

46

A SCHOLAR-PAINTER'S DIARY

The life of upper-class men involved not only study and official service but also refined pursuits such as collecting antiques or old books and cultivation of the arts—especially poetry writing, calligraphy, or painting. For many individuals these interests totally overshadowed any philosophical, political, or economic concerns; others usually sober-minded found in them occasional outlets for creative activity and aesthetic pleasure. A large share of the informal social life of upper-class men was oriented around these refined pastimes, as they gathered to compose or criticize poetry, to view one another's treasures, or to patronize young talents. In these activities, they frequently mingled with Buddhist and Daoist clergy.

The diary of Guo Bi, from which sixteen days are given below, illustrates the kind of relationships that existed between poetry, painting, calligraphy, and connoisseurship in the social and cultural life of a group of upper-class men. Guo Bi was a scholar and artist of the early fourteenth century who painted landscapes and bamboo and was noted for his calligraphy. Diary writing does not seem to have been practiced to any appreciable extent before the Song, and for the next several centuries most diaries, like Guo Bi's, were records of trips.

1309, The sixth month, 12th day: Staying at Xinghua. Mr. Zhan Derun invited me for dinner. The guests were the same as yesterday except for Gong Zifang. Zifang is the nephew of Zizhong, and lives in Gaoyou. After dinner, I accompanied the others to Perfect Truth Daoist Monastery, where we sat under four catalpa trees to catch some breeze. I wrote twenty wine poems for Zhao Boqian.

13th day: I painted a picture of an impressive stone for Mr. Zhan. The stone was less than a foot long and six or seven inches high. Its shape was

very unusual and yet no trace of a chisel could be detected. It was as though it had been carved by fairies. When I finished painting the stone, I asked Mr. Wang, the painter, to come see it. Then with my coconut cup I started drinking, and by noon I was already drunk. Yesterday I went with Gong Zifang, Zang Zixuan, and Xu Guiyan to visit Jinggong at the county school. There we ran into Mr. Zhao and Mr. Huang. All of us sat on the ground and enjoyed a chicken and a jug of wine. When finished with the wine, we went our separate ways.

14th day: Staying at Xinghua. Liu Juchuan's new wine had just matured; its taste was pure and its flavor unique. In the morning he brought over a pot, and we enjoyed several cups with Mr. Zhan. At noon Liu barbecued two birds, and we drank some wine together. Besides me, the guests included Huang Zhongwen, Li Jinggong and others. After the wine, Hu Zizhen's brother-in-law, Zang Zixuan, hired a small boat and invited Gong Zifang, Xu Shengzhi, and me to visit Lotus Flower Swamp. Zhao Boqian also came along. After a little while Mr. Zhan, his son, and Liu Juchuan also joined us in another small boat. After lingering for some time, we went to Righteous Road Monastery. The monk in charge prepared wine for us, but I cannot say very much for its taste. Next we went back to the boats and picked lotuses. By this time the sun was setting and a breeze began to blow. We made cups out of lotus leaves and drank wine from them. Those who could not hold their liquor all got drunk. Not until the moon had risen on the horizon did we return. It was a very merry day, except for the mosquitoes—they somehow spoiled the fun.

15th day: Staying at the Zhan household at Xinghua. An Dou, the county assistant, and Xing, the warden, came over. Mr. Zhan prepared wine for them and served melons. At night I sat with Mr. Zhan on the bridge. With a cool breeze blowing and the moon shining, we drank some wine and enjoyed the melons.

16th day: I made a calligraphy scroll for Mr. Zhan. At noon I drank wine.

17th day: Staying at Xinghua. It has been extremely hot every night. I perspired so much, I felt I had been rained on. The mosquitoes in Xinghua are big and ferocious. When you sit unsheltered, they swarm over to attack, and there are so many of them that you feel as if sand had been thrown at you. In the evening, Juchuan invited me to enjoy the cool breeze at the county school. Later I had a few cups of wine with Li, Zang, and Huang.

18th day: Staying at Xinghua. Hu Zizhen, Li Jinggong, Wang Shizhong, and I went to the county school and visited Huang Zhongwen in his office. The evening was unbearably hot. Mr. Zhan took a rowboat out onto the lake to get some cool air; yet he too was bothered by the mosquitoes and came back disappointed. That day, Mr. Zhan showed us an ancient bronze vessel with a horse on top and two lines of text under it: "Worthy elders—good sons and grandsons." When one strikes the bronze, it makes a sound.

19th day: Had breakfast at Hu Zizhen's. It rained in the evening, then became cooler.

20th day: Painted a picture of orchids for Wang Shizhong. I went to Original Goodness Monastery with Gong Zifang and Zang Zixuan to get some cool air. Next we stopped at Four Sages Daoist Monastery. Gong and Zang invited Xu Dongxi, Xu Shengzhi, and me, then all five of us went to visit Liu Dongan. We pooled our money to buy some wine and enjoyed the fragrance of the lotus flowers, not returning until dark. Later I went to the county seat and in the great hall I found a plaque which read: "Hall of Admiration for Fan." They say the plaque was made because Fan Zhongyan had once been magistrate here. In the evening I talked Derun into settling some business.

21st day: Staying at the Zhan residence at Xinghua. Liu Juchuan came and had lunch with me. Gong Zifang and Xu Shengzhi bought some paper and asked me to do calligraphy and bamboo drawings for them.

22nd day: I gave my writings to Zhan Derun. For my farewell dinner he had a goose cooked. The guests included Hu Zufang. Warden Xing came over. Using a poem by Wei Suzhou, I made a calligraphy scroll for Derun.

23rd day: The customs commissioner, Aban, paid me what he owed. Li Jinggong and Zhao Boqian, hearing that I was leaving, presented me with ten catties of yellow fish and brought a roll of paper to

ask for samples of my drawing and calligraphy. Warden Xing requested a screen with my calligraphy and bamboo drawings. He offered me presents of two geese, some noodles, and wine cups. I took the wine cups, which were in the Lizhao style.

24th day: Everything was set for the trip and I was about to board the boat, when there was suddenly a heavy downpour. It continued all day so I had to stay another day. Xu Dongxi, who is very good at portraits, brought with him two rolls of paper to ask for one of my bamboo sketches. Hu Zizhen made me a present of his calligraphy. He also asked me for a title for Master Wen's painting of grapes and my bamboo sketches. I also painted two old trees for Mr. Zhan. Afterwards I packed.

25th day: In the morning I took leave of Mr. Zhan and his son. They gave me a coconut scoop and a square ink block for presents. They asked Wang Shizhong to accompany me to the pier in the rain. Unfortunately, the local officials had appropriated all the boats for catching locusts. I had to ask Wang Shizhong to negotiate with the county government before I was able to leave. That day, Xu Shengzhi and Gong Zifang paid eight thousand cash for the boat fare. By dinner time the three of us had arrived at Gaoyou county. We went to visit Eastern Peak Temple and left our belongings at Gong Zifang's house. In the evening I took a bath and felt refreshed. Compared to Xinghua, Gaoyou had practically no mosquitoes. I slept soundly until midnight. When I woke up my bed was filled with silvery moonlight.

26th day: In the morning, Gong Zifang and I went to Heavenly King Monastery. There we visited Abbot Hai and took a look at the newly constructed pavilions. Zifang served me breakfast. Afterwards, on our way to the county seat, we passed Zhuoying Bridge; then we went to the county school to pay our respects to Confucius. At the back of the school there was a pavilion called Love-Lotus, with a plaque written by Qian Chunfu. Further back there was Literary Journey Pavilion, which was built by Chen Maoshu and inscribed by Yan Wufeng. At the side of the pavilion

was a shrine housing statues of Sun Xinlao and Qin Taixu. Later I went with Zifang to the market to drink some tea. Returning, I passed by the gate of the painter Zhang Xinjian. When he learned that we were from the same village, he asked me to stay for a cup of tea and showed me his paintings. Next I went to Xu Shengzhi's house, but he happened to be out. At his door, I came across Master Gong Zixiang, and we talked about an encounter we had had thirteen years earlier. The two of us then went up to Westerner Buddhist Monastery, the magnificent architecture of which impressed me. Zixiang dragged me to his place for lunch. He showed me a purple bull painted by Xu Xi and a few other specimens of paintings and calligraphy. Then he brought paper and asked me to do some ten scrolls of calligraphy for him. His three sons were waiting on us; the oldest is called Lifu, the youngest Boya, but the name of the second I cannot recall. After lunch, Zixiang accompanied me back to Zifang's house. Zixiang's residence is called Heavenly Lodge. According to him, there is a "Fair Lady Well" in front of it. Xu Shengzhi came by to see me and left me a pig's head and some pastry as presents. In the evening Zifang cooked a goose and drank wine with me. Lifu brought paper, asking me for some calligraphy. Zifang's brother was also present. Zifang is the son of Yuexi. Even in the summer heat, he treats me like a guest, with extreme hospitality.

27th day: In the morning Zifang accompanied me to the outskirts of Gaoyou City to board my boat. I took breakfast in the boat. At noon I got to Zhaobo and changed boats. At that time it started raining very hard, making it impossible to get to shore. Thus, through the pouring rain I rode in a boat which was very damp and narrow. All the riders were common people, so there was no one to talk to. Fortunately, the wind was perfect, and I reached Yangzhou by dinner time. I stopped to see Sheng Maoshi. The two of us then went to a bathhouse. Afterwards, we returned to his place for some wine. Mr. Pei Junde also drank with us. At night I stayed at an inn.