

Between Horizontal and Extremely Vertical: Mei Qing's Images of Mt. Huang from 1689 to 1695

Lee, Shwu-ching

Department of History National Chung Cheng University

Abstract

Mei Qing's genuine works mixed with forgeries already appeared during his lifetime, and the problem has only been getting more serious since he has become known as one of the three great masters of the Mt. Huang School, along with Hongren and Shitao. The "Mt. Huang School" was proposed in 1930s, and after then more forgers began choosing Mei Qing's Mt. Huang paintings as models. As a result, it is quite difficult for experts to recognize the true features of Mei Qing's paintings. Four Mt. Huang paintings by Mei Qing were published during the last three decades, but none of them has been fully studied; therefore, it is necessary to re-explore his Mt. Huang works. These newly discovered paintings give us the first opportunity to understand how Mei Qing's image of Mt. Huang developed from 1689 to 1695.

This essay attempts to clarify the time when Mei Qing first climbed up Mt. Huang, to infer the factors why he seldom chose it as a subject after the trip, and then focus on discussing how he depicted the views after two visits in 1678 and 1690. Through an analysis of Mei Qing's eight dated Mt. Huang works, we not only know the evolution of his depictions of Mt. Huang, but also find out his final ideal image of Mt. Huang is extremely vertical, rather than the horizontal aspect familiar to most scholars. Finally, according to the development of his style, an undated Mt. Huang album can be dated. We expect that the result of this study can be used as a standard both for inferring the dates of Mei Qing's other undated Mt. Huang paintings and for identifying the authenticity of his works.

Keywords: Mei Qing, image of Mt. Huang, horizontal, extremely vertical, undated album, eight Mt. Huang hanging scrolls