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Artist: Sheng Mou 盛懋 (active ca. 1310–1360)
Title: *Landscape: Hills on the River*
《山水圖》
Shanshui tu
Dynasty/Date: Yuan, mid-14th century
Format: Fan mounted as album leaf
Medium: Ink on silk
Dimensions: 25.0 x 26.3 cm (9-13/16 x 10-3/8 in)
Credit line: Gift of Charles Lang Freer
Accession no.: F1911.161c
Provenance: Lee Van Ching (Li Wenqing 李文卿), Shanghai

Album: Wooden covers. Album of ten leaves, nine paintings and one woven textile, attributed to various early artists (F1911.161a-j). Each leaf separately mounted on the interior right side of a folded cardboard backing, with a facing leaf of unused same-size sutra paper.

Album cover: Wood. No outside label.

Inside label slip: Unidentified

Ink on orange-brown paper. Pasted on cardboard mounting, upper right

Four characters, standard script

元盛子昭

Sheng Zizhao [Sheng Mou] of the Yuan dynasty

Painting: Third in an album of ten leaves. Round fan, with artist signature and one (1) seal. One other inscription, with signature. Eight (8) collector seals. Vertical crease in center indicates prior mounting and use as hand fan.

Artist inscription: Sheng Mou 盛懋 (ca. 1310–1360)¹

Painting, upper left

Two characters, standard script..

Signature: 子昭

Zizhao

Seal: (1)

Sheng Mou 『盛懋』 (square intaglio) – below signature

Other inscription: Shanshui lang 山水郎 (Esquire of Mountains and Streams; unidentified)

Painting, upper right

3 columns, standard script. Poem (4x5).

何處看山色，匡廬九疊屏，吳髯新學畫，眉黛鏡中青。
山水郎。

Where should one behold the mountain colors?
Before the Ninefold Screen on Mount Kuanglu.
Curly-bearded Wu has newly studied painting,
Eyebrow black looks green within the mirror.



Esquire of Mountains and Streams

Signature: 山水郎
Shanshui lang (Esquire of Mountains and Streams)

Date: none

Seals: none

Facing leaf: Unused sutra paper, same size and shape as painting; with two (2) collector half-seals (see below)

Colophons: none

Collector seals: (10)

1. Geng Zhaozhong 耿昭忠 (1640–1686) – (9)

Zhenshang 『真賞』 (gourd relief) – painting, upper right

[Zhen]mi 『[珍]祕』 (square relief; left half) – painting, mid right

[Yi'er] zizun 『[宜爾]子孫』 (square intaglio; left half) – painting, mid right

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

Dancheng 『丹誠』 (round intaglio; right half) – painting, mid left

Duwei Geng [*Xingong shuhua zhi zhang*] 『都尉耿[信公書畫之章]』 (square intaglio; right half) – painting, mid left

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

Qinshu[tang] 『琴書[堂]』 (square intaglio; right half) – sutra paper, left edge

Qianshan Geng [Xingong shuhua zhi zhang] 『千山耿[信公書畫之章]』 (square relief;
right half) – sutra paper, left edge

2. Geng Jiazuo 耿嘉祚 (late 17th–early 18th century) – (1)

Huihou zhencang 『會侯珍藏』 (square intaglio) – painting, bottom right

Traditional Chinese catalogues: none

Bibliography:

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Cahill, James F. *Chinese Album Leaves in the Freer Gallery of Art*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1961. Pp. 12 and 30 (plate 14).

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, 245 (A21–150).

Wetzel, Sandra Jean. *Sheng Mou: The Relationship Between Professional and Literati Painters in Yuan-dynasty China*. Ph.D. dissertation: University of Kansas, 1991. Rpt.: Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1995. Pp. 180–82, fig. 31.

_____. “Sheng Mou: The Coalescence of Professional and Literati Painting in Late Yuan China.” In *Artibus Asiae* 56.3–4 (1996): 263–89.

Notes

¹ Sheng Mou’s works stand out for their tightly designed compositions and polished, assured brushwork. Heavily influenced by the Li Cheng-Guo Xi style of landscape painting, he mainly created works for popular consumption, cultivating lively, striking effects, while simultaneously emphasizing clarity, precision, and elegance. The scene on this hand-fan is viewed from an elevated, slightly remote vantage, and structured to create a seemingly realistic recession into space, as if looking down an actual hillside: from the precisely drawn houses in the left foreground, to lower buildings at right, and off across the water to distant sailing boats and the retreating ridges of mountains on the far shore. In the middle, a line of flying birds parallels the sweep of the slope, leading the eye to upper left and along the rugged outcropping of rocks that anchors a subtle backward S-curve in the rising hills. The sparing use of dots and the nervous, wavy strokes that define the contours of the mountains are hallmarks of Sheng Mou’s style. Fu Shen, former senior curator at the Freer Gallery of Art, reportedly believes that the artist signature may be a later interpolation, but the seal is genuine. See Sandra Jean Wetzel, *Sheng Mou: The Relationship Between Professional and Literati Painters in Yuan-dynasty China* (Ph.D. dissertation: University of Kansas, 1991) (Rpt.: Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1995), 181, note 47.