

## A Study of Qiu Ying's *Spring Dawn in the Han Palace* and its Relationship to Palace Poetry

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### Abstract

Qiu Ying's (ca. 1494-1552) *Spring Dawn in the Han Palace* (collection of the National Palace Museum) is a long handscroll painting depicting various activities among palace ladies. The rendering of the figures is meticulous and the composition skillfully arranged, making this a masterpiece of painting beauties by Qiu Ying and a representative work of his. Portions of the composition are also related to those in other extant works, such as *Night Revels of Han Xizai* attributed to Gu Hongzhong (fl. mid-10th c.) of the Five Dynasties period (collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing) and *In the Palace* attributed to Zhou Wenju (fl. ca. 961-975) of the Five Dynasties period (sections of which are in Cleveland Museum of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Villa I Tatti, and the Harvard Art Museum). Judging from Qiu Ying's close relationship with collectors, *Spring Dawn in the Han Palace* is probably a work that reflects his copying of ancient paintings. However, previous to Qiu Ying, are such works as *Imitating a Tang Artist's Lady Painting* by Du Jin (ca. 1444-ca. 1521) in the Shanghai Museum, indicating that the theme of painting court ladies at this time did not begin with Qiu. The present study thus intends to explore the intimate relationship between *Spring Dawn in the Han Palace* and the literary tradition of "palace poem" sets, in particular the influence of the latter on the former, to show how the depiction of various activities of ladies in the palace in a single composition derived from such and became a unique form of expression in the painting of beauties.

**Keywords:** Qiu Ying, *Spring Dawn in the Han Palace*

(Translated by Donald E. Brix)