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Wu Bi

Goldfish Swimming beneath Wisteria Blossoms

This work by Wu Bi affirms her design talent. She depicts a pair of goldfish—one reddish, the other orange—swimming among duckweed in a pond. While the red one minds its own way, its companion seems to be distracted by a soft sound from above. It makes a turn and casts a look upward, thus guiding the viewer's gaze to the clusters of wisteria (*Wisteria sinensis*) blossoms that hang from long vines, swaying ever so slightly in a breeze. This work demonstrates that Wu Bi has made great strides in her artistic development. Although she still shows her predilection for detailing the leaf and petal veins with a sameness in lineal pattern, her other descriptive lines, such as those depicting the vines and the tendrils, are more fluid and naturalistic. The tails of the goldfish, too, are drawn with very sensitive fine lines, giving a successful impression of their softness.

The combination of goldfish (*jinyu*) and wisteria (*zhiteng*) as a pictorial subject was not Wu Bi's creation. She was only following convention in encoding in these two motifs the idiomatic expression, *jinyu zishou*, literally, "gold, jade, and a purple sash," which actually expresses the wish, "wealth and high rank."