

35. Anonymous, Ming dynasty (15th-16th century)

“Hanshan with Broom under Moon”

Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk

96.8 x 50.4 cm. (38 1/8 x 19 7/8 in.)



A figure wearing a robe with fungus tied at his waist and mantle of woven leaves, rides the waves holding a broom in his left hand and pointing upward with the right toward the moon. These various attributes identify the figure as a Taoist immortal, specifically the eccentric Chan poet Hanshan. The strong, calligraphic brushwork of the garments identifies the artist as a member of the 15th-16th century professional group of Ming artists known as the Zhe School, after Zhejiang province, home of a good number of them. One especially telling characteristic of the painting is the use of serrated lines to delineate the foreground waves, very similar to a painting of the Taoist immortal Zhongli Quan by the Ming court painter Zhao Qi (fig. 1) who was active during the Chenghua (1465-1487) and Hongzhi (1488-1505) reign-eras.

Hanshan (“Cold Mountain;” Japanese: Kanzan) first appears in a collection of about three hundred Tang poems known as the *Collected Poems of Hanshan*; the dates suggested for Hanshan range from 577 to 871, and it is most likely that Hanshan (as well as the monks with whom he was closely associated, Fenggan and Shide) were legendary, their fictional biographies based on a few poems and the preface of the *Collected Poems*. According to that preface Hanshan was a recluse and poet who lived on Mount Tiantai in Zhejiang province. The poems themselves abound with references to the Taoist classics *Daodejing* and *Zhuangzi*, and he seems to have been more a Daoist recluse than Chan Buddhist monk, and that accords with his image in the present painting.

Paintings of Hanshan are often paired with paintings of Shide, less often with Fenggan, but the present painting appears complete in itself, with the figure and moon creating a nicely balanced image.



Fig. 1. Zhao Qi: “Taoist Immortal Zhongli Quan,” after Cleveland Museum of Art: *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting*, Cleveland, 1980, cat. 132, p. 154.