

40. Lin Shangyong [Lin Shang-yung] (17th century)

“Two Monkeys by Pine along the River” 1685?

Fan, ink and color on paper
18.7 x 49.5 cm. (6 1/2 x 19 1/2 in.)

Inscription:

Within the cliff grotto they live in quiet seclusion,
old pines satisfy their pure heart;
In autumn wind during a moonlit night,
climbing a tree is good for making long cries.

During the sixth lunar month of the *yichou* year (1685?), I imitated Liuru jushi (Tang Yin).”

Artist’s seals:

Linsbi; Shangrong



One monkey swings from a pine that overhangs the river below. A second monkey sits on a rock emerging from that flowing stream that is bordered on the far side by grass and reeds. This well-painted scene is attractive in itself and also carries auspicious connotations. The monkey, *hou*, is often used in the homonymic expression *fenghou*,” to be elevated to the rank of count.” In conjunction with the long-lived pine tree, two monkeys convey “the wish that you rank as count from generation to generation.” And since the monkey is the ninth creature in the Chinese zodiac, the present fan would have made a most appropriate gift during the Year of the Monkey.

Lin Shangyong is not recorded in standard biographical sources but the style here suggests a dating in the early Qing dynasty, perhaps done by a Suzhou painter who here follows his great predecessor in that city, Tang Yin (1470-1523).