

Artist: Song Ke 宋克 (1327–1387)
Title: *A Myriad Bamboo*
《萬竹圖》
Wanzhu tu
Dynasty/Date: Ming, 1369
Format: Handscroll
Medium: Ink on paper
Dimensions: 24.9 x 98.1 cm (9-13/16 x 38-5/8 in)
Credit line: Purchase
Accession no.: F1938.18
Provenance: Tonying and Company, New York

Outside label slip: (1) – Chu Deyi 褚德彝 (1871–1942)

Ink on dark brown paper.

Eight characters, clerical script; plus 2 columns, smaller standard script

元宋仲溫《萬竹圖》卷。虛齋秘匱，丁丑八月，松窗。

A Myriad Bamboo, handscroll by Song Zhongwen [Song Ke] of the Yuan dynasty. In the private collection of Xuzhai [Pang Yuanji, 1864–1949]. Eighth lunar-month of the *dingchou* year [September 5–October 3, 1937], Songchuang [Chu Deyi].

Signature: 松窗
Songchuang

Date: 丁丑八月
Eighth lunar-month of the *dingchou* year (September 5–October 3, 1937)

Seal: (1)
undeciphered (square relief)

Inside label slip: Geng Zhaozhong 耿昭忠 (1640–1686)

Ink on dark brown paper.

Seven characters, standard script; plus 2 columns, smaller standard script

元宋仲溫《萬竹圖》。董昶諸家題跋三則。妙品。古軒藏。

A Myriad Bamboo, by Song Zhongwen [Song Ke] of the Yuan dynasty. With three colophons inscribed by Dong Chang and others. Of the marvelous class. In the collection of [Ban]guxuan [Geng Zhaozhong].

Signature: none

Date: none

Seal: (1)
Xingong jianshang 『信公鑒賞』 (rectangle intaglio)

Frontispiece: One sheet unused light-brown paper, with one (1) faint seal.

Dimensions: 24.9 x 59.3 cm (9-3/4 x 23-5/8 in)

Seals: (1)
undeciphered (square relief)

Mounting silk 1: Panel of beige silk, with phoenix-and-clouds motif. Between frontispiece and painting. With six (6) full seals, plus three (3) seals half on painting (see below).

Dimensions: 24.9 x 12.1 cm (9-3/4 x 4-15/16 in)

Painting:

Artist Inscription: (1) – Song Ke 宋克 (1327–1387)

Panting, upper left.

2 columns (thirteen characters), standard script.

己酉歲，宋仲溫為長卿寫《萬竹圖》。

In the *jiyou* year [1369], Song Zhongwen [Song Ke] drew *A Myriad Bamboo* for Changqing [unidentified].

Signature: 宋仲溫
Song Zhongwen

Date: 己酉歲
the *jiyou* year [1369]

Seals: (1)
Song Ke siyin 『宋克私印』 (square intaglio)

Mounting silk 2: Panel of beige silk, with phoenix-and-clouds motif. Between painting and first colophon paper. With five (5) full seals, plus three (3) seals half on painting, and one (1) seal half on colophon paper (see below).

Dimensions: 24.9 x 12.9 cm (9-3/4 x 5-1/16 in)

Colophons: (3) — On two separately mounted pieces of paper, with one colophon on first sheet, followed by a strip of paper (W 0.5 cm); and two colophons on the second sheet, followed by another strip of paper (W 0.5 cm) and mounting silk 3 (see below).

1. Dong Chang 董昶 (ca. 1335–ca. 1408)

Ink on brown paper. Dimensions: 24.9 x 47.6 cm (9-3/4 x 18-3/4 in)
14 columns, standard script. Prose, and poem (4x7).

吳郡夏彥哲氏，博雅好古。嘗於市肆中購得手卷一枚，出示與余，乃故人宋公仲溫之所作《萬竹圖》也。觀其筆法臻妙，蕭閒澹遠，多而不繁，葉葉不苟作，頗似澹游、房山意味。公平日好鼓琴，有伯牙之趣，況能乎其書得二王筆訣，又善鳥身之術。公極聰敏，好多為之，以其所能種種不在人下，乃莫不有所敬也。聊賦短章于後：

鳳翔別駕已仙游，一別俄驚二十秋，展卷叢篁餘墨在，使人披覽動新愁。同郡董昶。

Mister Xia Yanzhe of Wujun [modern Suzhou] is broadly cultured and fond of antiquities. He once purchased a handscroll in the marketplace, and when he brought it out to show me, it [turned out] to be *A Myriad Bamboo* by my late friend, master Song Zhongwen [Song Ke]. Observing the utterly marvelous [quality] of his brushwork—[the scene] desolate and lonely stretching off into the distance, with numerous [bamboo] but not too much, and not one leaf carelessly done—[the painting] rather resembles [the works of] Danyou and Fangshan in concept and flavor.¹ Every day [Song Ke] loved to play his *qin* [zither], for which he possessed the inclination of a Boya, and even more capable was he in calligraphy, capturing the secret brush

[techniques] of the Two Wangs, while he was also skilled in the art of bird-forms.² Exceedingly clever and intelligent, he put [his talents] to many uses, and as he was inferior to none in any of the sundry things [he undertook], there was no one who did not have respect for him. So I have composed a short stanza, as follows:

The vice-prefect of Fengxiang has become an immortal,³
Since he left, I'm suddenly surprised twenty years have passed.
I unroll this scroll of bamboo thickets, where his ink remains, And
am moved to renewed sorrow as I open it and look.

Dong Chang, from the same county [as Song Ke]⁴

Signature: 董昶

Dong Chang

Date: ca. 1407 (see poem, line 2)

Seals: (2)

Dong Chang yin 『董昶印』 (square intaglio) – following signature

Dong shi Weiming 『董氏惟明』 (square intaglio) – following signature

2. Yang Zhu 楊翥 (1369–1453)

Ink on light brown paper, with scrolling cloud design. First of two colophons.

Dimensions: 24.9 x 72.5 cm (9-3/4 x 28-9/16 in)

8 columns, standard script. Poem (16x5).

猗猗渭川種，煙雨萬竿綠，軒前儼相對，宛若篔簹谷。日映色篩金，風來聲戛玉，寧知炎暑薰，不憚冰霜肅。虛心似有容，勁節持幽獨，蒼翠恆不移，根本異凡俗。七賢樂清趣，武公詠淇澳，俛焉比其德，前脩以自勗。吳郡楊翥。

[Poem not translated.] Yang Zhu of Wujun.

Signature: 楊翥
Yang Zhu

Date: none

Seals: (3)
Sanrang liren 『三讓里人』 (rectangle intaglio) – top right
Yang shi Zhongju 『楊氏仲舉』 (square intaglio) – following signature
Cilin beiyuan 『詞林備員』 (square intaglio) – following signature

3. Qian Bo 錢博 (ca. 1410–1480)

Same sheet of paper, left. Second of two colophons.

9 columns, running script; plus 1 column, running-standard script. Poem (8x7).

南宮書法妙天下，更愛臨池寫墨君，八法縱橫如籀畫，萬竿瀟灑絕塵氛。冰霜勁節凌寒直，
， 竿籟秋聲入夜聞，安得相過尋二仲，清風一榻擬平分。

雲間錢博為公叙題。

[Poem not translated.] Inscribed for Gongxu by Qian Bo from Yunjian.⁵

Signature: 錢博
Qian Bo

Date: none

Seals: (2)
Ruxintang 『如心堂』 (rectangle relief) – top right
Yuanbo 『原博』 (square relief) – bottom right

Mounting silk 3: Panel of beige silk, with phoenix-and-clouds motif. Following second colophon paper and second strip of mounting paper. With two (2) full seals, plus one (1) seal half on mounting silk and half on following unused end paper (see below).

Dimensions: 24.9 x 13.0 cm (9-3/4 x 5-1/8 in)

Collector seals: (34)

1. Geng Zhaozhong 耿昭忠 (1640–1686) – (15)

Dancheng 『丹誠』 (circle intaglio) – mounting silk 1, mid right

Qianshan Geng Xingong shuhua zhizhang 『千山耿信公書畫之章』 (square relief) –
mounting silk 1, lower right

Zhenshang 『真賞』 (gourd relief) – mounting silk 1/painting join

Banguxuan shuhua yin 『半古軒書畫印』 (square intaglio) – mounting silk 1/painting join,
middle – (1/5)

Zhenmi 『珍祕』 (square relief) – painting, lower right

Yi er zisun 『宜爾子孫』 (square intaglio) – painting, lower right

Gong 『公』 (square relief) – painting, lower left

Xin'gong zhenshang 『信公珍賞』 (square relief) – painting, lower left

Banguxuan shuhua yin 『半古軒書畫印』 (square intaglio) – painting/mounting silk 2 join,
middle – (2/5)

Qinshutang 『琴書堂』 (square intaglio) – mounting silk 2, left

Duwei Geng Xingong shuhua zhizhang 『都尉耿信公書畫之章』 (square intaglio) –
mounting silk 2, left

Banguxuan shuhua yin 『半古軒書畫印』 (square intaglio) – mounting silk 2/colophon
paper 1 join, middle – (3/5)

Banguxuan shuhua yin 『半古軒書畫印』 (square intaglio) – colophon paper 1/paper
mounting strip/colophon paper 2 join, middle – (4/5)

Banguxuan shuhua yin 『半古軒書畫印』 (square intaglio) – colophon paper 2/paper
mounting strip/mounting silk 3 join, middle – (5/5)

*Geng Zhaozhong Xingong shi zi Zailiang biehao Changbai Shanzhang shoucang shuhua
yinji* 『耿昭忠信公氏字在良別號長白山長收藏書畫印記』 (square intaglio) – mounting
silk 3/end paper join

2. Geng Jiazuo 耿嘉祚 (late 17th–early 18th century) – (5)

Geng Huihou jianding shuhua zhi zhang 『耿會侯鑑定書畫之章』 (square relief) –
mounting silk 1, lower left – (1/2)

Huihou zhi zhang 『會侯之章』 (square relief) – mounting silk 1/painting join



Huihou zhencang 『會侯珍藏』 (square intaglio) – painting, lower right – (1/2)

Geng Huihou jianding shuhua zhi zhang 『耿會侯鑑定書畫之章』 (square relief) –
mounting silk 2, lower right – (2/2)

Huihou zhencang 『會侯珍藏』 (square intaglio) – colophon 1, lower right – (2/2)

3. Pang Yuanji 龐元濟 (1864–1949) – (11)

Tuixiu'an zhu 『退脩盒主』 (square relief) – mounting silk 1, mid right

Laichen xinshang 『萊臣心賞』 (square relief) – mounting silk 1, mid right

Wuxing Pang shi zhencang 『吳興龐氏珍藏』 (rectangle relief) – mounting silk 1, lower
left

Xuzhai shending 『虛齋審定』 (square relief) – painting, mid right

Pang Laichen zhencang Song Yuan zhenji 『龐萊臣珍藏宋元真跡』 (square relief) –
painting, lower right

Xuzhai zhijing zhi ping 『虛齋至精之品』 (rectangle relief) – painting/mounting silk 2, join

Laichen shencang zhenji 『萊臣審藏真跡』 (square relief) – mounting silk 2, right

Xuzhai moyuan 『虛齋墨緣』 (square relief) – mounting silk 2, right

Xuzhai miji zhi yin 『虛齋秘笈之印』 (square relief) – colophon 1, lower right

Xuzhai jianding 『虛齋鑑定』 (square relief) – mounting silk 3, lower right

Pang Yuanji shuhua yin 『龐元濟書畫印』 (square intaglio) – mounting silk 3, lower right

4. Yuan Lizhun 袁勵準 (1875–1936)⁶ – (1)

Konggaohan cang zhenmi 『恐高寒藏珍祕』 (rectangle relief) – painting, mid left

5. Zhou Dawen 周大文 (1890–after 1966)⁷ – (1) – ?

Zhen da da wen 『貞大大文』 (square relief) – painting/mounting silk 2 join, middle

6. Unidentified – (1)

Jinshi'an 『金石龕』 (square relief) – painting, lower right

Traditional Chinese catalogues: (2)

Yu Fengqing 郁逢慶 (active late 16th–early 17th century). *Yu shi shuhua tiba ji* 郁氏書畫題跋記. Postscript 1634. Shanghai: Shenzhou guoguangshe, 1911. 6:19b–20a.

(lists title as *Shuimo congzhu juan* 水墨叢竹卷 (Bamboo thickets in ink; handscroll);
transcribes all three colophons)

Sun Yueban 孫岳頒 (1639–1708), Wang Yuanqi 王原祁 (1642–1715) et al., comps. *Peiwenzhai shuhua pu* 佩文齋書畫譜. Preface 1708. Yangzhou 揚州: Yangzhou shiju 揚州詩局, 1708.
86:32a. (quotes most of first colophon from Yu Fengqing catalogue above)

Selected Bibliography:

Tō Sō Gen Min meiga taikan 唐宋元明名畫大觀 (Catalogue of the Works of Chinese Master Painters held at Tokyo in the Art Gallery, November–December, 1928, under the auspices of the

Japanese Government). Eds. Tō Sō Gen Min meiga tenrankai 唐宋元明名畫展覽會. Small edition. 2 vols. Tokyo: Otsuka Kōgeisha 大塚巧藝社, 1929. Vol. 2, 223.

_____. Large edition. 4 vols. Tokyo: Otsuka Kōgeisha 大塚巧藝社, 1930. Vol. 3, plate 47.

Hushe yuekan 湖社月刊 85 (December 1934): 4; and 86 (January 1935): 4. Reprint. Issues 1–100. 3 vols. Tianjin: Tianjin guji shudian, 1992. Vol. 3, 1384 and 1390.

Sirén, Osvald (1879–1966). *A History of Later Chinese Painting*. London: The Medici Society, 1938. Vol. 1, 16, plate 7.

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Nakata Yūjirō 中田勇次郎 (1905–1998) and Fu Shen 傅申. *Ōbei shuzō: Chūgoku hōshō meiseki shū* 歐米收藏：中國法書名蹟集 (Masterpieces of Chinese Calligraphy in American and European Collections). 4 vols. Tokyo: Chuokoron-sha, 1981. Vol. 1, 96–101 (plates 80–83) and 143.

Xu Bangda 徐邦達, ed. *Zhongguo huihuashi tulu* 中國繪畫史圖錄. 2 vols. Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1981). Vol. 2, 457.

Zhang Guangbin 張光賓, ed. *Zhongguo shuhua 3: huazhu hua* 中國書畫3 : 花竹畫. Taipei: Guangfu shuju, 1981. Pp. 40-42 (plate 21).

Suzuki Kei 鈴木敬 (1920–2007), ed. *Chūgoku kaiga sōgō zuroku* 中國繪畫總合圖錄 (Comprehensive Illustrated Catalogue of Chinese Paintings). 5 vols. Tokyo: University of Tokyo, 1982–83. Vol. 1, 204–05 (A21–045).

Haiwai cang Zhongguo lidai minghua bianji weiyuanhui 海外藏中國歷代名畫編輯委員會, eds. *Haiwai cang Zhongguo lidai minghua* 海外藏中國歷代名畫. 8 vols. Changsha: Hunan meishu chubanshe, 1998. Vol. 5, 2–¹ (no. 2).

¹ During the early Ming dynasty, Song Ke (1327–1387) served for a time as vice-prefect (*tongzhi* 同知) of Fengxiang county (near Xi'an in Shaanxi Province), where some sources say he died.

This line of poetry is built around an elaborate play on words that supports this idea. The literal translation of the placename Fengxiang is —phoenix soaring,|| while the term used here for Song Ke's rank, *biejia* 別駕, literally means —departing carriage.|| Finally, the expression *xianyou* 仙游

, meaning —to go off roaming as an immortal||—which is to say —becoming an immortal||—is a euphemism for dying. Taken literally, then, line 1 reads: —Departing by carriage like a soaring phoenix, he has gone off roaming as an immortal;|| while stripped to its barest essentials, it says: —Since Song Ke died as an official in Fengxiang county.||

Notes

¹ Danyou 澹游 was the sobriquet (*hao*) of Wang Wanqing 王萬慶 (ca. 1185–ca. 1262) of the Jin 金 dynasty, and Fangshan 房山 was the sobriquet of Gao Kegong 高克恭 (ca. 1248–ca. 1310) of the Yuan dynasty. Both men were renowned painters of bamboo.

² Boya 伯牙 was a legendary master of the *qin* 琴 (zither) in antiquity. The —Two Wangs refers to father and son calligraphers, Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (ca. 303–ca. 361) and Wang Xianzhi 王獻之 (344–388). The meaning of the term *niaoshen zhi shu* 鳥身之術 (lit: art of the bird body) is uncertain; however, it may refer to —bird script, an ancient convoluted style of decorative seal script, where the ends of strokes are rendered as the heads of birds; primarily used in carved texts or cast in metal.

⁴ Both Dong Chang 董昶, courtesy name (*zi*) Weiming 惟明, and the artist Song Ke were from Changzhou 長洲 (modern Suzhou 蘇州, Jiangsu Province). For basic biographical information on Dong Chang, see Gu Sili 顧嗣立 (1665–1722) and Xi Shichen 席世臣 (ca. 1756–ca. 1815), comps., *Yuanshi xuan guiji* 元詩選癸集 (Suzhou: Saoye shanfang 掃葉山房, 1798), *gengshang* 庚上: 62b.

⁵ The name Gongxu 公叙 may refer to the poet and academician Zhou Xu 周叙 (1392–ca. 1453), courtesy name (*zi*) Gongxu 公叙, from Jishui 吉水, Jiangxi Province, who was contemporary

with both Colophon Two writer Yang Zhu 楊翥 (1369–1453), as well as the current writer Qian Bo 錢博 (ca. 1410–1480). While there are no seals or other indications on the scroll of Zhou

Xu's ownership, if the identification is correct, this would indicate a pre-1453 date for Qian Bo's undated colophon

⁶ The painting belonged to Yuan Lizhun when it was exhibited in Tokyo in 1928. See *Tō Sō Gen Min meiga taikan* 唐宋元明名畫大觀, small edition, 2 vols. (Tokyo: Otsuka Kōgeisha 大塚巧藝社, 1929), vol. 2, 223; or large edition, 4 vols. (Tokyo: Otsuka Kōgeisha, 1930), vol. 3, plate 47.

⁷ It is uncertain if this seal belonged to Zhou Dawen 周大文 (1890–after 1966), as its text suggests. In any case, the painting was evidently in Zhou's collection when it was published in two parts during the winter of 1934–35. See *Hushe yuekan* 湖社月刊 85 (December 1934): 4, and 86 (January 1935): 4; rpt. in *Hushe yuekan*, 3 vols. (Tianjin: Tianjin guji shudian, 1992), vol. 3, 1384 and 1390.