Hsu Yung-chia (19th century)　須用嘉

"Autumn Pavilion by Frosted Trees"　秋景圖

Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk
172.5 x 39.5 cm.

Inscription:

"In the distance sound trees after frost,
Autumn colors the waterside pavilion.

Done in emulation of Kuan T'ung."

Artist's seals:

Yung-chia; Chia-k'o; Lu-kuan Tao-jen ("Taoist in a Deer-skin Hat")

Leafless trees and bamboo encompass the river side pavilion, within which sits a scholar gazing over the quiet river toward high peaks rising from the distant shore. In the distance a solitary figure holding a staff ambles his way along the waterside path. The stark earthen forms, unmitigated by summer grass and shrubs, provide visual analogy with the sharp chill of autumn mentioned in the poem, just as the strongly patterned tree branches serve to evoke the cracking sounds which accompany the onslaught of cold weather.

The monumental and strongly textured mountains are visual references to the style of the early 10th century master Kuan T'ung, mentioned here in the artist's inscription. The narrow composition, in which spatial tension is created by strong separation of fore and background, with the heaviest forms occupying the upper portion of the picture, originated with Ni Tsan (1201-1374) of the Yuan period and continued to be a staple of later artists who wished to call to mind that part of the literati tradition.

Hsu Yung-chia, the artist, was from Ch'ang-chou, near Suchou in Kiangsu province. Little is recorded of his life save that he excelled in painting landscapes, as is also evident from the present "Autumn Pavilion by Frosted Trees."