

Deconstruct and Reconstruct: A Study of Qiu Ying's Painting Album of *Six Scenic Views in Song and Yuan Styles*

Lin, Li-chiang

Graduate Institute of Art History
National Taiwan Normal University

Abstract

Six Scenic Views in Song and Yuan Styles is a painting album in the collection of the National Palace Museum that has always been considered among the oeuvre of Qiu Ying, the professional artist of the Suzhou area in the Ming dynasty, and done in imitation of ancient Song and Yuan paintings at the residence of the collector Xiang Yuanbian. However, a number of unanswered questions continued to revolve around this set of album leaf paintings. Why was the painting silk cropped in numerous places, leaving the text incomplete? Why do three of the six paintings feature a red-robed official? And is this album truly a set of paintings done merely to imitate ancient works as claimed by Xiang Yuanbian?

After restoring and decoding the partial texts on the paintings, and referencing related documentary sources, the present study has been able to reconstruct the process behind the formation of this album. At the same time, it has been discovered that the handscroll of calligraphy *Ten Paternal Aphorisms (Copying the Phrases of Tzu-wu's Father)* transcribed by Wen Zhengming (also in the National Palace Museum collection) was actually done for the same person as the album of paintings. Both works were made at the behest of Chen Yide, an official from Wuling serving in Suzhou at the time, for his father Chen Hongmo, who was also an official.

Once the identity of the official in *Six Scenic Views in Song and Yuan Styles* can be thereby confirmed, the album should be more accurately renamed as *Six Scenic Views of Wuling Abode* and the possible intent of the work more clearly explained. As it turns out, Chen Yide did not have the paintings done to extol the beauty of his hometown Wuling, but through the skillful arrangement of the scenes by Qiu Ying, the album leaves highlight the ambition and longing of the red-robed figure therein—his father Chen Hongmo. By returning the paintings to their original context of production and function at the time, the album leaves actually served to publicize the Chen family's private holdings and,

paradoxically, to privatize the local famous scenery. Finally, the album of paintings is also an important testimony to the diverse visual culture produced by officials in the Ming dynasty.

Keywords: Qiu Ying, *Six Scenic Views in Song and Yuan Styles*, Xiang Yuanbian, Chen Hongmo, Chen Yide, *Six Scenic Views of Wuling Abode*, Wen Zhengming, *Ten Paternal Aphorisms*(*Copying the Phrases of Tzu-wu's Father*)

(Translated by Donald E. Brix)