

THE
ART
OF

Qiu
Ying

Stephen
Little

Qiu Ying (c. 1494–c. 1552) was one of the most celebrated painters of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). By the late Ming (c. 1590) he was already included in the group known as the Four Masters of the Wu School (*Wumen sijia*), which dominated painting in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, in the middle Ming dynasty (the other three were Shen Zhou, Wen Zhengming, and Tang Yin).¹ Qiu Ying was also, and continues to be, one of the most misunderstood artists in Chinese history. Because of his astonishing shifts in style, he has long eluded easy classification, and his paintings have mesmerized and confounded art historians and critics for over four centuries. Today Qiu is known for his uncanny versatility and technical virtuosity, as well as for the profusion of copies and forgeries of his work that flooded the market, beginning in his own time. The relative silence enveloping the painter in official histories leaves a host of unresolved questions. *Where the Truth Lies* addresses broader curatorial and art historical issues of connoisseurship, artistic production in the Ming dynasty, and cultural exchange across socioeconomic divides.

There are several major challenges to studying Qiu Ying. First, almost nothing is known of his origins and social status. His precise dates of birth and death are unknown. He was born in the city of Taicang in Jiangsu province (not far from modern Shanghai), and as a young man moved to the affluent and cultured city of Suzhou, his primary home until his death. Suzhou was one of the leading centers of artistic production in China, and in that city and its environs the young artist had growing access to important artists, collectors, and patrons. Second, he was a stylistic chameleon who could work in myriad different modes at any given time. Third, few of his known paintings are dated by the artist's own hand, unlike the works of Shen Zhou, Tang Yin, and Wen Zhengming, many of which have dated inscriptions. And fourth, he was the most forged painter in Chinese history: for every authentic work by Qiu Ying, there are hundreds if not thousands of copies and forgeries. As a result, genuine works are still routinely confused with forgeries and vice versa, leading to enormous confusion regarding his work and its significance in the broader sphere of Ming painting.

The designation "Four Masters of the Wu School" was first articulated by Wang Shizhen (1526–1590); cited in Xiao Yanyi, "Qiu Ying he ta de mo zuo 'Zhongxing ruiying tu,'" *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* [Palace museum monthly] (1982/83): 45.

It was not without exaggeration that the early-nineteenth-century calligrapher Xie Lansheng (*jinshi* 1802) wrote, "There are more forgeries of [Qiu] Shifu's works than of those of any other painter." Xie's comment appears in his colophon to Qiu's *Landscape in the Style of Li Xigu [Li Tang]* in the Freer Gallery of Art (fig. 13, this essay; Freer Gallery of Art folder file 39.4). On Wen Zhengming see Anne de Coursey Clapp, *Wen Cheng-ming: The Ming Artist and Antiquity* (Ascona, Switzerland: Artibus Asiae, 1975); and Richard Edwards et al., *The Art of Wen Cheng-ming*, exh. cat. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1976).

Wang Zhideng, *Guochao Wujun danqing zhi* [Record of painting in the Wu commandery in the current dynasty], preface dated 1563, in *Huashi congshu* [Collected texts on the history of painting], 4 vols. (Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1974), 3:1440–41. As pointed out by James Cahill in *Parting at the Shore: Chinese Painting of the Early and Middle Ming Dynasty, 1368–1580* (New York: Weatherhill, 1978), 204, "painting a snake and adding feet" references a passage in the *Zhan Guo ci*; for a translation of the entire passage see J. I. Crump Jr., *Chan Kuo ts'ê* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 167–68.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

The earliest published account of Qiu Ying is found in the *Guochao Wujun danqing zhi* (Record of painting in the Wu commandery in the current dynasty), written by Wang Zhideng (1535–1612) in 1563, a full decade after the artist's death. Wang—best known today as a scholar and calligrapher—was a student of Wen Zhengming, who was also a mentor to Qiu Ying and without question the leading artist of the Suzhou-based Wu School. Wang's account reads:

Qiu Ying, whose style name was Shifu, was a native of Taicang [in present-day Jiangsu] who moved his residence to the prefectural capital [Suzhou]. In painting he took as his teacher Zhou Chen, but his individual artistic style did not reach that of his teacher. He excelled at copying and making draft sketches on tracing paper. When he applied his brush, it could be confused with the original. As for patches of kingfisher greens and hair-thin golds, silken reds and threadlike whites, his brushwork, exquisite and elegant, would not put him to shame even before the old masters. And yet, at times, [as if] altering the direction of the spindle and turning over the mechanism [of the loom] [in an attempt to improve on the originals], it seems like he cannot help but paint the snake and add legs to it.

Many later writers have routinely repeated parts of Wang Zhideng's text in their accounts of Qiu Ying. In addition, many commentators have taken the not-so-subtle denigrating tone of this short biography to be typical of the attitudes of the majority of Wang's literati colleagues and Qiu Ying's contemporaries, but this is not supported by sixteenth-century literary and artistic evidence, especially the many inscriptions and colophons written on Qiu's paintings by a significant number of his leading Wu School colleagues, including Wen Zhengming, Wang Chong, Yuan Jiong, Lu Zhi, Wen Peng, Wen Jia, Wang Guxiang, Wen Boren, and Peng Nian. Indeed, the majority of subsequent early Qing-dynasty (1644–1911) biographies begin and end on far-more-admiring observations. Xu Qin's *Minghualu* (1673), for example, includes the following account of Qiu Ying:

Qiu Ying's style or courtesy name [*zi*] was Shifu ["True father"] and his sobriquet [*hao*] was Shizhou ["Ten continents"]. He was a native of Taicang, [but] later moved his residence to Wu [Suzhou]. When he started to learn painting, [the professional painter] Zhou Dongcun [Zhou Chen] found him extraordinary and taught him. When he made copies of Tang and Song [dynasty] paintings, each one surpassed the original. He was also skilled in [painting] figures. His hair-thin blue-greens, thin lines of gold, thread-like reds, and silken whites were delicately beautiful and captivatingly untrammelled. He had no shame before the ancients.

Similarly, the *Tuhui baojian xuzuan* (Supplemental compendium to the precious mirror of painting), edited by Lan Ying and Xie Bin in c. 1680, states:

Qiu Ying's *hao* was Shizhou; he came from eastern Wu [eastern Jiangsu province]. He excelled at painting. Although in landscapes he copied the Song masters, he was in his own class. He particularly mastered the technique of blue-and-green [landscape] painting. All of his figure paintings and images of beautiful women had an aristocratic appearance, with rich and noble bearing. As for his towers and platforms in the *jiehua* ["boundary painting"] technique, and his carts, horses, boats, and oars, all had a refinement and detail approaching the divine. Among his works were those that copied the Northern Song, with inch-high figures and bean-sized horses, their whiskers and eyebrows all complete. His compositions and application of colors, whether heavy or light, achieved [a level] appropriate [to the subject]. His album leaves and handscrolls surpassed [the limitations of their] small [size] and were of surpassing beauty. Those who came before him could only chase after the old masters [that is, whom he matched], while those who followed could not even follow in his footsteps. He had a deaf grandson who was also a painter, [but now] people rarely know his name.

Jiang Shaoshu's *Wushengshi shi* (History of soundless poetry, 1720) selectively quotes these earlier accounts, adding a few additional points:

Qiu Ying's *zi* was Shifu and his *hao* Shizhou. He was a native of Taicang, but moved his dwelling to the Wu Commandery [Wujun]. He emerged from obscurity. When he first began to learn painting, Zhou Chen found him extraordinary and taught him. [Qiu] Ying's painting was accomplished, elegant, delicate, and beautiful.... Of all the famous masters of the Tang and Song [dynasties], there were none he did not copy. For each of these he had sketches, and the traces of his copying their forms could compete with the originals. He also excelled at painting men and women, and divinely rendered them lifelike. Even if [the Tang-dynasty painter] Zhou Fang were to come back to life, he could not surpass him.

Lan Ying and Xie Bin, eds., *Tuhui baojian xuzuan* [Supplemental compendium to the precious mirror of painting] (c. 1680), in *Huashi congshu* [Collected texts on the history of painting], 4 vols. (Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1974), 3:862.

THE QUESTION OF QIU YING'S LITERACY

One of the most persistent myths about Qiu Ying is that he was illiterate and incapable of signing his own name. Despite this myth having been disproven since the 1970s, the belief that he was a barely literate yet skillful craftsman who was somehow tolerated by the literati circles in which he moved (and which comprised his primary audience) still persists among the majority of scholars both within and outside China. Evidence to the contrary is provided throughout this exhibition, in the form of the artist's own beautifully inscribed and stylistically consistent signatures and titles, which demonstrate Qiu's mastery of standard, clerical, and seal scripts.⁶

That Qiu was not only literate but capable of sophisticated written communication is proven by two surviving pieces of documentation. The first is a letter he sent to one of his patrons (cat. 1).⁷ Inscribed in semi-cursive or running script, it is labeled as having been sent to a certain Chen Weichuan, who may have been the scholar-official Chen Ji (d. 1539).⁸ The letter reads as follows:⁹

Your attendant, Qiu Ying, kowtows and bows at the foot of the seat of

Your Excellency, Chuan, the great Han[lin] scholar, to make the following reply:

I, Ying, am like a piece of worthless wood but you have kept my name in memory and repeatedly favored me with attention.

This will always remain deeply engraved in my heart. I have always hoped to repay your kindness but owing to illness and sorrows I have been unable to do so, which is like hunger unsatisfied.

Recently you favored me with an order to make a painting for a birthday celebration. It has been respectfully completed and hereby presented for approval and acceptance. When you place another order, just send a word to me and it will be done and delivered but please do not place any more orders through Xichi. Although he and I are relatives, we do not get along at all. Kindly keep this in mind. The other two paintings will be delivered soon. Not yet recovered, I have written this in too careless a hand. Hoping for your forgiveness, I am,

Ying, who bows again, putting this in the envelope, on the sixth day.

I heard that in your house many Xixian¹⁰ pills have been prepared. I want to beg for a few doses. If you have [Xixian] leaves, please give me some too.

⁶ Contrary to Shen Fu and Marilyn Fu's statement that "the signatures in his [Qiu's] works are only a secondary consideration in establishing authenticity," these signatures are a primary consideration in establishing authenticity; see Shen Fu and Marilyn Fu, *Studies in Connoisseurship*, exh. cat. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Art Museum, 1973), 92.

⁷ Jean-Pierre Dubosc, "A Letter and Fan Painting by Ch'iu Ying," *Archives of Asian Art* 28 (1974/75): 108-12.

⁸ I am grateful to Professor Jonathan Chaves, The George Washington University, for his research on the identity of Chen Weichuan.

⁹ Translation by Professor Fang Chao-ying, Columbia University, with minor changes.

¹⁰ Dubosc, "A Letter and Fan Painting by Ch'iu Ying," 112n2: "A medicinal herb somewhat like goldenrod. Claimed to be effective against paralytic attacks."

Please be sure to have a copy of the *Suwen* Manual on Health printed for me.

Once again you have shown favors to the Daoist priest Huaqiao asking for contributions.

Also I received the payment in silver from your brother Fanghu. Please be sure to give him my thanks.

Your messenger was paid one mace of silver for the boat trip.

(Returned are) the remainders of the silk.

The second piece of documentation is found in *Five Immortals* (cat. 60), a long-lost *baimiao* handscroll depicting historical figures in the guise of Daoist immortals, with inscribed poems bearing Qiu Ying's seals (there is no clear indication that Qiu was the painter). The scroll is significant for its five *jueju* quatrains, composed and inscribed by Qiu in a semi-cursive script similar to that seen in the letter, suggesting, if they are genuine, that he was a capable poet (the poems are translated in appendix 1).

The evidence of his literacy is key to understanding the sophistication of Qiu's interpretations of the classical poetic, mythological, and historical narratives seen in many of his most famous paintings.

11 Dubosc, "A Letter and Fan Painting by Ch'iu Ying," 112n3: "Something like a tip for services with a value of a quarter dollar."

12 Dubosc, "A Letter and Fan Painting by Ch'iu Ying," 112n4: "Probably the remnants of the silk used for painting."

13 Previously published in *Jin Tang Wudai Song Yuan Ming Qing mingjia shuhua ji* [Compendium of calligraphies and paintings by famous masters of the Jin, Tang, Five Dynasties, Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing], exh. cat. (Nanjing, 1937), pl. 153.

侍下仇英預首拜復

大內翰川翁大人先生

英本博散曲材伏蒙存錄屢承

我公不念銘骨刻心何日忘之時懷報稱向病

困日抱抑鬱而嘗終不克果如飢未

副耳曩辱

委画壽齒莖完貢

上幸檢收更有他

委竟

教示下頓如命育

細萬勿轉托西池雖為親誼與僕情

甚不合幸能

意焉二回更俟續

上病中草率伏惟

見原

初六日英再拜具職

閣室中多合希登九求數服有草

亦乞見

忠未聞拜印一薄萬，化橋道人之承

擇學又蒙

方堂令助魚報幸致私萬

奉便舟銀一錢

餘奉



One of the many challenges faced when attempting to understand Qiu Ying is recognizing the unusually wide range of artists and classical styles to which he was exposed as a young artist. His surviving paintings reveal influences from the early and middle Ming Zhe School of professional and court painters active in Beijing and Nanjing; scholar-professional painters; the Wu School of literati painters active in Suzhou and surrounding towns of the Jiangnan ("South of the Yangzi River") region; and Qiu's primary teacher Zhou Chen (a professional Suzhou painter associated with the Wu School); as well as access to private collections of antique paintings that ranged in date from the Tang (618–906) through the Yuan (1260–1368) dynasty.

The influence of the Zhe School was dominant in fifteenth-century China. The preeminent Zhe School masters were Dai Jin, Guo Chun, Xie Huan, Li Zai, Ma Shi, Zhou Wenjing, Lin Liang, Liu Jun, Zhao Qi, Wu Wei, and Zhong Qinli, most of whom were active in Beijing and Nanjing from the Yongle (1403–24) through Hongzhi (1488–1505) reigns of the Ming. Dai Jin (1388–1462), who like Qiu worked in an amazingly eclectic range of styles, may have been the most influential Chinese painter of the early Ming dynasty, and his lasting impact can be seen in works by both Zhe School and Wu School artists.¹⁵ Extensive literary evidence further indicates that Zhe School painters were widely admired by Ming literati critics, giving the lie to the conventional notion that strict class boundaries prevailed in determining critical opinions of works by professional artists during the early and middle Ming dynasty.¹⁶

Typical of Zhe School narrative figure painting of the generation immediately preceding Qiu Ying is *Remonstrating with the Emperor* (cat. 4), a hanging scroll in ink, colors, and gold on silk by the court painter Liu Jun (active c. 1475–c. 1505).¹⁷ This work, which depicts a moralizing event at the court of the Han emperor Wendi (r. 179–157 BC), is characteristic of the type of figures-in-gardens paintings that became one of Qiu's specialties (for example, *The Golden Valley Garden* and *The Garden of Peach and Plum Trees* in the Chion-in collection, Kyoto; see figs. 24, 25). *Remonstrating with the Emperor* is an excellent example of the widespread revival among fifteenth-century Zhe School artists of Song-dynasty (960–1279) court styles of figure painting that were especially suitable for didactic and moralizing historical narratives and Buddhist subjects. Examples of twelfth-century Song-dynasty prototypes for such Ming Zhe School paintings are Liu Songnian's *Luohan Seated before a Screen* and the anonymous *Rejecting the Seat* (fig. 1). This mode of narrative figure painting was popular among numerous artists active in Nanjing, situated only some 124 miles (200 km) from Suzhou, during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The scholar-professional master Du Jin (active c. 1465–1509), who worked in both Beijing and Nanjing (and who was, significantly, also an acquaintance of the scholar-official Wu Kuan and the literati painter Shen Zhou), re-created meticulously descriptive Song-dynasty academic styles of figure painting, seen in *Enjoying Antiquities* (cat. 5) and *The Scholar Fu Sheng Transmitting the Book of Documents* (cat. 6).¹⁸

Executed in ink and colors in a polished, academic style, *Enjoying Antiquities* depicts two scholarly, white-robed gentlemen examining antiques in a formal garden. The host is seated on a chair in the middle of the scene. He watches his guest, who stands next to a table on which there are twelve ritual bronze vessels, a bronze mirror, and five ceramic vessels. The guest lifts the lid off a covered *ding* (tripod), apparently to read its inscription.¹⁹ Du Jin's inscription reads,

¹⁵ Richard M. Barnhart et al., *Painters of the Great Ming: The Imperial Court and the Zhe School*, exh. cat. (Dallas: Dallas Museum of Art, 1993).

¹⁶ It is telling that even Dong Qichang could not resist speaking highly of Dai Jin's paintings; see his enthusiastic comments on Dai's *Landscape in the Style of Yan Wengui* (Shanghai Museum). The painting was published in Mu Yiqin, *Mingdai gongting yu Zhepai huihua xuanji* [Selected Ming dynasty court and Zhe School paintings] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1983), color pl. 9.

¹⁶ Stephen Little, "Literati Views of the Zhe School," *Oriental Art* 37, no. 4 (Winter 1991/92): 192–208.

¹⁷ Published in Barnhart, *Painters of the Great Ming*, 91–92, cat. 29.

¹⁸ Published in Cahill, *Parting at the Shore*, color pls. 10, 11; and *Bunjinga suihen*, 10 vols. (Tokyo: Chuo koronsha, 1974–79), vol. 1, pl. 4.

¹⁹ The bronzes in Du Jin's painting represent the full span of the Bronze Age in style, from the Shang through Han dynasty. A *bo* (bell), a *huo* (ewer), several *ding* (tripods), an incense burner in the shape of a fantastic beast, a *lian* (toilettries box), a *lu* (brazier), and a *boshanlu* (incense burner) are represented. The ceramics include crackled Guan wares of the Song dynasty, and white porcelain *lianzi* ("lotus pod") bowls of the Yongle period.

It is common to enjoy antiquities,
 Study them and one's moral purpose increases.
 Examine their shapes and give them names,
 For *Ritual* and *Music* lie within them.
 A day without *Ritual* and *Music*,
 And men would revert to ignorance.
 To act on this and make it Orthodox,
 This is my aim.

It is clear from Du Jin's inscription that the artist saw ancient bronze vessels as potent symbols of deeply held cultural values and patterns of Orthodox Confucian behavior, for in China the study of antiquity was a pursuit inevitably informed with virtue. The philosophies codified in the books to which Du alludes in his poem (the *Liji* [Book of ritual] and the *Yue jing* [Classic of music]) functioned as basic constructs of the Chinese worldview. It is significant that Qiu Ying painted a similar scene of an antique-viewing party as part of a ten-leaf album of classically inspired subjects (fig. 2).²¹ Du Jin's work was also known to Qiu's teacher, the professional Suzhou master Zhou Chen (1470–1535).²²

On one level the renaissance in Song academic figure-painting styles in the early Ming period reflected an interest in utilizing these styles as vehicles to emphasize the social and political legitimacy of the Ming dynasty. This need for legitimacy continued to be felt as the Ming regime suffered unrelenting threats from the Mongols beyond the frontier as well as intrigue in the capital; the capture of the Zhengtong emperor (Zhu Qizhen, r. 1436–49) by the Mongols at the battle of Tumu in 1449 is a case in point.²³ The emergence of the Song court style in Du Jin's painting paralleled an established and widely felt need to give shape to the indigenous Chinese cultural and moral supremacy that had predated the Mongol conquest of the late thirteenth century and the intervening Yuan dynasty (1260–1368). The Song academic manner was particularly appropriate for political themes such as *The Scholar Fu Sheng Transmitting the Book of Documents*, the ultimate subject of which was the rescuing of the protocols for the transmission of Heaven's Mandate (*Tian ming*) from one dynasty to another, as articulated in the ancient *Shu Jing*, or *Book of Documents*.²⁴ The economic and social stability that characterized the Hongzhi reign during which Liu Jun and Du Jin worked is reflected in the precise, detached observation of scholarly and aristocratic figures in gardens that characterizes their paintings. In addition to Qiu's two famous garden paintings in the Chion-in, the influence of the Zhe School can also be clearly seen in his *Late Return from a Spring Outing* (fig. 3),²⁵ *Whiling Away the Summer in the Shade of Plantain* (see fig. 33), and *Pure Conversation in the Shade of Paulownia Trees* (see fig. 34).

21 This painting is one of ten leaves in Qiu's album *Figures and Stories*, in the Palace Museum, Beijing; published in Shan Guoqiang, "Qiu Ying ji qi 'Renwu gushi' ce," *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* [Palace museum monthly] (1982/83), pl. 2; and in *Shizhou gaohui: Wumen huapai zhi Qiu Ying* [Shizhou's lofty gathering: Qiu Ying of the Wu School], exh. cat. (Suzhou: Suzhou Museum, 2015), 119.

22 This is revealed in a record of Zhou Chen's copy of Du Jin's copy of Gu Hongzhong's *Night Revels of Han Xizai* (tenth century), recorded in Wang Shizhen's *Yanzhou shanren gao*, chap. 138:9b–10a, 6358–59. According to Wang's account, Zhou Chen's painting was inscribed by Chen Daofu with eight poems composed by Zhu Yunming. In 1542 Chen Daofu inscribed Qiu Ying's *Harp Player in a Pavilion* (cat. 31). For the Gu Hongzhong scroll, see Osvald Sirén, *Chinese Painting: Leading Masters and Principles*, 7 vols. (London: Lund Humphries, 1956–58), vol. 3, pl. 120–23; also Wan-go H.C. Weng and Yang Boda, *The Palace Museum* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1982), 160–62.

23 See the biography of Zhu Qizhen in L. Carrington Goodrich and Fang Chao-ying, eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography*, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 1:289–94. The situation continued to be unstable later in the fifteenth century; as Roy Miller has pointed out, "From about 1480 not a single year passed without some major Mongol raid across the Chinese northwestern frontier" (Goodrich and Fang, *Dictionary of Ming Biography*, 1:18). See the discussion of the Tumu debacle in Denis Twitchett and Tilemann Grimm, "The Cheng-tung, Ching-t'ai, and T'ien-shun Reigns, 1436–1464," in *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 7: The Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644, Part I*, ed. Frederick W. Mote and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 316–31.

24 For a detailed study of Du Jin's *The Scholar Fu Sheng Transmitting the Book of Documents*, see Stephen Little, "Du Jin, Tao Cheng, and Shi Zhong" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1987), 112–38.

25 Several scholars have pointed out the close relationship between Du Jin's *Late Return from a Spring Outing* and Dai Jin's earlier painting of the same subject; see, for example, *Ming si dejia tezhan: Qiu Ying* [Four great masters of the Ming dynasty: Qiu Ying], exh. cat. (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 2014), 320, 352. For an illustration, see p. 172, this volume.



6.11
Liu Jun, *Remonstrating with the Emperor*,
Ming dynasty, c. 1500



FIGURE 1
Rejecting the Seat, China, Southern Song dynasty,
12th century. Hanging scroll; ink and colors on silk,
57 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 30 $\frac{7}{16}$ in. (146.8 × 77.3 cm). National Palace
Museum, Taipei

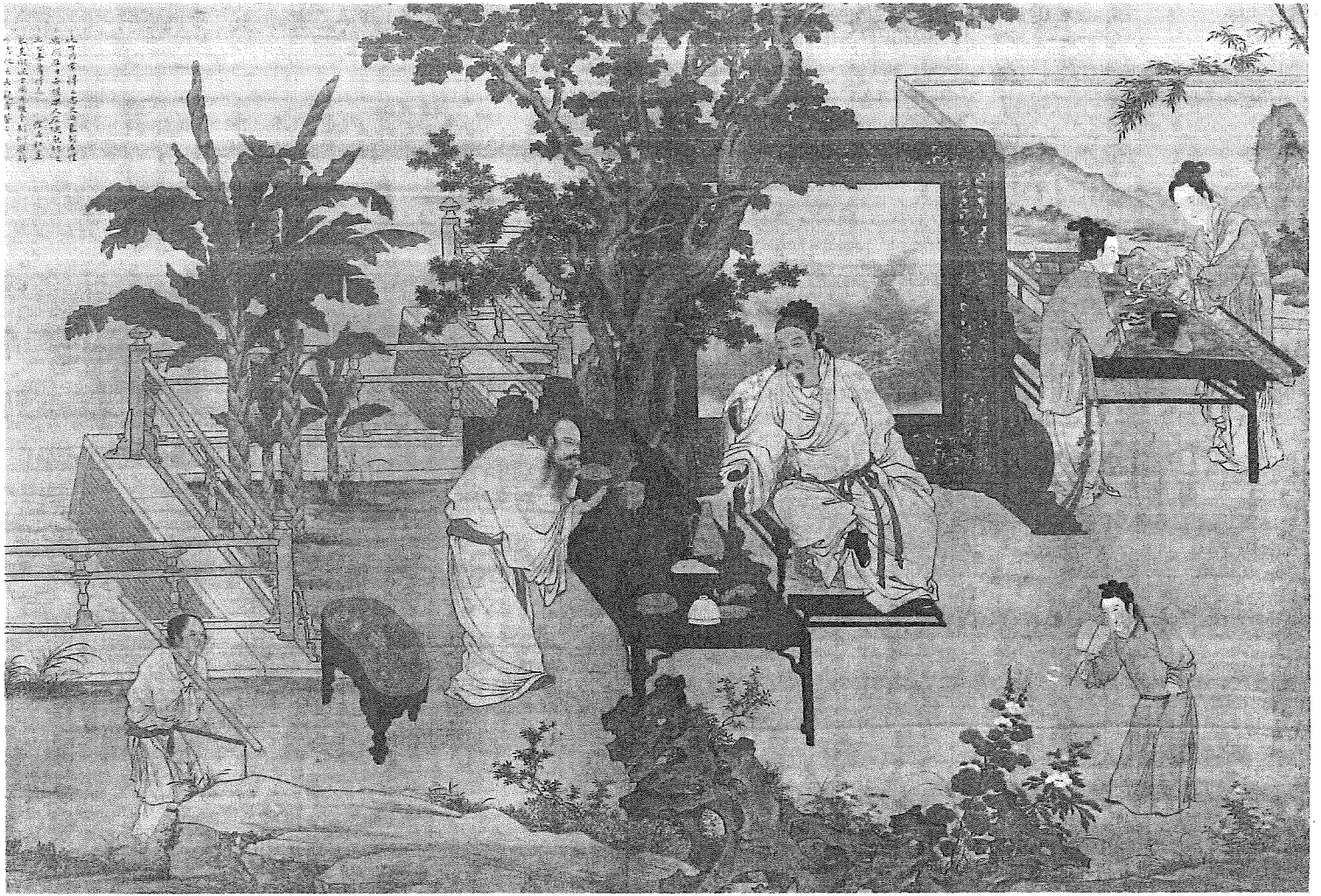


FIG. 5
Du Jin, *Enjoying Antiquities*, Ming dynasty,
late 15th–early 16th century



740
Du Jin, *The Scholar Fu Sheng Transmitting the Book of Documents*, Ming dynasty, late 15th–early 16th century

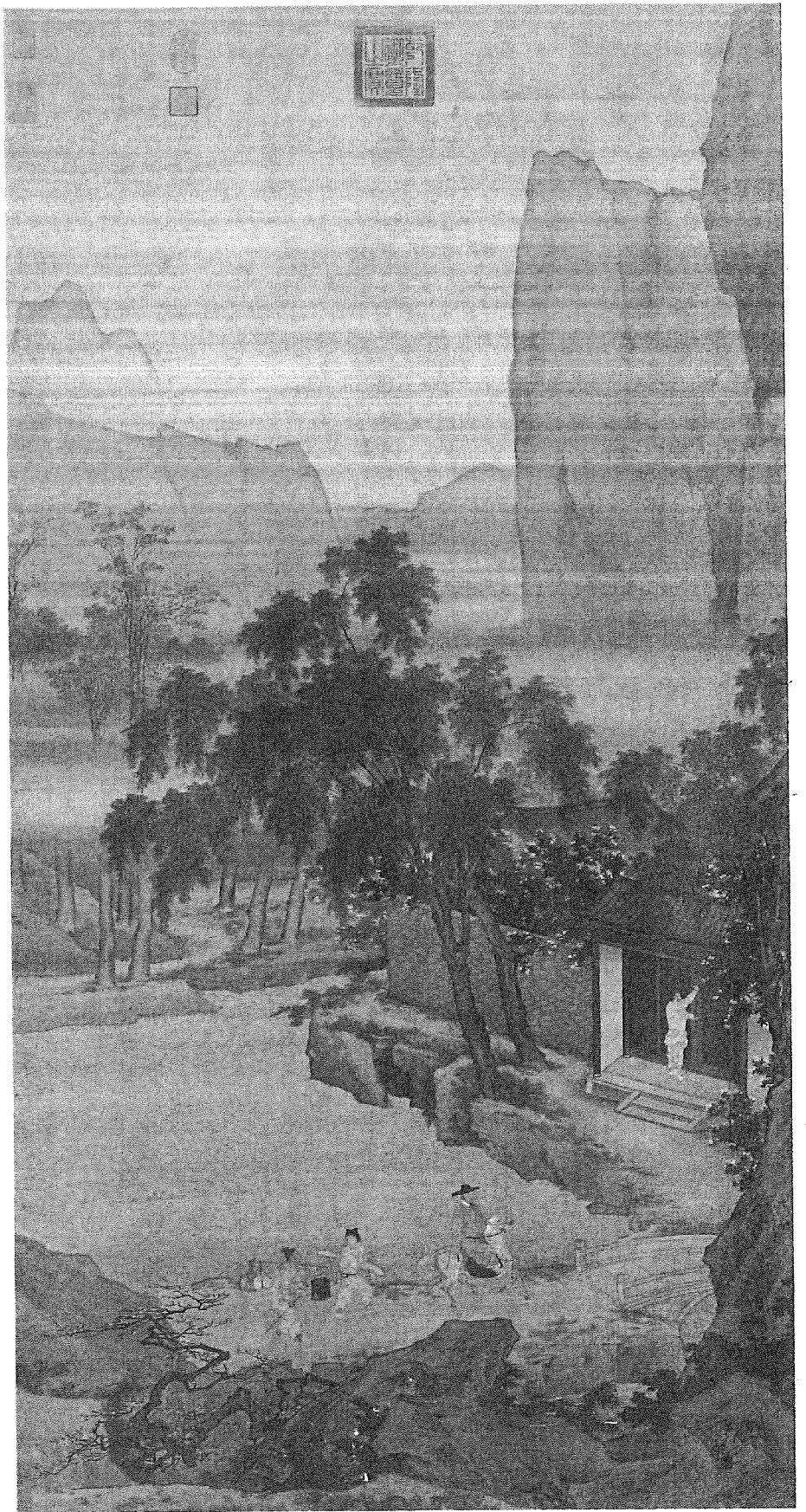


FIGURE 3
Qiu Ying (c. 1494–c. 1552), *Lqte Return from a Spring
Outing*, China, Ming dynasty, c. 1534–42. Hanging scroll;
ink and light colors on paper, 57 ⁷/₁₆ × 27 ³/₄ in.
(145.5 × 70.5 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

QIU YING, THE WU SCHOOL, AND ISSUES OF SOCIAL CLASS

In Suzhou, Qiu Ying was inevitably exposed to and inspired by the dominant Wu School of literati painting, the doyen of which was the great artist, calligrapher, and poet Wen Zhengming (1470–1559). Evidence of Qiu's proximity to the Wu School masters is clear from the fact that some twenty of Wen Zhengming's circle of students and followers inscribed the artist's paintings over the course of his career. It is likely that Qiu mastered the delicate and understated style that dominated Wu School literati painting from his study with Wen. The earliest known date associated with Qiu's career is 1517, when he was invited by Wen, about twenty-five years his senior, to add colors to Wen's *The Goddess and Lady of the Xiang River* (fig. 4). This is documented in an inscription added to the painting around thirty years later by Wen's protégé Wang Zhideng:

In the past, when I was young, I waited upon Wen Taishi [Wen Zhengming]. In our discussions he touched upon this painting, saying that he had asked Qiu Shifu to apply the colors. Twice he greatly changed it, and each time he was dissatisfied. Therefore he [Wen] himself applied them [the colors], in order to bestow it upon Wang Lüji [Wang Chong]. Now, after thirty years [from the time of the painting's creation], I have grasped and seen this authentic work. Indeed, the brush has the strength to lift a *ding* [a bronze tripod]. It is not something that the likes of Qiu Ying could even dream of. Inscribed by Wang Zhideng.³⁷

This inscription demonstrates that in his early twenties Qiu was studying with Wen, and that Wen held his talent in sufficient esteem that he offered the younger artist the opportunity to work jointly on a painting. Close stylistic connections between the two artists are especially apparent in early Qiu paintings such as *Fine Delights in a Forest Kiosk* (fig. 5). Further evidence of their close relationship is provided by the numerous Qiu paintings inscribed with colophons by Wen, among which dated examples survive from 1539 (*The River in Spring*), 1540 (*Two Steeds*, fig. 7), 1542 (*Zhao Mengfu Exchanging the Heart Sutra for Tea*, cat. 39), 1544 (*The Demon Queller Zhong Kui in a Wintry Grove*), and 1546 (*The Classic of Filial Piety*, fig. 8), among others.³⁸ Through his study with Wen Zhengming, he would have been exposed to the stylistic lineages that formed the basis of much Wu School literati painting, particularly those of the Four Great Masters of the Yuan dynasty—Wu Zhen, Huang Gongwang, Ni Zan, and Wang Meng—even though Qiu more often worked in Song rather than Yuan lineages of painting. As Anne Clapp and other scholars have shown, even Wen studied from an extraordinarily wide range of antique models. Clapp writes, "Wen Zhengming was a great technician in an age of great technicians and, notwithstanding his literati training and the alleged ban on technical brilliance, he chose to practice and invent styles which displayed his mastery to the full. In these respects he stands closer to Tang Yin and Qiu Ying, both supreme craftsmen and declared eclectics, than he does to Shen Chou [his teacher]."³⁹ This eclecticism

³⁵ Published in Xu Zhongling, ed., *Gugong bowuyuan cang wenwu zhenpin quanji: Wumen huihua* [The complete collection of the treasures of the Palace Museum: Wu School painting] (Hong Kong: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2007), 46–47, cat. 24.

³⁶ The scroll also bears a colophon by Wen Zhengming's son Wen Jia, dated 1568.

³⁷ This is a second example of Wang Zhideng's inclination to criticize Qiu Ying; it will be seen later (1563) in his brief biographical account of Qiu Ying in the *Guochao Wujun dangqing zhi Wujun dangqing zhi* (see note 4, above).

The phrase "the brush has the strength to lift a *ding*" was originally said by Ni Zan (1301–1374) of Wang Meng (c. 1308–1385); see James Cahill, *Hills beyond a River: Chinese Painting of the Yuan Dynasty, 1279–1368* (New York: Weatherhill, 1976), 121.

³⁸ *The River in Spring* is published in Chen Rentao, *Jin kui canghua ji* [Chinese paintings from Jin Kui (King Kwei) collection]. 2 vols. (Hong Kong: Tongying gongsi, 1956), vol. 1, pl. 28, with the painting's documentation published in Chen Rentao, *Jin kui canghua pingshi* [Notes and comments on the paintings of Jin Kui (King Kwei) collection] (Hong Kong, 1956), 146–48; see also Poly International Auction Co., *Classical Chinese Paintings and Calligraphy*, auction cat. (April 6, 2013), lot 622. *The Demon Queller in a Wintry Grove* is published in Stephen Little, "The Demon Queller and the Art of Qiu Ying," *Artibus Asiae* 46, no. 1/2 (1985), fig. 1. Parts of this essay and several translations of early inscriptions were previously published in my 1985 *Artibus Asiae* article.

is vividly demonstrated, for example, by Wen's paintings in the richly colored blue-and-green style (*qinglü*) and in the diametrically opposite monochromatic style of the tenth-century artist Li Cheng.¹⁰ Many Suzhou literati painters—including Shen Zhou (1427–1509), Wen Zhengming, and Wen Boren (1502–1575)—were masters of the blue-and-green style of landscape painting, said to have originated with the Tang-dynasty painter Li Sixun (c. 653–718) and still most often associated with professional artists. The style had, however, always been perceived as associated with elite culture, and not surprisingly is found among surviving works by both literati and professional artists from the Song dynasty onward—for example, the preeminent literati painters Wang Shen (1046–1110), Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322), Shen Zhou, Wen Zhengming, and Dong Qichang (1555–1636).

It has been assumed from the near-complete lack of biographical data that Qiu came from a low socioeconomic class, yet many of his colleagues and patrons (for example, Wen Zhengming and Xiang Yuanbian) were among the most distinguished scholars and collectors of his time. The lack of clear boundaries between social classes and different schools of painting that obtained during the early and middle Ming dynasty points to a considerably more complex reality than many conventional art histories of the period would have us believe.

- 10 Clapp, *Wen Cheng-ming: The Ming Artist and Antiquity*, 92.
- 11 See Wen Zhengming's *Imitating Zhao Bosu's "Illustration of the Latter Red Cliff"* (1548) in *Ming si dajia tezhan: Wen Zhengming* [Four great masters of the Ming dynasty: Wen Zhengming], exh. cat. (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 2014), 326–27, 360, cat. 42, and his *After Li Cheng's Winter Woods* (1542) in the British Museum, published in Edwards, *The Art of Wen Cheng-ming*, 147–49, cat. 40.
- 12 For examples of these artists' blue-and-green landscapes, see *Zhongguo meishu quanji: Huihua bian, 3/Liang Song huihua* [Compendium of Chinese art: Painting, 3/ Painting of the Northern and Southern Song dynasties] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1988), 1:66–67, pl. 34 [Wang Shen]; Cahill, *Hills beyond a River*, color pl. 2 [Zhao Mengfu]; and *Yiyuan duoying* [Gathered flowers from the garden of art] 34 (1987): 3–4 [Shen Zhou]. For examples of Dong Qichang's blue-and-green-style paintings, see his *Landscape in the Style of Yang Sheng* (1615) in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, published in Wai-kam Ho et al., *The Century of Tung Ch'i-ch'ang, 1555–1636*, 2 vols., exh. cat. (Kansas City, MO: Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 1992), vol. 1, pl. 25. See also the handscroll *Hall of Daylight Brocade* in the Jilin Provincial Museum, published in *Yiyuan duoying* 6 (1979): 24–25; and He Hailin, ed., *Dong Qichang shu Zhoujin tang ji* [Dong Qichang's calligraphy of the inscription for the Hall of Daylight Brocade] (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2011).

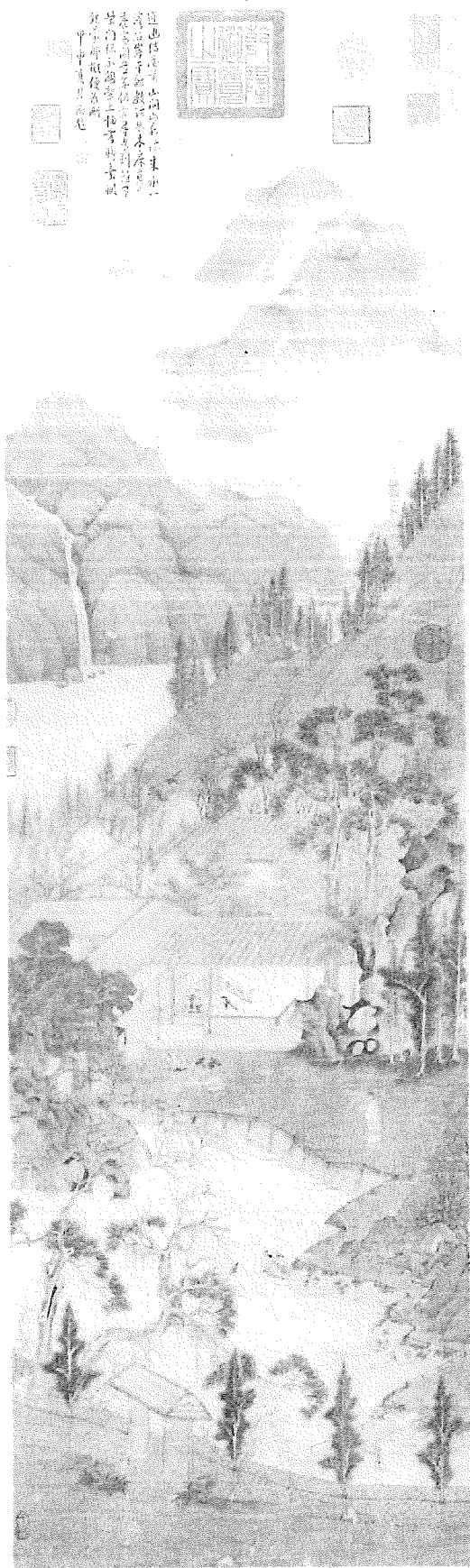


FIGURE 5
 Qiu Ying (c. 1494–c. 1552), *Fine Delights in a Forest Kiosk*, China, Ming dynasty, c. 1515–25. Hanging scroll; ink and light colors on paper, 47 $\frac{1}{6}$ × 11 $\frac{1}{6}$ in. (119.6 × 28.8 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei

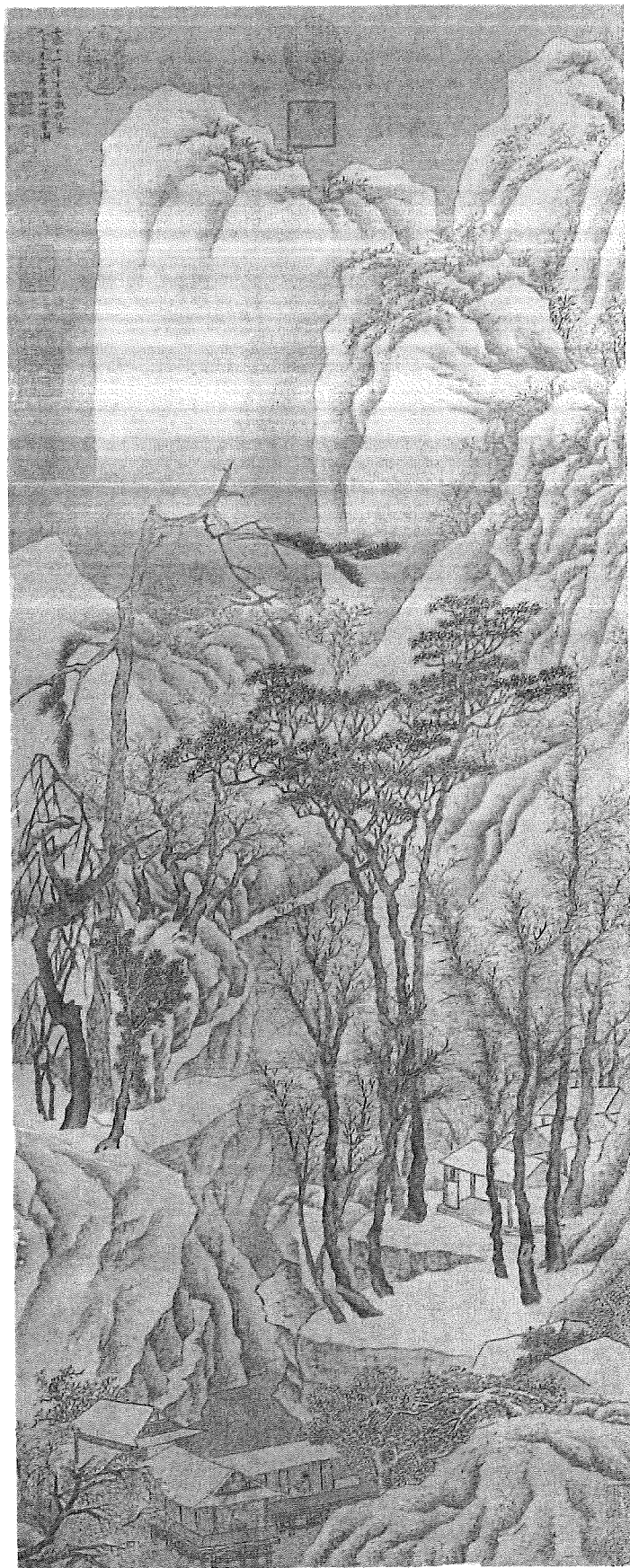
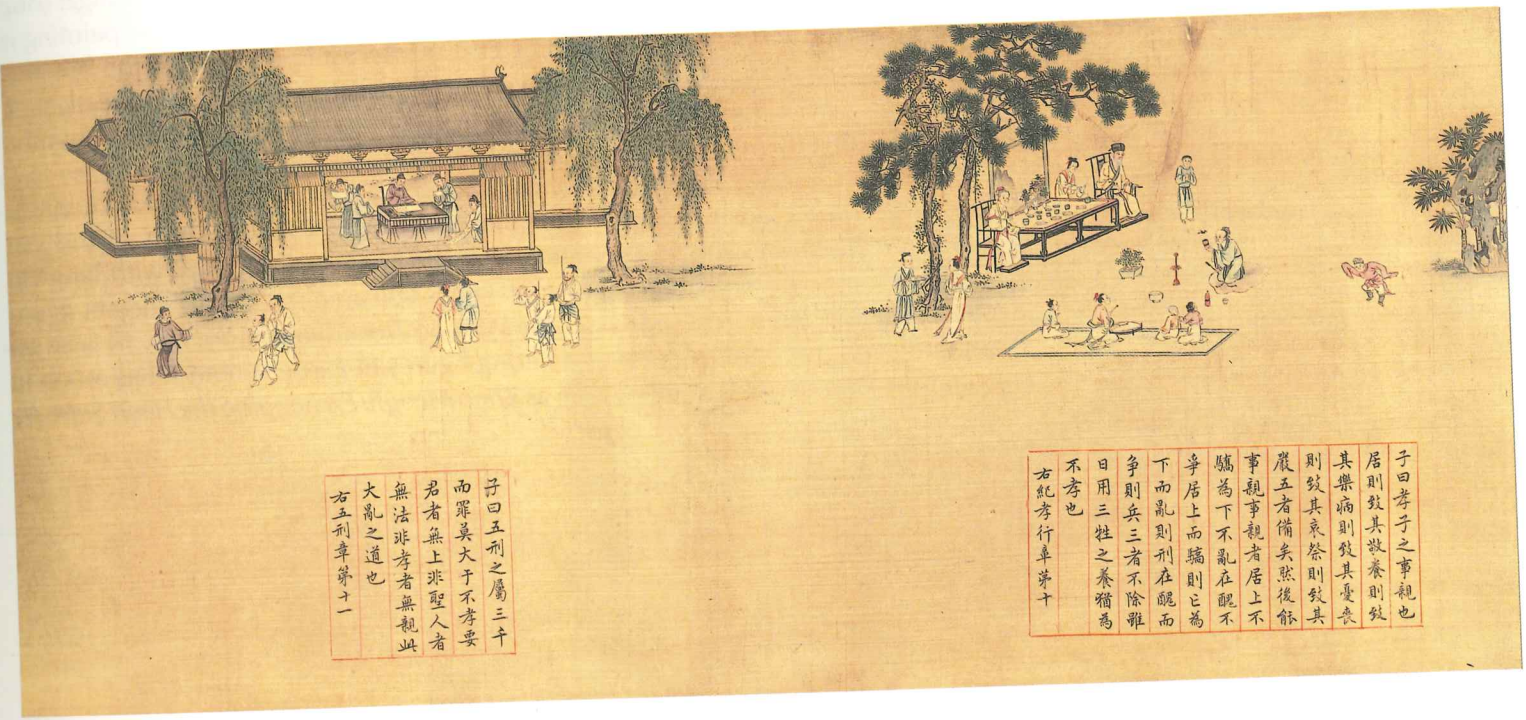


FIGURE 6
 Wen Zhengming (1470–1559), *Deep Snow on Mountains and Rivers*, China, Ming dynasty, 1517. Hanging scroll; ink and light colors on silk, 36 $\frac{1}{6}$ × 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (93.2 × 29.8 cm). National Palace Museum, Taipei



FIGURE 7
 Qiu Ying (c. 1494–c. 1552), *Two Steeds*, China, Ming
 dynasty, c. 1530–40. Hanging scroll; ink and light colors
 on paper, 43 7/8 × 19 1/8 in. (109.5 × 50.4 cm). National
 Palace Museum, Taipei



子曰五刑之屬三千
而罪莫大于不孝要
君者無上非聖人者
無法非孝者無親此
大亂之道也
右五刑章第十一

子曰孝子之事親也
居則致其敬養則致
其樂病則致其憂喪
則致其哀祭則致其
嚴五者備矣然後能
事親事親者居上不
驕為下不亂在醜不
爭居上而驕則曰為
下而亂則刑在醜而
爭則兵三者不除雖
日用三牲之養猶為
不孝也
右紀孝行章第十

FIGURE 8
Qiu Ying (c. 1494–c. 1552), *The Classic of Filial Piety*
(detail), China, Ming dynasty, c. 1530–40. Handscroll;
ink and colors on silk, 11 7/8 × 267 3/8 in. (30.1 × 679.8 cm).
National Palace Museum, Taipei

Early sources agree that Qiu Ying's primary teacher was the Suzhou professional master Zhou Chen (1470–1535),³² from whom he would have learned to master the idyllic, technically precise, and atmospheric styles of Zhou's primary models—the Southern Song-dynasty (twelfth- and thirteenth-century) painters Li Tang, Liu Songnian, Ma Yuan, and Xia Gui. Zhou Chen is best known for works such as *The North Sea* (cat. 8), the title of which comes from the *Zhuangzi*, and *After the Line, "Idly Watching Children Catch Willow Flowers"* (cat. 9). The former is painted in the lineage of Li Tang, with rocks textured with fine, axe-cut brushstrokes, while the latter, depicting young boys picking up spring willow catkins, is painted in the style of Liu Songnian.³³ Zhou Chen also depicted well-known narratives, seen in *Han Yu Meets the Immortal Han Xiangzi at Blue Pass* (cat. 10). This fan painting illustrates a story taken from the biography of the Daoist immortal Han Xiangzi (one of the Eight Immortals), nephew of the great Tang poet Han Yu.³⁴ This painting is significant not only as an illustration of Zhou's interest in popular fiction but also because it serves as a precedent for Qiu Ying's own treatment of these subjects, such as *Parting under a Willow Tree* (cat. 54), a fan painting featuring a scene from the popular drama *Romance of the Western Chamber*.³⁵

Zhou Chen was also the teacher of Tang Yin (1470–1523), an exact contemporary of Wen Zhengming and also one of the Four Great Masters of the Wu School. While there is no firm evidence that Qiu knew or associated with Tang Yin, he certainly would have been aware of Tang's volcanic talent and elegant figure paintings. Tang's *Tea Drinking under the Wutong Tree* (dated 1509; cat. 11) is an excellent example of his mastery of painting figures in gardens, and it has much in common with Qiu's later works, such as *Zhao Mengfu Exchanging the Heart Sutra for Tea* (cat. 39).³⁶

³² For a thorough study of Zhou Chen, see Mette Siggstedt, "Zhou Chen: The Life and Paintings of a Ming Professional Artist," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 54 (1982), no. 54.

³³ For signed and dated works by Li Tang and Liu Songnian, see Wen C. Fong et al., *Possessing the Past: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei*, exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996), pls. 61 and 93–94, respectively.

³⁴ See Yang Erzeng, *The Story of Han Xiangzi: The Alchemical Adventures of a Daoist Immortal*, trans. Philip Clart (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017), xvi–xvii.

³⁵ For the relevant section of the Yuan drama by Wang Shifu (1250–1337?), see S.K. Hsiung, trans., *The Romance of the Western Chamber* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 190–203.

³⁶ Anne Clapp has noted that the correct title of Tang Ying's handscroll of 1509 should be *The Bamboo Stove*; see Anne de Coursey Clapp, *The Painting of Tang Yin* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 257n20.



CAT. 9
Zhou Chen, *After the Line, "Idly Watching Children
Catch Willow Flowers,"* Ming dynasty, early 16th century



CAT. 8
Zhou Chen, *The North Sea*, Ming dynasty,
early 16th century





CAT. 10

Zhou Chen, *Han Yu Meets the Immortal Han Xiangzi at Blue Pass*, Ming dynasty, early 16th century



CAT. 11
Tang Yin, *Tea Drinking under the Wutong Tree*,
Ming dynasty, 1509

One of the advantages to living in Suzhou was the wealth of private collections of antique paintings that existed there and in surrounding towns, to which Qiu Ying would have had access through his teacher Zhou Chen and literati artists such as Wen Zhengming. There is a great deal of surviving evidence supporting the claim of the *Wushengshi shi* (History of soundless poetry) that "of all the famous masters of the Tang and Song [dynasties], there were none he [Qiu Ying] did not copy." Furthermore, as the following examples show, it is clear that Qiu made many copies of Tang-, Song-, and Yuan-dynasty paintings throughout his life. *Divinities of the Five Planets and Twenty-eight Lunar Mansions* (cat. 12) is a copy of Zhang Sengyou's *The Five Planets and Twenty-eight Lunar Mansions* (Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts); *Listening to the Qin* (cat. 13) is a copy after Zhou Fang's Tang-dynasty original, the earliest known copy of which is *Palace Ladies Tuning the Lute* (cat. 14); and he copied Wang Wei's *Wangchuan Villa*.³⁷ *The Gathering of the Lotus Society* (cat. 20) is after a Southern Song copy of Li Gonglin's original (Nanjing Museum), and *The Classic of Filial Piety* (fig. 8) is after Wang Duan's lost original. Qiu copied Zhang Zeduan's *Going up the River at the Qingming Festival*, and his *Eighteen Songs of a Nomad Flute* (cat. 43) is after an anonymous original. Qiu's handscroll (fig. 9) is after Xiao Zhao's *Auspicious Omens of Dynastic Revival*; his *Mahaprajapati Nursing the Infant Buddha* (cat. 21) is a copy of Wang Zhenpeng's handscroll (cat. 22); and *The Pavilion of Prince Teng* (cat. 34b) is after Xia Yong's.

37 Qiu Ying's copy of Wang Wei's *Wangchuan Villa* is published in *Mingdai Shen Zhou Wen Zhengming Tang Yin Qiu Ying si dajia shuhua ji* [The four great masters of the Ming: Shen Chou, Wen Cheng-ming, Tang Yin, Ch'iu Ying], exh. cat. (Taipei: National Museum of History, 1984), cat. 88.

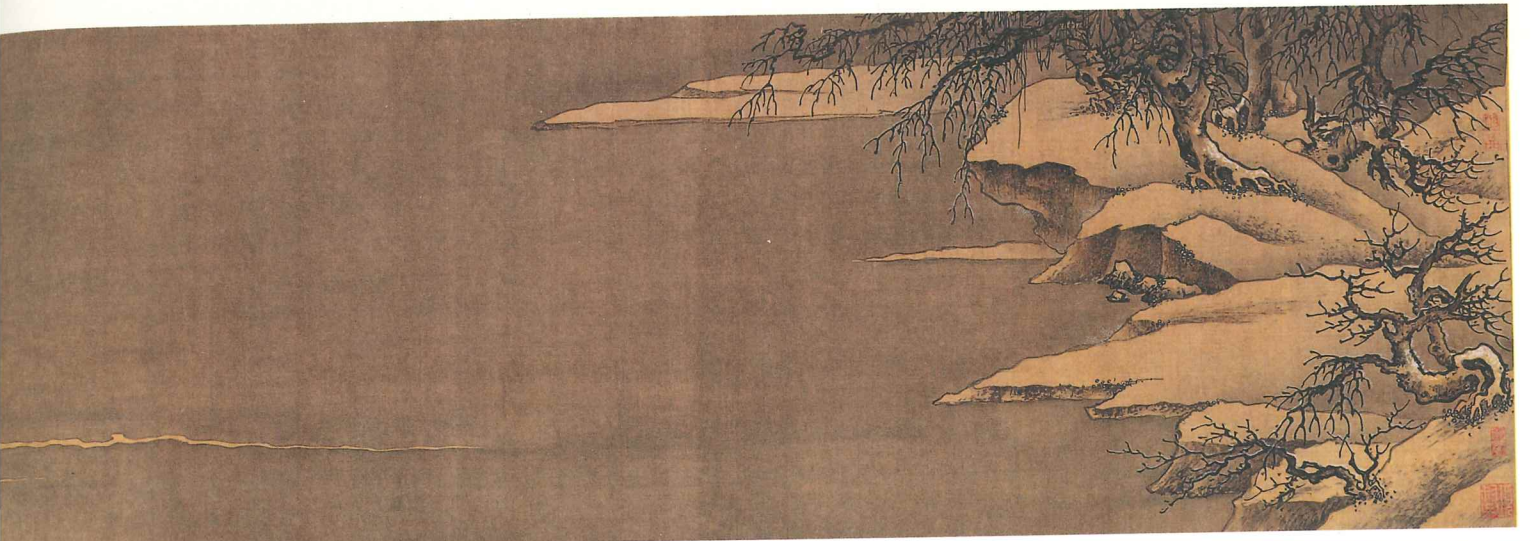
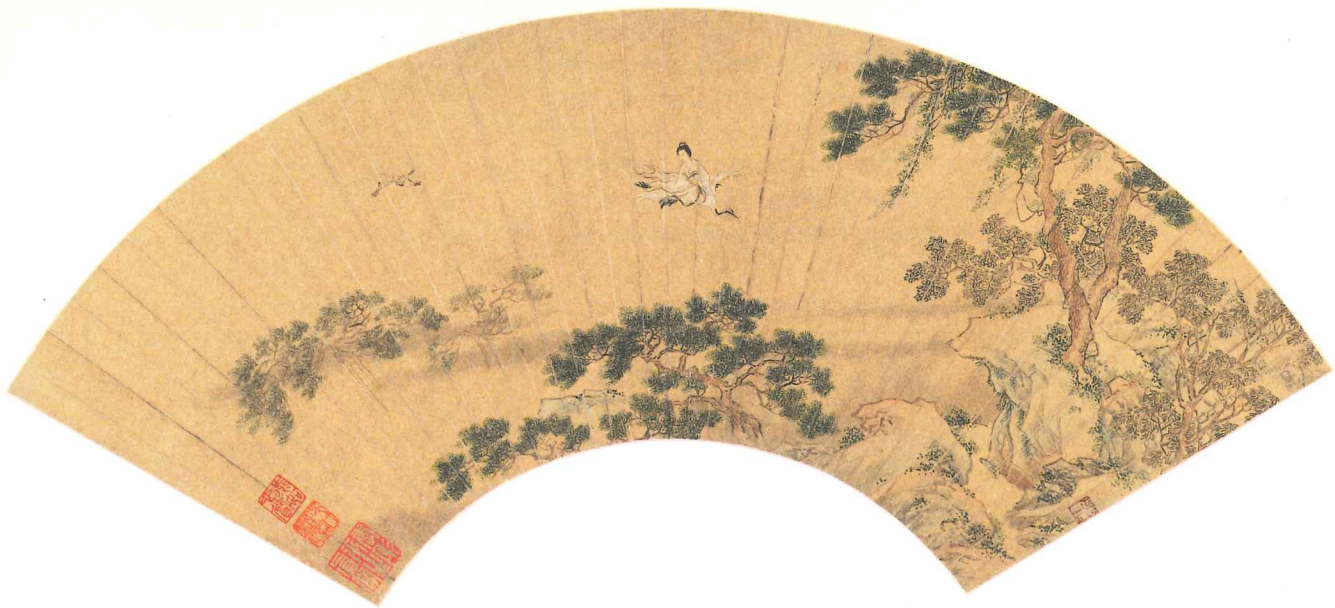


FIGURE 9
Qiu Ying (c. 1494–c. 1552), *Copy of Xiao Zhao's*
"Auspicious Omens of Dynastic Revival" (detail), China,
Ming dynasty, early 16th century. Handscroll;
ink and colors on silk, 13 × 284 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (33 × 723 cm).
The Palace Museum, Beijing

When confronted with the enormous volume of copies and forgeries of Qiu Ying's work ranging in date from the sixteenth century to the present, comprehending and presenting the full arc of the artist's career requires the rigorous exercise of visual acuity. One of the principal aims of *Where the Truth Lies* is to demystify the connoisseurship of Chinese paintings, the actual practice of which is rarely examined in museum exhibitions of Chinese art. It is widely held that the study of Chinese painting is the most difficult and demanding area within Chinese art history. The connoisseurship of traditional Chinese painting requires knowledge of many other disciplines, particularly Chinese calligraphy and poetry (most of Qiu's works incorporate three separate but closely related art forms: painting, calligraphy, and poetry, known traditionally as "The Three Perfections"). In addition, knowledge of Chinese language, history, art history (for example, artistic lineages and vocabularies of brushwork), the history and nature of artists' tools and materials, the mechanisms of damage and decay, and detailed knowledge of Chinese literature, philosophy, religion, architecture, textiles, and ceramics can all prove critical in the practice of connoisseurship and authentication. Many disciplines converge in both the creation and appreciation of Chinese painting.

An instructive example can be found in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, which has an album of ten Qiu Ying fan paintings that were gathered together by the early-nineteenth-century Cantonese collector Pan Zhengwei (1791–1850). The album is recorded in *Tingfanlou shuhua ji*, Pan's collection catalogue, published in 1843;³⁸ it also bears a colophon by the high-ranking Cantonese scholar-official Wu Rongguang, dated 1841.³⁹ The first fan in the album, *The Queen Mother of the West Flying on a Crane* (cat. 2), depicts one of China's oldest and most powerful Daoist goddesses. The album's dealer, Jean-Pierre Dubosc, owned a copy of this fan by a close follower of Qiu Ying, painted on the same type of gold-flecked paper and dating to the artist's lifetime or shortly thereafter (cat. 3); the museum acquired it at the same time, in 1979. These two fans have nearly identical compositions yet reveal subtle differences in brushwork and coloring: the phoenix in one fan is carefully outlined in ink, while parts of the phoenix in the other are painted with dabs of red and pink color, with no outlines. In one fan the trunks of the pine trees are shaded to convey the illusion of their twisting and turning in space, while in the other the pine trunks are two-dimensional and lack this spatial volume. Both fans bear nearly identical single square/relief Qiu Ying seals reading *Shifu*. Which is genuine, and which is the copy, and why? This is a question posed in a number of case studies in this exhibition.

3 Pan Zhengwei, *Tingfanlou shuhua ji* [Record of calligraphies and paintings in the Pavilion of Listening to the Sails] (1843) (Reprint, Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1980), 234–36.
4 Wu's colophon is recorded in Pan Zhengwei's catalogue.



CAT. 2
Qiu Ying, *The Queen Mother of the West
Flying on a Crane*, Ming dynasty, c. 1534-42

CAT. 3
Copy after Qiu Ying's *The Queen Mother of the West
Flying on a Crane*, Ming dynasty, mid-16th century

Overview *Where the Truth Lies* has three primary goals. The first is to demonstrate that far from being an illiterate craftsman (as he is often presented), Qiu Ying was a well-read, sophisticated interpreter of classical literary subjects who worked jointly with the leading literati artists of his day. The second is to establish a new chronology for his development as a painter, something which has never been systematically attempted. And the third is to provide basic guidelines for the determination of authenticity for his paintings through the inclusion of both genuine Qiu Ying works and copies and forgeries of his paintings, ranging in date from his lifetime through the early twentieth century. The exhibition presents a detailed case study in connoisseurship designed for both general and scholarly audiences, and it examines broader questions of connoisseurship and authenticity through the prism of a single Ming-dynasty painter who himself copied antique paintings, who was copied by his daughter Qiu Zhu and other immediate followers, who copied his own work, and whose work was then (and continues to be) the subject of innumerable copies and forgeries. Through Qiu Ying's works, the exhibition engages in a dialogue about perception.

Where the Truth Lies is organized into six thematic sections: an introduction; precedents; Qiu Ying's early, midcareer, and late works; and his legacy. Among the tools brought to bear in this analysis are the following:

1. A study of Qiu Ying's brushwork over the course of his artistic career in each of the stylistic lineages in which he worked; for example, blue-and-green landscapes, landscapes in the contemporaneous Ming-dynasty Wu School manner with scholarly themes and understated coloring, and refined figure paintings in the *baimiao* ("plain outline," or fine-lined monochrome ink drawing) technique.
2. A detailed study of the artist's signatures and seals, which has proven to be of great use in establishing a new chronology for him.⁴⁰
3. A study of the documents attached to his surviving paintings that facilitate their dating. These include dated inscriptions written directly on his paintings by contemporaneous scholars, poets, artists, and collectors; inscriptions on his paintings by the artist's contemporaries, each of whose date of death provides a *terminus ante quem* (latest possible date) for the work in question; and colophons (attached inscriptions) by the artist's contemporaries and later collectors and critics.
4. An examination of the fluid boundary between social classes during the Ming dynasty, and of how the acceptance of artificially constructed and retroactively projected class boundaries has impacted our perception of Qiu's artistic legacy and historical significance.

⁴⁰ For images of many of Qiu Ying's signatures and seals, see National Palace Museum, *Signatures and Seals on Painting and Calligraphy*, 6 vols. (Hong Kong, 1964), 2:5-7; Victoria Contag and Wang Chi-ch'ien, *Seals of Painters and Collectors of the Ming and Ch'ing Dynasties* (Hong Kong, 1966), 6, 633; and Shanghai Museum, *Zhongguo shuhua jia yinjian kuanzhi* [Seals and signatures of Chinese calligraphers and painters], 2 vols. (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1987), 1:144-46.

There is every likelihood that Qiu Ying was a child prodigy who was already active as a painter in his teenage years (c. 1504–15). This is suggested by his acquaintance with a large group of Wen Zhengming's students and followers in Suzhou, the majority of whom were contemporaries of Qiu Ying's, including Wang Zhideng—a typical prodigy who was recognized for his calligraphy by age six and for his poetry by age ten.⁴¹ Given the challenge of clarifying Qiu's overall chronological development, it is not surprising that there have been few attempts to identify his earliest surviving paintings and reconstruct the arc of his early career.

It is possible to isolate three paintings that—through their shared use of similarly carved double-gourd seals bearing the artist's sobriquet, *Shizhou*, with elongated upper tips—can be dated to this earliest phase of his career (see appendix 2, cats. 12, 13, 15): *Divinities of the Five Planets and Twenty-eight Lunar Mansions* (cat. 12), which may be one of Qiu's earliest surviving paintings; *Listening to the Qin* (cat. 13); and *Viewing the Pass List* (cat. 15). After this early period these rare and distinctively shaped seals never appear on his paintings. The brushwork in these paintings is also manifestly more naive than that seen in Qiu's mature works.

Although *Divinities of the Five Planets and Twenty-eight Lunar Mansions* is unsigned, an inscription written at the end of the scroll by Wen Boren—Wen Zhengming's nephew and a younger contemporary of Qiu's—specifically states that Qiu executed the painting, and that Wen added the inscriptions above each of the scroll's figures.⁴² The painting is a copy of a much earlier work, *The Five Planets and Twenty-eight Lunar Mansions* by the early-sixth-century painter Zhang Sengyou. Qiu's copy is significant in several ways because it, like other works by him, raises the question of whether he was a practicing Daoist. First, it provides the only complete version of the original composition. Second, the thirty-three deities depicted belong to the orthodox Daoist pantheon. Third, the scroll ends with Qiu's transcription of the Daoist talismans of the Five Sacred Peaks (*Wuyue zhenxing tu*). And fourth, Qiu's double-gourd seal reads *Shizhou (Ten Continents)*, which, significantly, refers to an early Daoist text known as the *Shizhou ji* (Record of the Ten Continents), variously dated to the third or sixth century AD.⁴³ This text was originally part of a longer work that included the *Han Wudi neizhuan* (Inner biography of Emperor Wu of the Han) and the *Han Wudi waizhuan* (Outer biography on Emperor Wu of the Han).⁴⁴ According to Kristofer Schipper, the *Shizhou ji* is “a description of the ten paradisiacal regions in the Eastern Ocean where the immortals have their abode, with a further description of the holy mountain Kunlun in the west, together with that of three additional islands: Fangzhang, Fusang, and Pengqiu.”⁴⁵ The *Shizhou ji* is a text that would have been of special relevance to a Daoist. In addition, it is worth noting the prevalence of Daoist themes and subjects in Qiu's work, including a portrait of the sage Laozi, author of the *Daodejing* (Classic of the way and its power) (see fig. 35a); the goddess Xiwangmu (cat. 2); images of deities of planets and other celestial asterisms (cat. 12); an image of one of the Eight Immortals (see p. 192); multiple depictions of Daoist immortals' paradises (cat. 48); and portraits of historical heroes in the guise of Daoist adepts (cat. 60). These connections come into greater focus in the context of the Daoist practices of several of Qiu's artistic colleagues and contemporaries, including Wen Zhengming's son Wen Jia (1501–1583) and the literati collector and critic Wang Shizhen (1526–1590).

⁴¹ Little, “The Demon Queller and the Art of Qiu Ying,” 58.

⁴² On Wen Boren, see Fang-mei Chou (Chou Fang-mei), “The Life and Art of Wen Boren” (PhD diss., Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1997).

⁴³ On the *Shizhou ji* and its date, see Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen, eds., *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 1:115; for an alternative dating of the text, see Fabrizio Pregadio, *Encyclopedia of Daoism*, 2 vols. (London: Routledge, 2008), 2:898–99. The *Shizhou ji* is translated in Thomas E. Smith, “Record of the Ten Continents,” *Taoist Resources* 2, no. 2 (November 1990): 87–119.

⁴⁴ On these texts and their relationship to the *Shizhou ji*, see Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 115–16.

⁴⁵ Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 115. Pengqiu is equivalent to Penglai. Later standard accounts of these three islands list them as Fanghu, Yingzhou, and Penglai.

These individuals' links with Daoism are suggested by Wen Jia's surviving paintings of pilgrimages to famous Daoist cavern-heavens (numinous paradises sited in the terrestrial landscape) and their accompanying poems by Zhang Fengyi (1527–1613), Wang Zhideng, Xu Chu, and Wen Jia himself;⁴⁶ by Wang Shizhen's adoption of the female Daoist adept Tanyangzi as his spiritual guide;⁴⁷ and by You Qiu's portrait of Tanyangzi (cat. 61). This aggregate of nominally Confucian individuals' knowledge of religious Daoism calls into question the prevailing belief that most Ming artists, literati, and patrons were devoid of personal spiritual beliefs, and it provides an opportunity to reassess the significance of a key part of Qiu's work that touches on the long history and significance of Daoism as an elite spiritual system, as opposed to mere superstition (still a misunderstanding among many sinologists). Religious Daoism enjoyed a tremendous renaissance during the Ming dynasty among all social classes, starting with the Yongle emperor's adoption of the Daoist god Zhenwu as the primary spirit-guardian of the imperial house.⁴⁸ We should also not forget Qiu's reference to a Daoist priest in his letter to his patron (cat. 1).

The elongated double-gourd seal is also found on *Listening to the Qin* (cat. 13), Qiu's copy of the Tang-dynasty painter Zhou Fang's (active 766–after 796) original, the earliest known copy of which is *Palace Ladies Tuning the Lute*, dating to the Northern Song dynasty (eleventh century; cat. 14). A close comparison of these two paintings illustrates the important role copying played in learning the rudiments of composition, brushwork, and coloring. Qiu's copies of *Five Planets and Twenty-eight Lunar Mansions* and *Listening to the Qin* also share the archaistic, stylized faceting and similar texturing of rocks.

Viewing the Pass List (cat. 15) reflects an evolving sophistication of brushwork and coloring on Qiu's part. Depicting successful graduates of the highest civil service *jinshi* examination being introduced to the emperor in the imperial palace, this is a remarkable and long-overlooked example of the artist's early mastery of figure painting and the demanding technique of fine-lined architectural rendering (*jiehua*). In both areas, this scroll presages Qiu's ever-increasing skill in figure and architectural painting that would characterize the remainder of his career, culminating with unsurpassed brilliance in his late works of 1542–52. An early feature is the *jiu* element in the artist's surname, *Qiu*, in the signatures on both *Listening to the Qin* and *Viewing the Pass List* (see appendix 2, cats. 13, 15), which has a short dash written over the final stroke.

Another important early work is his spectacular blue-and-green-style handscroll *Saying Farewell at Xunyang* (cat. 16).⁴⁹ Its authenticity has been questioned by Ellen Johnston Laing and other scholars, on the mistaken assumption that the style and technique should conform to Qiu's mature work.⁵⁰ However, it dates to c. 1504–15, long before Qiu's maturity—it was certainly painted before the artist was twenty. *Saying Farewell at Xunyang* is also a superb early example of Qiu's skill in depicting a famous literary subject—the Tang poet Bai Juyi's *The Song of the Lute* (*Pipa xing*), an elegy on the theme of exile.⁵¹ According to Laurence Sickman:

46 See Stephen Little and Christina Yu Yu, *Chinese Paintings from Japanese Collections*, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2014), 144–49, cat. 31.

47 Ann Waltner, "T'an-yang-tzu and Wang Shizhen: Visionary and Bureaucrat in the Late Ming," *Late Imperial China* 8, no. 1 (1987): 105–33.

48 On the veneration of Zhenwu during the Ming dynasty, see Stephen Little and Shawn Eichman, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, exh. cat. (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2000), 291–311; see also John Lagerwey, "The Pilgrimage to Wu-tang-Shan," in *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China*, by Susan Naquin and Chün-fang Yü (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 293–332.

49 Previously published in *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting: The Collections of the Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, and the Cleveland Museum of Art*, exh. cat. (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1980), 201–3, cat. 164, color pl. VI.

50 Ellen Johnston Laing, "'Suzhou Pian' and Other Dubious Paintings in the Received 'Oeuvre' of Qiu Ying," *Artibus Asiae* 59, no. 3/4 (2000): 277–78.

51 For a translation of *Pipa xing*, see Yang Xianyi, *Poetry and Prose of the Tang and Song*, trans. Gladys Yang (Beijing: Panda Books, 1984), 129–33.

The poem relates how Bai Juyi went to Xunyang (Jiangzhou) to say farewell to a friend whose boat was moored by the riverbank. It was evening, and across the water he heard the sound of a lute from another boat. The instrument was played with such skill that he knew the musician must have been trained in the capital. Indeed, the player had been a famous courtesan in the capital until her beauty faded and she was married off to a tea merchant who lived at Xunyang. She was invited to join the two friends on the boat and, as night drew on, she entertained them with a song of moving sadness and beauty.⁵²

As Sickman has shown, the particularly stylized forms of this landscape are most closely derived from the blue-and-green landscapes of the late-Song/early Yuan painter Qian Xuan (c. 1235–before 1307), such as *Wang Xizhi Watching Geese* (fig. 10).⁵³

The fan painting *Boating on a Willow River* (cat. 17) is likely coeval with *Viewing the Pass List*. Both works share a technical feature—the way in which the willow trees' trunks twist in space, with identically textured striations in the bark (see fig. 10). This fan's signature has a short dash written over the first stroke of the *jiu* element in the artist's surname, *Qiu*. Like the double-gourd seals with elongated tips, these calligraphic dashes appear only in signatures from this earliest period of Qiu's artistic production and are never seen thereafter.

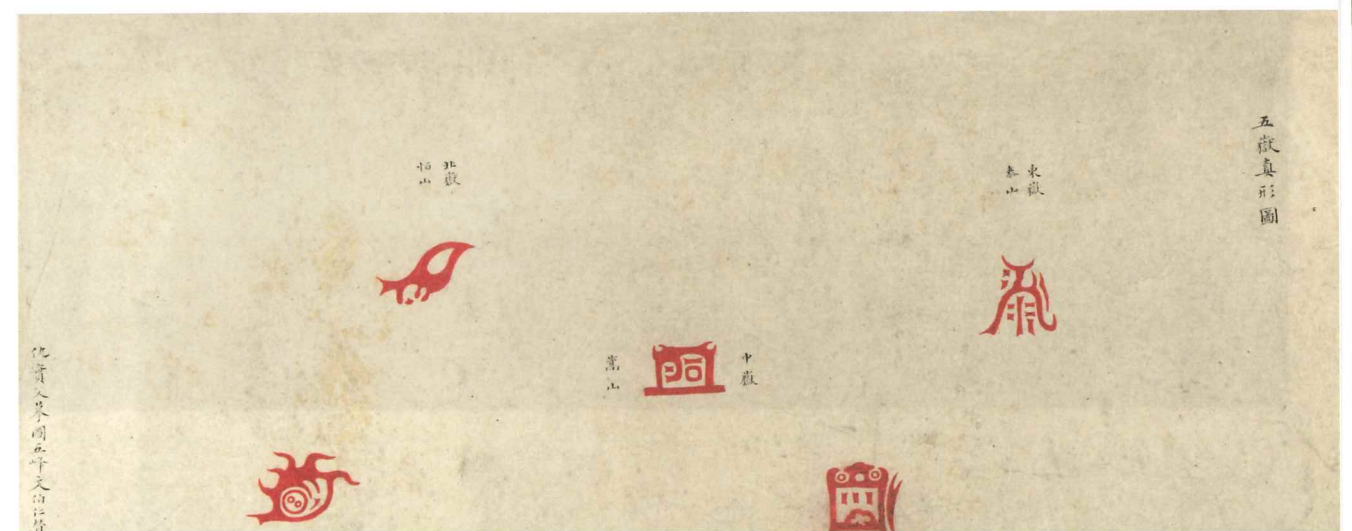
⁵² *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting*, 201.

⁵³ *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting*, 201. Ellen Johnston Laing has suggested that Qiu Ying may have seen Qian Xuan's *Wang Xizhi Watching Geese* in the collection of his patron Xiang Yuanbian, but it is likely that Xiang acquired Qian Xuan's painting after Qiu Ying's death (Xiang was twenty-seven years old when Qiu Ying died, and he lived, and continued to collect, to the age of sixty-five). It is also possible that Qiu Ying would have seen examples of Qian Xuan's blue-and-green landscapes in other Suzhou or local collections.

ing (Jiangzhou) to
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 e heard the sound
 was played with
 ve been trained in
 nous courtesan in
 as married off to a
 invited to join the
 n, she entertained
 uty.⁵²

forms of this landscape are
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CAT. 13
Attributed to Qiu Ying, *Listening to the Qin*,
Ming dynasty, c. 1504-15

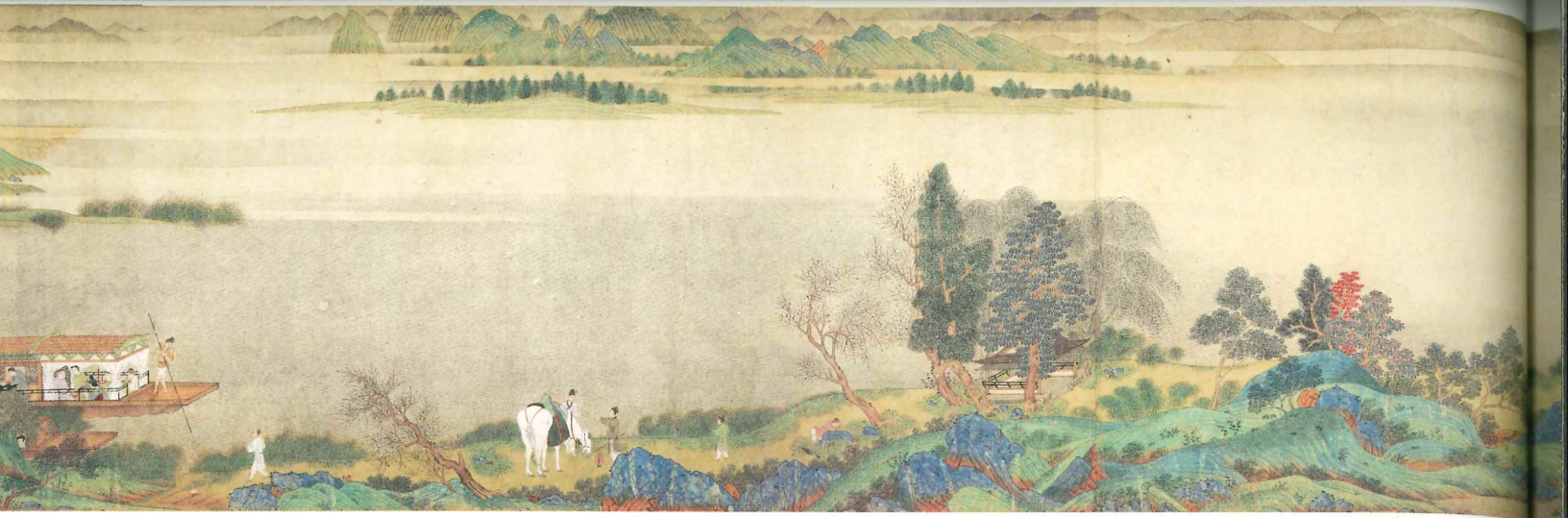


CAT. 14
After Zhou Fang, *Palace Ladies Tuning the Lute*,
Song dynasty, 11th century



CAT. 15
Qiu Ying, *Viewing the Pass List* (details),
Ming dynasty, c. 1504-15





皆文机英笔



CAT. 16
Qiu Ying, *Saying Farewell at Xunyang*,
Ming dynasty, c. 1504-15

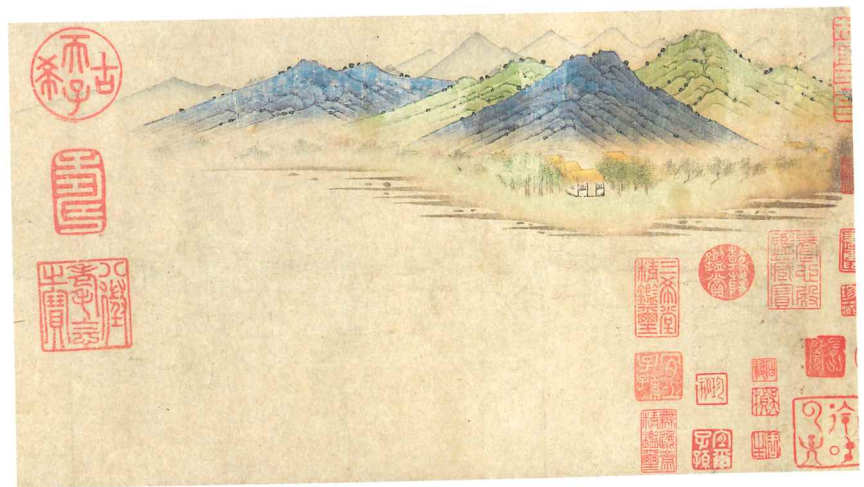
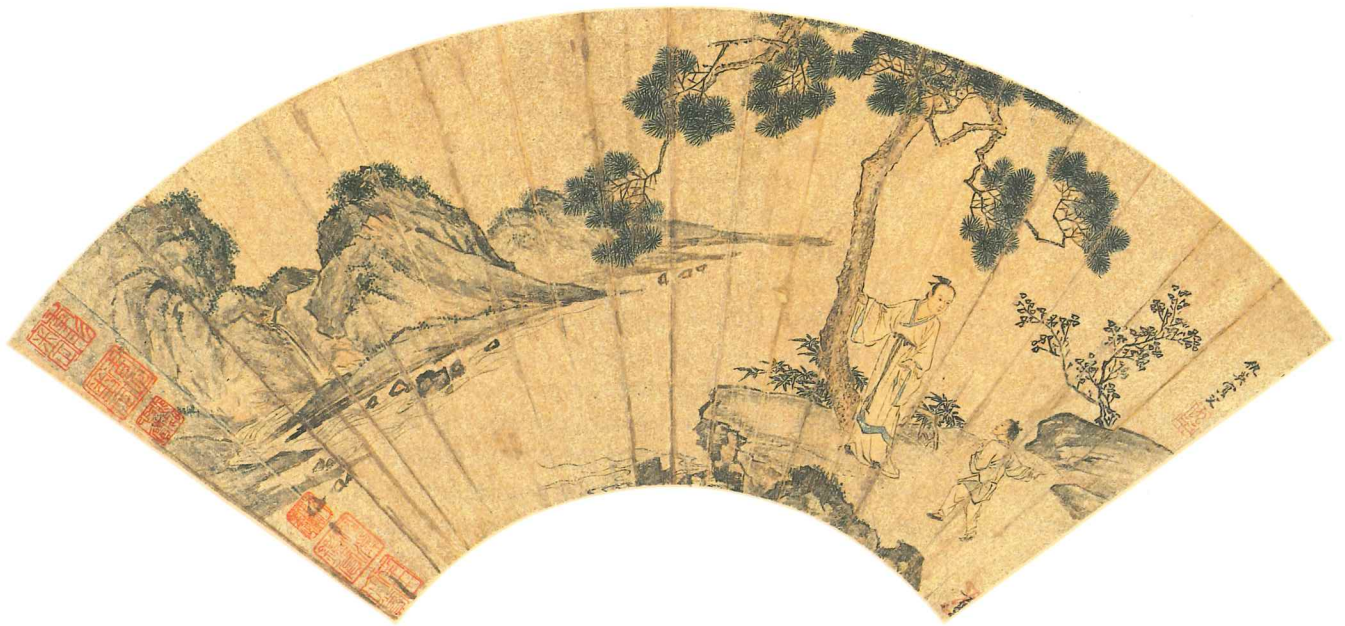


FIGURE 10
 Qian Xuan (c. 1235–before 1307), *Wang Xizhi Watching Geese* (detail) China, Yuan dynasty, c. 1295. Handscroll; ink, color, and gold on paper, $9\frac{1}{8} \times 36\frac{1}{2}$ in. (23.2 × 92.7 cm). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Ex coll.: C.C. Wang Family, Gift of The Dillon Fund, 1973



CAT. 17
Qiu Ying, *Boating on a Willow River*,
Ming dynasty, c. 1504-15



CAT. 26
Qiu Ying, *Scholar under a Pine Tree*,
Ming dynasty, c. 1515-25

EARLY WORKS: PART II (c. 1515–25)

Between c. 1515 and 1525 Qiu Ying paintings were increasingly impressed with a new group of seals that would become part of the artist's standard repertoire of seal forms. These include a nonelongated double-gourd-shaped seal reading *Shizhou* (see appendix 2, cat. 18d), a rectangle/relief seal reading *Qiu Ying* (see appendix 2, cat. 18a), a square/intaglio seal reading *Qiu Ying zhi yin* (seal of Qiu Ying; see appendix 2, cat. 18c), and a square/intaglio seal reading *Qiu Shifu shi* (Master Qiu Shifu; see appendix 2, cat. 18b). These seals are impressed on the leaves of a newly rediscovered album by the artist, *In the Spirit of Tang Poems* (cat. 18), accompanied by a series of poems by Tang-dynasty court poets—each focused on a different imperial activity. The album has a seal-script title and a running-script colophon by the Suzhou calligrapher Xu Chu, a student of Wen Zhengming's. The poems—by Su Ting (680–737), Cen Xi (d. 713), Li Jiao (644–713), Wu Pingyi (c. seventh–eighth century), Wei Yuandan (dates unknown), Zong Chuke (d. 710), Su Huan, Shen Quanqi (650–729), Lu Cangyong (664–713), Li Yong (674–746), Li Shi, Zheng Yin (d. 710), Ma Huaisu (659–718), Zhang Yue (663–730), Zhao Yanzhao (c. seventh–eighth century), Xu Yanbo (d. 714), Zhang Jiuling (678–740), Song Zhiwen (660–712), and Du Shenyang (645–708)—are inscribed in standard script by Xu Chu on the paintings' facing pages. According to Xu Chu's colophon, Qiu completed the paintings before Xu added the poems to the album. Wen Congjian (1574–1648) and Xu Naipu (1787–1866) also contributed colophons. The paintings are important for illustrating Qiu's early mastery of architectural painting and Song-dynasty landscape styles associated with Mi Fu (1051–1107), Li Tang (c. 1050–1130), Liu Songnian (1174–1224), Ma Yuan (c. 1150–after 1255), and Xia Gui (active c. 1195–c. 1235)—lineages that Qiu would continually rework over the course of his career.⁵⁴

Blue-and-Green Landscape (cat. 19), a handscroll in ink and heavy mineral colors on silk, is close in date to the album *In the Spirit of Tang Poems*.⁵⁵ Both works share an identical technical feature: the buildings' windows are painted with a combination of lead white (now partially tarnished black) and cinnabar red. The scroll has colophons by the Ming writers Wu Yi (1472–1519);⁵⁶ Wang Shou (1492–1550), whose colophon is dated 1529 and who was the brother of the more famous calligrapher Wang Chong; Wang Shimao (1536–1588), the younger brother of Wang Shizhen; Chen Wanyan (*jinshi* 1619); and Wang Duo (1592–1652), all of which were inscribed before the painting was exported to Japan in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century (or possibly earlier). The colophons by Wang Shou, Wang Shimao, and Wang Duo are generalized poems on the subject of Daoist paradises. The presence of Wang Shou's colophon specifically mentioning Qiu Ying ("Qiusheng," or Scholar Qiu) indicates that this is an early work by the artist. This reference to the artist as "Scholar Qiu" suggests that at the time Qiu Ying may have been enrolled as a student in a government-funded local school.⁵⁷ The presence of both Wu Yi's and Wang Shou's colophons indicates that by 1529, when Qiu was twenty-five, if not earlier, leading members of Wen Zhengming's literati circle admired his skills

54 Several leaves from this album are published in Harada Kinjirō, *Shina meiga hōkan* [Pageant of Chinese painting] (Tokyo: Otsuka kogeisha, 1936), 570–72. The album bears collectors' seals of Wang Yipeng (fl. c. 1488–1505), Gu Ningyuan (1580–after 1645), He Pu (nineteenth century), Li Enqing (d. 1864), and Xu Naipu (1787–1866). On Wang Yipeng's dates, see Cervone essay, note 44.

55 Previously published in *Eisei bunko ten, VI: Chūgoku no kai to sho* [Eisei bunko exhibition, VI: Chinese painting and calligraphy], exh. cat. (Kumamoto: Kumamoto Prefectural Art Museum, 1978), cat. 22; Suzuki Kei, ed., *Chūgoku kaiga sōgo zuroku* [Comprehensive illustrated catalogue of Chinese paintings], 5 vols. (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1982), vol. 3, JP22-046; and *Eisei bunko: Hosokawa ka no meihō* [Arts treasured by the Hosokawa clan: selections from the Eisei Bunko Museum collection], exh. cat. (Shigaraki: Miho Museum, 2002), cat. 40.

56 Famous for his seal-script calligraphy, Wu Yi was a nephew of the high-ranking official and collector Wu Kuan; see Marc F. Wilson and Kwan S. Wong, *Friends of Wen Cheng-ming: A View from the Crawford Collection*, exh. cat. (New York: China Institute in America, 1974), 95–97, cat. 17.

57 On the expansion of such local schools from the Ming Zhengtong reign (1436–49) onward, see Kang-I Sun Chang, "Literature of the Early Ming to mid-Ming (1375–1572)," in *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature, Volume 2: From 1375*, ed. Kang-I Sun Chang and Stephen Owen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 18–19.

as a painter. The scroll also bears earlier Chinese collectors' seals of He Liangjun (1506–1573) and Xiang Yuanbian (1525–1590). Authenticating inscriptions (*hakogaki*) stored in the painting's wooden box, written by the Kobichiko Kanō School painters and connoisseurs Eisen'in (1730–1790) and Seisen'in (1796–1846),⁵⁸ provide documentation that, during the Edo period, the painting entered the collection of the Hosokawa daimyo.

The Gathering of the Lotus Society, dated here to c. 1515–25 (cat. 20), is another early copy by the artist of a Song-dynasty painting.⁵⁹ In ink and colors on silk and signed *Qiu Ying Shifu zhi* (made by Qiu Ying Shifu), it is characterized by meticulous brushwork, exemplifying an early period in his career, when he was beginning to copy older paintings in local collections. This is one of several examples of Qiu's copies for which the Song original survives (fig. 11).⁶⁰ Unsigned, but traditionally attributed to Northern Song-dynasty painter Li Gonglin (c. 1047/49–1106), the Song painting bears a colophon by Wen Zhengming dated 1546, providing evidence that the painting was in Suzhou during Qiu's lifetime.⁶¹ The archaistic painting of the rocks and earthforms is reminiscent of the rocks of the even earlier *Palace Ladies Tuning the Lute* (cat. 14).

An early example of Qiu's mastery of the challenging *baimiao* (plain-outline) technique of uncolored line drawing—a tradition traced back to Li Gonglin—is *Mahaprajapati Nursing the Infant Buddha* (cat. 21),⁶² which depicts the Buddha's wet nurse holding him, surrounded by an entourage of five attendants and another infant in an open-sided pavilion. This is a third example in the exhibition of a Qiu copy of an earlier work (cat. 22), here by the Yuan-dynasty painter Wang Zhenpeng (active c. 1280–1329). Qiu continued to produce *baimiao* paintings throughout his career.

His copy (cat. 23) of an anonymous portrait (cat. 24) of the artist Ni Zan (1301–1374)—one of the most famous painters in Chinese history—is significant on several levels.⁶³ Ni was widely admired for his austere persona and his spare, elegant landscape paintings, the majority in monochrome ink—and for his refusal to serve the Mongols, who were the rulers of the Yuan dynasty.⁶⁴ In his version, which otherwise faithfully follows the appearance of the original, Qiu omitted the landscape screen behind the platform on which Ni Zan sits, and he changed most of the antique objects on the small table to the right. The inscription by Wen Peng (1498–1573), in small, standard script, consists of Ni's tomb epitaph and a short note reading, "In the year *renyin* of Jiajing [1542], written by your student, Wen Peng." The scroll is followed by Wen Zhengming's colophon, comprising Ni's eulogy, composed by the Yuan scholar Zhang Yu (1275–1348). The presence of inscriptions by two leading Suzhou literati artists, who often inscribed Qiu's paintings, further demonstrates their respect for him. Qiu's version of the portrait underscores his awareness of and identification with the highest literati traditions of the Jiangnan ("South of the Yangzi River") region as embodied in masters such as Ni Zan. In this sense, Qiu's painting is more than simply a copy of the famous Yuan portrait; it also reflects his own self-image as an integral part of Suzhou's cultural heritage.

58 I am grateful to the Eisei Bunko Museum's curator Sasaki Eriko for the opportunity to study this painting and its antique Japanese storage box and authentications.

59 Qiu Ying's copy is previously published in *Qiu Ying hua ji* [Compendium of paintings by Qiu Ying] (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin meishu chubanshe, 2001), pl. 42.

60 *Zhongguo meishu quanji: Huihua bian*, 3/*Liang Song huihua*, 64, fig. 33.

61 This work in the Nanjing Museum is now catalogued as a Southern Song-dynasty copy of a lost original by Li Gonglin. Another copy of this painting, purported to be a joint work by Qiu Ying and Wen Zhengming dated 1520, is in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, published in Wang Yaoting, *Yuanming yizhi tezhan tulu* [Catalogue of a special exhibition on Yuanming's retirement], exh. cat. (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1988), 111–12.

62 Previously published in *Jin Tang Wudai Song Yuan Ming Qing mingjia shuhua ji*, pl. 149. On Li Gonglin and the tradition of *baimiao* painting, see Richard M. Barnhart, "Survivals, Revivals, and the Classical Tradition of Chinese Figure Painting," in *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Chinese Painting* (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1972), 143–210.

63 Published in *Shizhou gaohui*, 88–91.

64 On Ni Zan, see Wen C. Fong et al., *Images of the Mind*, exh. cat. (Princeton, NJ: The Art Museum, 1984), 105–27.

The delicately painted and colored *Fine Delights in a Forest Kiosk* (see fig. 5) can also be tentatively dated to this period.⁶⁵ It has many similarities to early Wen Zhengming paintings, particularly *Deep Snow on Mountains and Rivers*, from 1517 (fig. 6).⁶⁶ *Fine Delights* stands apart from the vast majority of Qiu's works and of all of his surviving paintings comes closest to the styles of Wen Zhengming, his son Wen Jia, and his nephew Wen Boren.

A fan painting, *Crab Apple and Mountain Birds* (cat. 25), may also be dated to this period.⁶⁷ This is one of a handful of Qiu's surviving flower-and-bird (*huaniao*) paintings, exemplary of a genre in which he was equally proficient; others include *Narcissus and Plum* (see fig. 28), *Mandarin Ducks on a Riverbank* (dated 1540; see fig. 20), *A Pair of Ducks* (in a private Japanese collection),⁶⁸ and *Orchids*, inscribed with a poem by Wen Zhengming.⁶⁹ *Crab Apple and Mountain Birds* is signed in clerical script *Qiu Ying Shifu hua* (painted by Qiu Ying Shifu). Significantly, the artist's rectangle/relief seal reading *Qiu Ying* (see appendix 2, cat. 25) is identical to the seals on *In the Spirit of Tang Poems* (cat. 18; see appendix 2, cat. 18) and *Mahaprajapati Nursing the Infant Buddha* (cat. 21; see appendix 2, cat. 21), further indicating that these paintings are roughly coeval.

⁶⁵ Published in *Ming si dajia tezhan: Qiu Ying*, cat. 3.

⁶⁶ *Ming si dajia tezhan: Wen Zhengming*, cat. 4.

⁶⁷ Published in *Qiu Ying hua ji*, pl. 147.

⁶⁸ Published in Suzuki Kei, *Chūgoku kaiga sōgo zuroku*, vol. 4, JP34-069.

⁶⁹ Qiu Ying's *Orchids*, inscribed with a *jueju* couplet by Wen Zhengming, is published in Max Loehr, *The Great Painters of China* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1980), 285–87, fig. 156; and Christie's (New York), *Fine Chinese Ceramics, Paintings and Works of Art*, auction cat. (June 24, 1985), lot 666. Another version of this work is in the Palace Museum Beijing; published in *Qiu Ying hua ji*, pl. 71.



CAT. 18
Qiu Ying, *The Emperor Savors the Scenery*, from
In the Spirit of Tang Poems, Ming dynasty, c. 1515-19



觀國嵯峨起日邊
 祥雲駐蹕倚層巖
 天垂青海一杯水
 日暮齊安九點烟
 日長松神閣外千秋
 靈柏古壇前
 遊遊盡是蓬萊侶
 踏草琪花不記年
 茶鄉吳榮題

茶鄉吳榮題

淡上青楊柳枝
 人家萬竹故柴扉
 春風雁候花
 半叢杜雨生寒蕊
 未歸半樹未開
 依岸綠行
 鴻鵠肯人飛
 濯纒空懷浪
 思不及漢郎
 有釣磯

柳塘王世懋

楊李陳萬言觀

樓閣參差霄漢開
 峰巒疊疊水滄
 泗志欄柵外
 垂楊小步月吹香
 白竹

王世懋

王世懋



觀岡嵯峨起日邊
 祥雲整健倚層巖
 夾重青海一杯水
 日暮齊州九點烟
 百尺長松神閣外
 千秋靈柏古壇前
 遊湖盡是蓬萊侶
 瑤草琪花不記年

茶鄉吳矣題



喜見仇生樂壽圖意偏心遠
 羊峰孤竇林不礙神仙窟
 龍肌應鐘帝子都清世
 豈容白濁分明是須歌
 紫嶽天使君能看烟波興
 誰借三山与五湖
 涵峰山人三守書
 己丑春三月耕日也



仇其書之

