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Artist: Zhou Jichang 周季常 (active late-12th century)  
Title: *The Rock Bridge at Mount Tiantai*  
《天台石橋圖》  
*Tiantai shiqiao tu*  
Dynasty/Date: Southern Song, 1178  
Format: Hanging scroll mounted on panel  
Medium: Ink and color on silk  
Dimensions: 109.9 x 52.7 cm (43-1/4 x 20-3/4 in)  
Credit line: Gift of Charles Lang Freer  
Accession no.: F1907.139  
Provenance: Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan

**Object description:** One painting from set of one-hundred scrolls that collectively depict the 500 Luohan.<sup>1</sup> One (1) signed and dated inscription. No seals.

**Painting theme:** Buddhist story of the pious monk Tanyou 曇猷 (died 396) in the Tiantai Mountains crossing the rock bridge to paradise.<sup>2</sup>

**Inscription:** Yishao 義紹 (active late-12th century)<sup>3</sup>  
Gold ink on silk; lower right. Invisible in normal light.<sup>4</sup>  
2 columns, standard script.

翔鳳鄉、滄門里、北滄下保居住顧椿年妻、孫廿八娘合家等，施財畫此，入惠安院常住供養，功德保安家眷。戊戌淳熙五年，幹僧義紹題。周季常筆。



The wife of Gu Chunnian, resident of Lower Beicang Guard in Cangmen Village, Xiangfeng District, twenty-eighth female [in her generation] of the Sun [family], together with her whole family, contributed the funds to paint this [picture] and presented it to the Hui'anyuan [Monastery of Beneficent Peace] as a permanent offering, that this meritorious deed may protect and safeguard her family and relations.<sup>5</sup> In *wuxu*, fifth year of the Chunxi reign period [1178], inscribed by the monk-in-charge, Yishao. Painted by Zhou Jichang.<sup>6</sup>

Signature: 義紹  
Yishao

Date: 戊戌，淳熙五年  
In *wuxu*, fifth year in the Chunxi reign period [1178]

Seal(s): none

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朝、室町の繪画 (1). In *Nihon bijutsu zenshū* 日本美術全集. Tokyo: Kodansha, 1992. P. 123, no. 8.

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paintings arranged by general subject, with 47 transcribed inscriptions, including both Freer works.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> The original set of paintings depicting the 500 Luohan was comprised of 100 hanging scrolls, each showing five luohan. Created by two painters between 1178 and 1188 for a temple near modern Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, the set was transported to Japan around the middle of the following century, or early in the next, and eventually came into the possession of the Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, in the late sixteenth century. At some point, six paintings were lost for which replacements were created in 1638 by Kimura Tokuō 木村徳應 (1593–1670s?). Ninety four paintings from the original set survive. Eighty-two still belong to the Daitoku-ji; ten paintings are in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts; and two are in the Freer Gallery of Art (see also F1902.224). For general discussions of the set from various perspectives, see: Wen Fong, *Beyond Representation: Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, 8th–14th century* (New York and New Haven: Metropolitan Museum of Art and Yale University Press, 1992), 343–45; Ide Seinosuke 井手誠之輔, “Daitoku-ji denrai *Gōhyaku Rakan zo shiron*” 大徳寺伝来五百羅漢図試論, in Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 奈良国立博物館, eds., *Seichi Ninpō: Nihon Bukkyō 1300-nen no genryū; subete wa koko kara yatte kita* 聖地寧波：日本仏教 1300 年の源流 ～すべてはここからやって来た (Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism) (Nara: Nara National Museum, 2009), 254–59; and Gregory P.A. Levine, *Daitokuji: The Visual Cultures of a Zen Monastery* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2005), 287–313.

On the two Freer paintings in particular, see Wen Fong, *The Lohans and a Bridge to Heaven*, Freer Gallery of Art Occasional Papers, vol. 3, no. 1 (Washington, DC: Lord Baltimore Press, 1958); and Thomas Lawton, *Chinese Figure Painting*. (Washington DC: David R. Godine, in conjunction with Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1973), 94–97. For the ten



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paintings in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, see Kōjirō Tomita, *Portfolio of Chinese Paintings in the Museum (Han to Sung Periods)* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press for the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1933), 12–13 and plates 75–84; and Wu Tung, *Tales from the Land of Dragons: 1000 Years of Chinese Painting* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1997), 68–79 (plates 34–43) and 160–67.

For color photos of the ninety-four original paintings and six replacements, see: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, *Seichi Ninpō*, 113–54 (no. 104.1–82), paintings from Daitoku-ji; 155 (no. 105), two paintings from BMFA; 156 (no. 106), six replacement paintings from the Daitoku-ji; 233–35, eight paintings from BMFA and two paintings from Freer. The Daitoku-ji also possesses copies by Morimoto Kōchō 森本後澗 (1847–1905) of the twelve scrolls in the BMFA and Freer collections, giving it one hundred scrolls total. For black-and-white photos of the one hundred scrolls, see Suzuki Kei 鈴木敬, 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. 4, 14–22, JT10–001 (Daitoku-ji 大德寺), nos. 1–100 (Note: copies of the two Freer paintings are nos. 20 and 22; copies of the ten BMFA paintings are nos. 12–19 and 25–26; and copies of the six lost paintings are nos. 21, 23–24, 27–28, and 63). Hereafter, paintings in the set are referred to by their number in the Nara catalogue, followed by the Suzuki Kei number in parentheses.

<sup>2</sup> Located in Zhejiang Province a short distance inland from the coastal city of Ningbo 寧波, the Tiantai Mountains 天台山 were renowned for their wild, dramatic beauty, and reputedly were the abode of gods and immortals. As depicted in this painting, the natural rock arch that spans a waterfall remains one of Tiantai's most famous sights. According to legend, this bridge is also a pathway to heaven where the five-hundred *luohan*, saintly guardians of the Buddhist faith, worship and dwell among magnificent celestial temples. Those who venture to tread this perilous



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trail, however, find that the bridge, which narrows to a width of several centimeters, is obstructed at its far end by an insurmountable block of stone.

*Luohan* are generally portrayed in Chinese paintings as Buddhist monks, for whom they stand as holy exemplars. While not directly worshipped, *luohan* could be induced through rigorous proofs of devotion to assist a pious supplicant in overcoming obstacles to salvation. Such a scene is illustrated in this painting. Three *luohan* stand on a swath of clouds in the foreground, while two others walk in the clouds above, patrolling the gates of a stately temple. Both groups observe the devout monk Tanyou 曇猷 (died 396), who is attempting to gain access across the rock bridge. According to the story, Tanyou was initially thwarted by the large stone, but persisted in his endeavor, praying and fasting. Because of his sincerity, the *luohan* opened a gateway in the stone, allowing Tanyou to enter their heavenly abode and join in the daily monastic routine. Afforded this brief taste of the afterlife, he was sent back to the world to live another ten years. This painting captures the moment in the story just before the *luohan* open the stone and welcome pious Tanyou into paradise.

Ever since the Wu-Yue kingdom 吳越國 (907–978), the area of modern Zhejiang Province encompassing the Tiantai Mountains and the adjacent coastal zone from Dongqian Lake 東錢湖 and Ningbo to the imperial capital at Hangzhou, had experienced a revival and flourishing of the Tiantai sect 天台宗 of Buddhism, and indeed many Tiantai observances and stories are depicted among the 100 paintings of the current set. This painting of the Stone Bridge at Tiantai is therefore a key work in the series as it directly links the set as a whole to the eponymous mountains that gave rise to the Buddhist school whose teachings inform its overall religious content. For the biography of Tanyou, see Daoshi 道世 (died 683), comp., *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 (preface 668), 83:900a07–b22, in *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經, edited by Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaikyoku 渡邊海旭, 100 vols. (Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai 大正一切經刊行會, 1924–32[35]), vol. 53, no. 2122. For English translation of the relevant passage, see Wen Fong, *The Lohans and a Bridge to Heaven*, 14–16.



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<sup>3</sup> The monk Yishao 義紹, who signed himself as *ganseng* 幹僧 (monk in charge, or executive, managing monk), is unrecorded in any known source aside from his inscriptions on this set of paintings. According to research by Professor Ide Seinosuke of Kyūshū University, forty eight of the ninety four surviving paintings bear inscribed texts, all of which were apparently written by Yishao and most of which include his signature. Judging from these, Yishao was the moving force behind the creation of the 100 paintings, and was probably responsible for soliciting donations to advance the project over a ten-year period starting in 1178, when at least twenty five of the scrolls were painted (including both Freer works), and ending in 1188, when the final two dated paintings were created. As far as condition allows a reading, each inscription generally records the name, identification, and address of the donor and the spiritual benefit he or she hopes to provide to deceased or living family members; the name of the monastery for which the painting was intended (Hui'anyuan, see below); the year date; the name of the writer (Yishao); and the name of the painter. For a chart of the ninety four extant paintings arranged by general subject matter and the transcribed texts of their forty eight inscriptions (including both Freer works), see Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, *Seichi Ninpō*, 228–32.

While absent from other written sources, Yishao may be depicted in two of the uninscribed paintings in the set, both attributed to Zhou Jichang. For the first, see Nara 2 (Suzuki 90), where Yishao may be the younger of two monks at lower right, the one carrying an open book titled “Ganzao Wubai Da Aluohan” 幹造五百大阿羅漢 (Making of The Five-hundred Great Luohan). For the second possible image of Yishao, see Nara B7 (Suzuki 18) and Wu Tung, *Tales from the Land of Dragons*, 76 (plate 40) and 164–65, where a similar young monk with his hands folded in front of his chest appears at lower left standing behind two figures, who hold a brush and an outline drawing of a luohan (?), respectively, and may be the two painters of the set, Lin Tinggui (see F1902.224) and Zhou Jichang (see note 6, below).



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<sup>4</sup> Each surviving inscription was originally written in gold ink, most of which has flaked off or become damaged, rendering the text difficult, if not impossible, to locate and read with the naked eye, as is the case with both Freer inscriptions. Special photography is therefore required to create accurate transcriptions. For a 1950's transcription, translation, and photo of the Freer text, apparently produced using ultraviolet light, see Wen Fong, *The Lohans and a Bridge to Heaven*, 1–2, and plate 3 (left).

In February 2010, a distinguished group of four researchers from Japan visited the Freer Gallery of Art to study and photograph the inscribed areas of this painting and its companion work in the collection, F1902.224, published elsewhere in this website. The group included Professor Ide Seinosuke of Kyushu University; curator Taniguchi Kosei of Nara National Museum; Mr. Shirono Seiji, photographer from the Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties; and Ms. Torimitsu Mikako, assistant photographer from the Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties. Using a special thermo-luminescence photographic device, Mr. Shirono produced exceptionally high-resolution fluorescent photography of both inscriptions, as well as details of the adjacent silk and some areas of the painting. The new photography provides fresh confirmation of the Wen Fong inscription presented here and allows for a much more detailed study of the calligraphy and painting. For other examples of similar photography produced by the same group of researchers, see Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, *Seichi Ninpō*, 233.

<sup>5</sup> The Hui'anyuan 惠安院 (Monastery of Beneficent Peace) was located in Zhejiang Province about fifteen kilometers east of modern Ningbo, at the eastern foot of Mount Qing 青山 (modern Yangtangshan 陽堂山) on the northwest shore of Dongqian Lake, the largest natural freshwater lake in the province. According to local legend, the Sixteen Luohan appeared above the hill at this place in 904 at the end of the Tang dynasty. The rulers of the Wu-Yue kingdom that subsequently controlled the area were highly supportive of Buddhism, and a monastery was constructed at this location in 938 that was accordingly known as the Luohanyuan 羅漢院



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(Luohan Monastery). In 1010 under the Northern Song dynasty, the monastery received its official name of Hui'anyuan by an imperial decree of Emperor Zhenzong 真宗 (reigned 997–1022). At the time that this set of 100 paintings was begun in 1178 during the Southern Song dynasty, the Monastery of Beneficent Peace already had a history of 240 years. On the historical background of the temple, see Wen Fong, *The Lohans and a Bridge to Heaven*, 1, note 2. On the relation of the set to local history and Tiantai practice, see Ide Seinosuke, “Daitoku-ji denrai *Gōhyaku Rakan zo shiron*,” 256–58. For a concise historical overview of Tiantai Buddhism and its general practices during the Song dynasty, see Richard von Glahn, *The Sinister Way: The Divine and the Demonic in Chinese Religious Culture* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004), 144–48.

The district of Xiangfeng 翔鳳鄉 is located in the vicinity of Hui'anyuan Monastery and borders Lake Dongqian. It was inhabited for centuries by the Gu 顧 family, one of whose members was the husband of the female donor of this painting. According to surviving inscriptions, eleven other paintings in the set were sponsored through donations by various individuals from the Xiangfeng district, at least seven of which were donated by individuals bearing the same Gu surname (or their wives), and only two of which were donated by a person not specifically associated with the Gu family; see Nara 6 (Suzuki 91) and Nara 32 (Suzuki 40). Just as the Gu Chunnian named in the Freer inscription, the Gu family members who donated five of the paintings were also residents of Cangmen village 滄門里 (some of these family members donated more than one painting). In addition to the Freer scroll, five of the paintings date to 1178 (including four by Zhou Jichang and one by Lin Tinggui), while three others date to 1180 (including two by Zhou Jichang and one by Lin Tinggui). The dates and surnames of donors from Xiangfeng on two other paintings, both by Zhou Jichang, are too damaged to be legible; see Nara 10 (Suzuki 50) and Nara 35 (Suzuki 6). No other donations to the set from either the Gu family or Xiangfeng district are recorded. From this, it appears that as a group the Gus of Xiangfeng were strong supporters of the painting project during its early years, contributing at least eight works to the set, more than any other family. For the seven paintings



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aside from the Freer scroll donated by the Gus of Xiangfeng, see photos and transcribed inscriptions of: Nara 30 (Suzuki 8); Nara 34 (Suzuki 47); Nara 45 (Suzuki 87); Nara 49 (Suzuki 79); Nara 66 (Suzuki 83); Nara 74 (Suzuki 67); and Nara 81 (Suzuki 2).

<sup>6</sup> The artist Zhou Jichang 周季常 is unrecorded in any source aside from this set of paintings. Both he and his partner Lin Tinggui 林庭珪 probably specialized in religious painting and may have operated an atelier either in the nearby city of Ningbo or, somewhat further away, in the Southern Song capital of Hangzhou. As noted above, Zhou Jichang may have depicted both Lin Tinggui and himself in one of the paintings; see Nara B7 (Suzuki 18) and Wu Tung, *Tales from the Land of Dragons*, 76 (plate 40) and 164–65.

Of the ninety-four extant paintings, Zhou Jichang appears to have painted eight-five, making his the largest corpus of reliably dated and signed works by any single pre-Ming dynasty artist. While Zhou's contribution spans the entire duration of the project from 1178 to 1188, he produced twenty dated works alone in the starting year of 1178, one of which was the current Freer scroll. For the other nineteen paintings by Zhou Jichang dated 1178, see both plates and transcribed inscriptions of: Nara 3 (Suzuki 94); Nara 6 (Suzuki 91); Nara 11 (Suzuki 52); Nara 13 (Suzuki 84); Nara 15 (Suzuki 41); Nara 16 (Suzuki 58), no signature; Nara 18 (Suzuki 86), no signature; Nara 20 (Suzuki 39), no signature; Nara 24 (Suzuki 64); Nara 25 (Suzuki 32); Nara 31 (Suzuki 56); Nara 33 (Suzuki 89); Nara 34 (Suzuki 47); Nara 45 (Suzuki 87); Nara 59 (Suzuki 57); Nara 74 (Suzuki 67); Nara 81 (Suzuki 2); Nara B2 (Suzuki 15, Wu Tung, *Tales from the Land of Dragons*, 69 (plate 35) and 161–62); and Nara B6 (Suzuki 13; Wu Tung, *Tales from the Land of Dragons*, 74 (plate 39) and 163–64).