



[Project overview](#)

[Table of contents](#)

[View images](#)

Artist: Ni Zan 倪瓚 (1306–1374)¹
Title: *A Branch of Bamboo*
《墨竹圖》
Mozhu tu
Dynasty/Date: Yuan-Ming, ca. 1369 (?)
Format: Album leaf
Medium: Ink on paper
Dimensions: 29.3 x 29 cm (11-9/16 x 11-7/16 in)
Credit line: Gift of Charles Lang Freer
Accession no.: F1915.36d
Provenance: Tonying and Company, New York

Album: Cloth-covered wooden covers, with label slip. Twelve leaves. Each leaf bears either one or two collector seals of Cheng Xun 成勳 (unidentified, 19th–20th century?), who may have assembled the album from disparate sources (see Collector Seals, no. 6).

Label slip: Unidentified.

Pasted on cloth cover, upper right.

Four characters, standard script. No signature, date, seals.

墨林叢翰

Thicket of Brushworks from the Forest of Ink



Painting: Fourth leaf in album. Almost square paper, mounted separately on interior right side of folded cardboard backing. Artist signature and date. One other inscription, with signature and one (1) seal. Twenty (20) collector seals.

Artist Inscription: (1) – painting, lower right

2 columns, standard script

雲林生寫，臘月九日。

Drawn by Master Cloud Forest [Ni Zan], on the ninth day of the *la* [twelfth] lunar-month.²

Signature: 雲林生
Yunlin sheng [Master Cloud Forest]

Date: 臘月九日
ninth day of the *la* [twelfth] lunar-month

Seals: none

Other Inscriptions: (1) – Qian Weishan 錢惟善 (active 1341–ca. 1379) – forgery?³

Painting, upper left.

5 columns, running-standard script. Poem (4x5).

故人能寫竹，標格似湖州，靜對西窗下，清風滿紙秋。
曲江居士題。



My old friend knew how to paint bamboo,
And modeled his approach upon Wen Tong.⁴
Calmly he gazed out the western window,
And the clear wind filled his page with fall.

Inscribed by the Retired Scholar of Crooked Creek [Qian Weishan]

Signature: 曲江居士
Qujiang jushi [Retired Scholar of Crooked Creek]

Date: none

Seals: (1)
Qujiang jushi 『曲江居士』 (square intaglio) – painting, upper left (partially trimmed)

Collector seals: (20)

1. Shen Zhou 沈周 (1427–1509) – (1)

Shen Zhou shenwan 『沈周審玩』 (square relief) – painting, lower right (partially trimmed)

2. Xiang Yuanbian 項元汴 (1525–1590) – (7)

Molinzi 『墨林子』 (rectangle intaglio) – painting, upper right

Xiang Yuanbian yin 『項元汴印』 (square relief) – painting, lower right



- Molin shanren* 『墨林山人』 (square intaglio) – painting, lower right
Zuli 『樵李』 (oval relief) – painting, mid-left
Zisun yongbao 『子孫永保』 (square intaglio) – painting, mid-left
Xiang Zijing jiazhencang 『項子京家珍藏』 (rectangle relief) – painting, lower left
Xiang Molin jianshang zhang 『項墨林鑑賞章』 (rectangle intaglio) – painting, lower left

3. Wu Ting 吳廷 (active first-half 17th century) – (1)

Wu Ting 『吳廷』 (rectangle relief) – lower left

4. Geng Zhaozhong 耿昭忠 (1640–1687) – (7)

- Dancheng* 『丹誠』 (circle intaglio; left half) – painting, mid right
[Duwei Geng] Xingong shuhua zhi zhang 『[都尉耿]信公書畫之章』 (square intaglio; left half) – painting, lower right
Gong 『公』 (square relief) – painting, lower right
Xingong zhenshang 『信公珍賞』 (square relief) – painting, bottom center
Zhenshang 『真賞』 (gourd relief) – painting, top left
Zhen[mi] 『珍[秘]』 (square relief; right half) – painting, upper left
Chang yi [zिसun] 『長宜[子孫]』 (square intaglio; right half) – painting, mid left

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

- Geng Jiazuo yin* 『耿嘉祚印』 (square intaglio) – painting, bottom center
Huihou zhencang 『會侯珍藏』 (square intaglio) – painting, bottom center



6. Cheng Xun 成勳 (unidentified, 19th–20th century?) – (2)

Shuibu Cheng Xun 『水部成勳』 (square relief) – painting, lower right

Lianqiao jiancang 『蓮樵鑑藏』 (square relief) – painting, upper left

Traditional Chinese catalogues: none

Selected Bibliography

Cahill, James F. *Chinese Album Leaves in the Freer Gallery of Art*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1961. Pp. 13 and 34 (plate 18).

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Li Lincan 李霖燦 (1913–1999). “Zhongguo mozhu huafa de duandai yanjiu” 中國墨竹畫法的斷代研究. In *Gugong jikan* 故宮季刊 (National Palace Museum Quarterly) 1.4 (April 1967): 53–4 and plate 16.

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, 239 (A21–123).



Toda Teisuke 戶田禎佑 and Ogawa Hiromitsu 小川裕充, eds. *Chūgoku kaiga sōgō zuroku: zokuhen* 中國繪畫總合圖錄：續編 (Comprehensive Illustrated Catalogue of Chinese Paintings: Second Series). 4 vols. Tokyo: University of Tokyo, 1998–2001. Vol. 1, 129 (A21–365-4).

Notes

¹ Ni Zan 倪瓚 (1306–1374), alternative *ming* Yu 迂, *zi* Yuanzhen 元鎮, *hao* Yunlin 雲林 (Cloud Forest), was a native of Wuxi 無錫, in Jiangsu Province. His birthyear is often given as 1301; however, recent research by Tan Fuxing 談福興 has established his birthyear as 1306. See Tan Fuxing, “Guanyu Ni Zan de shengzu shijian: Zhou Nanlao ‘Yuan chushi Yunlin xiansheng muzhiming’ kaowu” 關於倪瓚的生卒時間：周南老《元處士雲林先生墓志銘》考誤, in *Duoyun* 朵雲 34 (1992.3): 26–29.

² In his study of Ni Zan’s works, C.C. Wang (Wang Jiqian 王季遷, 1907–2003) proposed a date for this album leaf of *circa* 1369. See Wang Jiqian, “Ni Yunlin zhi hua” 倪雲林之畫 (The paintings of Ni Yunlin), in *Gugong jikan* 故宮季刊 (National Palace Museum Quarterly) 1.3 (January 1967): 38.

³ Qian Weishan 錢惟善 (active 1341–ca. 1379), *zi* Sifu 思復, *hao* Qujiang jushi 曲江居士 (Retired Scholar of Crooked Creek), was a native of Qiantang 錢塘 (modern Hangzhou), Zhejiang Province. Known mainly for his poetry, Qian was acquainted with many of the major literary and artistic figures in the middle years of the fourteenth century and, while his inscriptions frequently appear on scrolls from the period, including other works by Ni Zan, the poem inscribed on the Freer album leaf is neither attributed to him elsewhere, nor included in his collected literary works, the *Jiangyue songfeng ji* 江月松風集. However, the same basic poem is



recorded in a late-Ming source as an anonymous inscription on an undated painting attributed to Ke Jiusi 柯九思 (1290–1343), another Yuan dynasty artist famous for his ink-bamboo. Copied from this source, the anonymous poem was later included in other literary compendia. In addition, the same poem (with several variants) is attributed to Ni Zan himself on a different Freer handscroll (F1919.10), which is also documented in several later catalogues. These other occurrences of the poem, either unattributed or attributed to different authors, suggest that the text may have been in general circulation during the mid-fourteenth century, and give rise to doubts about the authenticity of the inscription on this album leaf. For a genuine example of a Qian Weishan inscription on a painting by Ni Zan, see *Ni Zan huaji* 倪瓚畫集 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1992), plate 35. On the painting attributed to Ke Jiusi (current whereabouts unknown), see: Wang Keyu 汪珂玉 (1587–after 1644), *Shanhuwang minghua tiba* 珊瑚網名畫題跋 (pref. January 1644), 8:26a, in Zhang Junheng 張鈞衡 (1872–1927), comp., *Shiyuan congshu: di ba ji* 適園叢書：第八集 (China: Privately published, 1916).

⁴ In place of the name Wen Tong 文同 (1019–1079), a seminal eleventh-century painter of ink-bamboo, the text actually reads “Huzhou” 湖州, a prefecture in Zhejiang Province where Wen once served as magistrate. In reference to this period of official service, later generations often referred to him as Wen Huzhou, which here is abbreviated to the place name itself.