

# 王右丞集卷之十九 序

## 19.1

### 暮春太師左右丞相諸公于韋氏逍遙谷讌集序

山有姑射。人蓋方外。海有蓬瀛。地非  
宇下。逍遙谷天都近者。王官有之。不廢  
大倫。存乎小隱。跡崆峒而身拖朱紱。

4 朝承明而暮宿青靄。故可尚也。先天之君。  
俾人在宥。歡心格于上帝。喜氣降為陽春。  
時則有太子太師徐國公。左丞相稷山公。  
右丞相始興公。少師宜陽公。少保崔公。  
8 特進鄧公。吏部尚書武都公。禮部尚書  
杜公。賓客王公。黼衣方領。垂璫珥筆。

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1 This would be a piece meant to serve as an introduction to the poems composed by those attending the banquet. This was composed in 737. Easy Wandering Valley was probably located on the same estate described in 2.11. Most of those present were powerful figures in court politics in the 730s.

2 In chapter 1 of the *Zhuangzi*, a Transcendent is said to dwell on this mountain.

3 Two of the islands of Transcendents in the eastern sea.

4 Alluding to a poem by Wang Kangju 王康堯 that asserts that minor recluses live in the countryside, while major recluses live in the cities (i.e., reclusion is a state of mind).

5 See note to 14.1.4.

6 See note to 4.8.1.

7 Xiao Song 蕭嵩.

8 Pei Yaoqing 裴耀卿.

9 Zhang Jiuling 張九齡.

## From *Juan 19: Prefaces*

### 19.1

Poem collection preface: In late spring, the Grand Preceptor of the Heir Apparent, the Chief Ministers of Left and Right, and various other gentlemen held a banquet at the Wei family's Easy Wandering Valley<sup>1</sup>

Among mountains there is Guye, where people dwell beyond the world;<sup>2</sup> in the sea there are the islands of Peng and Ying, whose lands are outside our realm.<sup>3</sup> But Easy Wandering Valley is close to the capital and is owned by an official at court. He has not abandoned the important human relationships, but rather dwells here in “minor reclusion.”<sup>4</sup> He follows Transcendents’ traces on Kongtong Mountain, letting his vermilion seal-ribbons trail behind him;<sup>5</sup> he attends morning court at Chengming and at dusk he spends the night in the blue mists.<sup>6</sup> This is worthy of esteem!

Our lord, who precedes Heaven, treats his people with magnanimity; God above responds to his cheerful heart, so that delightful weather descends, bringing us the spring season. At this time there were the Grand Preceptor of the Heir Apparent, the Duke of Xu;<sup>7</sup> the Chief Minister, the Duke of Jishan;<sup>8</sup> the Chief Minister, the Duke of Shixing;<sup>9</sup> the Junior Preceptor of the Heir Apparent, the Duke of Yiyang;<sup>10</sup> the Junior Guardian of the Heir Apparent, Lord Cui;<sup>11</sup> Lord Deng the Specially Advanced;<sup>12</sup> the Minister of Personnel, the Duke of Wudu;<sup>13</sup> the Minister of Rites, Lord Du;<sup>14</sup> and Advisor to the Heir Apparent, Lord Wang.<sup>15</sup> They are all dressed in embroidered black and white

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10 Han Xiu 韓休.

11 Cui Lin 崔琳.

12 “Specially advanced” was a prestige sinecure title. Lord Deng has not been identified.

13 Li Gao 李嵩.

14 Du Xian 杜暹.

15 Wang Qiu 王丘.

詔有不名。命無下拜。熙天工者。坐而論道。典邦教者。官司其方。相與察天地之和。人神之泰。聽于朝則雅頌矣。  
12 問於野則賡歌矣。迺曰。猗哉。至理之代也。吾徒可以酒合讌樂。考擊鐘鼓。退于彤庭。選辰擇地。右班劍。驂六駟。  
16 畫輪載轂。羽幢先路。以詣夫逍遙谷焉。

ceremonial robes with square collars, with dangling pendants and writing brushes in their caps. Edicts permit them to keep their names to themselves,<sup>1</sup> and the ruler has commanded that they need not bow low. They have magnified the work of Heaven, and they discourse on the Way while seated.<sup>2</sup> They manage the educational transformation of the state, each of them in charge of their own particular duties. Together they investigate what brings harmony to Heaven and Earth, and what brings contentment to men and spirits. When they are heeded in court, they announce what is proper and praise the good;<sup>3</sup> when they make inquiries in the countryside, they continue their songs of encouragement.<sup>4</sup>

And so they say, “Splendid! This is an age of perfect order. Let us drink and come together to take pleasure in a banquet, striking bell and drum.” Withdrawing from the crimson court, they selected a time and place. The guests were accompanied by attendants with their patterned ceremonial swords of wood and driven by their teams of six groomsmen. They rode out in carriages with painted wheels and ornamented hubs, feathered streamers carried in the vanguard – and so they go to visit the Valley of Easy Wandering.

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1 See note to 9.20.6.

2 The *Zhou li*: “Those who discourse on the way while seated are kings and dukes.” I.e., the highest councilors of state, as opposed to lower-ranking officials.

3 *Ya* and *song* are two sections of the *Shijing*; the “Great Preface” to the Mao commentary on the *Shijing* defines *ya* as guiding and putting right the ruler, and *song* as praising his virtues.

4 *Shang shu, Yi ji*: The minister Gaoyao 皋陶 continues (*geng*) a song of Shun’s, praising the harmony between ruler and minister, and reminding Shun to be an attentive ruler.

神皋藉其綠草。驪山啟于朱戶。渭之美竹。  
魯之嘉樹。雲出其棟。水源于室。灞陵下  
連乎菜地。新豐半入于家林。館層巔。

20 檻側逕。師古節儉。惟新丹堊。巖谷先曙。  
羲和不能信其時。卉木後春。勾芒不能一  
其令。花逕窈窕。衡皋漣漪。驂御延佇于  
叢薄。珮玉升降于蒼翠。于是外僕告次。

24 獸人獻鮮。樽以大罍。烹用五鼎。木器  
擁腫。即天姿以為飾。沼毛蘋蘩。在山羞  
而可薦。伶人在位。曼姬始縠。齊瑟慷慨  
于座右。趙舞徘徊于白雲。哀旒松風。

28 珠翠烟露。日在濛汜。群山夕嵐。猶有濯  
纓清歌。據梧高詠。與松喬為伍。是羲皇  
上人。且三代之後。而其君帝舜。九服

1 “Godly precincts”: the capital region.

2 Xihe is the charioteer of the sun. The valley is so high (or hidden), sunlight enters  
it at an odd time, making Xihe doubt his schedule.

3 Goumang was a deity in charge of trees and their seasons.

4 The guests leave their carriages and begin their climb up the mountain.

The godly precincts lend them their green grasses;<sup>1</sup> Mount Li opens before their vermilion doors. Lovely bamboo from Wei is there and excellent trees from Lu. Clouds emerge from the eaves, and spring water wells up from the rooms. Baling stretches down to the vegetable plots; Xinfeng half enters their household forest. They have built a lodge on the terraced crest, and constructed railings along the mountain paths. Yet they are thrifty in the manner of the ancients and have only applied fresh paint of red and white. When light first dawns on the cliff valley, Xihe cannot trust in the time;<sup>2</sup> plants and trees turn to spring late, so that Goumang cannot keep to his rules.<sup>3</sup> The flowered paths are deep and dark; stream water ripples by the banks of asarum.

Now the carriage drivers halt long by a thicket, and the jade pendants begin their climb into the blue mountain mists.<sup>4</sup> Then the groundskeepers announce their stopping place; the huntsmen present fresh game. Large amphoras serve as our drinking vessels, and five tripods are used to boil the meat.<sup>5</sup> The wooden utensils are all knots and knobs, for they use nature's forms for their ornament. Water clover and artemisia grow by the pond – mountain delicacies that can be served at the meal.

The performers then take their places: graceful maids now dressed in thin silks. Qi zitherns play fervently by the banquet seats; dancers from Zhao waver amid the white clouds. There are nobles' robes and cap-fringes in the pine wind; there are pearls and kingfisher feathers in the foggy dew. Then the sun moves toward the banks of the Meng,<sup>6</sup> and mountain mists rise from the hills. Yet there is still the clear "washing hatstrings" song; and they sing it aloud as they lean on their zithers.<sup>7</sup> Chi Songzi and Wangzi Qiao are their companions, men from the golden age of Fuxi.<sup>8</sup>

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5 Ancient texts mention ritual feasts that involve five cooking tripods cooking five different kinds of meat.

6 In Chinese myth, the river to the far west into which the sun sets.

7 See note to 4.16.16.

8 Chi Songzi 赤松子 and Wangzi Qiao are two legendary Transcendents from the Han era. Fuxi 伏羲 was a primeval sage emperor; his reign is often mentioned as exemplary of a Daoist utopia.

之內。而其俗華胥。上客則冠冕巢由。

<sup>32</sup> 主人則弟兄元愷。合是四美。同乎一時。廢而不書。罪在司禮。竊賢楚傳。常詣茅堂之居。仰謝右軍。忽序蘭亭之事。蓋不獲命。豈曰能賢。

Now our ruler is another Shun, though it is after the time of the Three Eras;<sup>1</sup> and our customs reflect those of Huaxu, even though we dwell within the Nine Feudatories.<sup>2</sup> Our lofty guests are Chaofu and Xu You dressed in garb of office;<sup>3</sup> and our hosts are brothers comparable to the Eight Yuan and Eight Kai.<sup>4</sup> How fitting it is that these four excellences would come together at one time!<sup>5</sup> To disregard this and fail to write of it – the crime would then rest with the Ministry of Rites. I have always had an admiration for the tutor from Chu, and I often seek out the thatched cottages of recluses.<sup>6</sup> I also beg the indulgence of the General of the Right for having written a preface for my own “Orchid Terrace.”<sup>7</sup> No one demanded that I compose it, so how can I make any claims to worth?

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1 The three early dynasties of Xia, Shang, and Zhou.

2 See notes to 1.1.9 and 1.1.10.

3 See note to 4.9.3.

4 The ancient sage emperors Gaoxin and Gaoyang each had eight advisors known as the Eight Yuan and the Eight Kai respectively.

5 I.e., Chaofu, Xu You, the Yuan, and the Kai. Here Wang is alluding to all the guests and the hosts collectively.

6 Wei Meng 韋孟 was a tutor and advisor to the rulers of Chu; he abandoned the state when he found the current king addicted to vice and unwilling to heed advice. He then fled to Zou, where he became a hermit and composed a song about cutting rushes to build a house.

7 General of the Right is Wang Xizhi, whose preface to the Orchid Terrace poems has served as a model for poem prefaces in general.

## 19.5

## 送懷州杜參軍赴京選集序

國自有初。以節守西門者。得自召吏選客。故我常侍崔公。以貳車迎杜侯于杜陵而咨之矣。舍之門下。衣儒者之服。

4 立于軍中。說諸侯之劍。猗。元帥之理也。行有貴育。鐵馬成羣。而雄戟罕耀。角弓載橐。秉王者師。不邀奇功。樓庭籍甚。高冠長劍。拜命雲臺。在是行也。羣公自  
8 出轅門。驂駢滿路。置酒欲飲。高歌自悽。寂寥孤城。惆愴朔管。飛雪蔽野。長河始冰。吾子勉之。慷慨而別。

1 Written ca. 737, when Wang Wei was serving Cui Xiyi in Hexi. From the text of this piece, it is likely that Du was chosen by Cui Xiyi to serve as an adjutant while he was awaiting being chosen for an official post, and he is now returning to the capital in the hopes of obtaining a regular appointment.

## 19.5

Preface: Seeing off Adjutant Du of Huaizhou on his way to the capital to attend the appointment selection<sup>1</sup>

From the founding of our state, those who held the insignia for guarding the Western Approaches have been entitled to summon functionaries to act as their retainers. Consequently, our Attendant-in-Ordinary Lord Cui greeted Master Du at Duling with a guest carriage and consulted him. He lodged him in his offices and clothed him with the robes of a scholar; Du then took his place at headquarters and discoursed on the “sword of the feudal lords.”<sup>2</sup>

And indeed, it is the principle of our marshal’s that our ranks be filled with bravos like Meng Ben and Xia Yu,<sup>3</sup> just as we have crowds of armored steeds; nonetheless, our halberds rarely glitter in the sun, and our horn-tipped bows are stored away.<sup>4</sup> He holds authority with the King’s Troops, but does not invite individual deeds of extraordinary merit.

A crowd has assembled in the courtyard of his mansion, with lofty caps and long swords, to receive their orders from the Cloud Terrace – all for Master Du’s present departure. A throng of gentlemen emerges from the gate of army headquarters, their horse teams filling the road. They set out the ale, about to drink; they sing loud in mournful tones. How lonely are these solitary town walls, and how grieving the notes of the nomad flutes! Gusts of snow cover the wilds, and the long river has begun to freeze over. Do your best! We part in ardent spirits.

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<sup>2</sup> *Zhuangzi*, chapter 30: Zhuangzi is invited by the crown prince of Zhao to dissuade the king from his fondness for sword-fighting. Zhuangzi visits the king and tells him he has three swords: The sword of the son of heaven, appropriate for the virtuous ruler; the sword of the feudal lords, appropriate for virtuous and talented ministers; and the sword of the commoner, appropriate for ruffians.

<sup>3</sup> Two men from the Warring States period known for their courage.

<sup>4</sup> That is, Cui is excellent at keeping his forces well-prepared, but is also excellent at keeping the peace.

## 19.6

## 送鄆州須昌馮少府赴任序

少年明經。試出補吏。學通大義。政習前典。本之于德。輔之以才。大官大邑可也。不惟是歟。予昔仕魯。蓋嘗之鄆。書社

4 萬室。帶以魚山濟水。旗亭千隧。雜以鄭商周客。有鄒人之風以厚俗。有汶陽之田以富農。齊紝在笥。河鯈登俎。一都會也。子其不寶貨。不耽樂。不弄法。不慢官。

8 無侮老成人。無虐孤與幼。上官奏課。輶軒以聞。則繡衣方領。垂璫珥筆。子所得也。誰敢有之。予病且憊。歲晚彌獨。窮巷衡門。落日秋草。趙服過我。且東其轅。促飯中廚。子不可以蔬食。送車出郭。吾不可以徒步。屢以及門。拜于宇下。猶且抱杖延頸。送之以目。城迴樹轉。悲其馬嘶云。

1 Composed some time in Wang's last years, following the rebellion.

2 Wang's period as an official in Jizhou, 723–727.

3 "Flag pavilions" were elevated buildings from which guards and officials could observe activities in the marketplace. This phrase adapts a line from Zhang Heng's "Rhapsody on the Western Capital."

## 19.6

Preface: Seeing off District Defender Feng of Xuchang in Yunzhou on the way to his post<sup>1</sup>

When still young you passed the Classics Comprehension examination, and as a result you were appointed to civil office. Your scholarship is conversant with great principles, and in governing you are familiar with the norms of the past. You have your basis in virtue, aided by your inherent talents. You would be a great official, competent to take on a great post – let alone the one that you have now.

In the past I held office in Lu, and once went to Yunzhou.<sup>2</sup> It was a place with ten thousand registered households, bordered by Fish Mountain and the Ji River. The flag pavilions overlook a thousand market lanes, where Zheng merchants and Zhou travelers mingle.<sup>3</sup> The customs of the Zou people still enrich their folkways, and the fields of Wenyang yield a rich harvest. Chests are filled with Qi silk, and river bream are served on trays – a whole metropolis comes together there.

Do not put value in possessions; do not lose yourself in pleasures; do not take the laws lightly; do not be neglectful in your official duties; do not scorn the aged and mature; and do not abuse the orphaned and young. Your superior will report on your performance, making them known by official courier. Then no one else would dare presume to lay claim to the honors that you obtain therefrom – an embroidered robe with a scholar's square collar, the official's dangling pendants and the writing brush for your cap.

I have grown tired and sick and am increasingly alone in my waning years. I live in a remote lane with a makeshift gate, where the sun sets amid the autumn weeds. Yet you hurried in your carriage to visit me before directing your shafts eastward. I urged you to have some rice in my kitchen, without the benefit of vegetables; and I saw your carriage off beyond the city walls, though I could not follow you any further on foot. Arriving at the city gate, I bowed to you under the eaves; then I remained for a time, holding my staff and craning my neck, bidding you farewell with my eyes. As you turned about the city walls and the trees, I saddened to hear the neighing of your horses.

## 19.7

## 送鄭五赴任新都序

邠人前京兆。右扶風。居上谷間。與寢園接。七月之什。蕩無遺風。五陵之豪。雜居其地。故有黠吏惡少。犯命干紀。

4 政寬則以姦病人。操急則以事中吏。鄭子為邑也。絃歌之化。洋溢四封。雷霆之威。燁赫百里。下車按捕。盡致法焉。繡衣不帷。風俗大治。苟以文墨抵罪。除名為人。削跡于野。杜陵解印。時賣故侯之瓜。彭澤無官。詎有公田之黍。牽衣肘見。步雪履穿。獲戾由忠。是貧非病。屬聖朝

1 Composed in 726. Zheng Five's precise identity is not known. Xindu County was located in modern Sichuan province.

2 The "Seventh Month" poem in the *Shijing* (154) is said by commentators to describe the moral legacy of the Zhou imperial house. Bin County was located on the site of the ancient Zhou homelands.

3 The site of the tombs of five Han emperors (Wuling) became a fashionable residential district in Han. Since then, Wuling has become a general allusive term for the homes of haughty aristocrats.

4 This refers to the transformative power of his governance: local music can reflect the quality of government and moral rectitude in a community.

5 The latter Han official Jia Cong 賈琮 refused to lower the curtains of his carriage when first arriving in the district he was to govern (which had been the custom), claiming that he could only govern well by seeing everything around him.

## 19.7

Preface: Seeing off Zheng Five as he leaves for his post in Xindu County<sup>1</sup>

The people of Bin County front the capital district on the one side and Fufeng to the west on the other. They reside high among ravines, adjacent to the imperial cemeteries. But the moral legacy described in the “Seventh Month” poem has been swept away and there is no trace of its influence.<sup>2</sup> Instead, great clans of the Wuling sort reside here and there in the place.<sup>3</sup> Crafty officials and young hooligans are there as well, men who violate decrees and offend against the norms. If governance there is too lenient, then they bring harm to the people with their perfidy. On the other hand, if management is too pressing, then affairs can bring harm to local authorities.

When Master Zheng served as magistrate there, the transformation of strings and song<sup>4</sup> permeated to all the four corners of the district, and the thunder of his awesome majesty was made manifest for a hundred li. As soon as he dismounted from his carriage he investigated and apprehended the wicked, thoroughly enforcing the laws there. Dressed in his embroidered robe of office, he refused to lower the curtain of his carriage;<sup>5</sup> as a result, local customs were greatly put in order. And yet he received punishment because of things that he wrote; his name was purged from the gentry and he was reduced to commoner status. He then hid himself away in the countryside. A man of Duling had untied his seal of office, for a time selling the melons of the former marquis; and Pengze lacked its magistrate, so that there was no millet grown on public fields.<sup>6</sup> When he pulled his robe tight his elbows showed; the holes in his shoes were evident when he walked in snow.<sup>7</sup> He had

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<sup>6</sup> “A man of Duling” refers to Xiao Yu 蕭育, a Han official who resigned because of the arrogance of his superiors. The marquis of Dongling upon the fall of the Qin empire became a commoner and made a living selling melons outside of Chang'an. Tao Qian famously resigned his post as magistrate of Pengze; but while he was serving there, he insisted on using half of the public lands for growing millet, which was used for the brewing of ale.

<sup>7</sup> Master Dongguo 東郭 of the Han was a poor scholar. His shoes still had tops, but the soles had disintegrated – which became clear to those nearby whenever he walked through snow.

龍旂鑾輶。登封告成之事畢。蒼玉黃琮。

12 郊天祀地之禮備。天下無事。海內乂安。  
盡登仁壽之域。猶下哀憐之詔。萬方有罪。  
與之更新。百寮失職。使復其位。降邑宰  
為輿尉。從綰墨而解褐。龍星始見。馬首  
16 欲西。搢紳先生。居多結友。諸曹列署。  
且有同時。時工部侍郎蕭公。詞翰之宗。  
德義之府。弱年筮仕。一命聯官于奉常。  
幾日左遷。六人同罪于外郡。簾金盛業。  
20 克傳丞相文儒。萬石高風。彌重故人賓客。  
賦詩寵別。贈言誠行。騎登棧道。館于板

1 Wang Wei alludes to an anecdote in the *Zhuangzi*, chapter 28: Confucius' disciple Zigong visits Yuan Xian 原憲; the former was driving a splendid carriage, while the latter lived in abject poverty. Zigong said to Yuan Xian, "How ill you are!" Yuan Xian replied, playing on two meanings of the word *bing*: "I have heard that one who has no wealth is called 'poor,' while one who studies but is unable to put his studies into practice is called 'flawed/ill' (*bing*). I am poor, but I'm not flawed."

2 Xuanzong had carried out the famous *feng* and *shan* sacrifices at Mt. Tai in 725.

3 The Rites of Zhou prescribes using green jade discs when carrying out rites directed to Heaven, and yellow jade cylinders when carrying out rites directed to the earth.

4 The Green Dragon asterism first appears in the sky during the fourth month.

5 Chen Tiemin speculates that the "Lord Xiao" mentioned here is Xiao Yuanjia 蕭元嘉, whose father Xiao Zhizhong 蕭至忠 was implicated in Princess Taiping's attempted coup in 710. Yuanjia, whose career was just beginning at the time, was punished with a post in exile.

offended out of a sense of loyalty, and his situation resulted from poverty, not from any failing.<sup>1</sup>

Now it so happened that the sagely court with its dragon banners and belled wagons had completed a report of its accomplishments through the *feng* sacrifice;<sup>2</sup> and fulfilled were the rites directed to Heaven and Earth with their blue jade discs and yellow jade cylinders.<sup>3</sup> The empire had no affairs, and all within the seas was at peace. It was a realm where all achieved benevolence and longevity; and the ruler continued to issue proclamations showing his compassion and concern. Though crimes were committed throughout the realm, he has granted the criminals a new beginning; and though many officials have lost their positions, he has restored their places.

And so he bestowed on Zheng the management of a district and made him a commandant. Zheng then tied on his office seal ribbons and doffed his coarse homespun. Just as the dragon stars are now appearing, he is directing the head of his horse to the west.<sup>4</sup> He has made friends with many among those gentlemen who had tallies of office in their sashes, and among the various ranks of officials there are those who have obtained their position at the same time. Lord Xiao, at one time Vice Minister at the Board of Works, was an exemplar of the literary arts and a repository for virtue and justice. In his youth, when he first took up official office, he served with Zheng together at the lowest level, in the Court of Imperial Sacrifices. Several days later he was demoted and was sent with six others guilty of the same crime to prefectures in the country.<sup>5</sup> But his was a flourishing legacy worth a basket of gold; and he was able to transit a Chief Minister's literary talent and scholarship to his son.<sup>6</sup> The lofty manner of a Wanshi made him value even more his friends and guests.<sup>7</sup> We now compose poems to do honor to Zheng's departure, and present our compositions to him, bidding him be careful on his travels. He shall ride his horse

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6 In Han times, the minister Wei Xian 韋賢 was a gifted scholar of simple tastes who passed on his learning and official success to his sons. As a result a proverb of the time stated: "Leaving a basket of gold to your sons is not as good as a single [Confucian] Classic."

7 Wanshi Fen 萬石奮 was a Han official famous for his extreme sense of courtesy and humility.

屋。劍門中斷。蜀國滿于二川。銅梁下臨。  
巴江入于萬井。黃鸝欲語。夏木成陰。

24 悲哉此時。相送千里。

## 19.9

### 送衡岳瑗公南歸詩序

衡嶽瑗上人者。常學道於五峰。蔭松棲雲。  
與狼虎雜處。得無所得矣。天寶癸巳歲。  
始遊于長安。手提瓶笠。至自萬里。

4 宴居吐論。緇屬高之。初。給事中房公。  
謫居宜春。與上人風土相接。因為道友。  
伏臘往來。房公既海內盛名。上人亦以此  
增價。秋九月。杖錫南返。扣門來別。  
8 秦地草木。槭然已黃。蒼梧白雲。  
不日而見。滇陽有曹溪學者。為我謝之。

up slatted skyways and shall lodge in houses of wooden boards. Sword-gate Pass will rise steep there, where the land of Shu is filled with the Two Rivers. Bronze-Bridge Mountain will look down upon him, where the Ba River flows into the land of a myriad square li.<sup>1</sup> The yellow orioles soon begin their song as the summer trees produce their shade. How sad this time, that I must see you off on the trip of a thousand li!

## 19.9

Preface to a poem: “Seeing off Master Yuan of Heng Marchmount on his return south”

His Eminence Yuan of Heng Marchmount always studied the Way among the five peaks of Mount Heng. He took his shade under pine trees and he roosted in clouds, and among the various dwellings of wolves and tigers he obtained that which is not obtained. In the *guisi* year of Tianbao [753], he first traveled to Chang'an. He came from ten thousand li away, holding washing vase and rainhat in hand. Dwelling in calm he set forth his discourses, and the black-robed assembly esteemed him. Earlier, the Supervising Secretary Master Fang Guan, when he was exiled to Yichun, made connections with the local eminent Buddhist monks, and at that time became friends in the Way with Yuan. They would visit each other during the Midsummer and Midwinter festivals. Master Fang was renowned throughout the world, and so His Eminence also became more valued as well. In autumn in the ninth month, he took staff in hand and returned south, knocking at my gate in order to bid me farewell. By then the grass and trees of Qin were already yellow and sere; but before many days go by, he will see the white clouds over Cangwu. There is a disciple of Huineng of Caoxi in Zhenyang – Yuan will present my compliments to him.

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1 Various place-names associated with Shu (where Xindu is located) are mentioned here. The Two Rivers are two branches of the Min, which flow to the north and south of Chengdu. The Ba River flows below Bronze-Bridge Mountain. The word *jing* (“well”) is used to describe land one *li* square.

## 19.10

## 薦福寺光師房花藥詩序

心舍于有無。眼界于色空。皆幻也。離亦幻也。至人者不捨幻。而過于色空有無之際。故目可塵也。而心未始同。心不世也。

4 而身未嘗物。物者方酌我于無垠之域。亦已殆矣。上人順陰陽之動。與勞侶而作。在雙樹之道場。以眾花為佛事。天上海外。異卉奇藥。齊諧未識。伯益未知者。

8 地始載于茲。人始聞于我。瓊蕤滋蔓。侵迴階而欲上。寶庭盡蕪。當露井而不合。羣艷耀日。眾香同風。開敷次第。連九冬之月。種類若干。多四天所雨。

1 Jianfu Monastery was located in the Kaihua Ward of Chang'an. It was first established following the death of Emperor Gaozong. Daoguang was Wang Wei's teacher; for Wang Wei's stele inscription on him, see 25.2. He died in 739.

2 *Rūpa*: the sensuous and illusory appearance of objects. Of the Three Realms of samsara, the lowest world (our world) is defined by it.

3 This term (*zhiren*) may be used in various ways in Chinese, but in Buddhist discourse generally refers to a fully enlightened being.

4 That is, like a talented bodhisattva he participates in the changes and passions of the world without letting them affect him negatively.

5 Twin tree: another term for the Bodhi tree under which the Buddha achieved enlightenment; it also becomes a poetic term for a Buddhist monastery.

## 19.10

Preface to a poem: “Flowering herbs at the lodging of Master Daoguang at Jianfu Monastery”<sup>1</sup>

The mind is lodged in the midst of Being and Nonbeing, and the eye is bounded by *rūpa*<sup>2</sup> on the one hand and Emptiness [*śunyatā*] on the other. All is illusory, and detachment from them is illusory as well. The Fully Realized Person does not cast aside illusion,<sup>3</sup> but he does go beyond the limits of Being and Nonbeing, of *rūpa* and Emptiness. For that reason his eye may reside in the dust while his mind never once shares in that condition. His mind is not in the world, and his body never becomes an object; for identifying oneself as an object causes the Self to be attached through limitless realms, and this is dangerous indeed.

His Reverence follows the movements of yin and yang, and acts in company with the passions.<sup>4</sup> At the twin tree’s place of practice he turns all the flowers into a form of Buddhist activity:<sup>5</sup> all unusual plants and extraordinary medicinal herbs from Heaven or from beyond the seas – things not recognized by *The Marvels of Qi* or known by Bo Yi.<sup>6</sup> The soil here supports these growths for the first time, and I too first hear of them. Their carnelian petals spread everywhere, infringing upon the curving stairs as they begin to climb them; and the monastery courtyard is covered in vegetation, touching upon the uncovered well, though not blocking it. Their alluring beauties shine in the sunlight, their multitudinous fragrances accompany the breeze. They blossom one after the other, well into the winter months. So many of these varieties have come raining down on us from the Four Heavens.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The *Marvels of Qi* is quoted in the first chapter of the *Zhuangzi* in describing the gigantic mythical *peng* bird (though the book itself may be fictional). Bo Yi was a minister of the legendary sage emperor Yu and was famous for his knowledge of plants and animals. *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* (*Shan hai jing*) was attributed to him.

<sup>7</sup> These refer specifically to four of the Buddhist heavens that are connected with the lower Realm of Desire.

12 至用楊枝。已開貝葉。高閣聞鍾。升堂  
觀佛。右繞七匝。卻坐一面。則流芳忽起。  
雜英亂飛。焚香不俟于旃檀。散花奚取於  
優鉢。漆園傲吏。著書以稀稗為言。

16 蓮座大仙。說法開藥草之品。道無不在。  
物何足忘。故歌之詠之者。吾愈見其嘿也。

1 Here Wang Wei begins a description of Daoguang's daily routine. Pattra leaves were used in India for writing books, and so here they provide a poetic substitution for sutras (this alludes to morning sutra chanting, though it also allows the author to balance one plant against another – the willow branches used for cleaning the teeth).

2 The utpala flower is a fragrant blossom mentioned in Indian scriptures.

3 The proud clerk of Lacquer Garden is Zhuangzi (he had a minor post at Lacquer Garden in Meng). The reference to lowly weeds may allude to a dialogue the philosopher had with Master Dongguo, in which the former asserts that the Way may be found in the basest things, including weeds and excrement.

Right after he uses his willow twigs, he opens up his pattra leaves.<sup>1</sup> In the high gallery he hears the bells, and he ascends the hall to do honor to the Buddhas; he circumambulates them clockwise seven times, then withdraws and sits facing them. It is then that wafting fragrances suddenly arise, and blooms of all kinds fly about in profusion. No need to rely on sandalwood for one's incense; nor must he choose utpala from among the scattered flowers.<sup>2</sup> The proud clerk of Lacquer Garden composed his book by turning lowly weeds into words.<sup>3</sup> The Great Transcendent on his Lotus Seat preached the Dharma in his "Medicinal Herbs" chapter.<sup>4</sup> And so the Way may be found everywhere, and it is thus pointless to disregard physical things. So I sing in praise of these plants, for I increasingly take note of their silence.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The Great Transcendent: the Buddha. Wang Wei here refers to a chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* in which the Buddha speaks of the Dharma as a life-giving rain that allows each plant to fulfil its individual nature.

<sup>5</sup> Wang Wei may be suggesting that the plants of the garden, unable to speak, are actually conveying the truth of non-duality (just as Vimalakīrti responded to an inquiry concerning non-duality by remaining silent).