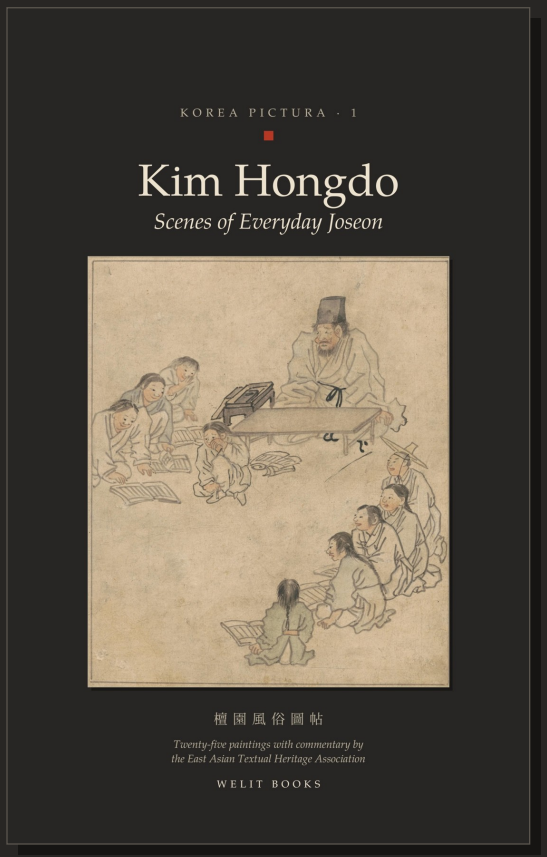
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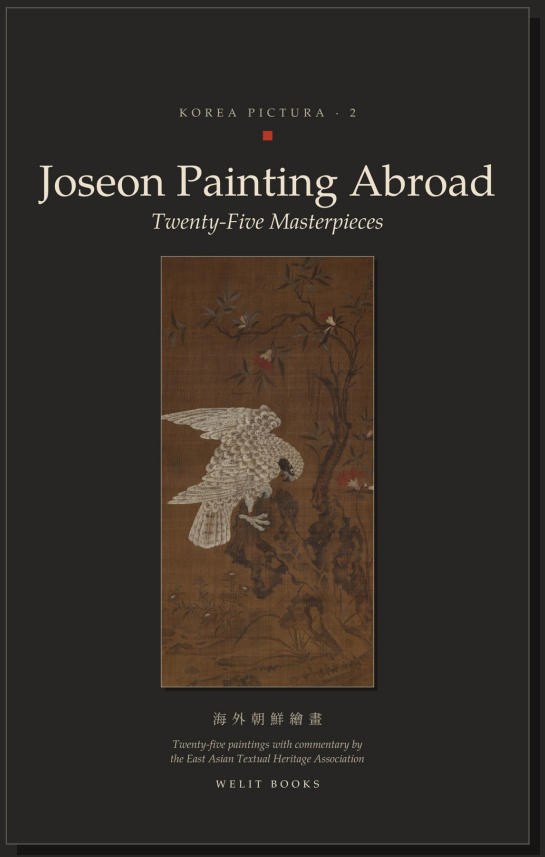
KOREA PICTURA

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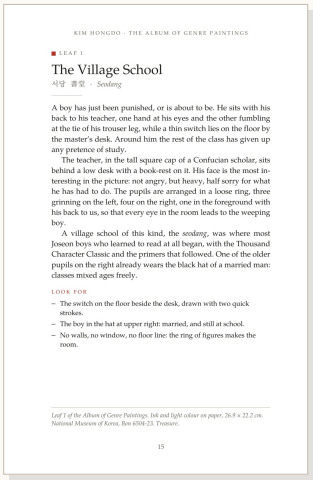
Korea Pictura presents Korean works of art to English readers with the depth of a scholarly edition and the pleasure of a fine art book. Each volume gathers twenty-five works. Every work is given four pages: the painting reproduced in colour on a left-hand page of its own; facing it, a guide to what you are looking at, with the work's full museum record; then an essay on the history behind it, and an essay on the ideas that shaped how its first viewers saw it. Notes give the sources and the original Chinese of every passage quoted.

The paintings are reproduced from high-resolution photographs released for reuse by the museums that hold them. The commentary is new, written for the series by the East Asian Textual Heritage Association. *Korea Pictura* is a companion to *Korea Classica*, the Association's English editions of classical Korean texts.



1. The Village School · 서당 書堂

14



KIM HONGDO · THE ALBUM OF GENRE PAINTINGS

LEAF 1

The Village School

서당 書堂 · *Seodang*

A boy has just been punished, or is about to be. He sits with his back to his teacher, one hand at his eyes and the other fumbling at the tie of his trouser leg, while a thin switch lies on the floor by the master's desk. Around him the rest of the class has given up any pretence of study.

The teacher, in the tall square cap of a Confucian scholar, sits behind a low desk with a book-rest on it. His face is the most interesting in the picture: not angry, but heavy, half sorry for what he has had to do. The pupils are arranged in a loose ring, three grinning on the left, four on the right, one in the foreground with his back to us, so that every eye in the room leads to the weeping boy.

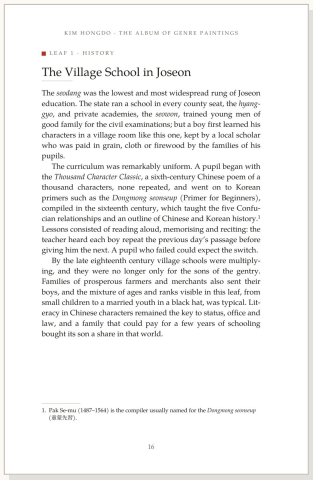
A village school of this kind, the *seodang*, was where most Joseon boys who learned to read at all began, with the Thousand Character Classic and the primers that followed. One of the older pupils on the right already wears the black hat of a married man: classes mixed ages freely.

LOOK FOR

- The switch on the floor beside the desk, drawn with two quick strokes.
- The boy in the hat at upper right: married, and still at school.
- No walls, no window, no floor line: the ring of figures makes the room.

Leaf 1 of the Album of Genre Paintings. Ink and light colour on paper, 26.9 × 22.2 cm. National Museum of Korea, Box 6504-23. Treasure.

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KIM HONGDO · THE ALBUM OF GENRE PAINTINGS

LEAF 1 · HISTORY

The Village School in Joseon

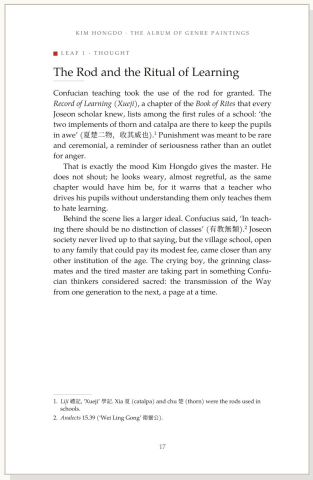
The *seodang* was the lowest and most widespread rung of Joseon education. The state ran a school in every county seat, the *hyanggyo*, and private academies, the *seowon*, trained young men of good family for the civil examinations; but a boy first learned his characters in a village room like this one, kept by a local scholar who was paid in grain, cloth or firewood by the families of his pupils.

The curriculum was remarkably uniform. A pupil began with the *Thousand Character Classic*, a sixth-century Chinese poem of a thousand characters, none repeated, and went on to Korean primers such as the *Dongmong seonseup* (Primer for Beginners), compiled in the sixteenth century, which taught the five Confucian relationships and an outline of Chinese and Korean history.[1] Lessons consisted of reading aloud, memorising and reciting: the teacher heard each boy repeat the previous day's passage before giving him the next. A pupil who failed could expect the switch.

By the late eighteenth century village schools were multiplying, and they were no longer only for the sons of the gentry. Families of prosperous farmers and merchants also sent their boys, and the mixture of ages and ranks visible in this leaf, from small children to a married youth in a black hat, was typical. Literacy in Chinese characters remained the key to status, office and law, and a family that could pay for a few years of schooling bought its son a share in that world.

1. Pak Se-mu (1487–1564) is the compiler usually named for the *Dongmong seonseup* (朴世茂撰).

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KIM HONGDO · THE ALBUM OF GENRE PAINTINGS

LEAF 1 · THOUGHT

The Rod and the Ritual of Learning

Confucian teaching took the use of the rod for granted. The *Record of Learning* (*Xueji*), a chapter of the *Book of Rites* that every Joseon scholar knew, lists among the first rules of a school: 'the two implements of thorn and catalpa are there to keep the pupils in awe' (夏楚二物, 收其威也).[1] Punishment was meant to be rare and ceremonial, a reminder of seriousness rather than an outlet for anger.

That is exactly the mood Kim Hongdo gives the master. He does not shout; he looks weary, almost regretful, as the same chapter would have him be, for it warns that a teacher who drives his pupils without understanding them only teaches them to hate learning.

Behind the scene lies a larger ideal. Confucius said, 'In teaching there should be no distinction of classes' (有教無類).[2] Joseon society never lived up to that saying, but the village school, open to any family that could pay its modest fee, came closer than any other institution of the age. The crying boy, the grinning classmates and the tired master are taking part in something Confucian thinkers considered sacred: the transmission of the Way from one generation to the next, a page at a time.

1. 記 禮記, 'Xueji' 學記. Xia 楚 (catalpa) and chu 楚 (thorn) were the rods used in schools.
2. *Analects* 15.39 (*Wei Ling Gong* 衛靈公).

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1 THE PLATE

The work in full colour, alone on a left-hand page.

2 THE GUIDE

What to look for, and the museum record.

3 HISTORY

The world behind the scene.

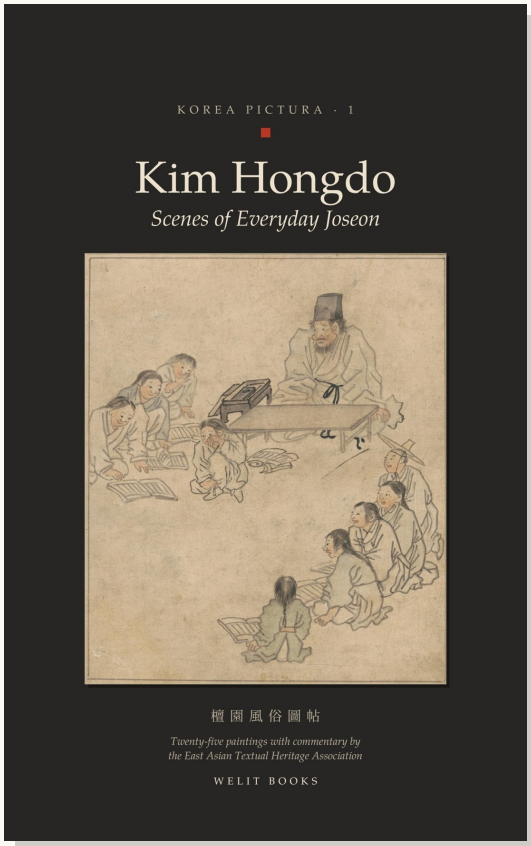
4 THOUGHT

The ideas behind it, with the sources in Chinese.

Shown above: pages 14–17 of Volume 1, the four pages on leaf 1, The Village School.

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Format	Hardcover, case laminate with matte finish · 5.5 × 8.5 in (140 × 216 mm)
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Contents	Introduction · timeline · overview of the 25 works · four pages per work · glossary · further reading
Editions	Hardcover (with ISBN) through Amazon and Ingram · Kindle ebook on Amazon
Price	Hardcover US $44.99 · Kindle US $9.99



KOREA PICTURA · 1

Kim Hongdo

Scenes of Everyday Joseon

The Album of Genre Paintings

檀 園 風 俗 圖 帖

The best-loved picture of everyday life in old Korea, leaf by leaf.

A boy weeps at the village school. Two wrestlers grapple in a ring of spectators. Women beat laundry on the stones of a stream while a young gentleman watches from behind a rock. Twenty-five such scenes, drawn in a few quick strokes on bare paper, make up the album attributed to Kim Hongdo (1745–after 1806), the greatest court painter of eighteenth-century Joseon. The album, now a designated Treasure in the National Museum of Korea, has shaped how Koreans picture their own past ever since.

Every leaf is given four pages: the painting in full, from the museum's high-resolution photograph; a guide to what you are looking at; an essay on the history behind the scene; and an essay on the ideas that shaped how its first viewers saw it, with notes and the original Chinese of the passages quoted.

- All 25 paintings reproduced in colour, one to an opening
- 50 essays on history and thought, with notes
- Introduction, timeline, glossary of Korean terms and further reading

Paintings	Album attributed to Kim Hongdo (1745–after 1806), ink and light colour on paper
Commentary	The East Asian Textual Heritage Association
Hardcover	ISBN 979-8-90900-101-3 · case laminate, matte · 5.5 × 8.5 in (140 × 216 mm)
Extent	120 pages · full colour · 25 plates, timeline, overview of the album
Price	US $44.99 · UK £35.99 · EU €41.99 · CA C$61.99 · AU A$69.99
Ebook	Kindle edition, US $9.99 (Amazon)
Subjects	BISAC ART019000 · ART016000 · HIS023000 · Thema AGB, AGA, NHF
Edition	English · first edition 2026

Images: National Museum of Korea (Bon 6504-1 to 6504-25), Korea Open Government License (KOGL) Type 1. The museum does not endorse this edition.

The Twenty-Five Leaves

Every leaf of the album, in the order recorded by the National Museum of Korea. Each has four pages in the book.



1 The Village School
서당 書堂



2 Ploughing
논갈이 耕畓



3 Archery Practice
활쏘기 射弓



4 Wrestling
씨름 相撲



5 Peddlers on the Road
행상 行商



6 The Dancing Boy
무동 舞童



7 Laying Roof Tiles
기와이기 葺瓦



8 The Smithy
대장간 鍛冶



9 A Smile on the Road
나들이 路上破顔



10 Asking for Alms
시주 施主



11 The Ferry
나룻배 渡船



12 The Tavern
주막 酒幕



13 A Game of Gonu
고누놀이



14 Women at the Stream
빨래터 漂母



15 At the Well
우물가 井邊



16 Cutting Tobacco
담배썰기



17 Weaving Mats
자리짜기 編席



18 Threshing Rice
벼타작 打作



19 Looking at a Painting
그림감상 審觀



20 Weaving Cloth
길쌈 織造



21 Shoeing a Horse
편자박기 蹄鐵



22 Fishing
고기잡이 漁場



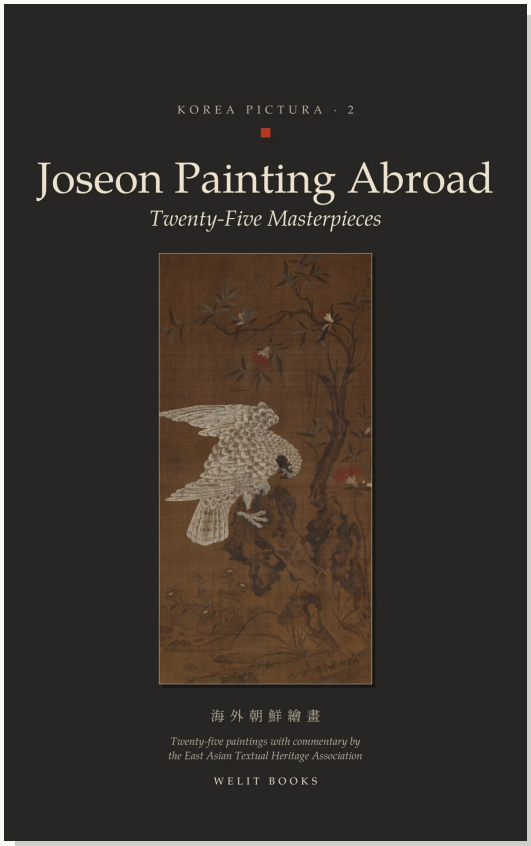
23 The Wedding Procession
신행 新行



24 Lunch in the Fields
점심



25 Coming Home from Market
장터길



KOREA PICTURA · 2

Joseon Painting Abroad

Twenty-Five Masterpieces

Korean Paintings in an American Museum

海 外 朝 鮮 繪 畫

Twenty-five masterpieces of Korean painting, one to an opening, with new commentary.

A white falcon that once belonged to a nephew of the dynasty's founder. A scholar playing his zither under the moon while his servant sleeps. A great Manchu hunt sweeping across eight panels. Portraits of two ministers, one who died in honour and one who died in the Crown Prince Sado affair. An old regent's last screen of orchids. All twenty-five come from the Korean collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art, from the early 1500s to 1898.

Every painting is given four pages: the work in full; a guide to what you are looking at; an essay on the history behind it; and an essay on the ideas that shaped how its first viewers saw it, from the Confucian classics and Buddhist scripture to Daoist legend and Chinese poetry. Inscriptions on the paintings are read and translated afresh, and the museum's own doubts are reported in the text.

- 25 paintings in colour: landscapes, portraits, Buddhist icons, birds and flowers, folding screens
- 50 essays on history and thought, with notes and the original Chinese
- Introduction, timeline, glossary and further reading

Paintings	25 works, early 1500s to 1898, from the Cleveland Museum of Art
Commentary	The East Asian Textual Heritage Association
Hardcover	ISBN 979-8-90900-115-0 · case laminate, matte · 5.5 × 8.5 in (140 × 216 mm)
Extent	120 pages · full colour · 25 plates, timeline, overview of the plates
Price	US $44.99 · UK £35.99 · EU €41.99 · CA C$61.99 · AU A$69.99
Ebook	Kindle edition, US $9.99 (Amazon)
Subjects	BISAC ART019000 · ART006020 · HIS023000 · Thema AGA, AGC, NHF
Edition	English · first edition 2026

Images: The Cleveland Museum of Art, Open Access, Creative Commons Zero (CC0). The museum does not endorse this edition.

The Twenty-Five Plates

All twenty-five paintings, in the order of the book, from the early 1500s to 1898. Each has four pages in the book.



1 Mountain Market, Clear with Rising Mist
산시청람도 山市晴嵐圖
early 1500s



2 White Falcon
백응도 白鷹圖
1500s



3 Bamboo in Moonlight
월하묵죽도 月下墨竹圖
1500s



4 Winter Landscape
설경산수도 雪景山水圖
Seal of Yeoseol · 1500s



5 Cold Forest, Clearing after Snow
한림제설도 寒林霽雪圖
Kim Si · 1584



6 Landscape with Fishermen
조어산수도 釣漁山水圖
Attributed to Yi Bulhae · 1600s



7 Boating in Moonlight
월하주행도 月下舟行圖
1600s



8 Wild Geese and Reeds
노안도 蘆雁圖
1600s



9 Ink Grapes
묵포도도 墨葡萄圖
1700s



10 Gathering of the Office of the Censor-General
미원계회도 薇垣契會圖
1700s, after an original of about 1530



11 Tigers and Leopard
호표도 虎豹圖
Signed 'the mountain recluse of Honam' · 1700s



12 Portrait of the Great Master Yeongwoldang Eungjin
영월당 응진 대선사 진영
影月堂應眞大禪師眞影
1700s



13 Seated Manjusri
문수보살도 文殊菩薩圖
1700s



14 True Scene of Gyesan
계산진경도 稽山眞境圖
late 1700s or early 1800s



15 Portrait of an Official
관료 초상 官僚肖像
early 1800s



16 Portraits of Cho Hyeon-myeong and Cho Jae-ho
조현명·조재호 초상
趙顯命·趙載浩肖像
early 1800s, after 1700s originals



17 Playing the Geomungo under the Moon
월하탄금도 月下彈琴圖
1800s



18 Zhang Zhihe, the Poet Fisherman
장지화 어부사 張志和漁父詞
1800s



19 Lotuses, Herons, Kingfishers and Dragonflies
연화백로도 蓮花白鷺圖
1800s



20 The Hunt of the Northern Horsemen
호렵도 胡獵圖
1800s



21 Nine-Dragon Falls
구룡폭 九龍瀑
Han Unpyeong · late 1800s



22 Mount Chilbo, the Seven-Jewel Mountain
칠보산도 七寶山圖
late 1800s



23 The Assembly of Tejaprabha Buddha
치성광여래도 熾盛光如來圖
1878



24 Books and Scholars' Things
책가도 冊架圖
Yi Taek-gyun · late 1800s



25 Orchids and Rocks
난석도 蘭石圖
Yi Ha-eung, the Daewongun · 1897–98

Two Openings from Volume 2



17. *Playing the Geomungo under the Moon* · 월하탄금도 月下彈琴圖

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PLATE 17

Playing the Geomungo under the Moon

월하탄금도 月下彈琴圖 · *Wolha tangeum do*
Unidentified painter · 1800s

A balding scholar in a loose blue-green robe sits cross-legged on a woven straw mat and plays a long zither laid across his knees. The instrument has frets, which mark it as the Korean *geomungo*, not the fretless Chinese *qin* named on the museum label.

Behind him a servant boy has fallen asleep with his head on his arms. Beside the boy a kettle sits on a little brazier, and a thread of steam rises from its spout: the tea is ready, and no one has noticed. Above them the leaves of a great tree open just enough to show a full moon.

The painter uses a few soft greens and greys and leaves most of the silk bare. The foreground is a stretch of empty bank with a few tufts of grass and stones, so that the eye moves from the sleeping boy to the absorbed musician to the moon, and the music seems to fill the space between them.

LOOK FOR

- The frets along the neck of the geomungo.
- The steam rising from the kettle by the sleeping boy.
- The full moon framed by the leaves.

Unidentified painter. Playing the Geomungo under the Moon, 1800s. Album leaf; ink and colour on silk; 23.5 × 23.8 cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance Fund, 1990.69 (museum title: Scholar Playing a Qin). Image CC0.

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Plate 17, Playing the Geomungo under the Moon: the painting faces a guide to what to look for, with the full museum record below.

PLATE 17 · HISTORY

The Black Crane Zither

The *geomungo* is the oldest surviving Korean string instrument. According to the *History of the Three Kingdoms* (1145), the Jin court in China sent a seven-string *qin* to Goguryeo, but no one could play it. The minister Wang Sanak kept its basic form, changed its construction and composed more than a hundred pieces for it; when he played, black cranes came and danced, so it was called the 'black crane zither' (玄鶴琴), later shortened to *hyeongeum*, the *geomungo*.[1]

It has six silk strings over sixteen high frets and is struck with a short bamboo stick. Its sound is deep and grave, and Joseon scholars called it 'the elder of all instruments'. Where Chinese literati had the *qin*, Korean *seonbi* had the *geomungo*, and many kept one in their studies.

Scholars playing alone in moonlight became a favourite subject of late Joseon album painting. Such leaves were often bound in sets of figure subjects, and this one came to Cleveland together with the next painting in this book, from the same dealer in 1990.

1. *Samguk sagi* 三國史記 32, 'Akji' 樂志: 第二相王山岳存其本樓，頗改易其法制而造之，兼製一百餘曲以奏之。於時玄鶴來舞，遂名玄鶴琴，後但云玄琴。

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PLATE 17 · THOUGHT

The Zither without Strings

Chinese tradition explained the zither with a pun. 'The zither (琴) is restraint (禁): it restrains excess and makes the heart upright,' says the *Comprehensive Discussions in the White Tiger Hall*.[1] To play was not to perform but to cultivate oneself, and the best playing was done alone or for one friend who understood.

The poet Tao Yuanming took the idea to its limit. He could not read music, but he kept a plain zither with no strings, and when he had been drinking with friends he would stroke it and say: 'If you know the meaning in the zither, why trouble with the sound on its strings?' (但識琴中趣，何勞絃上聲).[2]

The painting plays gently with this ideal. The scholar has strings and is plainly making music; yet the only listener is asleep, and the moon is the true audience. What matters is the state of mind the music expresses, not whether anyone hears it.

1. Ban Gu 班固, *Baihu tong* 白虎通, 'Li yue' 禮樂: 琴者，禁也，所以禁止淫邪，正人心也。
2. *Jin shu* 晉書 94, biography of Tao Qian 陶潛.

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The same plate, turned over: an essay on its history, and one on its thought, with notes giving the sources and the original Chinese.

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