

9/2/18

Hongren (Hung Jen), 1610-1663, China
The Coming of Autumn, c. 1658-61
hanging scroll, ink and color on paper,
h. 48", w. 24 3/4" (122 x 62.9 cm.)
Gift of the Wilhelmina Tenney Memorial
Collection, 1955 (2045 1)
On view in gallery 18

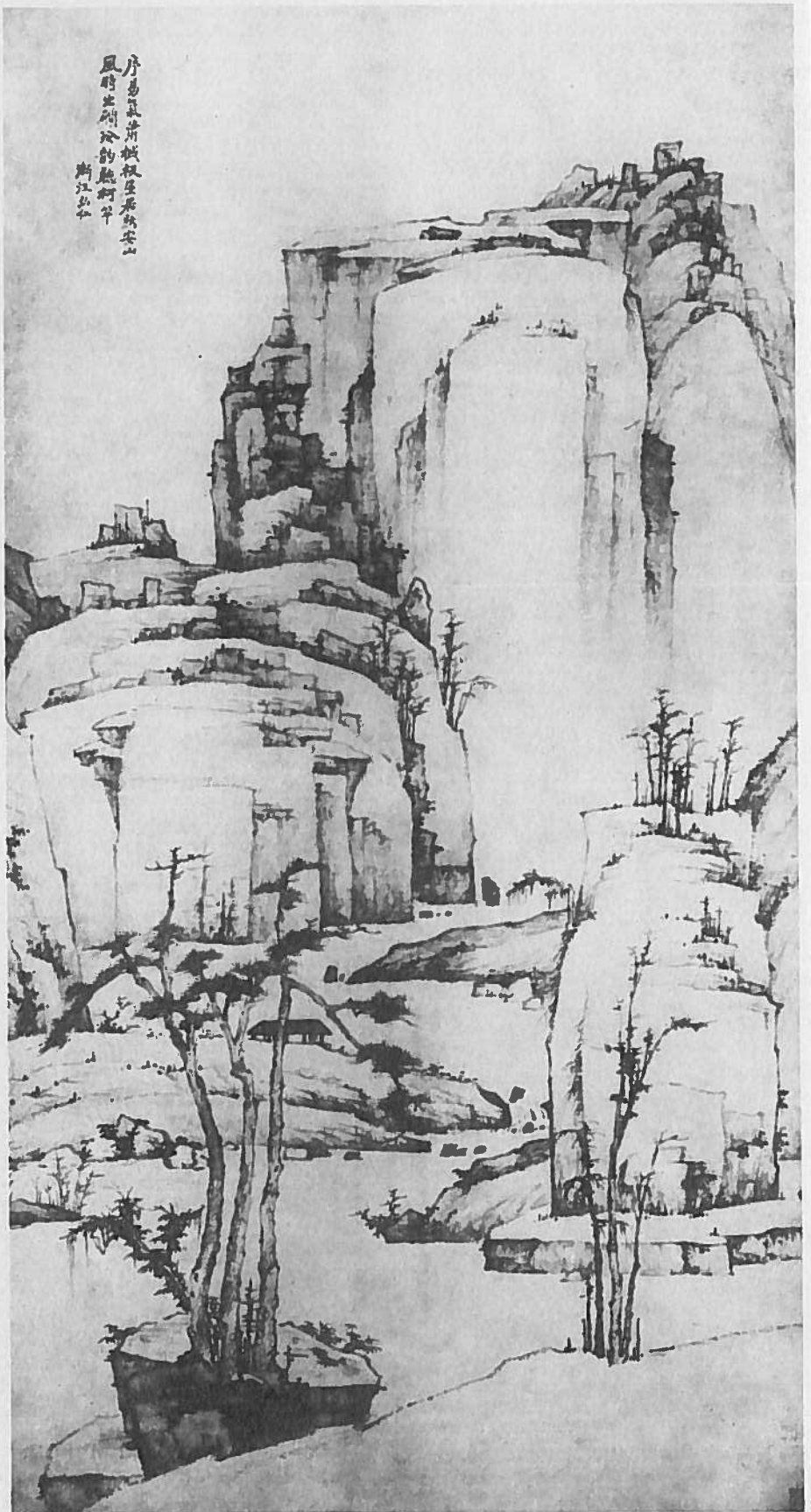
The Coming of Autumn is generally regarded as the masterpiece of the seventeenth-century Chinese painter Hongren. Born in Anhui province, in the heart of southeastern China, Hongren is the central figure of the Anhui School of painting which developed in the region in the late Ming dynasty and which in the early years of the Ch'ing dynasty, i.e. the 1650s and 1660s, represented one of the principal currents or movements in Chinese painting.

In *The Coming of Autumn*, Hongren combined the dry, linear brushwork that characterizes much of Anhui painting with a sense of the bulk and monumentality of actual forms, achieving a reconciliation of angular, abstract geometry with the naturalistic representation of Anhui scenery. Beyond the shallow foreground, with its cluster of tall trees on an outcropping of rock, stretches a river which winds and recedes through the landscape, defined by a succession of spits of land and trees of diminishing size. The high, vertical bluffs show Hongren's stylistic association with the Northern Sung monumental landscape mode, but he deftly overcame the flatness that usually results from the repetition of angular mountain shapes by using light washes that give some sense of volume to the rocks and small blocky units along contours to create a sense of space between the ridges. The flat-topped mountain masses strengthen the effect of depth and volume. Hongren expressed the feeling of the scene in a poem inscribed on the painting:

*"With season's change comes lonely
desolation,
But in my wooden shack I live at peace.
A mountain wind sometimes blows off
the stream,
Bringing chill harmonies of clashing
branches."*

The Coming of Autumn was recently lent to the important exhibition *Shadows of Mt. Huang: Chinese Painting and Printing of the Anhui School* at the University Art Museum of the University of California, Berkeley. Chinese painting scholar James Cahill, who organized the exhibition, commented in the catalogue about the Academy's painting: "... in the whole context of Chinese painting history, it stands as one of the major monuments of the seventeenth century."

The Coming of Autumn, along with other selected highlights of the collection of Chinese art, will be discussed on Members' tours on Thursdays, April 16 and 30.



HUNG-JEN

Chinese, Ch'ing dynasty, 1610-63

The Coming of Autumn, ca. 1658-61

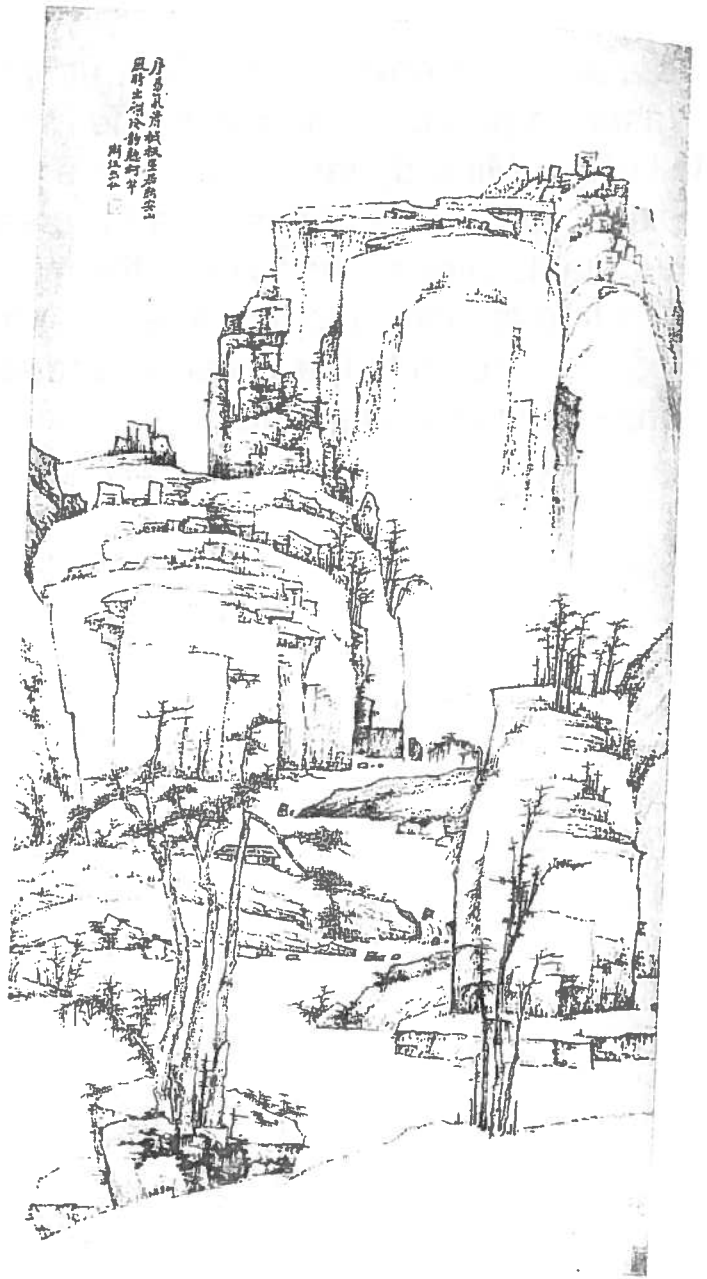
Ink on paper, mounted as a hanging scroll

48 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 24 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (122.2 × 62.9 cm.)

Signature: Chien-chiang Hung-jen; seal: Hung-jen

Gift of Wilhelmina Tenney Memorial Collection, 1955

(2045.1)



Among the Anhui individualists of the Ch'ing dynasty was Hung-jen, an artist who took the skeletal painting style of the great Yüan master Ni Ts'an (1301-74) and created a new and original variation. One of the finest Hung-jen paintings to survive is *The Coming of Autumn*. Painted on paper with light, dry brushstrokes, blocky, angular forms overlap with flat planes. The painting is sparse, crystalline, and extremely sensitive. The rhythmical repetition of shapes, which result in a feeling of vastness, recall the style of Hung-jen's contemporary and teacher, Hsiao Yun-ts'ung (1596-1673). The single lonely hut in the mid-

dle ground is given verbal expression in a poem accompanying the work: "At the changing of the seasons, my emotions become sad and lonely. In my wooden hut I dwell in peace. The winds of the mountain sometimes come. And in the coolness and harmony I hear the sound of the branches and trunks."

The scroll is signed "Chien-chiang [courtesy name] Hung-jen" and sealed "Hung-jen." There can be no doubt of the work's singular importance in the study of this master's brief career. HAL

As a distant member of the Ming Imperial family, Hongren had every reason to pursue reclusion in the mountains of Anhui province after the fall of the Ming dynasty. He is one of a group of artists who used the bizarre landscape of this area for creative inspiration. In this, one of his true masterpieces, he follows the Yuan dynasty master Ni Zan in depicting an icily cold, linear environment devoid of humans. His inscription reflects the isolation and feelings of loneliness at losing his homeland to the Manchus.

The Coming of Autumn (#2045.1)
Gift of Wilhemina Tenney Coll., 1955
Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 7'6-1/2" h. x
30-7/8" w., with poem, signature and seal of the artist

GAL'17

China
17th C. (Ch'ing Dyn)
Gallery 17

ARTIST: Hung Jen (1610?-1663) died in his 40's. Lay name Chiang T'ao. From Anhui Province. Foremost painter among the Anhui individualists. In his 20's, when the Ming Dynasty fell, he rejected the new dynasty and became a Buddhist monk. This also followed the death of his mother. His style is based on the sparse use of dry ink devised by Ni Tsan (Yuan Dyn., 14th C.) Like Ni Tsan, Hung Jen had clean, clear landscapes with simple outlines, much white area and bare trees. He expressed the same isolation and solitude which Ni Tsan expressed. Hung Jen was a recluse. His personality is expressed in his painting.

SUBJECT: Landscape with crystalline rock forms. High and lower mountain masses, stream. Small building is only evidence of man in nature.

MEDIUM AND TECHNIQUE: Paper with ink only (no colors) in light dry brushstrokes, very fine and delicate.

STYLE: "Sparseness" style (a Chinese category). Clearness and clarity like Ni Tsan, whose style he followed. Thin brush strokes, white areas. The landscape is painted with very few lines, few textures. White of the paper itself the most prominent feature. Mountain forms are angular, blocky; with overlapping flat planes. They seem crystalline, transparent. Seem lonely, austere. His style of simplicity and sparse strokes goes back to the Yuan (14th C.) painter N. Tsan.

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS: Vast nature, humble man. You might read the artist's poem to express the Chinese attitude toward nature, the seasons, man seeking solace in the wilderness and harmonizing himself with the forces in nature.

Poem at scroll top left:

At the changing of the seasons my mood
becomes sad and lonely
In my wooden hut I dwell in peace
The mountain wind comes at times into the gorge
And in cool harmony I hear the note of the
branches and trunks.

(translated by: Roger Goepper in "The Essence of Chinese Painting"
p. 219)