past, then it makes sense to date the scroll to the time after the 1127 fall of Kaifeng. A stylistic comparison with the paintings at Yanshan Monastery 岩山 寺 at Mount Wutai suggests that this date is possible, for some of these paintings, which are dated to 1167, are very like the scroll. Robert Maeda has pointed out several innovations in ruled-line painting that appear in the Qingming scroll, and which also appear in the Yanshan Monastery paintings. The artists paint the buildings from a near distance so they look closer, and both use an overhead perspective so that the viewer can look into houses and boats. They also cut off figures behind walls and doors.<sup>22</sup>

The wall paintings at Yanshan show vivid scenes from daily life, like seated children playing with toys and embroidering on a screen, courtesans napping, and a cow being milked. In one

<sup>20.</sup> Whitfield, Ph.D. diss., 74-75, summarizes the history of the painting.

<sup>21.</sup> Wu Pei-yi, "Memories of K'ai-feng, New Literary History 25 (1994): 47-60.

<sup>22 .</sup> Robert J. Maeda, "Chieh-hua: Ruled-Line Painting in China," 131-34.

painting especially evocative of the Qingming scroll, boatmen struggle to bring in a snapped mast with its billowing square-rigged sails. We can see the same contrast in clothing as in the scroll: as gowned merchants look on from the deck, shirtless boatmen work above them (Fig. 3). In another scene showing an inn, the viewer can even make out the writing on a flag hanging outside a second-story wineshop offering female companionship: "Wild flowers from throughout the land bloom here; full jars of fragrant local wine." The shop, like the restaurants in the Qingming scroll, is filled with patrons. Outside are monks, a blind fortuneteller, snack-vendors, and their customers (Fig. 4).<sup>23</sup>

Although the Yanshan Monastery paintings are dated to 1167, most scholars see them as continuing the Northern Song tradition of painting under the Jin, and Patricia Karetsky suggests their painter was a Northern Song court painter who stayed in north China after 1126. Stylistically, then, painting styles from the end of the Northern Song differ little from those of the Jin. Like the painter of the Yanshan temple paintings, Zhang Zeduan was most likely a Chinese artist who had trained in the Northern Song but who painted his scroll after 1126.

The Meaning of the Word "Qingming"

Zhang Zhu's colophon of 1186 is the first to give the title of the painting as *Qingming shanghe tu*. Was this the artist's own title? We cannot know. Because Zhang Zhu records the date of his colophon as the day after the Qingming festival, many have translated the title of the scroll as *Going Up River on the Qingming Festival*. Occurring some 100 days after the winter solstice, the Qingming



<sup>23.</sup> Ellen Johnston Laing, "Chin 'Tartar' Dynasty (1115-1234) Material Culture," Artibus Asiae 49 (1988-89): 73-126; Patricia Eichenbaum Karetsky, "The Recently Discovered Chin Dynasty Murals Illustrating the Life of the Buddha at Yen-shangsu, Shansi," Artibus Asiae 42.4 (1980): 245-61; Zhang Yaping 張亞平 and Zhao Jinzhang 趙晉樟, "Shanxi Fanshi Yanshangsi de Jindai bihua" 山西繁峙岩上寺的金代璧畫, Wenwu 1979.2:1-1-2; Pan Jiezi 潘潔茲, "Lingyan caibi dong xinbo Yanshangsi Jindai bihua xiaoji" 靈岩彩璧動心魄岩上寺金代璧畫小記, Wenwu 1979.2:3-10. The most copiously illustrated reproductions are in the Yanshan Temple in Fanshi, Shanxi Province 繁峙岩上寺(Fanshi Yanshansi) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1980), but because even these are difficult to see, I have reproduced two of the line drawings from Wenwu. (The temple name has changed since the first publications. Originally Yanshangsi 岩上寺, it is now called Yanshansi 岩山寺.)

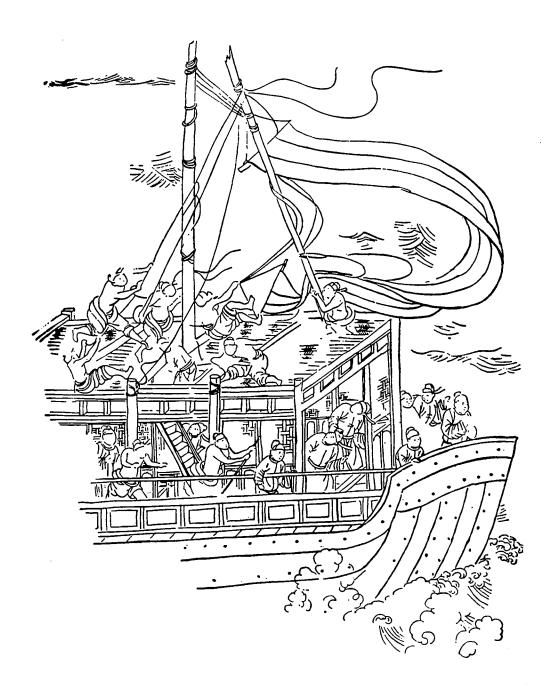


Fig. 3. Painted in 1167, this scene of an ocean-going boat whose mast has snapped appears on a Jin-dynasty temple wall. It has been redrawn for clarity. Like the Qingming scroll, this painting captures the urgency with which the struggling crew works. Rpt. from *Wenwu* 1979.2:8.

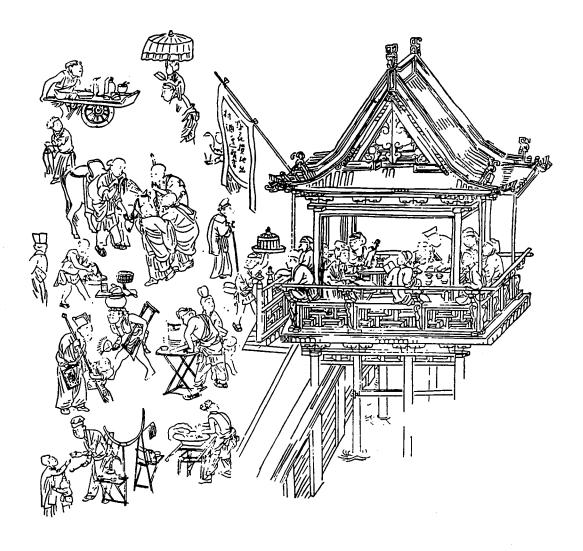


Fig. 4. This depiction of an inn from Yanshan portrays the same variety of street life as in the Qingming scroll. The male-female ratio, though, is less uneven. Outside the restaurant, one woman with a bun on her head and a child by her side waits as a man rolls dough. Directly above her a second woman walks with the aid of a cane. At the bottom left a girl, also with a child, buys a drink. At the top, a girl holding a fan and beneath an umbrella rides on a man's shoulders. Inside the restaurant, two seated women offer the professional service advertised by the flag outside. Rpt. from *Wenwu* 1979.2:9.

Festival was an occasion on which families swept ancestral graves.<sup>24</sup>

Recently, though, scholars have come to question the linking of the scroll with the Qingming festival on several grounds. First of all, the painting fails to shows the characteristic activities of the Qingming festival described in other Song sources. Where are the date dumplings pierced with willow twigs? Where are the graves? Where are the willow bunches that hung on every roof? And where are the willow twigs that women put in their hair? The scroll gives only two hints of grave-sweeping activities—the brooms on the sedan chair in the first frame of the painting, and the brooms in front of the inn near the end of the scroll—and they are very subtle indeed. Many inns have erected elaborate wooden structures in preparation for a holiday, but such structures were used for other holidays as well.

Scholars have also noted that the season does not quite fit the early springtime of the Qingming festival. A flag advertises new wine (xinjiu 新酒), which went on sale only in the fall. Over ten people in the scroll, some with their shirts off, fan themselves. A stand on the bridge sells drinks and watermelon, and some are wearing straw and bamboo hats—hardly the garb or the snacks of early spring. They think the more likely season is fall, when the heat of summer still lingers, but the trees at the beginning of the scroll—some with green buds, some still bare—seem more characteristic of early spring. <sup>25</sup>

If qingming does not mean the Qingming festival, what does it mean? Some scholars propose that the qingming in the title refers to the district in Kaifeng of the same name, but the full title of the scroll—Going Up River in the Qingming District—reads awkwardly and does not make sense. Why should the artist single out one district when the scroll clearly shows much more of the city? Others more plausibly suggest qingming means peaceful and orderly, with

<sup>24.</sup> For a discussion of the Qingming festival in the Tang and Song dynasties, see Patricia Buckley Ebrey's "Early Stages of Descent Group Organization," in Patricia Buckley Ebrey and James L. Watson, eds., Kinship Organization in Late Imperial China, 1000-1940 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 20-29.

<sup>25.</sup> Hsiao Ch'iung-jui 蕭瓊瑞 provides a very useful summary of recent articles in Chinese concerning doubts about the meaning of Qingming and concerning the season shown in "Qingming shanghe tu huaming yiyi de zai renshi" 清明上河圖畫明意義的再認識, in Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Chinese Art History, 1991: Painting and Calligraphy (Taibei: The National Palace Museum, 1992), 111-37. Wu Pei-yi suggested the phrasing Peace Reigns Over the River (personal communication, 11 June 1995).

the resulting translation as *Peace Reigns on the River*. This interpretation fits nicely with the idealization so prevalent throughout the scroll.

A further objection to the identification of the Qingming festival remains. Meng Yuanlao describes the Qingming festival as it was celebrated in the early twelfth century, saying:

The well-off and the commoners filled all the gates, while the religious paper stores (zhima dian 紙馬店) displayed multilayered paper houses on the street. The outskirts in all directions were as crowded as markets. Under fragrant trees and between fields and gardens people put down cups and plates. They fed and urged each other to drink. The singing and dancing girls of the capital city filled every garden and every pavilion, and returned home only at dusk.<sup>26</sup>

This is hardly the scene painted in the scroll. The gates are not crammed full of people. The one religious paper store stands empty of either paper buildings or customers. The painting shows bustling streets, but the outskirts of the city are not packed. The only people who are drinking are inside inns, and no one is picnicking in gardens.

### Where Are the Women?

Contrary to Meng Yuanlao's description of the Qingming festivities, singing and dancing girls are not in each garden and not in each pavilion. The relative absence of women throughout the scroll is puzzling.<sup>27</sup> The famous bridge scene is filled with people coming and going, but none are women (unless the sedan-chair carries one hidden from view!). Out of the some 500 people shown in the scroll, only about twenty (by my count) are women.

Once the viewer's eye adjusts, women are easily identifiable. The only women to appear outside unaccompanied by men are those of low social status. Early in the scroll, two women ride a donkey down a path. Their headdresses resemble that of the suckling milknurse who feels no shame in baring her breasts, in Li



<sup>26.</sup> Meng Yuanlao, *Dongjing meng Hua lu* (Beijing: Zhongguo shangye chubanshe, 1982), 7.43. Wu Pei-yi reminded me of this passage and graciously provided a partial translation, which I have cited here.

<sup>27.</sup> Lin Xiaoping first brought this point to my attention.



Fig. 5: Li Song, *The Knickknack Peddler*. The milknurse's headdress in this fan painting is just like that of the women riding donkeys at the beginning of the Qingming scroll. Her willingness to expose her breasts in public testifies to her low social position. The women in the scroll ride outside, rather than in a carriage, suggesting they are of equally low status. Because this painting dates to 1210, this detail provides further evidence for dating the scroll to after 1126. Collection of the National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China.

Song's 李嵩Knickknack Peddler (Fig. 5).<sup>28</sup> Another woman, of low status, pours out water from a sampan, on which she is doing laundry.

Women of higher social position tend to be inside, whether in their dwellings or palanquins. Two women, sitting inside their boats, gaze at the canal from the windows of their docked ships. A maidservant brings noodles to her mistress seated inside a sedanchair by a restaurant. Within the city walls, in front of the large inn, a group of two or three women cluster around a basket of willow brooms, presumably to be used for sweeping graves. A fatter woman looks on. These are the only women enjoying themselves outside, and their proximity to the restaurant suggests they

may well be prostitutes in the company of their madam.

Why does Zhang paint so few women? Social historians do not know with any certainty the extent to which women were secluded in the twelfth century. In Zhang's idealized cityscape, women, with a few exceptions, are restricted to the home, yet the inn scene from Yanshan shows more women. Zhang's vision meshes with classical strictures, which called for women to remain inside, while men ventured out. As Patricia Buckley Ebrey notes, well-off households with servants were better able to enforce the segregation of the sexes than poorer ones.29 Many women, she continues, evaded this restriction, and enjoyed going out, especially on holidays. Does Zhang's scroll mean that so few women actually went outside in the twelfth century? If we view the scroll as a photograph, then we can conclude that women were already restricted to the home by the time of the scroll. But the scroll reveals as little about the lives of women as it does about urban poverty.

This scroll depicts a utopia unblemished by crime, beggars, sickness, or filth, and barely disturbed by women. The police in this city can afford to doze, since no criminals violate its harmony. The city is so secure it has no soldiers to guard it, and it does not even require standard fortifications. Zhang painted a city in which everyone dressed according to social position and, by implication, in which everyone knew his (very rarely her) place. The visual



<sup>28.</sup> The painting dates to 1210 and is held in the Palace Museum Collection in Taibei. The painting is reproduced in James Cahill, *Treasures of Asia: Chinese Painting* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1977), 53. I am indebted to Laura Whitman for pointing out this similarity to me.

<sup>29.</sup> Patricia Buckley Ebrey, The Inner Quarters: Marriage and the Lives of Women in the Sung Period (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 23-27.

equivalent of Meng Yuanlao's memoir, the Qingming scroll presents one unknown artist's view of an idealized past. For all of its riches, it does not offer a photographic portrait of either Songdynasty Kaifeng or the Qingming festival.

"The Mystery of the Qingming Scroll and Its Subject: The Case Against Kaifeng," The Journal of Sung-Yuan Studies 26 (1996): 183-200. Author's translation of this essay appears as "<<Qingming shanghetu>>suo hui changjing wei Kaifeng zhiyi" in Qingzhu Deng Guangming jiaoshou jiushi huadan lunwenji (Collected essays celebrating the ninetieth birthday of Professor Deng Guangming) Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 1997.

對於北京故宫博物院所藏的《清明上河關》,歷來有一些固定的說法:它的年代雖然不清楚,它的畫家的傳雖然不詳盡,但是很多學者都認為它是北宋滅亡之前為徽宗畫的,而且通常認為畫名裏面的"清明"指清明節。這些想法都需要重新予以考慮,近年來已經有一些學者對於這些假說提出了質疑。假如我們仔細看《清明上河圖》,我認為,我們會感到《清明上河圖》中的城市不是開封,而是一個理想化的城市;我想對過去的成說——因為這幅畫看起來是宋代的畫,因為裏面畫的是一個比較大的城市,所以那應該是開封——提出一些疑問。<sup>6</sup>

### 非開封的證據

畫中的建築都缺少明確的標識,所有十二世紀的城市都會有類似的店鋪、酒館、城門,畫裏畫的飯鋪的招牌只標志種類,而不指具體名稱:"正店"指比較大型的酒店,"脚店"指一種分店。因為張擇端想畫一般的城市——非開封——所以他故意不畫任何有代表意義的名勝古蹟,或者商號。

畫中有一些地方跟開封不一樣:張擇端没有畫開封所有街頭的木牌樓。1970 年法國的德兒根斯 (Rene-Yvon D'Argence) 解釋過他為什么懷疑張擇端畫的並非開封:

畫家很自然地畫城門,畫宫殿,畫任何有代表性的場景。衆所周知,汴京和臨安府的道路都有門跟門牌(gates with gate signs),而畫中没有門,也没有門牌。

畫中的城市有繁榮的運河港口,而没有首都的樣子。按照歷史上的記載,北宋、南宋的首都都有很多的多層建築,可是畫中没有。畫中人物的活動使觀看者 想起的是繁榮的州城,而不是當時世界最大、最文明的城市,即北宋首都。<sup>②</sup>

D'Argence 先生的看法有道理, 畫中略去街門、門牌、高樓, 更證明畫中的城市不是開封。

很多學者都引用孟元老所著《東京夢華録》來確定《清明上河圖》的真實性。他們注意到商店招牌的構造形式與孟元老的記述相同,即"某姓一家一某商品",但是畫中的店名没有一個跟書中的店名一樣。另外,英國的 Roderick Whitfield 也曾提醒學者們注意,正如我們能够查《東京夢華録》一樣,宋代以後的畫家也可以查閱,即使畫中店銷的名稱與書中重複,也不能證明圖畫肯定作於北宋。<sup>69</sup>

### 一座理想化的城市

張擇端雖然未畫名勝古蹟,可是他用很多方法表示畫中城市是一座理想的城市。畫 的風格屬于寫實派,令一般觀賞者感到畫跟照片一樣,但是我們越看這幅畫,越意識 到畫中的城市過於十全十美。

張擇端略去十二世紀常見的窮人與病人,也没有盐身體有障礙的人,盐中完全没有像周陳(?~1536年)三百年之後畫的那類乞丐和窮人。畫中的社會次序也同樣被理想化了,除了一些明顯地睡午覺的門衛之外,畫中幾乎没有士兵。

世中的人們,連船上的工人與逆水拉船的縴夫在內,看起來都很高興,大家看起來也很乾净。

城門上只有一個觀看下面道路的人,城牆本身有殘破之處,城脚下有理髮攤,一片太平景象。城牆幾乎無人戍衛,這不可能是北宋的開封,很可能是理想化的城市。畫中只有一重城牆,但是北宋的開封有兩重城牆,原來的內城是 781 年修的,外城是 955 年圍繞新的地區建造的。

楊新先生引用《東京夢華録》來確定《清明上河圖》所繪景物的位置。當時的開 封有十四座橋,根據楊先生的假說,畫中的橋應該是上土橋。畫卷開端所繪的郊外其 實在外城之內,但是張擇端没有畫外城。<sup>①</sup>楊先生没有解釋其它十三座橋的位置,也没 有說張擇端為什么不畫外城。

所有試圖將《清明上河圖》所繪場景確定為北宋開封某一具體位置的假説會有同

樣的弱點:北宋開封有過內城、外城、十四座橋和很多水道。它們的位置關係跟畫中 景物的彼此關係不同,一旦將畫上的某個場景(如內城、外城、橋、水道)解釋為北 宋開封的某一地方,其它部分的位置就都會發生問題。

還有更簡單的判斷方式:《清明上河圖》是一幅構圖細緻的繪畫作品,全圖分成三段:第一段畫郊外,第二段畫運河和城外的商店,第三段畫城內。虹橋剛好在第二段中,即畫的中間,此處顯然是全畫的高潮。畫尾有一個很有特色的戴圓帽的士大夫,似乎要去看我們剛剛觀賞過的人和城市。(他會不會是張擇端的自畫像?)這三段經過精心安排的布局證明畫上的城市是按畫家的設想構成的,而不是完全寫實的,正如很多山水畫上的山水並非真實景點,《清明上河圖》所給城市也並不是開封。

### 關於《清明上河圖》的年代

高居翰(James Cahill)主張中國過去的批評藝術(protest art)不同於西方的批評藝術等。明朝畫家周陳直接批評權威者,可是大多數的畫家不敢,他們寧願畫理想化的畫, Cahill 提出《清明上河圖》可能作于金代。北宋滅亡後,張擇端畫《清明上河圖》以表示恢復過去生活的願望,也間接批評金朝的統治,因此他畫了一座理想化的城市。

高先生的假說符合張擇端傳裏面的記載,按張著的題跋:

翰林張擇端,字正道,東武人也。幼讀書游學於京師,後習繪事,本工其界畫,尤嗜於舟車,市橋,郭徑,别成家數也。按《向氏評論圖畫記》云:《西湖争標圖》《清明上河圖》選入神品。藏之宜寶之。

大定丙武清明後一日,燕山張著跋。

張著的傳是現存的關於張擇端最早的資料,傳文沒有記張擇端生活的年代,但是 說到他的翰林身份。傳文給我們的印象是:張擇端曾經活動於北宋。但他完全有可能 一直活到金朝佔領中原之後。題跋中雖然沒有直接說張擇端供職於翰林圖畫院,但是 很多學者覺得《清明上河圖》的長度(5 米×25 厘米)證明張擇端是宫廷中的一位畫 家。但是《清明上河圖》的界畫風格跟其它工筆畫風格不同。<sup>①</sup>《清明上河圖》確實很 長,很可能是一組畫家的作品,當時的皇帝可以為身邊的畫家提供創作這樣一幅畫的 必要條件,不過其他的人——特别是富商——也足以提供類似的條件。

把《清明上河圖》的作畫年代定在北宋時期的證據極少。張著的跋是 1186 年寫的,它引用的書《向氏評論圖畫記》面世應該早於 1186 年。1352 年的跋說畫端原來有宋徽宗的題字,而後來已不存在,假如徽宗的字能保留下來,畫的價值能提高很多。還有一個因素令人懷疑: 1352 年的跋是第一次提到徽宗的字,而徽宗題辭,應是 200 多年以前的事情,早就應該有人提到。我個人的推測是,《清明上河圖》是金朝前期畫的,元朝它成為皇室藏畫。(後來它有時在私人手裏,有時藏在皇室。1925 年溥儀帶到滿洲,

1945年在那裏被發現。)

### 留戀過去的動機

《清明上河圆》中的城市氣氛很像孟元老回憶的開封,所有《東京夢華録》的讀者無疑都能體會到孟元老對於開封的感情。像孟元老一樣,張擇端没有描寫城市生活中存在的種種問題,正像 Wu peiyi 在《懷念開封》中説到的:"孟元老没有提到城市醜陋的現象。"人口密度達到每公頃居住 210 人,古城肯定相當擁擠,有不少窮人和犯人。而這些都不出現於《東京夢華録》",也不出現於《清明上河圖》。

假如張擇端和孟元老的動機一樣,那麽《清明上河圖》的創作年代也可能和《東京夢華録》相近。《清明上河圖》的風格類似於 1167 年的五臺山嚴山寺壁畫的風格。前田洛博(Robert Maeda)提出一些《清明上河圖》新的界畫表現手法。這些手法也出現於嚴山寺的壁畫,兩個畫家用同樣的角度來畫房子和船裏面的人,他們也都畫人站在半開著的門邊。

嚴山寺的壁畫描繪了日常生活中的活動,小孩兒在玩玩具,有人在擠奶,姑娘們在睡覺。其中一幅類似於《清明上河圖》,畫中,船員竭力控制一個毀壞了的桅杆,畫中人物的服裝表現出明顯的身份差别。另外一幅畫上有旅館,可以看得出旗子上的字:"野花攢地出,村酒透瓶香"。這個店鋪跟《清明上河圖》中的店鋪一樣,有很多客人,店銷外站著看相者、賣食物者和他們的主顧。<sup>60</sup>

嚴山寺壁畫雖然作於 1167 年,很多學者覺得它們繼承了北宋的繪畫風格。Patricia Karetsky 認為它們的繪製者原來是宋朝宫廷的畫家。金朝畫的風格很像北宋畫的風格。就像嚴山寺壁畫的畫家一樣,張擇端很可能是在北宋時開始繪畫創作的,但是他的作品《清明上河圖》却創作於金代。

### "清明"的意思

張著引用的《向氏評論圖畫記》載有《清明上河圖》的名稱,可是我們無法知道 它是否為張擇端自己選定。因為張著說他的跋是"清明後一日"寫的,所以很多人覺 得畫名的意思是"在清明節上河的圖"。

最近有一些學者提出新的看法,他們認為,這幅畫没有突出表現清明節的風俗。孟 元老說:

清明節,尋常京師以冬至後一百五日爲大寒食。前一日謂之"炊熟",用麵造 棗錮飛燕,柳條串之,插於門楣,謂之"子推燕",子女及笄者,多以是日上頭。 寒食第三節,即清明日矣,凡新墳皆用此日拜掃,都城人出郊。

轎子即以楊柳雜花裝簇頂上,四垂遮映。"

畫上有兩處地方可能跟祭掃墳墓有關:一是前面的轎子外邊插有楊柳枝, 畫尾正店前 有一些市人,似乎分别在觀看筐裏的柳枝。

但是總起來看,畫上的季節不像清明節,一面旗子上寫著"新酒",可是新酒是秋後的產品,十多個拿扇子的人中,有的人不穿襯衫,橋上的攤子賣"飲子",有的人戴草帽,這都不像春天典型的現象。是否秋天?<sup>並</sup>畫頭的樹看起來還是春天的樣子。

假定清明的意思不是清明節,還有甚麼其它的可能?過去開封有一個叫做清明的坊,可是《清明坊上河圖》讀起來很蹩扭,張擇端為甚麼要畫一個坊而不畫其它的坊? 不太可能。

清明還有一個適合的意思,即"政治有法度,有條理"。"這個意思正與前文所說"理想化的城市"相符合。

清明節的說法還有一個弱點,根據孟元老的說法,當日:

士庶闐塞諸門,紙馬鋪皆於當街用紙衮壘成樓閣之狀,四野如市,往往就芳樹之下,或園囿之間,羅列杯盤,互相勸酬。都城之歌兒舞女,遍滿園亭,抵暮而歸。<sup>49</sup>

畫上的城市没有那麼熱鬧, 畫中人物看上去都在從容不迫地從事日常活動, 畫上的紙馬店雖然擺著紙製的樓閣, 但是門前相當冷清, 我們從畫面上也看不到"士庶園塞諸門", "四野如市"的場面。

### 畫上爲什麽女性少?

我們注意到, 出上的人物中, 女性很少, 橋上有很多人走來走去, 可是没有一個是女性(除非轎子裏坐著一位婦女), 出上有 500 多人, 女性只有 20 名左右。"

社會身份比較高的女性很少在街中露面。她們有的坐在轎子裏,有的坐在家裏。游船上有兩個朝外看的女客人, 岔路口有一個女師從店内給坐在轎子裏的主人買了一碗麵。

城裏有三個女人站在正店門外,她們是否是在正店陪酒的妓女?除了她們之外,没 有其他站在外面的女性。

張擇端為甚麽畫這麽少的女人? 十二世紀的城市婦女上街的情形,我們很難確切

瞭解。在張擇端的理想城市,只有很少的女人站在外面,可是嚴山寺壁畫上站在外面的女人比較多。原則上,女人不應該在街市上拋頭露面,可是埃布莉指出富裕家庭有條件讓女人留在家裏,窮人則没有這種可能性。過節日時,很多婦女可以上街。<sup>⑤</sup>《清明上河圖》上畫這麼少女人,證明十二世紀的婦女真的不上街麼?假如《清明上河圖》是一幅照片的話,我們可以推測十二世紀的女性與世隔絕;可是《清明上河圖》不是照片,要研究十二世紀窮人生活的話,不能僅僅依據這幅畫;同樣,研究婦女生活的人也不可以完全依據這幅畫。

畫上的城市是一個無犯人、無乞丐、無病人、無污染、幾乎無女人的烏托邦。因為沒有壞人,所以城裏的士兵可以睡午覺。張擇端畫的城沒有衛兵,也不戒備森嚴,跟《東京夢華録》一樣,《清明上河圖》負載著張擇端這位身世不詳的畫家的理想,反映出他對於過去的太平生活的懷念。《清明上河圖》帶給我們的信息非常豐富。總的來說,《清明上河圖》是十二世紀理想化的城市的畫面,而不是清明時節開封城的真實寫照。

### ·注釋:

- ① 本論文的英文本 "The Mystery of the Qingming Scroll and its Subject: The Case Against Kaifeng," 發表於《宋元研究學報》Journal of Sung-Yuan Studies 26 期, 1996 年,第 183 至 200 頁。Roderick Whitfield 的三篇大作提出很多資料,給我很多啟發: 1. 普林斯頓大學 1965 年博士論文,張擇端的《清明上河圖》"Chang Tse-tuan's Ch'ing-ming shang-ho t'u"。2. "Aspects of Time and Place in Zhang Zeduan's Qingming shanghe tu."載《東洋美術こおける風俗表現》 1986 年版,第 40-46 頁。3. 張擇端的《清明上河圖》"Chang Tse-tuan's Ch'ing-ming shang-ho t'u"載 Proceedings of the International Symposium on Chinese Painting, 1970 年版,第 351-390 頁。我要感謝鄧小南和李孝聰幫助校正和潤色了文稿。
- ② Proceedings of the International Symposium on Chinese Painting, 1970 年版,第 368 頁。
- ③ Proceedings of the International Symposium on Chinese Painting, 1970 年版,第 369 頁。
- ④ 楊新、《清明上河圖地理位置小考》、《美術研究》,1979年2期,第75~76,52頁。
- 5 James Cahill "Political Themes in Chinese Painting," in Three Alternative Histories of Chinese Painting (Lawrence, Kansas; Spencer Museum of Art, 1988) p. 13.
- ⑥ 楊新,張擇端《清明上河圖》,《中國文物》1980年3期第7-8頁。
- ⑦ 前田洛博 Robert Maweda,中國的界准風格"Chieh-hua, RuledLine Painting in China"《東方藝術》Ars Orientalis, 1975 年 10 期第 123—141 頁。
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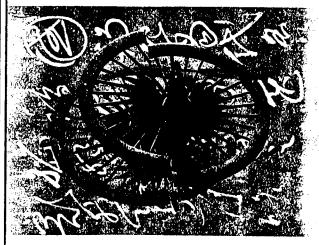
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