Five Early Paintings by Ch'iu Ying

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Biographical information about Ch'iu Ying (*tzu*, Shih-fu, *hao* Shih-chou),who along with Shen Chou (1427-1509), Wen Cheng-ming (1470-1559) and T'ang Yin(1470-1524) was counted as one of the Four Great Masters of the Ming Dynasty, is exceedingly sparse. Ch'iu was born to parents in humble circumstances in the town of T'ai-ts'ang in modern Kiangsu province probably around 1494. As a youth, he moved to Suchou where he became a student of the professional painter Chou Ch'en (ca. 1500-1535), whose other famous pupil was T'ang Yin. Ch'iu Ying relied upon the sale of his art for his living, often working on commission, and lived in the redisences of three wealthy patrons: Ch'en Kuan, Chou Feng-lai(1523-1555) and Hsiang Yuan-pien (1525-1590). ① Ch'iu Ying probably died about 1552. ②

In an effort to establish a foundation for understanding Ch'iu's artistic life, this article focuses on five paintings which safely can be assigned to the beginning years of his career, from 1513 until 1533, on the basis of external evidence. The five works to be discussed are 1. "Cloud Raft," 2."Eastern Grove," 3. "Bamboo Courtyard," 4. "Chuang-tzu," 5. "Thatched Hut Under Bamboo and Wu-t'ung Trees."

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① See Ellen Johnston Laing. "Ch'iu Ying's Three Patrons," *Ming Studies* 8 (Spring, 1979): 49-56 and "Sixteeenth-Century Patterns of Art Patronage:Qiu Ying and the Xiang Family," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 111, no. 1 (1991): 1-7.

② All accounts of his life in Chinese sources are skimpy. The two basic ones are by Wang Chih-teng, *Wu-chün tan-ch'ing chih,* 1563 *Hua-shih ts'ung-shu* ed. (Shanghai: Jen-min mei-shu ch'u-pan-she, 1962), 4-5 and Wang Shih-chen, *Yen-chou shan-jen ssu-pu kao,* 1577 (reprint, Taipei: Wei-wen t'u-shu ch'u-pan-she, 1976) 115:17b. Controversy revolving around Ch'iu's birth and death dates engages the attention of present-day Chinese scholars in particular. Several sets of alternate dates have been proposed: Wen Chao-t'ung suggested 1494 to 1561 ("Ch'iu Shih-chou," in his *Ming-tai ssu-ta hua-chia* [Hong Kong: Hsin-fu ch'u-pan-she, 1960], 19, 25); others have suggested 1482-1558 or 1500-1552 or 1502-1552 (see Shan Kuo-lin, "Ch'iu YIng sheng-p'ing huo-tung k'ao," in *Wu-men hua-p'ai yen-chiu* (Peking: Tzu-chin-ch'eng ch'u-pan-she, 1993), 219-223). Shan himself proposes 1489 to 1552 (p.222).

It is conventional in studies of an artist to group and discuss the master's oeuvre on a chronological basis as a means of charting the progress of his career: stylistic development, modifications in types of themes or subjects depicted, sequences of patrons, or personal events which affect his art, and the like. Chronologies are posited upon the examination of a corpus of genuine paintings which, preferably, bear a date in the artist's own hand.Unfortunately, few of Ch'iu Ying's paintings are dated by him. Lacking such positive dating, approximate dates may be derived from reliable external evidence, of which there are several types. A genuine inscription, written directly on the painting by an individual known to have predeceased the artist provides a *terminus ante quem.* However, the time span during which the painting might have been created can be lengthy, and so the dating is imprecise. Another category of secondary evidence is a statement by someone of the period providing information about subject or recipient written on a separate piece of paper or silk and mounted with the scroll. Both types of evidence are represented in the corpus of paintings assigned to Ch'iu Ying, and enable us to identify early examples in his ovuvre. The general situation, however, renders it impossible to generate a neat, firm, clear-cut, step-by-step stylistic chronology for Ch'iu Ying. Only the most gross stylistic changes can be verified.

Heretofore, the only available broad outline of Ch'iu's artistic development was that proposed in the catalogue of the exhibition of Wu school paintings held at the National Palace Museum in Taipei in 1975, a statement which suffers from being entirely based on paintings attributed to Ch'iu Ying in the Taipei Place Museum, without considering any of Ch'iu's works now outside that collection:

> His early works are strongly influenced by the style of the Sung dynasty painter Liu Sungnien (there are also a few which reveal the influence of Wen Cheng-ming). They are characterized by fine, polished brushwork, but there is flexibility within the gemlike hardness and a feeling of roundness within the angularity. The colors are dense and brilliant, and silk is favored over paper as a ground. In his middle and late periods Ch'iu Ying's brush strokes become increasingly blunt and straight, executed with ever-greater rapidity and freedom. At the same time, his paintings on paper begin to outnumber those on silk and his colors to become more bland....Ch'iu Ying's early paintings tend to follow the Sung dynasty practice of leaving much of the surface empty; many of these works resemble the compositional formula of Ma Yuan. Paintings from Ch'iu Ying's middle and late periods tend to fill more of the surface. ③

③ *Wu-p'ai-hua chiu-shih-nien chan (Ninety Years of Wu Shcool Painting)* (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1975), 324-25.

There are four flaws inherent in this précis. First, there is no definition of the time span for early, middle, and late periods. Second, for his early period, the one we are concerned with here covering from 1513 to 1533, three paintings were used as a basis for determining the stylistic characteristics; yet none of the three scrolls is firmly dated but each was, in circular argument, assigned a date on the basis of style. The three paintings are "Relaxing in a Forest Pavilion" (assigned a date of 1518 ④), "Watching a Waterfall from Pine-shaded Pavilion" (considered to have been painted sometime between 1523 and 1532 ⑤), and "Garden Dwelling" (assigned a date of 1532 ⑥). Third, there are contradictions between the physical data seen in these paintings themselves and Palace Museum statement. For example, in the Palace Museum statement it is asserted that in his early period Ch'iu Ying perferred silk as a ground and most often chose to "leave much of the surface empty," alluding to the one-corner compositional arrangement favored by the Southern Sung court artists. Yet two of the three paintings asserted by the Palace Museum to be "early" are painted on paper, not silk, and only one displays the dramatic one-cornered composition. Fourth, strangely, no mention was made of the possible influence of Ch'iu Ying's teacher, Chou Ch'en.

As will be demonstrated below, an analysis of a different set of paintings, paintings which prudently can be assigned to the initial era of Ch'iu Ying's artistic endeavors, casts a totally fresh perspective, one not limited, as was that advanced by the Palace Museum in 1975, to style alone, on the beginnings of this famous artist's career.

"Cloud Raft," 1513, present location unknown, fig. 1.

In the early sixteenth century, Ch'iu Ying was still a novice at painting.Although his teacher, Chou Ch'en, may have done his best to foster Ch'iu's career, it was perhaps T'ang Yin who did the most for the young man's career, because it was T'ang who, by virtue of his education, his ability to compose poetry, and his standing among the elite,

④ Reproduced in *Wu-p'ai-hua,* color plate 10 and in *Ch'iu Ying tso-p'in chan t'u-mu (An Exhibition of Works by Ch'iu Ying)* (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1989), no. 1 and p. 65.

⑤ Reproduced in *Wu-p'ai-hun*, 93 and in *Ch'iu Ying tso-p'in,* no. 4 and p.68.

⑥ Recorded in Hu Ching et al, *Shih-ch'ü pao-chi san-pien* 1816 (reprint: Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1969), 1873 and in *Ku-kung shu-hua lu* 1956, 2nd revised ed. (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1965) vol. 4, 8:42. Illustrated in *Wu-p'ai-hua,* 120 and in *Ch'iu Ying tso-p'in,* 14.

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despite the unfortunate civil service examination scandal which scuttled his chances for a bureaucratic career, had the connections with the wealthy and the lettered. T'ang was much in demand to create the commemorative pictures so sought after in the Suchou area--pictures honoring the taking of a new pseudonym or dedicating a new pavilion or retreat, as well as contributing pictures to composite scrolls of calligraphy, literature and painting, which were in vogue in his day.⑦

As early as 1509, when a mere lad of fifteen or so, Ch'iu already had one presentation scroll to his credit, the one painted in that year for an unidentified Sheng T'ao-chu (now lost).⑧ Notice of this picture first appears very late in the painting literature, and is nowhere else recorded; as Anne Clapp warns, it must be accepted with caution.⑨ Both Chou Ch'en and T'ang Yin also contributed to this gift; it is possible that either or both of them rrecommended Ch'iu Ying as a young, promising artist who could produce a picture suitable for the enterprise. This plunged Ch'iu Ying's painting directly into the company of the greats, for Shen Chou, Wen Cheng-ming and the great calligrapher Chu Yun-ming (1461-1527) also contributed to the package. In his painting, Ch'iu Ying provided a portrait of T'ao-chu (Peach-tree Bank) leaning on a rock and gazing at cranes (along with peaches, a common symbol of longevity); for Ch'iu's portrait, T'ang Yin composed a "sketchy pictorial setting."⑩ Although collaboration on a work of art is not uncommon in China, the fact that T'ang Yin provided the background for this 1509 figure painting by Ch'iu might suggest that Ch'iu's landscape abilities at this time were middling.

This observation is supported by the seemingly inept scenery in Ch'iu Ying's contribution, five years later, to another presentation scroll, the 1513 "Cloud Raft." This handscroll unfortunately is known today only through an indistinct reproduction published in 1909. Although seen but dimly, this scroll evinces certain weaknesses suggestive of an immature hand. It also has stylistic links with the art of the older T'ang

⑦ Anne De Coursey Clapp, *The Painting of T'ang Yin* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), chapter three.

⑧ Shao Sung-nien, *Ku-yuan ts'ui-lu,* (N. p.: 1904), 3:16.

⑨ Clapp, *T'ang Yin,* 256, n. 10.

⑩ Clapp, *T'ang Yin,* 51.

Yin. This is clearly a *hao* painting; Yun-ch'a, "Cloud Raft," was the pseudonym of Chang Ch'ung, one of the many members of the Chang family of K'un-shan and Suchou who were clients of local artists.⑪ According to Huang-fu Fang, Chang Ch'ung loved excursions; even at the age of sixty, he was as nimble as a youth. He wandered in the environs of Tiger Hill and Stone Lake, both near Suchou, sometimes by boat, sometimes by land, often in the company of friends and servants carrying wine jars and cups. Chang Ch'ung told his sons, "You needn't be concerned about me. All this drifting and floating is like riding a raft to the overhead Han."Thus, his *hao*, "Cloud Raft."⑫A bit of explanation is in order here."Drifting and floating" are characteristics of clouds; the "overhead Han"means the Han River in the sky, a name for the Milky Way, sometimes called the Cloudy Han. The "raft" refers to a well-known vehicle of Taoists whose "sky rafts," "star rafts," "numinous rafts," or "sylph's rafts," sccording to Edward Schafer, transported "the immortal spirits to their mysterious harbors."⑬

The entire presentation package is difficult to reconstruct. The first section consists of a poem (undated) inscribed by Wen Cheng-ming and dedicated to Yun-ch'a; this is followed by a colophon by Wen P'eng (1497-1573) naming T'ang Yin and Ch'iu Ying as the creators of the two pictorial parts of the scroll. T'ang Yin's picture is dated 1513. It shows a man seated by a stream, with the requisite misty clouds (in reference to his name) in layers behind him. At the beginning of the third and last segment, is Ch'iu Ying's inscription, barely visible in the reproduction, dedicating his picture to Yun-ch'a. Ch'iu's contribution is a short scene which opens with rapids spilling from a crevasse, followed by two twisted, leaning pine trees set against mountain slopes. To the left of the pines a gentleman sits on a rocky bluff overlooking swirling mists. He casually leans against an arm rest; nearby a servant unties a bundle of scrolls. The picture closes with two large mountain peaks and a finger pinnacle in the distance. While T'ang Yin's figure in a landscape is beautifully suave and elegant in both conception and execution, Ch'iu Ying's

⑪ For the Chang family and their support of Ch'iu Ying, see my "Qiu Ying's Other Patrons," *Journal of the American Oriental Society,* forthcoming.

⑫ Huang-fu Fang, *Huang-fu ssu-hsun chi* 1575 in *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu chen pen san chi* (Taipei: Commercial Press, 1972), 51:3b.

⑬ Edward H. Schafer, *Pacing the Void; T'ang Approaches to the Stars* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), 262; for an explication of the significance of these rafts and traveling in the firmament, see Schafer's comments on pp. 262-269.

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picture, from what can be seen in the reproduction, is muddlded in composition and stylistically discordant. The pine trees easily become confused with the background; the rounded rocky passages at the beginning, with extensive use of dots, are inconsistent with the rectangular lower support of the bluff upon which Chang sits. In its rectangularity, this structure is similar to a blocky formation seen in T'ang Yin's "Bamboo Stove" scroll of 1509 (The Art Institute of Chicago ⑭) as well as in T'ang's "I-an" scroll of about 1519 (Palace Museum, Peking; fig.2). The rendering of the figures in Ch'iu Ying's picture appears to be more accomplished than the landscape setting. It is entirely possible that the awkwardness perceptible in this scroll represents an early stage in Ch'iu Ying's career. If he was born in 1492 or so, he would have been approximately 21 years old in 1513; a reasonable age for a budding artist, with connections to the patronage world through someone like T'ang Yin, to receive commissions.

"Eastern Grove," before 1524, National Palace Museum, Taipei, fig. 3.

Among the few contemporary garden scenes depicted by Ch'iu Ying is a lovely scroll, in ink and color on silk, of two men seated inside a garden hall while servants outside preparing tea. The artist's inscription dedicates the painting to a certain Tung-lin ("Eastern Grove"). On a separate piece of paper mounted at the end of the scroll are undated poem colophons by T'ang Yin and his contemporary, Chang Ling. In the catalogue of the Wu school exhibition held at the National Palace Museum in 1975, this painting was considered a late work, done about the year 1547. ⑮

Acceptance of "Eastern Grove" as an authentic scroll by Ch'iu Ying is shadowed by the existence of two copies, one of which, titled "Garden Dwelling" (National Palace Museum, Taipei), is sometimes considered the better of the two. ⑯ "Garden Dwelling" is an old poetic and painting theme. The "Garden Dwelling" picture is followed by two poems composed by Wang Hsien-ch'en (*chin-shih* 1493), the owner of the famous Cho-cheng Garden in Suchou and the supposed recipient of the "Garden Dwelling" scroll, along with a prose note supposedly by Wang Ch'ung (1494-1533) dated 1532. James

⑭ Reproduced in Clapp, *T'ang Yin*, figs 22 and 23 and color plate 3.

⑮ *Wu-p'ai-hua*, 314.

⑯ See note ⑥.

Cahill believes the colophon belongs to a different painting for a different patron, while Stephen Little accepts both the painting and the written materials as genuine, as does Mette Siggstedt. ⑰ After careful comparison of the two scrolls, I have concluded that "Garden Dwelling" is a clumsy copy of "Eastern Grove," as revealed in the incomplete rendering of the architecture, which is basically unlike Ch'iu Ying, and in the inept drawing of, for example, the servant on a bridge. A third, much weaker version of the painting, entitled "Conversing on a Garden Terrace," is now in the Berlin Museum. ⑱

The painting dedicated to Tung-lin is by far the finest of the three scrolls, but establishing a date of execution for this scroll depends upon identifying the person who went under the name Eastern Grove, the stated recipient of this picture. Two individuals have been proposed.

The modern scholar Cheng Ch'ien believes that two comments in the opening lines of T'ang Yin's poem are clues to the possible identity of the recipient. ⑲ In these lines, T'ang refers to a descendant of Wu-su and says they sat for the exams together. Cheng has determined that T'ang is speaking of Ch'ien Kuei (1472-1530). According to Ch'ien's epitaph by Wen Cheng-ming, he was a descendant of Prince Wu-su (Ch'ien Liu) of the tenth century state of Wu-Yueh, located in the Suchou area. Ch'ien Kuei placed fifty-fifth in the 1498 examination in Nanking where T'ang Yin claimed first. Cheng believes the scroll was made for him. Unfortunately, nowhere is it stated that Tung-lin was either one of Ch'ien Kuei's alternate names, or the name of his garden estate. ⑳ On the other hand,

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⑰ James Cahill, *Parting at the Shore: Chinese Painting of the Early and Middle Ming Dynasty, 1368-1580* (New York: Weatherhill, 1978), 206; Stephen Little, "The Demon Queller and the Art of Qiu Ying (Ch'iu Ying)," *Artibus Asiae* 46, nos. 1-2 (1985):47; Mette Siggstedt, "Zhou Chen: The Life and Paintings of a Ming Professional Artist," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 54 (1982): 29. Another version recorded in Lu Shih-hua, *Wu-Yueh so-chien shu-hua lu*, 1776 (T'ai-ts'ang: Huai-yen Ke, 1910), 3: 77b-78a.

⑱ Suzuki Kei, *Chugoku kaiga sogo zuroku (Comprehensive Illustrated Catalogue of Chinese Painting* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1982), 2: 256.

⑲ Cheng Ch'ien, *T'ang Po-hu shih chi i chien chu* (Taipei: Lien-ching ch'u-pan shih-yeh kung-ssu, 1982), 40-41.

⑳ Wen Cheng-ming's "Summer Retreat in the Eastern Grove," is of no help here, because of the uncertainty introduced by the fact that the artist claimed he painted this scroll in the Western Garden of his friend, Ch'ien K'ung-chou (1475-1549). See Richard Edwards, *The Art of Wen Cheng-ming (1470-1559)* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Museum of Art, 1976), 69-72.

a garden painting for Ch'ien Kuei is entirely appropriate, for his tenth-century ancestors were noted for their love of constructing gardens. ㉑ Presumably T'ang Yin's poem was intended from the beginning to accompany Ch'iu Ying's picture. If "Eastern Grove" was made for Ch'ien Kuei, perhaps at the behest of T'ang Yin, it is possible that the two figures in the pavilion are meant to be Ch'ien and T'ang, and the date of execution would have to be 1524 or earlier because T'ang Yin died in that year.

Martie Young suggested that the "Eastern Grove" picture was made for an imperial censor named Chia Ting (1448-1523), a native of Honan Province. ㉒ Other than the fact that Tung-lin was a *hao* of Chia Ting, there is no other support for this conjecture. If "Eastern Grove" was made for Chia Ting, the date of execution would be 1523 or earlier because Chia Ting died in that year.

Anne Clapp observed that the "Eastern Grove" composition is similar to one by T'ang Yin, "The I-an" (fig.2). This resemblance is entirely understandable when "Eastern Grove" is placed in the context of being an early work by Ch'iu Ying, perhaps under the influence of T'ang himself, and made for one of T'ang's friends. "Eastern Grove" is in the tradition of Liu Sung-nien of the Southern Sung. By the sixteenth century, Liu's style, transformed by repeated re-workings into a mode, was appreciated in Suchou. T'ang Yin especially favored the Liu mode and was directly influenced by at least one of Liu's paintings which survived in the city. ㉓ Ch'iu Ying probably comprehended Liu's art as filtered through T'ang Yin. Ch'iu Ying sometimes mixed styles; here he introduces other Southern Sung devices, such as the bare pathway wandering through the mist-filled blossoming plum trees on the low incline which concludes the scroll. The pathway recalls similar passages in the Chao Ling-jang tradition, another style already absorbed into the sixteenth century aesthetic by T'ang Yin. ㉔

At the same time, "Eastern Grove" displays many features which distinguish Ch'iu Ying's hand. It is finished off in detail and interior furnishings exactly in the same way as

㉑ Liu Tun-chen, *Su-chou ku-tien yuan-lin* (Nanking: Chung-kuo chien-chu kung-yeh ch'u-pan-she, 1979), 4.

㉒ Martie W. Young. "The Paintings of Ch'iu Ying: A Preliminary Survey," (Ph. D. diss., Harvard University, 1961), 173.

㉓ Clapp, *T'ang Yin*, 93-99. For landscape modes, see Richard Edwards, "Review of *The Painting of T'ang Yin* by Anne De Coursey Clapp," *Ars Orientalis* 22 (1992): 169.

㉔ Clapp, *T'ang Yin*, 163-64.

are so many other indisputable works by Ch'iu Ying. Individuals relate to each other. The drawing of the gentlemen and servants is accurate and confident. One indication of Ch'iu Ying's descriptive skills is seen in the rendition of the fabric drape of one man's robe, it is evident that his concealed ankles are crossed. Otherwise, "Eastern Grove" contains beautiful, nuanced passages, such as the soft mists at the end through which the trunks and branches of the blossoming plum trees can just be discerned. Small adjustments in the drawing of some of the figures have the appearance of being traces of the original artist's brush as he made minor corrections as he progressed with the painting, a habit seen in the works of other Chinese artists. ㉕

During the fifteen-teens and early twenties, Ch'iu Ying was dependent upon Chou Ch'en and T'ang Yin for his patronage contacts, as well as for some of his artistic resources. By 1523, however, he had made great strides. In stylistic terms, if his " Eastern Grove" really epitomizes Ch'iu Ying's artistic level in the early 1520s, it marks a qualitative leap from the hesitant scroll for Chang Ch'ung in 1513 to the coherent and confident work of a mature artist.

"Bamboo Courtyard," before 1533, Vannotti collection, Muzzano, fig.4.

In the "Bamboo Courtyard," a fan painted in ink and color on gold-flecked paper, a solitary man sits decorously on a low rock beneath three bamboos; a purling stream zigzags from a distant bamboo grove past him. The fan bears an inscription by Wang Ch'ung. This fan is the first of three excellent paintings by Ch'iu Ying inscribed by Wang, who died in 1533, thus setting a *terminus ante quem* for them. Born in 1494, Wang Ch'ung was approximately the same age as Ch'iu Ying, but unlike Ch'iu, prepared himself for the civil service examinations, which, however, he failed eight times. Nevertheless, Wang was widely admired for his knowledge of the classics, and for his literary talent. He was especially famous for his calligraphy, characterized as charming, graceful and attractive, which was ranked by some as second only to that of Wen Cheng-ming. ㉖ Wang was a close friend of both T'ang Yin and Wen Cheng-ming. After T'ang's

㉕ For example, the Sung painter Li Sung, see Ellen Johnston Laing, "Li Sung and Some Aspects of Southern Sung Figure Painting," *Artibus Asiae* 37 [1975] nos. 1-2: 12.

㉖ Marc F. Wilson and Kwan S. Wong, *Friends of Wen Cheng-ming: A View from the Crawford Collection* (New York: China House Gallery, China Institute in America, 1974), 99.

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death in 1524 their families were united by the marriage of Wang's son to T'ang's daughter. Wen Cheng-ming's 1531 "Farewell at T'ing-yun" (Tientsin Museum, fig. 5) was dedicated to Wang Ch'ung.Inscriptions by the prestigious Wang Ch'ung on Ch'iu Ying's paintings must have enhanced the reputation of the painter, and in this respect, Wang Ch'ung can be considered an "indirect" patron, for the presence of such an inscription might be an affidavit or recommendation which, in addition to other qualities it might have, indirectly helped to "sell" the artist to others.

In addition, since Ch'iu Ying, although entirely capable of writing, was not adept at composing essays or poetry, inscriptions by Wang on Ch'iu Ying paintings supplied the missing component which painters like Shen Chou, Wen Cheng-ming and T'ang Yin, all poets and fine calligraphers in their own right, furnished for their own paintings. T'ang Yin presumably intoduced Ch'iu Ying's paintings to Wang Ch'ung.

The inscription by Wang Ch'ung on the " Bamboo Courtyard" fan is a poem dedicated to a certain monk, the characters for whose name, unfortunately, defy decipherment. The poem, translated below, is in Wang's collected works but lacks the dedication. ㉗

Visiting a Bamboo Courtyard in the Evening
The Bamboo Courtyard is veiled in azure mist,
In the Jetavana Garden the slanting blue-greens are subtle.
The pine gate in evening clouds is enwrapped,
Past the snowy wall autumn flowers fly.
The lake's bend resembles Hsi's Pond,
The overgrown terrace is not Wu's Garden.
Greely rich and dark vines grow together,
In the distance, fishermen and woodcutters return home.

The Bamboo Courtyard was a popular image in T'ang dynasty poetry and continued to be a reference throughout later centuries. The Jetavana Garden was a Buddhist retreat. Hsi's Pond alludes to Hsi Yü of the Later Han dynasty who raised fish and constructed a pond for them edged with bamboo. This pool is contrasted with the garden of the King of Wu, located in the Suchou area.

Stylistically, the flat stone is a subdued and more careful modulation of the rock

㉗ Wang Ch'ung, *Ya-i shan-jen chi* reprint (Taipei: National Central Library, 1968), 5:21b.

outcropping seen in the 1513 scroll for Chang Ch'ung. The landscape setting in the fan is simple and effective in its organization, a major improvement over the 1513 picture. In the fan, the background is constructed in a series of interlocking triangles delineated by the stream banks, verging on an abstract degign. Dots are modestly and loosely scattered across the ground and near the banks. This more manicured setting permits the focus to rest on the seated gentleman.

"Chuang-tzu," before 1533, Kurokawa Institute of Ancient Cultures, Japan; fig. 6.

The second painting with an inscription by Wang Ch'ung, an album leaf in ink and light color on paper, depicts a man seated at the base of a pine tree. The extremely casual dress and pose of the figure suggest that this is a specific individual. The motif of a man seated beneath a tree is of greatt antiquity. Often the tree is a specific one, and one which can be identified with the person, for example, the poet T'ao Ch'ien seated under a willow (one of his favorite trees) in the well-known Northern Sung hanging scroll in the National Palace Museum, Taipei. ㉘ Wang Ch'ung's couplet goes:

Sitting in the Ch'i Garden until
Nature gave off its sounds
Unaware, blue mists of sky
moistened my lapels. ㉙

The Ch'i Garden in Wang's poem refers to the Lacquer Garden connected with Chuang-tzu who supposedly lived in a place known as Lacquer Garden. By implication, the figure at the base of the tree is Chuang-tzu, even though the tree in the painting is an evergreen, not a deciduous tree.

In Ch'iu Ying's album leaf, the man is seated on a rock under a pine tree near a tumbling stream also reveals an advance toward compositional clarity over the 1513 scroll. In contrast to the sprawling trees in the 1513 picture, the robust branches of the single pine tree in the album leaf spread from a sturdy trunk to either side and above the figure, so that thte scantily-dressed man, seated comfortably among the roots of the pine

㉘ Reproduced in *Ku-kung shu-hua t'u-lu*, vol. 3 (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1989), 69.

㉙ Translation by Tung Yuan-fang.

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and vines is almost a part of the tree itself. It was just about at this time that Wen Cheng-ming seriously began his studies of twisted and gnarled pines, cypresses, and junipers as seen in his "Farewell at T'ing-yun," the hanging scroll dated 1531 and dedicated to Wang Ch'ung (Tientsin Art Museum, fig. 5.). Ch'iu Ying in his picture emphasizes the figure by completely screening any background view with washed-in mountains. The man wears a thin, transparent robe, pulled off one shoulder and his chest. In Ch'iu Ying's careful drawing, the man's torso, arms, and upper legs are all clearly visible beneath the thin fabric. The drawing of the lower leg and foot, consistently rather anatomically incorrect or at least awkward in Ch'iu's drawing, is similar to the way he rendered bare legs and feet in other paintings. The superficial rendering of hands, another of Ch'iu Ying's weaknesses, is also evident. Instead of squarish rocks, the land forms here are angular and peaked,accented along the edges with a few dots.

"Thatched Hut Under Bamboo and Wu-t'ung Trees," before 1533, Shanghai Museum; fig. 7.

Inside a thatched-roofed pavilion under the cooling fonds of bamboo and the foliage of two tall catalpa trees and further secluded in a valley freshened by a stream, a man reclimes in his lounge chair. Arrayed on a red table in front of him is his abandoned open book, an ink stone, a water dropper, a book in a blue wrapper, and a jar containing three brushes. The season is summer, as indicated by the clumps of blooming hosta and day lily near the pavilon; the man's languorous posture and bared chest suggests a sultry day. This is the perfect picture of quiet retirement, a circumstance substantiated by the poems inscribed by Wang Ch'ung, Wen Cheng-ming and P'eng Nien (1505-1566) along the upper margin of the scroll.㉚ In his poem, Wang Ch'ung refers to an unidentified individual as someone who held a position as attendant-in-ordinary (*ch'ang-shih*) and praises his literary talents; Wen Cheng-ming lauds his learning, comparing him to Wen-t'ung, a reference to Lu Chih, a native of Suchou who was expert in the *Spring and Autumn Annals* and served as reader-in-waiting for the heir apparent under Emperor

㉚ The scroll bears imperial seals and is listed in Ch'ien-lung's painting collection catalogue (Chang Chao et al., Shih-ch'ü pao-chi, preface 1745 [Taipei: National Palace Museum reprint, 1971], 653). Latter it belonged to P'ang Yuan-chi (1864-1949) and Wu Hu-fan (1884-1968/70). A colse copy, under a slightly different title, is in the National Palace Museum in Taipei (illustrated in *Ku-kung shu-hua t'u-lu*, vol. 7 [Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1991], 255 and recorded in Hu Ching et al., *Shih-ch'ü pao-chi san pien*, 1879 and in *Ku-kung shu-hua lu*, 5:354).

Hsien-tsung (r. 806-820); P'eng Nien's poem rings on the images in the verses by Wang and Wen. All three poems mention "flowers born of the brush," a metaphor connecting poems and picture with a cluster of meanings: the poems themselves, the unidentified man's literary and scholarly talents, the hosta and day lily in the painting, and the painting itself.

Rendered in ink and color on paper, the scene in this hanging scroll, like the scene in the Kurokawa album leaf, is restricted by a wall of mounttains to create the valley, but the depth is greater than that in the album leaf. The composition of a man in a small hut in a grove of trees behind a curving stream and a mountain background is conventional; Wen Cheng-ming's "Tea Tasting" series provideds one prototype, as does his "Chi-hsiang Pavilion" of 1521 (My Humble House, Taipei).㉛ In Ch'iu's scroll, the pushing of background mountains well back behind a misty bamboo grove is also reminiscent of similar compositions by Wen Cheng-ming. Ch'iu's picture, however, is more complex for between the foreground creek and the background mountains is the misty bamboo grove by a stream, then, in the mid-ground, the small thatched hut. There are stylistic affinities with other Ch'iu Ying paintings from his early period. Landscape elements are in triangular wedges not dissimilar from those in the "Bamboo Courtyard" fan. The crisp edges of forms, accented with light rows of dots recalls the similar treatment of edges in the "Chuang-tzu" album leaf, and ultimately reflects the tutelage of Chou Ch'en, who handles landscape forms with a similar line and dot combination in his "Making Tea under the Pine Trees" (University of Michigan Museum of Art; fig. 8) and in his "Nine Ancients of Mt. Shang" (Tientsin Art Museum㉜). On the other hand, the strikingly delicate treatment of the boughs of intricate foliage patterns, however, reflects Ch'iu's distinctively personal appreciation of nature, as does the sensitive rendition of blossoming lilies in the foreground

Conclusion

On the basis of the five paintings discussed above, it is evident that in his early career, Ch'iu Ying was stylistically indebted to Chou Ch'en and T'ang Yin as well as to Wen Cheng-ming. Ch'iu's early paintings reflect the brush of Liu Sung-nien, but only as seen through the hand of T'ang Yin, and Ch'iu, rather than using the open or one-sided

㉛ Reproduced in Clapp, *T'ang Yin*, fig. 21.

㉜ Reproduced in *Chung-kuo mei-shu ch'üan-chi, hui-hua pien, 7 Ming-tai hui-hua, chung* (Shanghai: Jen-min mei-shu ch'u-pan-she, 1989). p1. 22.

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approach, just as often elected to use a closed compositional arrangement of landscape as did both T'ang Yin and Wen Cheng-ming. This need not mean that Ch'iu Ying and Wen Cheng-ming were master and pupil or even acquaintances. Wen's style was known throughout the Suchou area and many artists appropriated it, even though they never were acknowledged pupils of Wen. A case in point is Lu Chih (1496-1576), who, as Louise Yuhas has demonstrated, worked in the Wen style, but never studied formally with him.[33] In general, in this early period, Ch'iu seems more influenced by his contemporaries than great antiquity.

Additional information about the artistic status of Ch'iu Ying can be garnered from this survey of five early paintings. As a beginning professional painter, Ch'iu needed contacts and commissions; initially he must have been indebted to Chou Ch'en and T'ang Yin for these. As early as 1509, T'ang Yin might have assisted the neophyte complete a commission by supplying a landscape background for Ch'iu's figure. In 1513 and again before his death in 1524, T'ang Yin may have played a role in establishing patronage connections for Ch'iu Ying.

It is noteworthy that four of these paintings can specifically be identified as presentation pieces, dedicated either by the artist himself, or implied as such by the external evidence of secondary inscriptions by T'ang Yin and Wang Ch'ung. Thus from the beginning, Ch'iu Ying was devising pictures worthy of being presented as gifts. Although at this stage in his career, Ch'iu Ying's style was largely indebted to that of others, he managed to conceive unique creations perhaps based upon his knowledge of the life and likes of the recipient, as seen in particular in "Bamboo Courtyard," and "Chuang-tzu," a feature which would characterize his oeuvre in general. For example, Ch'iu was asked to provide a fiftieth-birthday gift for Chang Ying-wen (fl. c 1530-94), the author of a book on collecting art objects, the *Ch'ing pi ts'ang*,[34] and a nephew of the Chang Ch'ung for whom Ch'iu Ying depicted "Cloud Raft" in 1513. Instead of producing an ordinary expression of wishes for longevity, such as the hackneyed pine tree or crane, Ch'iu created a personalized birthday gift. In recognition of Ying-wen's interest

[33] See Louise Yuhas "Lu Chih and the Literati Tradition: Paintings in the Style of Ni Tsan," *Ars Orientalis* 13 (1982):1, 35 and her "The Landscape Paintings of Lu Chih Part I," *National Palace Museum Bulletin* 20, nos. 5-6 (1985-86):4.

[34] For this book, see Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (Cambridge :Polity Press, 1991), 31-34, 59, 106.

in alchemical arts,[35] Ch'iu elected to depict the immortal, Hung Yai, who, according to one account, obtained the Tao during the time of Huang-ti. Ch'iu's painting was recorded by Chang Ying-wen's son, the famous art historian Chang Ch'ou, whose notes on Chinese paintings form major repositories of information about paintings of this period and earlier.[36] Painted in the style of the Southern Sung painter, Ma Yuan, Ch'iu's painting bore colophons by the famous literatus from T'ai-ts'ang, Wang Shih-chen (1526-1590) and his brother Wang Shih-mou (1536-1588), the former saying that the painting had been made as a fiftieth-birthday present for Chang Ying-wen.[37] Such a painting would not only celebrate the birthday anniversary as a gift, but the subject would, by implication rather than overt statement, express the sentiment of "many happy returns." On another level, a portrait of Huang Yai could be read as representing Chang himself, a common occurrence in Chinese culture where a sitter might be cast as a favorite poet or hero from the past.

Other harbingers of Ch'iu Ying's own artistic proclivities are already evident in these five paintings: a talent for accurate figure depiction, a preference for polished detail, a delight in rich textures and color, a fascination with passages of lush foliage as seen in "Thatched Hut Beneath Wu-t'ung Trees and Bamboo," the visual pleasure of which foreshadows similarly delicate compacting of leaf designs in the beautiful "Lady in a Lakeside Pavilion" (Boston Museum of Fine Art) of "Fisherman's Flute Heard over the Lake" (Nelson Gallery, Kansas City).[38] Even at this stage in his career, Ch'iu Ying

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[35] See the entry by Liu Lin-sheng and Chaoying Fang, "Chang Ch'ou," in *Dictionary of Ming Biography 1368-1644*, ed. by L. Carrington Goodrich and Fang Chaoying (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 1:51.

[36] Especially his *Ch'ing-ho shu-hua fang* and his *Chen-chi jih-lu*. For additional information on Chang Ch'ou's life see his biography by Liu and Fang in *Dictionary of Ming Biography* 1:51-53 and on his art writings, see Hin-cheung Lovell, *An Annotated Bibliography of Chinese Painting Catalogues and Related Texts*, Michigan Papers in Chinese Studies, no. 16, (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1973), 22-27.

[37] Chang Ch'ou, *Ch'ing-ho shu-hua fang*, preface 1616 (N. p.; n. d.), 12.50; Pien Yung-yü, *Shih-ku t'ang shu-hua hui k'ao*, 1682, reprint (Taipei: Cheng-chung shu-chü, 1958), 27.36.

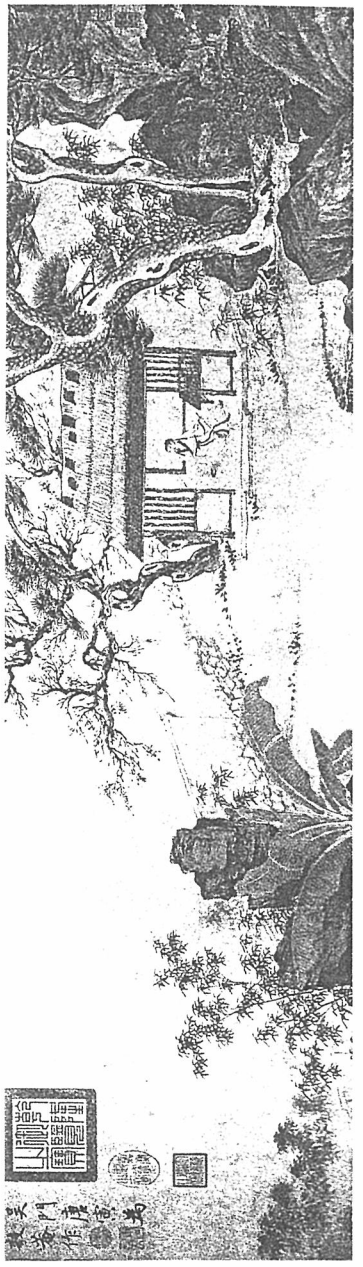
[38] "Lady in a Lakeside Pavilion" is reproduced in Osvald Sirén, *Chinese Painting, Leading Masters and Principles* (New York: The Ronald Press, 1956-58), vol. 6, pl. 246; "Fisherman's Flute" is reproduced in Wilson and Wong, *Friends of Wen Cheng-ming*, fig. 19.

occasionally surpassed contemporary artistic influences to create memorable images, as in the "Bamboo Courtyard" fan and the "Chuang-tzu" album leaf. Perhaps Wang Ch'ung recognized parallels to his own artistic qualities in Ch'iu's paintings when he endorsed them with poems, sometimes of his own composition, in his "graceful, charming and attractive" calligraphy.

After the works Ch'iu Ying must have painted in or before 1533, there is a gap of some ten years before the appearance of another painting which can be safely assigned a date. By 1535 Ch'iu's champion, T'ang Yin, had been deceased for nearly a decade; his elite advocate, Wang Ch'ung had died two years earlier; and his teacher, Chou Ch'en probably died in this year. Ch'iu Ying was on his own.

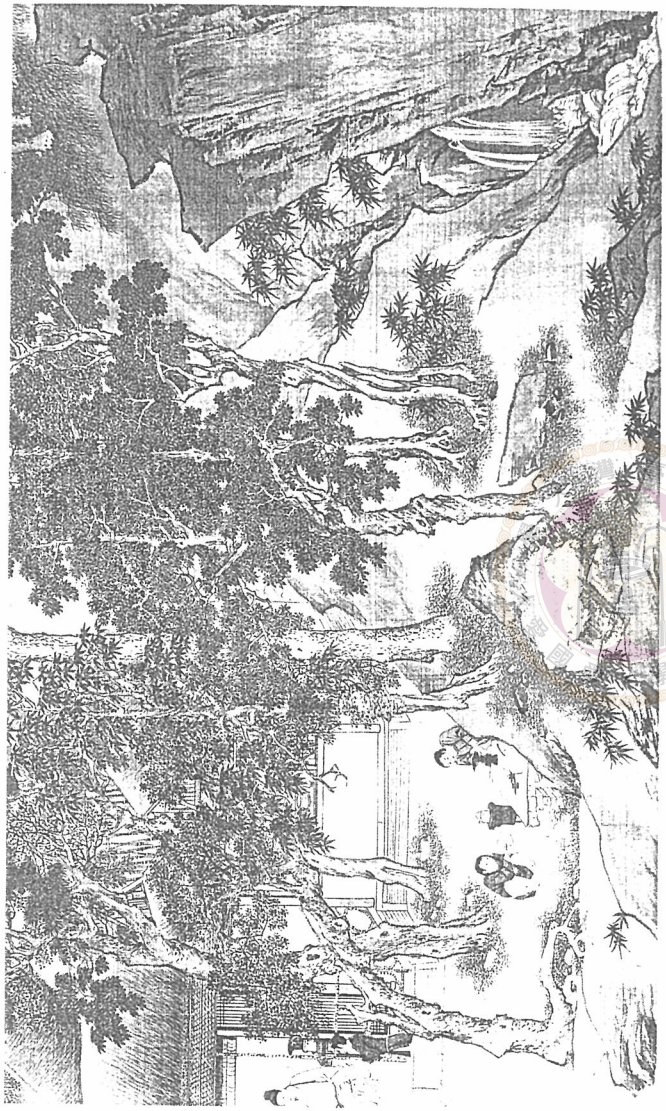


1. Ch'iu Ying (c.1494-c.1552),"Cloud Raft,"1513. Present location unknown. Publication: Chung-kuo ming-hua chi (Shanghai: Yu Cheng Book, Co.,1909),vol. 2.

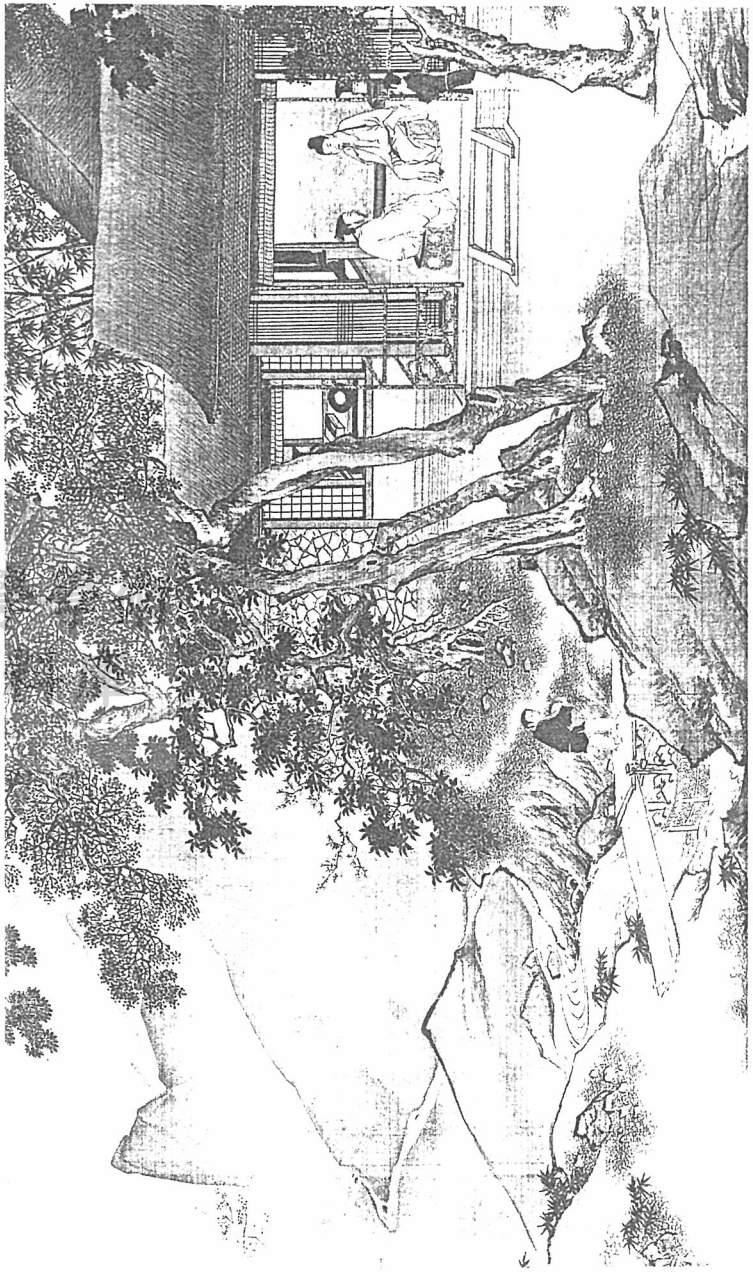


2. T'ang Yin(1470-1524), "The I-an," about 1519. Ink and color on paper. Collection: Palace Museum, Peking. Publication: Clapp, *T'ang Yin*, pl. 2.

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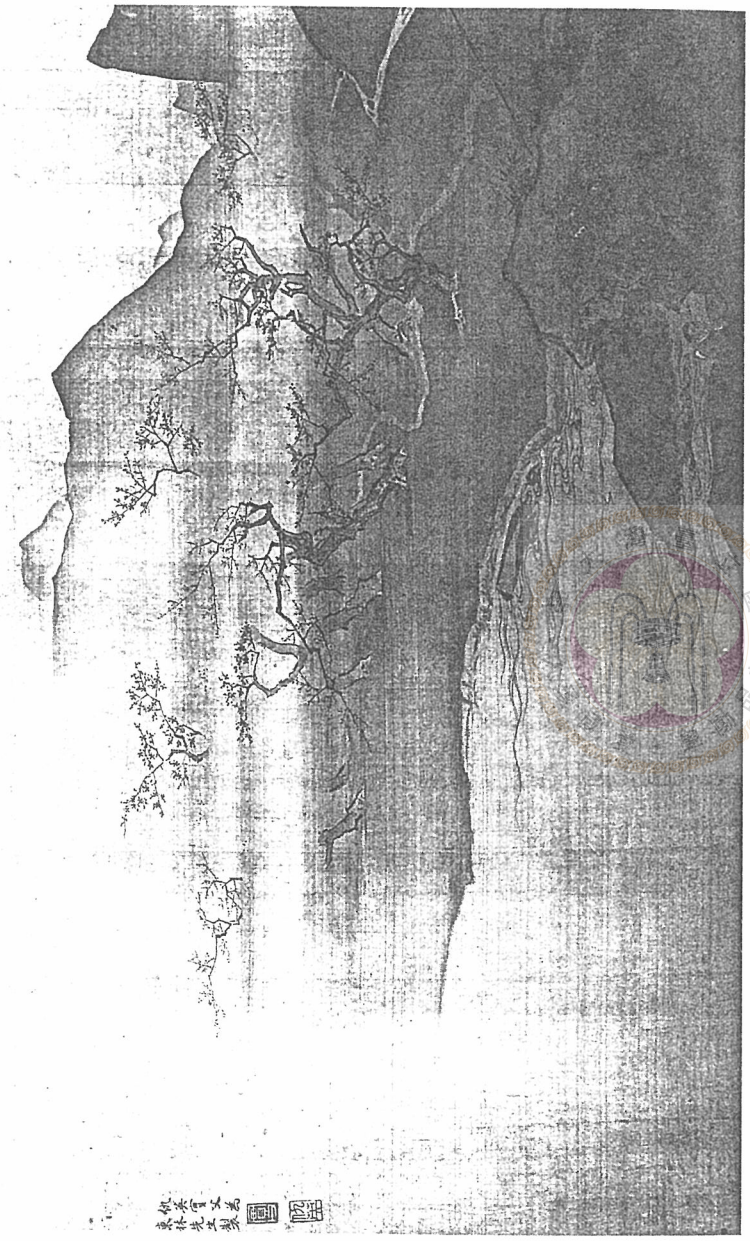


3-1. Ch'iu Yin "Eastern Grove," before 1524. Ink and color on silk. Collection: National Palace Museum, Taipei.

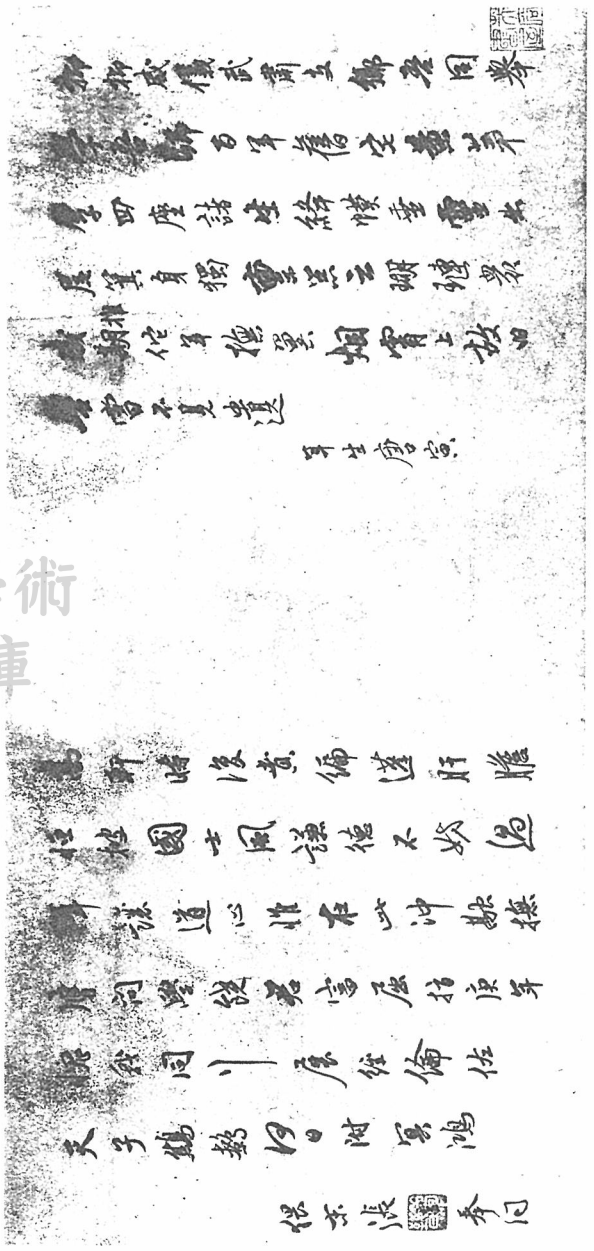


3-2. Ch'iu Yin "Eastern Grove," before 1524. Ink and color on silk. Collection: National Palace Museum, Taipei.

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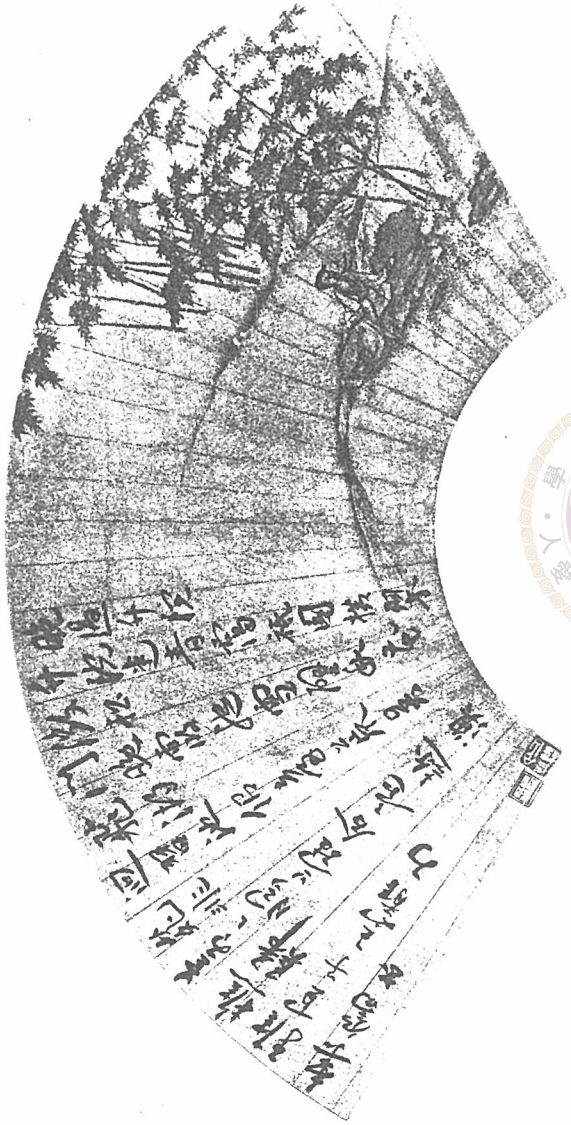


3-3. Ch'iu Yin "Eastern Grove," before 1524. Ink and color on silk. Collection: National Palace Museum, Taipei.



3-4 Ch'iu Yin "Eastern Grove," before 1524. Ink and color on silk. Collection: National Palace Museum, Taipei.

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4. Ch'iu Ying, "Bamboo Courtyard," before 1533. Ink and color on gold spattered paper. Collection: Dr. Franco Vannotti, Muzzano. Publication: *Les quatre grands peintres de la Dynastie des Ming xve et xvie siècles* (Geneva: Collections Baur, 1966) fig. 20



5. Wen Cheng-ming (1470-1559), "Farewell at T'ing-yun,"1531. Ink and color on paper. Collection: Tientsin Museum. Publication: *I-yuan tuo-ying* (Shanghai: Jen-min mei-shu), no. 45 (1993),p. 14.

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6. Ch'iu Ying "Chuang-tzu," before 1533. Collection: Kurokawa Institute of Ancient Cultures, Japen. Publication: Sirén. *Chinese Painting*, 6:238.



7. Ch'iu Ying "Thatched Hut Under Bamboo and Wu-t'ung Trees," before 1533. Ink and color on paper. Collection: Shanghai Museum. Publication: *Toso genmin meiga taikan* (Tokyo: Otsuka Kogeisha, 1929), 277.

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8. Chou Ch'en (active c. 1500-1535), "Making Tea under Pine Trees by a Stream."Ink and color on silk. Collection: University of Michigan Museum of Art. The Margaret Watson Parker Art Collection, 1963/2.3