

LS Lecture Notes 1

1. Introductory. Pre-Han.

1.1. About Myself

Introduce self. Origins of project: need for book, all the specialists up to now (including myself) failed to write it. (Tell why: through extensive photographing/slide-making projects, arrived at visual coverage of whole extant body of Ch ptg that would have permitted a history; but meanwhile, 1970s-80s, whole art-history field going off in different direction, away from narrative art history. My analogy: (etc.)

Taught course quite a few times: history of Chinese ptg from earliest times through Sung dynasty, late 13th century, with emphasis on landscape. These lectures will be based on that course, but will be briefer: concentrating on visuals—in fact, I'll limit myself largely to the visuals--leaving out most of my background lectures on Chinese religion and philosophy, history, art theory, etc. For those, will suggest readings—on my website, or in books you can get. So I must emphasize from the beginning that these lectures are meant only to supplement, certainly not to supplant or replace, a proper academic lecture courses on early Chinese painting. If you're not enrolled in such a course, but want to reach a comparable understanding of the subject, you'll need to do a lot of background reading, which I'll suggest in the lectures, or in the accompanying materials on my website, as we go along.

Also, I would plead guilty immediately to not having kept up with all the new writing in my field; I will be making mistakes that others have corrected long ago, and applying outdated criteria in my judgments. Against this well-founded charge I can only plead age, and decades of having turned my attention mainly to the later periods of Ch ptg.

I want to make one very strong recommendation—if I could make it a requirement, I would. Since names and dates and other information of that kind about the artists and paintings will be available on my website, in the outlines or study-guides for each lecture, DON'T TRY TO TAKE NOTES AS I TALK. It will keep you from looking at the pictures, which is what you should be doing.

First of all, I want to spend some time talking about my background, my teachers and predecessors, how I got here, why I feel competent to deliver these lectures, in fact feel an obligation to do so while I still can. I ask you to be patient with this, since I'll use it to lay out not only background for these lectures, but also some basic principles underlying them. Will get to paintings before too long. If you don't want to watch and listen to this, you can skip ahead (nobody will see you leave the lecture hall, and return when you want to).

Me and teachers

1.1.1. Max Loehr,

1.1.2. Shûjirô Shimada,

1.1.3. Wang Chi-ch'ien or C. C. Wang. All deceased.

Wang: born & brought up near Suzhou in China; spent time in Shanghai, was one of leading disciples of major collector-connoisseur Wu Hufan (good book on him by Clarissa von Spee). Other was Xu Bangda. C.C.Wang came to U.S. in 1947, lived in New York rest of his life.

I'm certainly not claiming to have combined the best of these three great traditions of scholarship; that would be presumptuous and untrue. But I absorbed enough of them to have some sense of how Chinese paintings were understood and appreciated in each of them.

Leaving out two other art historians: Alexander Soper (describe briefly); also Osvald Siren, another prominent figure in Chinese painting studies whom I spent time with. Not his student. Siren didn't have students. Art historian; in some sense a disciple of Bernard Berenson; wrote on Italian painting before turning to Chinese.

1.1.4. Photo: C.C.Wang and I with Chuang Yen (or Chuang Shang-yen), then Director of the Palace Museum in Taichung in 1959; Li Lin-ts'an (second from left), close friend, later Vice-Director, with whom C.C.Wang and I spent long, happy days looking through boxes of paintings (he called us "Three Painting Worms" by analogy with bookworms); two other curators; and, beside me, wearing glasses: Henry Beville, photographer for National Gallery in Washington D.C., who did photographing for my Skira book *Chinese Painting*. This great series of viewings in 1959 not only decided much of selection for that Skira book, but also much of the selection for great exhibition *Chinese Art Treasures*, which opened at National Gallery in D.C. in 1961.

1.1.5. -Photo: Henry Beville, Aschwin Lippe, John Pope and myself at opening of that exhibition. (Freer Gallery only showed its own objects, no outside exhibitions). Aschwin Lippe (describe), then curator at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, and I were responsible for selection of paintings, much of it based on what C.C. Wang, Li Lin-ts'an and I had seen and selected two years earlier.

1.1.6. - Photo: I also had the good fortune to be a member of the 1973 "Archaeologists" delegation to China, led by Sherman Lee. (Explain why "archaeologists"). Also Larry Sickman, Richard Rudolph (only real archaeologist among us), also Arthur Wright, Chinese historian at Yale, Tom Lawton, later Director of Freer, others. Month-long tour of Chinese museums and collections, along with important sites, on which we saw and photographed large numbers of early and important paintings. Followed up by:

1.1.7. - Photo: 1977 "Old Chinese Painting" delegation, led by me, with such notable Chinese painting specialists as Ellen Laing (my vice-chair), Nelson Wu, Wai-kam Ho, Wen Fong. Ellen, Wen Fong and I are still around, most others have joined their ancestors.

1.1.8. - Me with then-Director of Palace Museum in Beijing, looking at painting (attrib. to Chan Tzu-ch'ien—we'll see later.) We were allowed to make slides from all we saw, to take back to U.S. for ourselves and our colleagues to use in teaching and research. Great opening up of Chinese collections. These two month-long delegations, together with photographing of Palace Museum collection in Taiwan, collections in Japan and U.S. and Europe that had been accessible earlier, gave us a new degree of visual coverage of best Chinese paintings all over the world. We were, in principle, ready to settle back and write our histories. Somebody should have written a detailed, comprehensive history of Chinese painting through the end of the Song dynasty, the late 13th century, the kind of history these lectures will attempt to outline. But nobody did. Max Loehr tried, in his general book (about which I'll speak later) and went badly wrong on problems of dating and attribution of paintings. Siren's books simply don't serve the purpose, as you know if you've tried reading them—he never arrived at the real understanding that should underlie such a history. Michael Sullivan got off to a good start with two books on early Chinese landscape, but then didn't continue into the great period,