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香 港



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**An Analysis of the Song-dynasty painting *Apes Picking Up Fruits*
(*Yuan hou zhai guo tu* 猿猴摘果圖)**

Edmund Saw Ngai Mun 蘇毅文

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Visual Analysis of <i>Apes Picking Up Fruits</i>	6
Significance of the Gibbon in Song Literati Culture	7
What Gibbons Meant to Song Literati Scholars.....	7
The Gibbon's Role in Song Art and Culture.....	9
Poems on the Gibbon	11
Literary Perspective on the Gibbon.....	12
Conclusion	13
Bibliography	18
Appendix One	21
<i>Xi hu you lan zhi: Xihu you lan zhi yu: juan er</i> 西湖遊覽志：西湖遊覽志餘： 卷二 (<i>Tour Records of the West Lake: Chapter 2</i>).....	21
“Ti lin an di 題臨安邸 (On a Lin'an Hotel Wall)” by Lin Sheng	21
Appendix Two	21
“Yuan 猿 (Gibbon)” by Wen Tong.....	21
Appendix Three	21
“He Ziping di yuan 和子平弔猿 (He Ziping Mourning the Death of His Gibbon)”	21
Appendix Four	23
<i>Xuan he hua pu: juan shi ba, “Yi Yuanji”</i> 宣和畫譜： 卷十八「易元吉」 (<i>Imperial Catalogue of the Xuanhe era: Chapter 18 “Yi Yuanji”</i>).....	23
<i>Tu hua jian wen zhi: juan si, “Hua niao men Yi Yuanji</i> 圖畫見聞誌： 卷四「花鳥門易元吉」 (<i>Experiences in painting: an eleventh century history of Chinese painting: Chapter 4 Flowers and Birds: “Yi Yuanji”</i>).....	25
Appendix Five.....	26
“Cong ren mi xiao hu sun xu ji 從人覓小胡孫許寄 Looking For Monkeys” by Du Fu.....	26
Appendix Six	26
“Autumn Cove” by Li Bai.....	26
Appendix Seven.....	26
“Yuan 猿 (Gibbon)” by Du Mu.....	26
Appendix Eight	26

<i>Shi shuo xin yu jian shu chu mian di er shi ba</i> 世說新語箋疏黜免第二十八 (“A New Account of World Tale: Kaleidoscope of Wei-Jin Era,” “Dismissal Section: Chapter 28” by Liu Yiqing.)	26
Appendix Nine	27
<i>Hua yang guo zhi: juan di yi</i> 華陽國志：卷第一 (<i>History of the Kingdom of Hua Yang: Chapter 1</i>).....	27

Table of Figures

Figure 1. <i>Yuan hou zhai guo tu</i> 猿猴摘果圖 (<i>Apes picking up fruits</i>)	15
Figure 2. Chart of gibbon paintings in China.	15
Figure 3. <i>Qing ci shu, niu, hou yong</i> 青瓷鼠、牛、猴俑 (<i>Animal Statuettes in Court Robes</i>)	16
Figure 4. <i>Sheng xiao hou yong</i> 生肖猴俑 (<i>Monkey statuette in Court Robe</i>)	16
Figure 5. <i>Ju yuan tu juan</i> 聚猿圖卷 (<i>Monkeys Playing in Trees and on Cliffs</i>)	17
Figure 6. <i>Zhu wang jue yuan tu</i> 蛛網攫猿圖 (<i>Gibbon grasping Spider</i>)	17

Introduction

The painting *Yuan hou zhai guo tu* 猿猴摘果圖 (*Apes Picking Up Fruits*) is only one of the many artworks which featured gibbons or apes in the Song dynasty (960-1279) (fig. 1). According to the *Xuanhe hua pu* 宣和畫譜 (Imperial Catalogue of the Xuanhe era, 1119 - 1125) there were various paintings that depicted this particular subject.¹ Indeed the modern scholar Thomas Geissmann has pointed out that in China, there were two periods in which gibbon paintings reached their peak in numbers.² The first was the Northern Song (960-1126) and the second peak which doubled the first followed in the Southern Song (1127-1279) (fig. 2).³

Song dynasty paintings were in general an elegant and subtle way for erudite scholars to express dissent and criticism against the government, thus, were not meant for public display.⁴ These paintings served to ridicule imperial judgments and to satirize contemporaries amongst a trusted circle of scholars who shared similar views and ideas.⁵ However, such covert and profound meanings are often difficult to decipher if one lacks the knowledge of their historical contexts. Many Song scholars wished to reclaim the land in the North that was ruled by the Qidans in the Northern Song and then the Jurchens in Southern Song. However, Song emperors and aristocrats were often reluctant to go to war and settled for disgraceful peace treaties instead.⁶ Consequently, scholar officials who were ambitious in unifying the country

¹ *Xuanhe hua pu* [20 juan] 宣和畫譜: [20卷], Taipei Shi: Taiwan shang wu yin shu guan, 1971.

² Thomas Geissmann, "Gibbon paintings in China, Japan, and Korea: Historical distribution, production rate and context", *Gibbon Journal*, no. 4, (May 2008), p. 4, Available from http://www.gibbons.de/main/papers/pdf_files/2008gibbon_paintings.pdf Date accessed: 17 September 2010.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴ Alfreda Murck, *Poetry and Painting in Song China: The Subtle Art of Dissent*, Harvard-Yenching Institute monograph series, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Asia Center for the Harvard-Yenching Institute, 2000), p. 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 2000, p. 3.

⁶ Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 167 and Qianmiao Yang, Zengyu Wang, *Nan Song shi* 南宋史 (History of

were often neglected and even prosecuted.⁷ As suggested in *Hou: sheng xiao wen hua* 猴：生肖文化 (*Chinese Zodiac Culture: Monkey*), poems on gibbon cries reflect the sentiments of literati scholars who were abandoned by the imperial court.⁸ Empathy to the cries of the gibbon may have been appreciated by the literati because they likened it to their anguish when abandoned by the court.

As Murck suggests, the Chinese literati practiced “a long tradition of implied criticism by electing not to serve governments that they regard as evil or inept.”⁹ *Apes Picking Up Fruits* may, therefore, function in a similar way as gibbon poems did to address Song literati scholars’ dignified inner spirits and their romantic desire of a unified country. By depicting such noble creatures, literati scholars could sooth their frustrations and pain by contemplating the noble and solitary lifestyle of the gibbon in order to lessen the heartache of losing their precious homeland to “barbaric” tribes from the north.

Hence, it is not surprising that when the Jurchens took over Northern China in the Southern Song dynasty, gibbon paintings doubled in numbers.¹⁰ After all, one might as well be a reclusive ape who roams freely in wilderness rather than leading an undignified existence under foreign barbaric rule.

My analysis will begin by explaining the composition of *Apes Picking Up Fruits*. This will be followed by the discussion of the significance of the gibbon in Song Chinese literati culture. With these supporting evidences the present essay will

the Southern Song), *Er shi wu shi xin bian*, 10, Xianggang: Zhong hua shu ju (Xianggang) you xian gong si, 2003, pp. 5-9. See also Appendix One, a poem written in the Southern Song dynasty which satirized the feeble attitude of Song emperors and aristocrats.

⁷ Qianmiao Yang, Zengyu Wang, *Nan Song shi* 南宋史 (History of the Southern Song), *Er shi wu shi xin bian*, 10, Xianggang: Zhong hua shu ju (Xianggang) you xian gong si, 2003, p. 9.

⁸ Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, *Hou: sheng xiao wen hua* 猴：生肖文化 (*Chinese Zodiac Culture – Monkey*), 1991, p. 14.

⁹ Murck, 2000, p. 1.

¹⁰ Geissmann, 2008, p. 4. See also Fig. 2.

attempt to argue that gibbon paintings such as the *Apes Picking Up Fruits* functioned as a means for Song literati scholars to express their noble political sentiments and frustrations towards the Song court.

Visual Analysis of *Apes Picking Up Fruits*

Art historians are unsure who painted the *Apes Picking Up Fruits*. The painting is rendered in ink and colors on silk. This small painting measures 25 x 25.6 cm. Its shape is an odd hybrid between a circle and a square, originally designed for a hand-held fan. These fans were popular in the Song dynasty.¹¹ They were often taken apart and remounted as album leaves after a certain period of use.¹² The background which presumably was much lighter when the painting was new is now a dark coffee-brown color. The painting is rendered in a meticulously linear style. The scene is dominated by a rugged tree-trunk rooted on the far right which rises upwards and then extends sideways to the bottom left of the painting. Three gibbons are shown in a playful style on the tree-trunk. The top one is white and the other two are black. While the white gibbon is shown eating, the gibbon next to it is trying to pick a fruit underneath the white gibbon's foot. The third gibbon on the very left is dangling dangerously on the end of the tree-trunk. Its left arm is extending downwards trying to pick fruit from below. Its daring action causes the tree-trunk to slant towards the bottom left of the scene. Each gibbon is portrayed in an individualized and lively manner with very different actions.

Minor shoots and leaves painted in a detailed fashion compliment the gibbons and the main tree-trunk. The background consists of a slope presented in a diagonal

¹¹ Robert Hans van Gulik, *The Gibbon in China: An Essay in Chinese Animal Lore*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967), p. 80. They were stiff fans that cannot be folded like the handheld fans which were later introduced from Korea and Japan.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 80.

manner which emphasizes the scene's location high above ground level. It also reinforces the oblique line created by the tree-trunk. The presence of the slope adds a sense of spatial recession to the whole scene. Additionally, the modern art historian Wang Guanyao has claimed that this painting conforms typically to Southern Song style as the artist chose to leave most of the left side of the silk blank.¹³ The art historian Wen Fong also argued that blank space plays a defining role in Southern Song paintings.¹⁴

Significance of the Gibbon in Song Literati Culture

What Gibbons Meant to Song Literati Scholars

Monkeys and gibbons have always enjoyed a special role in Chinese culture. It is common knowledge that the monkey is part of the Chinese Zodiac which rotates between twelve different animals. Yet, the Chinese's affection towards the monkey lies much deeper. For example, Gibbons were perceived as auspicious creatures possessing occult powers which enabled them to transform into human beings and extend their lives to several hundred years.¹⁵ Also, the morpheme *hou* 猴 (monkey) is pronounced in the same way as *hou* 侯 (a nobleman or a high official). As the art historian Wang pointed out, Chinese people throughout the ages often included the monkey motif in artworks with other auspicious animals such as *que* 鵲 (a magpie) for *jue* 爵 (the rank of nobility, peerage) to symbolize good fortune.¹⁶ Monkeys

¹³ Wang Guanyao 王光堯. "Jia shen hou nian wen wu te zhan 甲申猴年文物特展 (Year of the Monkey Artworks Exhibition)," Gu gong bo wu yuan 故宮博物院 (The Palace Museum, Beijing). Available from http://www.dpm.org.cn/www_oldweb/China/E/E26/index.htm. Internet; accessed 28 February 2010.

¹⁴ Wen Fong, *Beyond Representation: Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, 8th-14th Century*, (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992), p. 257 and Fusheng Lu 盧輔聖, and Erping Cui, *Zhongguo shu hua quan shu 中國書畫全書* (Encyclopedia of Chinese Paintings), (Shanghai: Shanghai shu hua chu ban she, 1992), Vol 2, pp. 674-675.

¹⁵ Gulik, 1967, p. 38.

¹⁶ Wang, Available from http://www.dpm.org.cn/www_oldweb/China/E/E26/index.htm. Internet; accessed 28 February 2010.

picking fruit especially peaches, is another icon which symbolizes longevity.¹⁷

Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that the *Apes Picking Up Fruits* also embodies long life as one of its allegory elements.

Furthermore, literati scholars preferred gibbons to monkeys as they are more timid and friendly compared to monkeys' deceitful nature.¹⁸ Their cloistered lifestyle was considered to be gentlemanly and noble in Confucian traditions.¹⁹ As the modern scholar Robert Han van Gulik stated:

For already more than two thousand years ago the Chinese singled out the gibbon as the aristocrat among apes and monkeys, and in the course of the centuries there accumulated in China a truly astounding amount of literature dealing with gibbon both in the wild and in captivity...The gibbon, Yuan 猿 the rarest of all, occurring in remote mountain forests and was familiar only to the roving poet and the high-minded recluse.²⁰

Despite the fact that Buddhists at times worshipped the monkey, it nonetheless had a bad reputation, associated with ugliness and trickery".²¹

The literati's appreciation of gibbons is further evident in the poem "Yuan 猿" written by the famous Song bamboo painter Wen Tung 文同 (1019-1079) in which he expressed his partiality for gibbons over monkeys.²² He claimed that the gibbon was "truly possessed of unsurpassed skill," not at all in the same league as the

¹⁷ Ibid., Available from http://www.dpm.org.cn/www_oldweb/China/E/E26/E26c.htm. Internet; accessed 28 February 2010.

¹⁸ Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, *Hou: sheng xiao wen hua* 猴: 生肖文化 (Chinese Zodiac Culture – Monkey). Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1991, p.13.

¹⁹ Ibid., 13.

²⁰ Gulik, Preface.

²¹ C. A. S. Williams and C. A. S. Williams. *Chinese Symbolism and Art Motifs: An Alphabetical Compendium of Antique Legends and Beliefs, As Reflected in the Manners and Customs of the Chinese*, Rutland, Vt: C.E. Tuttle, 1988, pp. 277-278.

²² Wen Tong 文同, *dan yuan ji* 丹淵集, 卷第九. *Si bu cong kan dian zi ban* 四部叢刊電子版 (Original And Historical Monographs Of China – Electronic Version). Network version 1.0 ban. Beijing: Shu tong wen shu zi hua ji shu you xian gong si, 2001, Available from <http://laozi.lib.hku.hk/sbck/sbck.htm> Date accessed: April 24, 2010.

common macaque.²³ As this demonstrates, gibbons were a source of inspiration for scholars who practiced the creative arts.²⁴

“Wen Tung was so enamored with gibbons that he also kept them as pets.²⁵ He even wrote a long lament when one of his favorite gibbons died.²⁶ Such tender and sentimental reaction fully reflects the significance of the gibbon amongst literati scholars.

The Gibbon's Role in Song Art and Culture

According to the modern scholar Fu Tenglong 傅騰龍 ancient Chinese started training monkeys to become performers in the Qin dynasty (221-207 BCE).²⁷ They were taught to perform all sorts of acts similar to today's circus performances, and by the late Tang dynasty (618-906) monkey acts were one of the most popular forms of imperial entertainment among aristocrats and court officials.²⁸ Interestingly, monkey acts became such an integral part of official life that in the late Tang dynasty they were performed as part of a ritual after the civil service examination results were released.²⁹

²³ Ibid., See also Appendix Two.

²⁴ Shanghai gu ji chu ban she. *Hou: sheng xiao wen hua* 猴: 生肖文化 (Chinese Zodiac Culture – Monkey), 1991, p. 13.

²⁵ As Geissmann quoted in his writing, “like the crane, gibbons were kept as pets by the literati”, Geissmann, 1987, p. 2, Available from: http://www.gibbons.de/main/papers/pdf_files/2008gibbon_paintings.pdf Date accessed: 17 September 2010. Thomas Geissmann quoted this information from: Jerome Silbergeld, “Chinese Concepts of Old Age and Their Role in Chinese Painting, Painting Theory, and Criticism,” *Art Journal* 46, no. 2, Old-Age Style (Summer, 1987), pp. 103-114.

²⁶ Wen Tong 文同, *dan yuan ji* 丹淵集, 卷第九. See also Appendix Three.

²⁷ Fu Tenglong, “Discussion On Monkey Acts” in Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, *Hou: sheng xiao wen hua* 猴: 生肖文化 (Chinese Zodiac Culture – Monkey). Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1991, pp 60-63.

²⁸ Ibid., pp 60-63.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 61.

Moreover, animals were often portrayed as literati officials in the Tang dynasty which shows the merging of identities between men and beast (fig. 3 and 4).³⁰ Considering that artists such as Ren Renfa 任仁發 (1254 – 1327) and Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫 (1254 – 1322) used the horse to convey their inner feelings, the gibbon may also be a metaphor for scholars.

During the Song dynasty, the most distinguished artist in painting monkeys and gibbons was Yi Yuanji 易元吉 (act. Song dynasty).³¹ He was particularly praised for his realistic depiction of gibbons and deer. Such illustrations were based on his observations of wildlife in the mountains where he lingered for months on end.³² As stated in the *Xuanhe hua pu*, Yi Yuanji was so skillful that he was asked to paint gibbons to decorate the Song palace. Figure 5 shows his *Ju yuan tu juan* 聚猿圖卷 (*Monkeys Playing in Trees and on Cliffs*), probably the most well-known Song painting on the gibbon. Figure 6 depicts *Zhu wang jue yuan tu* 蛛網攫猿圖 (Gibbon grasping Spider) by the same artist in a fan format just like the *Apes Picking up fruits*. This painting depicts a gibbon trying to catch a spider.

There are some clues as to why gibbons were treasured by the Song emperor as well as the literati officials. Gulik has suggested in his writing that the ape motif was probably the ancestral totem of the Shang (1766-1122 BCE) royal house.³³ Moreover, the skin of the brown monkey was “very much valued by the Chinese, and it is said that at one time only members of the Imperial family were entitled to wear

³⁰ Holland Cotter, "Art Review: Where Monkeys Are the Rulers", *The New York Times*, 01 September 1995, pg. C.1.

³¹ *Xuanhe hua pu* [20 juan] 宣和畫譜: [20卷], 1971, pp. 509-529; Yanyuan Zhang, Zhou Xiaowei, Zhao Wangqin, and Guo Ruoxu, *Li dai ming hua ji xuan yi, Tu hua jian wen zhi xuan yi*, Gu dai wen shi ming zhu xuan yi cong shu, Chengdu: Ba Shu shu she, 1994, pp. 204-207. See also Appendix Four.

³² Ibid., see also Appendix Four.

³³ Gulik, 1967, p. 22.

it.”³⁴ Like the dragon, monkeys and gibbons represented nobility, power and authority. This may also be one of the factors that a painting like *Apes Picking Up Fruits* has survived to this day.

Poems on the Gibbon

This particular fondness of the gibbon is also reflected in the numerous poems which explored their lively character. Du Fu’s 杜甫 (712-770) poem “Cong ren mi xiao hu sun xu ji 從人覓小胡孫許寄 (Looking for Monkeys)” describes the comical features of monkeys which children at the time thought was so amusing and funny.³⁵ While this fully reflects Tang people’s affection towards them, it also echoes the animated depictions of the gibbons in *Apes Picking Up Fruits*. The three gibbons which dwell on the tree correspond to the verse 山猿樹樹懸 (gibbons hanging on all the trees). In addition, Li Bai’s 李白 (701-762) “Autumn Cove” describes the gibbons’ agile movements and their unperturbed lifestyle which functioned perfectly as a poetic commentary to compliment *Apes Picking Up Fruits*.³⁶ The gibbons in *Apes Picking Up Fruits*, especially the one hanging on the bottom are portrayed in such an energetic way which highlights their agile movements. The artist also depicts their peaceful lifestyle beautifully by focusing on the gibbons and the tree without cluttering the scene with unnecessary details.

³⁴ Williams, 1988, p. 278.

³⁵ Du Fu 杜甫, “Looking for Monkeys” in Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, *Hou: sheng xiao wen hua* 猴: 生肖文化 (Chinese Zodiac Culture – Monkey), Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1991, p. 16. See also Appendix Five.

³⁶ Li Bai, “Autumn Cove.” *The Columbia Book of Chinese Poetry: From Early Times to the Thirteenth Century*. Burton Watson, trans, New York: Columbia University Press, 1984, p. 209. See also Appendix Six.

On a deeper level, the sound of gibbon cries was considered as highly sentimental and melancholic.³⁷ For example, Du Mu's 杜牧 (803-853 CE) poem "Yuan 猿" is quite different from the other light hearted poems mentioned above. It explores the passage of time through the melancholic cries of monkeys. One can easily feel the sorrowful atmosphere generated by the staccato rhythm from the verse "三聲腸斷斷腸斷" (three cries tear the intestines again and again).³⁸ This mournful verse certainly reflects the poet's frustration with lost time and his unfulfilled ambition of being a senior court official.

Literary Perspective on the Gibbon

The gibbon's exceptional intelligence and their resemblance to humans are often portrayed compassionately in Chinese literature.³⁹ An example of this is located in Liu Yiqing's 劉義慶 (403–444 CE) *Shi shuo xin yu jian shu* 世說新語箋疏 (A New Account of World Tales - Kaleidoscope of Wei-Jin Era). A passage in this text describes Huan Gong 桓公, a general from the Eastern Jin dynasty (317-420) who led his troops into Sichuan by boat.⁴⁰ One of his officers captured an infant gibbon on the way. As the boat moved downwards along the river, the mother ape chased the troops breathlessly hoping to rescue her offspring. Despite growling desperately all the way, her efforts were in vain. After pursuing the troops for over a hundred miles, she jumped onto the boat. Sadly, she died of fatigue as soon as she landed. When the

³⁷ Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, *Hou: sheng xiao wen hua* 猴: 生肖文化 (Chinese Zodiac Culture – Monkey), 1991, p. 14.

³⁸ Du Mu 杜牧, "Ape" in An Deming, and Lihui Yang. *Jin hou xian rui* 金猴獻瑞 (Golden Monkeys Offering Treasures), *Zhongguo sheng xiao wen hua cong shu*, Beijing: She hui ke xue wen xian chu ban she, 1998, p.129. See also Appendix Seven.

³⁹ Gulik, Preface, "The non-human primates that bear the closest resemblance to human are the chimpanzee, the gibbon, the gorilla and the orang-utang – a quartet therefore usually designated as the anthropoids."

⁴⁰ Liu Yiqing 劉義慶, "Dismissal Section: Chapter 28" in Yu Jiaxi, Xiaobiao Liu, Zumo Zhou, Shuyi Yu, Shiqi Zhou, and Yiqing Liu, *Shi shuo xin yu jian shu* 世說新語箋疏 (A New Account of World Tales - Kaleidoscope of Wei-Jin Era), Beijing Shi: Zhonghua shuju, 2007, pp. 1014-1015. See also Appendix Eight.

officers dissected her, they found that her intestines were torn into pieces because of her extreme grief. This story is the basis for the popular phrase *ai chang cun duan* 哀腸寸斷 often used to express deep sorrow. When General Huan Gong found out, he fumed with anger and compassion, and officially dismissed the soldier who caught the infant ape.⁴¹ In this instance, Liu Yiqing portrayed the mother gibbon as a loving mother whose devotion to her offspring touched the heart of a tough military leader.

Another story from *Shu Zhi* 蜀志 (*The Dynastic History of Shu*) records the experience of a general from the Three Kingdoms period (220-264). This story took place in the same area of Sichuan where gibbons were plentiful. It describes General Deng Zhi 鄧芝 who shot an arrow at a mother gibbon. Its infant gibbon pulled out the arrow at once and stopped her bleeding by covering the wound with leaves. Astounded by the love and affection the infant gibbon shown towards its mother, Deng deeply regretted his violent actions.⁴²

In sum, these primary sources indicate that ancient Chinese scholars admired and respected the noble qualities in gibbons.

Conclusion

The noble gibbon was a symbol of authority and good fortune in Song China which inspired many literary works as well as paintings such as the *Apes Picking Up Fruits*. The gibbon statuettes mentioned earlier (fig. 3 and 4) demonstrated the fact that scholar officials often perceived themselves as the noble gibbon. The way that scholars related their anguish with melancholic gibbon cries further emphasized this

⁴¹ Ibid., see also Appendix Eight.

⁴² Chang Qu 常璩 (c.291-c.361 CE), *hua yang guo zhi* 華陽國志，卷第一，*Si bu cong kan dian zi ban* 四部叢刊電子版 (Original And Historical Monographs Of China – Electronic Version), Network version 1.0 ban, Beijing: Shu tong wen shu zi hua ji shu you xian gong si, 2001, Available from <http://laozi.lib.hku.hk/sbck/sbck.htm> Date accessed: April 24, 2010. See also Appendix Nine.

point. Moreover, the gibbon's humanness was fully exemplified in literary records such as *Shi shuo xin yu jian shu* and *Hua yang guo zhi*. Their noble qualities fully conform to Confucian teachings, namely, motherly love and filial piety. These are all important factors as to why the gibbon was so much admired by Song scholars. By exploring these literary records and poems, one can understand the relationship between men and beast in the Song dynasty. To sum up, these points help to support my argument that Song scholars used poems as well as gibbon paintings such as *Apes Picking Up Fruits* as a means of implied criticism to express their frustrations towards the Song court. By identifying themselves with the noble gibbon, scholars are also distancing themselves from a government which they perceived as incompetent.

(2565 Words)



Figure 1. Anonymous, Song dynasty (960-1279), *Apes Picking Up Fruits* 猿猴摘果圖, Ink and color on silk; album leaf, Taipei TW, National Palace Museum.

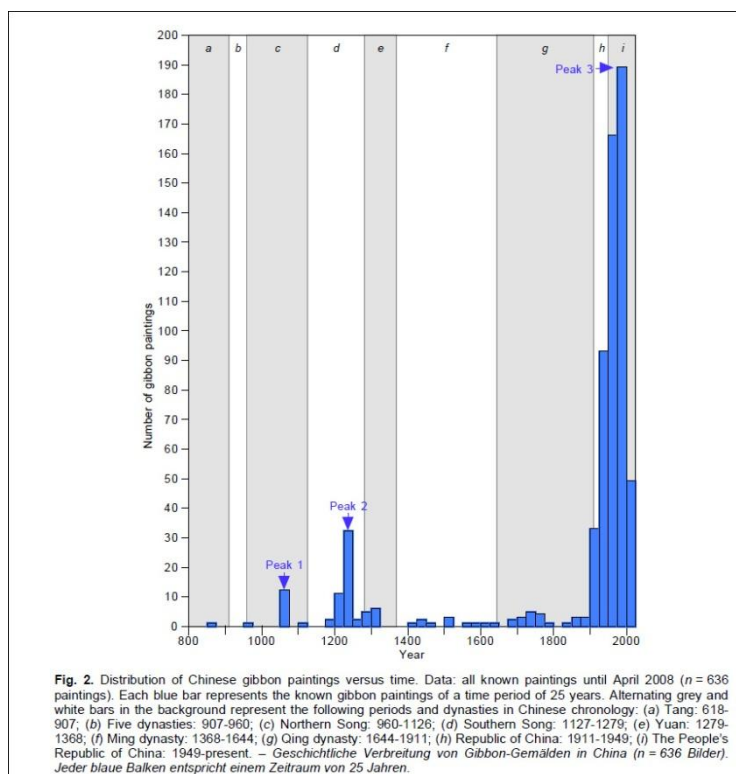


Figure 2. Chart of Number of Gibbon Paintings in China. Reproduced from: Thomas Geissmann, "Gibbon paintings in China, Japan, and Korea: Historical distribution, production rate and context." *Gibbon Journal*, no. 4, (May 2008), p. 4.



Figure 3. *Animal Statuettes in Court Robes*, Sui Dynasty (581 – 589 CE), Beijing, National Museum of China.



Figure 4. *Monkey statuette in Court Robe*, Tang Dynasty (618 – 906 CE), Private Collection.



Figure 5. Yi Yuanji 易元吉 (attributed), (act. Song dynasty), 聚猿圖卷 *Monkeys Playing in Trees and on Cliffs*, ink on silk, Osaka JAP, Osaka Municipal Museum of Art.



Figure 6. Yi Yuanji 易元吉 (act. Song dynasty), 蛛網攬猿圖 *Gibbon grasping Spider*, Ink and color on silk; album leaf, Old Palace Museum, Beijing.

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Appendix One

Xi hu you lan zhi: Xihu you lan zhi yu: juan er 西湖遊覽志：西湖遊覽志餘： 卷二 (*Tour Records of the West Lake: Chapter 2*)

紹興、淳熙之間，頗稱康裕，君相縱逸，耽樂湖山，無復新亭之淚。士人林升者，題一絕于旅邸云：

『山外青山樓外樓；西湖歌舞幾時休？
暖風薰得遊人醉，便把杭州作汴州。』

“Ti lin an di 題臨安邸 (On a Lin'an Hotel Wall)” by Lin Sheng

Beyond the hills green mountains lie, next to mansions stand edifices of more,
Singing and dancing on and around the West Lake never draw to a close.
As if warm breezes are scented, intoxicating wayfarers,
Who takes Hangzhou for capital Bianzhou, as if all is well, good as gold.

(English Translation taken from: URL:

<http://south28.wordpress.com/?s=%E9%A1%8C%E8%87%A8%E5%AE%89%E9%82%B8>)

Date accessed: 4 May, 2010.

Appendix Two

“Yuan 猿 (Gibbon)” by Wen Tong

岷嶺高無敵·來從第幾層·
攀緣殊不倦·趨捷爾誠能·
晚嘯思危石·晴懸憶古藤·
王孫非如類·只可以文憎·

The mountains of Min are unrivalled in height:
From which of their countless ranges have you come?
You never tire of climbing up and down the trees,
You are truly possessed of unsurpassed skill!
When you call at night you think of those sheer cliffs,
Swinging at dawn you remember the creepers of old.
Macaques can never be compared to you:
Those serve only for being decried in writing.

Translated by R.H. Van Gulik

Appendix Three

“He Ziping di yuan 和子平弔猿 (He Ziping Mourning the Death of His Gibbon)”

去年汶山花平僧·求得匡猿遠相寄·來時野性已馴熟·趨捷輕便殊可憐·呼來遣去會人語·一成已絕歸山意·置之眼前看不足·解去條索令自恣·月明木杪倚風嘯·天暖花陰向陽睡·兒童圍繞賓客惜·倒挂橫跳街嬉戲·豢夫每日費提舉·未始時節虧飲飼

· 前時忽來報之病 · 抱立堦前自臨視 · 與之柿栗不肯顧 · 局脚埋頭交兩臂 · 毛焦色暗肉攣縮 · 斗覺精神變憔悴 · 尋常忽然遇小疾 · 不過蜘蛛噉三四 · 咽喉才下即無恙 · 何此不効況頻餌 · 今朝霜風冷入骨 · 早遣之問云已斃 · 人情不免為傷怛 · 退自悔恨中且愧 · 重縶複袖本其樂 · 大薄長林違爾志 · 苦將韁鎖強維繫 · 不究天年良有自 · 遣人包裹瘞深僻 · 不使筋骸屬螻蟻 · 西隣子平最好事 · 聞之搏髀歎無已 · 再三慘怛來訪問 · 歸作長篇踰百字 · 其詞讀之甚悽愴 · 亦謂一鬱歎其死 · 復推物理重相慰 · 聚有散無皆偶爾 · 把之庭下讀復讀 · 仰望高株一歔歔 ·

Last year a Buddhist monk of Hua-ping, in the Min mountains,
Obtained a gibbon for me and had it delivered from afar.
On arrival he was already tame and accustomed to captivity,
And his swift and nimble movements were a delight to watch.
He would come and go as told, as if he understood my speech,
And seemed to have lost all desire to return to his mountains.
Put on a leash he was not interesting to watch,
So I set him free and let him romp about as much as he liked.
On a moonlit night he would sing, swinging from a branch,
On hot days he would sit by the flowers and doze facing the sun.
When my children were around or my guests showed their interest,
He would hang upside down or jump about showing his tricks.
I had told a man to look after all his needs,
So that he never even once lacked his seasonal food and drink.
Yet the other day his keeper suddenly told me the gibbon was ill.
Offered him persimmons and chestnuts, but he didn't glance at them.
Legs drawn up, head between his knees, hunched up with folded arms,
His fur ruffled and dull, all at once his body seemed to have shrunk,
And I realized that this time he was really in great distress.
Formerly you were also subject to occasional slight indispositions,
But then, after I had fed you a few spiders as a remedy,
After having swallowed them, you would recover at once.
Why did the medicine fail now, though given several times?
This morning when a frosty wind was chilling me to the bone,
Very early I sent someone to inquire, and he reported you had died.
Although in this world it is hard to avoid grief and sadness,
I was tormented by repentance and bitter self-reproach.
You could be happy only when near your towering mountains,
You must have suffered deeply being kept on leash or chain,
And that was why your allotted span of life was cut short.
I had his body wrapped up well and buried deep in a secluded corner,
So that at least the insects would leave his remains in peace.
Mr. Tzu-ping, my western neighbor, a man of very wide interests,
When he heard about this, slapped his thigh sighing without end.
He came to inquire several times, in deep sorrow over my loss,
Then, back home, he wrote a long poem of over a hundred words.
Reading those lines my lonely heart was filled with sadness,
Well he had expressed the grief caused by my gibbon's death!
He also tried to console me by referring to life's natural course,
That meetings result in partings, all subject to the whims of fate.
I took his poem out into the garden, read and re-read it –

Then, looking up at the bare branches, I burst out in tears.

Translated by R. H. Gulik

Appendix Four

Xuan he hua pu: juan shi ba, “Yi Yuanji” 宣和畫譜：卷十八「易元吉」
(Imperial Catalogue of the Xuanhe era: Chapter 18 “Yi Yuanji”)

易元吉字慶之長沙人天資穎異善畫得名于時初以工花鳥專門及見趙昌畫乃曰世未乏人要須擺脫舊習超軼古人之所未到則可以謂名家於是遂遊於荆湖間搜奇訪古名山大川每遇勝麗佳處輒留其意幾與猿猱鹿豕同游故心傳目擊之妙一寫於毫端間則是世俗之所不得窺其藩也又嘗於長沙所居之舍後開圃鑿池間以亂石叢篁梅菊葭葦多馴養水禽山獸	欽定四庫全書 宣和畫譜 卷十八	以伺其動靜游息之態以資於畫筆之思致故寫動植之狀無出其右者治平中景靈宮迎釐御宸詔元吉畫花石珍禽又於神遊殿作牙獐皆極臻其妙未幾復詔畫百猿圖而元吉遂得伸其所學今御府所藏二百四十有五	牡丹鵲鴿圖一 芍藥鵲鴿圖二 梨花山鷓鴣圖一 寫生折枝花圖四 夏景戲猿圖一 夏景猿獐圖三
夏景戲猿圖二 太湖石孔雀圖二 餅花孔雀圖二 盜果子母猿圖一 秋景獐猿圖四 秋景戲猿圖一 秋景鷺鷥圖一 湍流雙猿圖二 娑羅花孔雀圖一 蘆花羣猿圖一 山茶馬鹿圖一 山茶孔雀圖二 山茶戲猿圖二 眾禽噪虎圖二 花枝翎毛圖一 四獸羣居圖二	欽定四庫全書 宣和畫譜 卷十八	三生羣戲圖二 羣猿戲蜂圖二 四生護雛圖四 攏猿羣戲圖二 獐猿羣戲圖一 窠石獐猿圖二 窠石雜猿圖二 引雛戲獐猿圖二 窠石山鷓鴣圖二 寫生蒲萄圖一 寫生太平花圖一 寫生石榴圖二 寫瑞牡丹圖一 寫生雜菜圖三 寫生枇杷圖二	

寫生南果圖一	寫生菜圖二	寫生木瓜花圖一	寫生芍藥圖一	寫生藤整貓圖一	寫生月季圖一	寫生雙鷄圖一	寫生花圖一	寫生鶴圖一	寫生籠鶴圖一	寫生獐圖一	寫生戲貓圖三	小景獐猿圖一	寫生麋圖一	小景獐鹿圖二	小景戲猿圖四	果蓬猿圖一	小景羣獐圖二	猿猴驚顧圖二	小景圖二	子母戲貓圖一	戲猿視猴圖二	子母猴圖四	子母戲猴圖二	子母獐圖二	子母戲猿圖二	枇杷戲猿圖二	山林物性圖二	引雛獐圖二	竹石獐禽圖二	栗枝山鷓圖一
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雞冠戲貓圖一	竹石雙獐圖二	青菜鼠狼圖一	竹梢小禽圖一	雙猿戲蜂圖二	藤整睡貓圖一	四生圖二	五瑞圖一	百獐圖八	百禽圖四	羣獐圖八	雙獐圖二	四猿圖六	雙猿圖二	羣猿圖二	戲猴圖二	戲猿圖二十	獐猿圖六	老猿圖一	獐石圖三	猿猴圖四	戲貓圖一	猿猴圖二	戲獐圖三	獐獐圖一	堆金圖一	俊禽圖一	鷄鷹圖三	折枝花圖一
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孔雀圖四	金絲猿圖一
雛鴨圖一	猿圖二
架鷄圖一	睡貓圖一
花雀圖一	梅花圖一
山獬鹿圖一	竹石獬猿圖一
寫生山茶圖一	寫生紫丁香花圖一
寫生紫竹戲猿圖一	
寫生玻璃盤時果圖一	
寫生木瓜山鷄圖一	
海棠花山茶戲獬圖二	

Tu hua jian wen zhi: juan si, “Hua niao men Yi Yuanji 圖畫見聞誌:

卷四「花鳥門易元吉」 (*Experiences in painting: an eleventh century history of Chinese painting: Chapter 4 Flowers and Birds: “Yi Yuanji”*)

易元吉字慶之長沙人靈機敏畫製優長花鳥蜂蟬
動臻精奧始以花果專門及見趙昌之蹟乃歎服焉後
志欲以古人所未到者馳其名遂寫獬猿嘗遊荆湖間
入萬守山百餘里以覘獬猿鹿之屬逮諸林石景物
一一心傳足記得天性野逸之姿寓宿山家動經累月
其欣愛勤篤如此又嘗於長沙所居舍後疏鑿池沼間
以亂石叢花疎篁折葦其間多蓄諸水禽每穴窗伺其
動靜遊息之態以資畫筆之妙治平甲辰歲景靈宮建
孝嚴殿乃召元吉畫迎燈齊殿御展其中扇畫太湖石
仍寫都下有名鶻鷄及雉中名花其兩側扇畫孔雀又
於神遊殿之小屏畫牙獬皆極其思元吉始蒙其召也
欣然聞命謂所親曰吾平生至藝於是有所顯發矣未
欽定四庫全書
幾果敕令就開先殿之西廡張素畫百獬圖命近要中
貴人領其事仍先給粉墨之資二百千畫獬纔十餘枚
感時疾而卒元吉平日作畫格實不辟意有疎密雖不
全拘師法而能伏義古人是乃超忽時流周旋善譽也
向使元吉卒就百獬當有過於人主然而遽喪其命矣
夫有獬猿孔雀四時花鳥寫生蔬果等傳於世建隆觀
殿東獬猿林石絕佳又嘗於餘杭復市都監廳屏
風上畫鶻子一隻舊有燕二巢自此不復來止

Appendix Five

“Cong ren mi xiao hu sun xu ji 從人覓小胡孫許寄 Looking For Monkeys” by Du Fu

人說南州路，山猿樹樹懸。
舉家聞若駭，為寄小如拳。
預晒愁胡面，初調見馬鞭。
許求聰慧者，童稚捧應癡。

Appendix Six

“Autumn Cove” by Li Bai

At the Autumn Cove, so many white monkeys,
Bounding, leaping up like snowflakes in flight!
The coax and pull their young ones down from the branches
To drink and frolic with the water-borne moon.

Appendix Seven

“Yuan 猿 (Gibbon)” by Du Mu

月白煙青水暗流，孤猿銜恨叫中秋。
三聲腸斷斷腸斷，饒是少年今白頭。

Appendix Eight

Shi shuo xin yu jian shu chu mian di er shi ba 世說新語箋疏黜免第二十八 (“A New Account of World Tale: Kaleidoscope of Wei-Jin Era,” “Dismissal Section: Chapter 28” by Liu Yiqing.)

桓公入蜀，至三峽中，部伍中有得猿子者。其母緣岸哀號，行百餘里不去，遂跳上船，至便即絕。破其腹中，腸皆寸寸斷。公聞之怒，命黜其人。

When the lord Huan entered Shu, and had arrived (with his fleet) at the Three Gorges (or the Yangtse River), one of his subaltern officers caught a young gibbon. Its mother followed the boat all along the bank, crying pitifully, and would not give up even after a hundred miles. At last she sprang down into the boat (from the high bank) and died on the spot. When her belly was cut open, her entrails proved all broken up into small pieces. When the lord Huan heard about this, he flew into a rage and had the officer degraded.

Translated by R.H. Van Gulik

Appendix Nine

Hua yang guo zhi: juan di yi 華陽國志：卷第一 (History of the Kingdom of Hua Yang: Chapter 1)

延熙十三年・大姓徐巨反・車騎將軍鄧芝討平之・見茱萸緣其山・芝性好弩・手自射
猿中之・猿子拔其箭・卷木葉塞其創・芝歎曰・嘻・吾傷物之性・

In the 13th year of the Yen-hsi period (250 CE), the powerful Hsu clan revolted. The “General of Carts and Cavalry” Teng Chih put the rebellion down in a punitive expedition. Then he saw a dark gibbon climbing a mountain. Teng being by nature fond of archery, shot an arrow at the gibbon, and hit him. Then the gibbon’s child pulled the arrow out, and staunched the bleeding by covering the wound with leaves. Teng sighed and said “Alas, I have offended against Nature!”

Translated by R. H. Gulik