庚戌秋日
風夜寫

Aoki Shukuya (1737-1802)

青木夙夜

"Landscape in Autumn" 1802

秋景圖

Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper
121.4 x 39.7 cm. (47 3/4 x 15 5/8 in.)

Inscription:
"On an autumn day of the year 1802, painted by Shukuya."

Artist's seals:
Shukuya; *Shoshu Sanbō*

Provenance:
Iwasaki collection

The artist Aoki (originally Yō) Shunmei (Toshiaki), called Shukuya, was born in Ise, perhaps of Korean parents surnamed Yo. His elder cousin Tenju (1727-1795), who was later adopted by the Nakagawa family in Kyoto, sometimes called himself Kan Tenju, the "Kan" surname being derived from the Japanese name for Korea, Kankoku. Shukuya was adopted by the Aoki family in Kyoto, and was probably introduced by Tenju to his close friend Ike Taiga (1723-1776), who became Shukuya's teacher and exerted profound influence over the later course of his life.

Like Tenju, Shukuya maintained contacts in Matsuzaka, where they both were born. The writer Hosoai Hansai wrote in the preface to Tenju's *Kishizukamei* that he had met Tenju and Shukuya in Edo, where they may have gone on business on behalf of the shop Tamaruya in Matsuzaka. The avid collecting and publishing activities of the cousins may in fact have led to a decline in the business. Shukuya's fame as a painter continued to grow, however, and in the 1782 edition of the *Heian Jinbutsu-shi*, his name appears together with those of Kō Fuyō (1722-1784), a close friend of Taiga, and Ike Gyokuran (1728-1784), Taiga's wife.

Following the death of Gyokuran in 1784, Shukuya and other pupils established a memorial hall named the Taigado in the area of Sorinji where Taiga had lived. Shukuya became the first master of the hall, calling himself Taigado 2nd, and, according to Tanomura Chikuden (1777-1835), "...He closed his gate and did not go out, supporting himself as a writer. He did not clear away the grass and tree-leaves and the steps and courtyard were left unswept. For more than ten years he was cut off from others as though by a screen and few people saw his face..."

Fig. 1. Sheng Mao-yeh: "Lofty Mount Lu," University Art Museum, University of California at Berkeley.

Chikuden judged Shukuya's landscape style to have been based mainly on that of Wen Cheng-ming (1470-1555) and praised the grace and elegance of his precisely applied color and controlled brushwork, concluding "...He profoundly achieved the ancient standards. He said himself that 'for even a single rock or patch of water I need from five to ten days to complete it; silk and paper (from those seeking paintings) pile up on my desk, for unless I have an idea or become inspired I dare not work. I cannot live the life of selling mountains as practiced by the ancients.' Thus his extant works are very rare."

The present "Autumn Landscape" was painted during the last year of Shukuya's life, a mature work that very likely was inspired by some late Ming dynasty painting of the Suchou school, by an artist such as Sheng Mao-yeh (figure 1). However, Shukuya's original contributions here are much more important to the success of the painting and are to be found mainly in the more abstract pictorial patterns, the formalized composition, and the more lyric expression. Shukuya seems to have been a contemplative man, one who painted in a thoughtful and disciplined manner in which each stroke was designed to make a specific contribution to the very evocative whole.