

The reception of Chinese painting in Britain, circa 1880-1920 : with special reference to Laurence Binyon

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ABSTRACT

The British understanding of Chinese painting owed much to Laurence Binyon (1869-1943) who enriched the British Museum's collections of Oriental painting, and for almost forty years, published widely and delivered lectures in Britain and abroad. Binyon's legacy is to be found in several archival resources scattered in Britain, America, Japan and China. This dissertation is a study of the reception of Chinese painting in early twentieth century Britain, and examines Binyon's contribution to its appreciation and criticism in the West.

By examining the William Anderson collection of Japanese and Chinese paintings (1881), I illuminate Anderson's way of seeing Chinese pictorial art and his influence on Binyon's early study of Oriental painting. I argue that the early scroll, *The Admonitions of the Court Instructress*, which Binyon encountered in 1903, ignited his interest in the study of traditional Chinese painting, yet his conception of Chinese pictorial art was influenced by Japanese and Western expertise. To reveal the British taste and growing interest in Chinese painting around 1910, Binyon's involvements in major acquisitions and exhibitions of Chinese paintings at the British Museum, including the Sir Aurel Stein collection (1909) and the Frau Olga-Julia Wegener collection (1910), as well as his visits to Western collections of Chinese art in America and Germany, will be investigated.

In order to understand the relevance and values of Chinese painting for the development of early twentieth-century British art, I also scrutinize how the principle of "rhythmic vitality" or *qiyun shengdong*, as well as the Daoist-and Zen-inspired

aesthetic ideas were assiduously promoted in Binyon's writings on Chinese painting, and how Chinese art and thought kindled British modernists to fuse art with life in order to re-vitalize the spirit of modern European art with non-scientific conceptions.

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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF CHINESE DYNASTIES

Xia		c. 2100-1600 BCE
Shang		c. 1600-1100 BCE
Zhou		c. 1100-256 BCE
	Western Zhou	c. 1100-771
	Eastern Zhou	770-256
	Spring & Autumn	770-476
	Warring States	475-221
Qin		221-206 BCE
Han		206 BCE-220 CE
	Western Han	206 BCE-25 CE
	Eastern Han	25-220
Three Kingdoms		220-265
	Wei	220-265
	Shu	221-263
	Wu	222-280
Western Jin		265-316
Eastern Jin		317-420
Southern and Northern Dynasties		420-589
Sui		581-618
Tang		618-907
Five Dynasties		907-960
Liao		916-1125
Song		960-1279
	Northern Song	906-1127
	Southern Song	1127-1279
Western Xia		1038-1227
Jin		1115-1234
Yuan (Mongols)		1271-1368
Ming		1368-1644
Qing (Manchus)		1644-1911

A NOTE ON ROMANIZATION OF CHINESE AND JAPANESE WORDS

Chinese words are spelled according to the *Pinyin* system of Romanization in the text, while those in direct quotations will remain in the Wade-Giles system which was originally adopted by scholars in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Chinese and Japanese personal names appear in their traditional form, with surname followed by given name. Place names, like Canton and Peking, will be as they were in the early twentieth century, while their modern spellings will be noted in brackets.

A NOTE ON ATTRIBUTIONS

In the main texts and illustration captions of this dissertation, the attributions of dating and authorship of Chinese and Japanese paintings and prints follow the named museums' online database records. The phrases "claimed to be by" and "attributed to" are adopted by the British Museum; the former representing a claim to authorship made by original collectors and the latter an attribution of authorship made by other experts. The British Museum also uses the phrase "in the style of" to indicate the stylistic likeness of possible painters when the authorship is unknown and the original collectors' attributions are in doubt. In all instances, my own usage of these terms parallels that used by the British Museum. The phrase "probably painted by" in Figure 22 is adopted from the curator's comment in the Victoria & Albert Museum online database.

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used in the main texts and footnotes. Full publication details are given in the bibliographies.

ALB	Archive of Laurence Binyon (Loan 103), British Library, London
BL	British Library, London
BM	The British Museum, London
<i>BM</i>	<i>The Burlington Magazine</i>
BMCA	The British Museum Central Archive, London
<i>c.</i>	Circa
CE3-SC	CE3 Minutes of Meetings of the Trustees' Standing Committee, the British Museum Central Archive, London.
CE4-OP	CE4 Original Papers, the British Museum Central Archive, London.
CLFP-FGA	Charles Lang Freer Papers, Freer Gallery of Art/Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives. Smithsonian Institution, Washington D. C.
<i>DHC</i>	<i>Descriptive and Historical Catalogue of a Collection of Japanese and Chinese Paintings in the British Museum</i> (1886)
DPD	Department of Prints and Drawings, the British Museum
<i>FD</i>	<i>The Flight of the Dragon</i> (1911)
Fig.	Figure number
<i>IE</i>	<i>The Ideals of the East</i> (1903)
<i>IHCPA</i>	<i>An Introduction to the History of Chinese Pictorial Art</i> (1905, rev. ed. 1918)
<i>LB</i>	<i>Laurence Binyon: Poet, Scholar of East and West</i> (1995)
<i>LEAP</i>	<i>Landscape in English Art and Poetry</i> (1931)

<i>MRC</i>	<i>The Modernist Response to Chinese Art: Pound, Moore, Stevens</i> (2003)
<i>PAJ</i>	<i>The Pictorial Arts of Japan</i> (1886)
<i>PFE</i>	<i>Painting in the Far East</i> (1908, rev. edn 1913, 1923, 1934)
r.	Reign
<i>SR</i>	<i>The Saturday Review</i>
<i>SMAA</i>	<i>The Spirit of Man in Asian Art</i> (1935)
<i>TLS</i>	<i>The Times Literary Supplement</i>

Introduction

Why Laurence Binyon?

Laurence Binyon (1869-1943) (Fig. 1) worked at the British Museum for forty years, from 1893 to 1933. Under the supervision of Sir Sidney Colvin (1845-1927), he was involved in the acquisition, exhibition and cataloguing of European and Oriental paintings in the Department of Prints and Drawings. Through numerous publications and lectures, Binyon also established a reputation as an English poet, as well as a historian of Oriental painting in Britain and abroad. His pioneering study of Chinese painting impressed collectors, art critics and influenced the artists of his time. With his long career in a national museum, his influential scholarship in Oriental painting, his multifarious interest in art, literature, drama and non-Western cultures, as well as his wide network of friends in both art and literary circles, Laurence Binyon was a central figure for the study and reception of Chinese painting in early twentieth-century Britain.

Binyon was born in the third quarter of the nineteenth century when Japanese art was in fashion in Europe. While his friends were more interested in Japanese prints, Binyon realized the importance of exploring the historical development and aesthetic values of Chinese painting. He de-mystified the concept of “Oriental art” by examining the relationship between the art and thought of Japan, China and India. Binyon’s major interest lay in the aesthetics and philosophy of ancient China, some aspects of which were close to aesthetic ideas prevailing in early twentieth-century Britain. Nevertheless, since his death in 1943, little has been written about Binyon’s contribution to the growth of appreciation of Oriental painting in early twentieth-

century Britain. Although the role of Binyon is occasionally mentioned by some scholars in their discussion of the European reception of Asian art and culture, the importance of Binyon is generally subordinated to that of his predecessors or contemporaries, such as Ernest Fenollosa (1853-1908), Okakura Kakuzo 岡倉覚三 (also known as Okakura Tenshin 岡倉天心) (1862-1913), Roger Fry (1866-1934), Ezra Pound (1885-1972), and Arthur Waley (1889-1966). Otherwise, attention has more often been paid to Binyon's poetry, with his war-poem "For the Fallen" (Fig. 2) which is always recited on Remembrance Day.

With the support and assistance of Binyon's descendants, John Hatcher (b. 1951) compiled the first biography of Binyon which recognizes his fame in the world of both literature and art. Hatcher's doctoral dissertation *Laurence Binyon: A Critical Biography* (Oxford 1991) and its published version *Laurence Binyon: Poet and Scholar of East and West* (1995) facilitate further knowledge about Binyon's career, circles of friends, writings and research on Oriental painting. In the last few years, Binyon has occasionally been the focus of recent publications on modern art and literature by scholars in the East and West. For instance, Binyon's relationship with Ezra Pound and his role as an art critic of British modernism are discussed in publications by David Peters Corbett, Qian Zhaoming, and Rebecca Beasley.¹ A more recent discussion of Binyon and his study of Oriental art is Alexander Jacoby's short

¹ For examples, David Peters Corbett, "'Make It New': Laurence Binyon, Pound and Vorticism", *Paideuma* 26, 1997, 101-19; Corbett, "Laurence Binyon and the Aesthetic of Modern Art", *Visual Culture in Britain* 6, 2005, 102-19. Also Qian Zhaoming's *Orientalism and Modernism: The Legacy of China in Pound and Williams* (1995) and *The Modernist Response to Chinese Art: Pound, Moore, Stevens* (2003), as well as Rebecca Beasley's *Ezra Pound and the Visual Culture of Modernism* (2007).

article in the *Japan Times Weekly* in 2008, in which Binyon is remembered as a “Japanologist” and “a scholar of Oriental art – Japanese in particular.”²

In fact, Binyon’s duties in the Department of Prints and Drawings and later its Sub-Department of Oriental Prints and Drawings at the British Museum were not limited to Japanese painting and woodcuts, but also included the pictorial arts of China, India and Persia. In the early twentieth century, he was recognized as an authority on Chinese painting, and his lectures, articles and books were widely known in Europe, America and Japan. Nonetheless, Binyon’s role in promoting the appreciation of Chinese painting in the West has not received much attention among contemporary researchers. This neglect is reflected in a recent article on “Chinese Painting Research: Past and Present” by Chen Pao-chen in 2009.³ In her overview of the development of the scholarship of Chinese painting in China, Japan and the West from the late nineteenth century to the present, Chen highlights some influential references and scholars, including Ernest Fenollosa, Okakura Kakuzo, Otto Kummel (1874-1952), Sir Marc Aurel Stein (1862-1943), Charles Lang Freer (1854-1919), Taki Seiichi 瀧精一 (1873-1945), Arthur Waley and Osvald Sirén (1879-1966). While Binyon’s contemporaries are regarded as important scholars who contributed to the expanding study of Chinese painting in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Binyon’s role and publications are ranked as less important and receive no attention in the article. Chen’s discussion of research on Chinese painting in Britain is also very brief in comparison with her discussion of other Western countries, like Germany and America.

² Alexander Jacoby, “Laurence Binyon: A Japanologist Worthy of Remembrance”, *Japan Times Weekly*, 26 January 2008, 18.

³ Chen Pao-chen, “Chinese Painting Research: Past and Present”, *Newsletter for Research in Chinese Studies* 28, August 2009, 1-14.

Several books on East-West cultural relations, *Chinoiserie*, as well as Chinese export porcelain and Chinese watercolours in Britain, have been published in the last few decades. However, academic publications addressing the single subject of the reception of Chinese painting in Britain are far from adequate. After Binyon's *Chinese Paintings in English Collections* (1927), the early history of Chinese painting in Britain has been discussed in short articles by subsequent curators from the British Museum, including Basil Gray (1904-1989), Roderick Whitfield, and Anne Farrer.⁴ Shelagh Vainker's catalogues, *Modern Chinese Painting: Reyes Collection in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford* (1996) and *Chinese Paintings in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford* (2000), focus only on the collections of modern Chinese paintings in the first public museum in Britain. In fact, almost all the Chinese paintings at the Ashmolean were acquired in the second half of the twentieth century. According to Vainker, there is no inventory of Chinese painting before the establishment of the Department of Eastern Art in 1963. The few examples which were already in the Ashmolean Museum do not appear in the Eastern Art departmental inventories, and were given a separate class of accession number (X ...). It is thus difficult to identify with certainty if these items were in the Ashmolean before about 1955.⁵ Hence, the very limited number of Chinese paintings acquired by the University Museum at Oxford before the twentieth century was probably unknown to Binyon when he was a student at Trinity

⁴ See for instance, Basil Gray, "The Development of Taste in Chinese Art in the West 1872 to 1972", *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* 39, 1971-3, 19-42; Roderick Whitfield, "Landmarks in the Collection and Study of Chinese Art in Great Britain: Reflections on the Centenary of the Birth of Sir Percival David, Bt. (1892-1967)", in Ming Wilson and John Cayley (eds), *Europe Studies China: Papers from an International Conference on the History of European Sinology*, London 1995, 202-14; Anne Farrer, "Chinese Paintings in the British Museum", *Arts of Asia* 16, May-June 1986, 81-90. Also see Frances Wood, "From Ships' Captains to the Bloomsbury Group: The Late Arrival of Chinese Paintings in Britain", *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* 61, 1996-7, 121-31.

⁵ I acknowledge Dr Shelagh Vainker for providing this information in personal correspondence in May-June 2009. See also Vainker, *Chinese Paintings in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford*, Oxford 2000, 9-20.

College between October 1888 and June 1892 (Fig. 3).⁶ In contrast, among public museums in Britain, the British Museum's collections of Chinese paintings have the longest history and are the largest in size, with over 500 items of traditional specimens acquired before Binyon's retirement in 1933.

Research Approach and Method

This research was primarily developed from my Master's dissertation entitled *Laurence Binyon's Conception of Chinese Painting* (St Andrews 2004), and since 2006, has been expanded to address the broader issue of *The Reception of Chinese Painting in Britain*. My study of the collections of Chinese paintings in the British Museum focuses on the formative period of 1880-1920, which saw the development and high point of the collecting and connoisseurship of Chinese art in the West. It involves a broad range of complex relations between China and Britain, public museums and private collectors, as well as the collection, display and interpretation of Chinese painting.

Sino-British relations have long been investigated in several major studies which give an in-depth discussion of the interaction between the British Empire and China in the wider contexts of politics, society and culture.⁷ Western ideas of the "Orient" and the collecting of the art of "other" cultures in relation to colonial history have also been debated among scholars in art history, material culture, museum and post-colonial studies during the last few decades, particularly since the publication of

⁶ For Binyon's study life at Oxford, see John Hatcher, *Laurence Binyon: Poet, Scholar of East and West* (hereafter *LB*), Oxford 1995, 18-37.

⁷ For a discussion of the British imagination of China, see Jerome Chen, *China and the West*, London 1979, 39-59; Robert Bickers, *Britain in China: Community, Culture and Colonialism 1900-1949*, Manchester and New York 1999, 22-66. For a lively account of Western perception of China, see Frances Wood, *The Lure of China: Writers from Marco Polo to J. G. Ballard*, New Haven and London 2009.

Edward Said's influential study *Orientalism* (1978).⁸ Craig Clunas has claimed that the British colonial presence in China informed their response towards Chinese art and culture.⁹ Such recent scholarship has addressed the discourse of national and imperial identity and the framing of Chinese art and culture through collecting and collections of Chinese objects in Britain.¹⁰

Although this dissertation considers the cross-cultural and political encounters between Victorian Britain and China, the cultural politics of empire and museums are not its primary concern. Rather, attention is paid to the role of private collectors, museums and curators in contributing to the formation and study of Chinese painting in Britain. Peter Vergo remarks that museums are far more than places of study, display, education or entertainment, but “the very act of collecting has a political,

⁸ Edward Said was an influential postcolonial theorist who stimulated considerable debate on the discourse and representation of the Orient in relation to the Western attitude towards Asia and especially the Arab Middle East. See Edward Said, *Orientalism*, London 1978; Said, *Culture & Imperialism*, London 1994.

⁹ Craig Clunas, “China in Britain: The Imperial Collections”, in Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn (eds), *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum*, London and New York 1998, 43. Clunas examines how the possession of Chinese art from the eighteenth century onwards is constitutive of identity within the dominant discourses of political and moral economy in Britain. His expanded article gives a more comprehensive discussion of the production of “Chinese art” in Britain, in the institutional context of museum and academy. See Craig Clunas, “Oriental Antiquities/Far Eastern Art”, in Howard Morphy and Morgan Perkins (eds), *Anthropology of Art: A Reader*, Malden, Massachusetts and Oxford 2006, 186-208.

¹⁰ For a discussion of British colonial attitudes to Chinese culture and the representation of China as a commodity, see Catherine Pagani, “Chinese Material Culture and British Perceptions of China in the Mid-Nineteenth Century”, in Barringer and Flynn (eds), *Colonialism and the Object*, 28-40. Stacey Pierson's conference proceeding includes several papers examining the national collections of Chinese art (mainly ceramics) in European and Chinese museums. Anne Farrer investigates the formation, development and collecting policy of the British Museum's twentieth-century Chinese print collections. See Stacey Pierson (ed.), *Collecting Chinese Art: Interpretation and Display*, Percival David Foundation Colloquies on Art & Archaeology in Asia No. 20, London 2000. Judith Green's doctoral dissertation discusses the British image of China, the interplay of public institutions and private collecting, with special reference to the collections of Chinese objects formed by John Henry Gray (1823-1890), Stephen Bushell (1844-1908) and George Eumorfopoulos (1863-1939). See Judith Green, *Britain's Chinese Collections, 1842-1943: Private Collecting and the Invention of Chinese Art*, D. Phil Dissertation, University of Sussex 2002. For the relationship of identity and collection, as well as professional public collecting and amateur private accumulation of Chinese art and material culture through the discourse of gender, see Sarah Cheang, “The Dogs of Fo: Gender, Identity and Collecting” and Nicky Levell, “Scholars and Connoisseurs, Knowledge and Taste: The Seligman Collection of Chinese Art”, both in Anthony Shelton (ed.), *Collectors: Expressions of Self and Other*, London 2001, 55-89; Sarah Cheang, *The Ownership and Collection of Chinese Material Culture by Women in Britain, c. 1890-1935*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Sussex 2004.

ideological or aesthetic dimension”.¹¹ However, Binyon’s conception of Asian art did not reflect an overt political ideology. His approach to Chinese painting was largely aesthetic and philosophical, and related closely to his poetic and romantic view, his comprehension of life and nature, and his response to the development of modern art in early twentieth-century Europe.

Since little has been written about the early history of the collecting, display and interpretation of Chinese painting in British collections, this dissertation adopts a historical and cross-cultural approach to examine five major issues:

- 1) the formation and growth of the British Museum’s collections of Chinese paintings before 1920;
- 2) the impact of early writings on, and exhibitions of, Chinese painting in the West;
- 3) the role and taste of private collectors, curators and scholars in shaping an understanding of Chinese pictorial art;
- 4) the growing competition between Western museums as collectors of Chinese painting; and
- 5) the relevance of Chinese aesthetics for the development of modern European art.

Binyon’s later career, the ensuing interest in Chinese painting in Britain after 1920, and the changing attribution of Chinese painting as a result of Chinese scholarship and research conducted at the British Museum in subsequent decades, are outside the remit of this dissertation. Beyond cultural boundaries and academic disciplines, this

¹¹ Peter Vergo (ed.), *The New Museology*, London 1989, 2. James Clifford also argues that in the West, “collecting has long been a strategy for the deployment of a possessive self, culture, and authenticity”, while collections reflect wider cultural rules of rational taxonomy, gender and aesthetics. Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture*, 218. Charles Smith and Peter Vergo provide practical methods of presenting museums’ artefacts and works of art for the advancement of learning in modern institutions. See also Vergo (ed.), *The New Museology*, 6-21, 41-59. For literature concerning the role of the museum as a site for the production of knowledge, as well as broader critical histories of collecting and display, see George Stocking (ed.), *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*, Vol. 3 History of Anthropology, Madison, Wisconsin 1985; Ivan Karp and Steven Lavine (eds), *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, Washington and London 1991.

dissertation presents a missing chapter in the early history of the collections of Chinese paintings in the British Museum and of Laurence Binyon's conception of Chinese pictorial art. It aims to throw light on the transnational and comparative study of art and cultural history.

The inventory records of Chinese painting, original papers, Trustees' minutes, visitors' books, reports and letter books in the British Museum are indispensable for reconstructing Binyon's career and the growth of the Museum's collections of Chinese paintings. By coincidence, when I began my Ph.D. research in 2006, the British Museum launched a three-year project to catalogue its collections of Chinese paintings with an online database. My participation in this project was useful for this dissertation, and allowed personal access to the actual works and original registers before the 1920s. While the online database records are still being updated, the Museum's manuscripts and early publications, including catalogues and exhibition guides, serve as supplementary references. However, there are discrepancies between the old and new records concerning the attributions of curators and visiting scholars of different periods. For instance, the total number of Chinese paintings dated to a specific dynasty has varied, according to the judgments of later experts. Moreover, some Chinese paintings known to Binyon can no longer be located in the Museum's storage. The data analysis shown in the following texts and appendices is based on all the foregoing early and recent records, and gives an accurate picture of the growth and characteristics of the Museum's collections of Chinese paintings.

The changing nature of attribution and the authenticity of Chinese paintings in the British Museum are not major concerns of this dissertation. Since the collecting

practice and study of Chinese painting in Britain has not been analyzed in depth, it was considered more important to explore Binyon's early interest in Chinese painting, and how early collectors and scholars influenced his understanding of it. Also considered is how Chinese painting was collected, displayed, and interpreted in Western countries in the cultural context of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Binyon's archives are scattered in various libraries and museums in Britain, America, Japan and China. The Laurence Binyon archive on loan to the British Library is a particularly important primary source for illuminating these issues. Secondary sources in both European and Asian languages have also been consulted in order to support my arguments and to set out the different views of international scholars on specific issues.

British Interest in China before the Twentieth Century

China trade mainly maintained through the East India Company played a key role in reinforcing the European fantasy vision of China and its neighbours, notably Japan, India and Persia. During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, throughout Europe there was great demand for things Oriental which extended from tea, silks and porcelains, to lacquerware, furnishings, wallpapers, carvings, ivories, watercolours and paintings. Exquisite objects made in China specifically for the Western market resulted in a taste for *Chinoiserie* which became fashionable in eighteenth-century Europe and reached its apogee in Britain in the 1750s.¹² At the same time motifs of natural history in Chinese export watercolours and engravings fascinated British naturalists and collectors. The English East India Company staff members (included surgeons, physicians and naturalists), who were enthusiastic

¹² For a recent discussion of early British interest in *Chinoiserie*, see David Beevers (ed.), *Chinese Whispers: Chinoiserie in Britain, 1650-1930*, Brighton 2008.

students of natural history, collected local specimens in China during their leisure time. To preserve the colour and lively appearance of the samples, they commissioned both Western and Chinese artists to produce watercolours of plant and insect, fish, bird and other natural things.¹³

British curiosity in China also included its landscape, people, and their activities. A considerable number of export paintings were mass-produced in workshops in Canton (Guangzhou) and imported to Europe and America through the East India Company for the middle-class market. They illustrated a diversity of subject matter, including Chinese domestic and social life, customs, costumes, ports, gardens, plants, birds, etc. Many of the export paintings were produced in meticulous detail, and employed modeling, perspective and a delicate palette. Some had texts in Chinese and European languages and were mass-produced by woodblock or transfer printing methods.¹⁴ Although many of the export drawings were made by the Chinese, they corresponded with the Western vision of China, of what Europeans felt was “Chinese”. Due to their great variety and comparatively low prices, export paintings were commonly purchased by Western visitors and collected by museums in Europe and America.

From 1860 the South Kensington Museum (renamed the Victoria & Albert Museum in 1899) in London acquired a large number of Chinese export paintings

¹³ For the early history of British naturalists in China, see Fan Fa-ti, *British Naturalists in Qing China: Science, Empire, and Cultural Encounters*, Massachusetts and London 2004, 11-60.

¹⁴ For a discussion of themes, styles, materials, and techniques of Chinese export drawings and prints produced in Chinese workshops during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Carl L. Crossman, *The Decorative Arts of the China Trade: Paintings, Furnishings and Exotic Curiosities*, Suffolk 1997, 156-203.

from British visitors to Canton in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹⁵ Tao Cheng states that

Paintings, among the many locally-produced artifacts, were one of the most popular souvenirs taken home by western travelers and merchants who visited Guangzhou ... It was against such a background that a huge number of paintings for the export market were produced in Guangzhou as early as the 1760s.¹⁶

The idea of purchasing Chinese export paintings in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was almost the equivalent of taking photographs or buying postcards today. The pictures served as souvenirs or as a visual record for Westerners who were interested in the daily scenes and topography of China, as well as in the racial appearance, costumes, and occupations of Chinese people:

In the late 18th/early 19th century Europeans made no conscious distinction between Chinese paintings made for export and those made for the home market, although Chinese artisans were indeed aware that their products were intended for foreigners. People in Europe wanted to know more about China, and paintings were the best source of information available in days before the advent of photography.¹⁷

Export products like these provided ethnographic information about China, but did not represent the aesthetic quality of original Chinese art. Nor did they show the original style and tradition of Chinese paintings produced by both court and literati painters in ancient or modern China. Thus, by the late nineteenth century collectors and connoisseurs in the West had not been trained, and still had no eye for evaluating the quality and authenticity of traditional Chinese painting.

The Display of Chinese Art in Nineteenth-Century Britain

¹⁵ For Chinese export paintings in the Victoria and Albert Museum's collection, see Craig Clunas, *Chinese Export Watercolours*, London 1984.

¹⁶ Tao Cheng, "Foreword II", in Ming Wilson and Liu Zhiwei (eds), *Souvenir from Canton-Chinese Export Paintings from the Victoria and Albert Museum*, Shanghai 2003, 5.

¹⁷ Carl Crossman remarks that after 1880 demand for Chinese export watercolours of large panoramic landscapes had seriously diminished with the introduction of the camera, while several port painters became photographers. The decorative pith paper albums and tiny drawings on pith of a single figure, fish or shell, which were sold in little fabric-covered boxes with glass lids, remained popular in the late nineteenth century. See Wilson and Liu (eds), *Souvenir from Canton-Chinese Export Paintings from the Victoria and Albert Museum*, 10; Crossman, *The Decorative Arts of the China Trade*, 198-9.

While China was threatened by foreign aggression and was ceaselessly forced by British powers to open various ports for business and political purposes during the 1830s and 40s, a flood of Chinese objects was imported to Britain. The outbreak of the First Opium War in 1839 brought to bookshops and newspapers in London a discussion of the people, customs, and culture of the ancient and mysterious Chinese civilization.¹⁸ When the Treaty of Nanking was signed in 1842, Shanghai, Ningpo (Ningbo), Foochow (Fuzhou), Amoy (Xiamen) and Canton were opened for foreign residence, trade and consular establishments, while ceding Hong Kong to Britain until 1997. In particular, Canton became a major southern port for selling a great variety of Chinese export goods, including art and crafts, for the British market. Following subsequent defeats in incessant wars, such as the Taiping Rebellion (1851-64), the Arrow War (1856-60), and the burning of the old Peking (Beijing) Summer Palace (*Yuanmingyuan* or Gardens of Perfect Brightness) by British and French soldiers in 1860, the Western looting of court treasures of Chinese paintings, ceramics, jades and other works of art brought a flood of high quality Chinese objects, including ancient art but mostly of the Ming (1368-1644 CE) and Qing (1644-1911 CE) dynasties, onto the European art market.¹⁹ On the one hand, the collecting of Chinese objects fulfilled the European curiosity for the race, life, culture and art of China. But on the other hand, the possession of these treasures through plunder encouraged Western imperialism and British colonial power in China.

Collectors and merchants in America and Europe were enthusiastic to acquire Chinese objects of high aesthetic value, while the looting of imperial treasures

¹⁸ Richard Altick, *The Shows of London*, Massachusetts and London 1978, 292.

¹⁹ For the transmission of Chinese objects from Peking to the European market in 1860, see Nick Pearce, "Soldiers, Doctors, Engineers: Chinese Art and British Collecting, 1860-1935", *Journal of Scottish Society for Art History* 6, December 2001, 45-8. Chinese version of the article was translated by Xie Meng and published in *Wenwu Tiandi*, May 2005, 70-9.

increased the opportunity to see Chinese works of high quality and rarity in the West. Plundered and export collectibles were displayed in several eye-catching exhibitions, such as that of Nathan Dunn's Chinese Collection in Hyde Park Corner in 1842-3 (Fig. 4),²⁰ and the exhibition of the Chinese Collection of Captain Negroni, in the French Court of the Crystal Palace in 1865.²¹ Chinese objects were also shown in the Great Exhibition of Industry of All Nations at the Crystal Palace in South Kensington in 1851-2 (Fig. 5),²² and the International Inventions Exhibition at the Albert Hall Galleries in South Kensington in 1885. A wide range of Oriental objects shown in these international exhibitions, including manufactures, weapons, temples, Buddhas, ornaments, costumes, and art, gave the British public a picture of domestic life and culture which they had never seen before. Chinese and Japanese products gave manufacturers a taste and elegance for British industrial design. Although the collection and display of Oriental objects might have deepened British understanding of the ethnographical aspects of non-Western cultures, their historical development and aesthetic values remained unexplored.

A Taste for Things Japanese or Chinese?

²⁰ Nathan Dunn (1782–1844) who was a rich Philadelphian merchant opened an exhibition of his Chinese collection in London just weeks before Britain signed the Treaty of Nanking with China in 1842. The exhibition of Chinese art and artefacts showcased 1,341 items, which were probably collected during his twelve years residence of Canton. This large scale exhibition drew people's attention to a comprehensive display of decorative arts, paintings, clay figures, and Chinese architectural models. Subsequent exhibitions of Chinese collection appeared in 1847 and 1848. For details, see William B. Langdon, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Chinese Collection*, London 1842; "The Chinese Collection, Hyde Park Corner", *Illustrated London News*, 6 August 1842, 204-5; "Public Exhibitions for the Holidays", *Observer*, 26 December 1842, 2; Altick, *The Shows of London*, 292-7.

²¹ See "The Chinese Collection at the Crystal Palace", *Times*, 30 March 1865, 10.

²² The Chinese section was organized by the London agent, Hewett of Fenchurch Street, who provided export wares for display and purchase in the exhibition. Peter Trippi states that the Great Exhibition had a strong social and political purpose with an attempt to "give the nation a sense of cohesion and loyalty in a period of unrest", promoting both foreign trade and national prestige. See Peter Trippi, "Industrial Arts and the Exhibition Ideal", in Malcolm Baker and Brenda Richardson (eds), *A Grand Design: A History of the Victoria & Albert Museum*, London 1997, 80. See also *The Great Exhibition, Great Exhibition of Works of Industry of All Nations, 1851: Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue*, 3 Vols, London 1851; Jonathan Meyer, *Great Exhibitions: London – New York – Paris – Philadelphia, 1851-1900*, Suffolk 2006, 40.

Although objects of Chinese art and crafts were imported in large quantities to Britain, British interest in Oriental art had shifted to Japan by the mid-nineteenth century.²³ Following the trade agreement between Japan and America negotiated by Commodore Matthew C. Perry (1794-1858) of the United States Navy in 1854, there was an influx of Japanese objects onto the Western market. In France and Britain, many collectors, artists and merchants caught the Japanese fever and took a strong interest in collecting Japanese objects, especially lacquerware, porcelains, *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints, fans, and screens.²⁴ Japanese objects not only became popular decorations for houses and drawing rooms, but also inspired the work of British artists and designers, such as Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882), James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903), and Christopher Dresser (1834-1904).

According to Toshio Watanabe, favourable accounts of Japan and illustrations of Japanese prints in the publications of the 1850s and 1860s (which included the report of Perry's expedition *Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas and Japan* (1856) and Sherard Osborn's (1822-1875) *Japanese Fragments* (1861) showed an important shift in Western attitudes to Japanese art.²⁵

²³ Chinese ceramics, bronze, jade, lacquer, textile and all kinds of *Chinoiserie* did not regain recognition in Britain until the late nineteenth century. The increased market demand for Chinese blue and white porcelain in London stimulated the reproduction of pieces for the export market in Canton. Oliver Impey writes that Chinese and Japanese porcelain which was made for the Western market was "available in London from the travelling 'China-men' or 'India merchants' as well as from shops in Leadenhall Street or direct from the East India Company's headquarters in the same street." Nick Pearce also notes that between 1881 and 1891, Liberty's of London were able to effect price reductions because of the increased direct importation of "modern" Chinese porcelains. See Nick Pearce, *Photographs of Peking, China 1861-1908*, Lewiston 2005, 61-2; Oliver Impey, "Oriental Antiquities", in Arthur MacGregor (ed.), *Sir Hans Sloane: Collector, Scientist, Antiquary Founding Father of the British Museum*, London 1994, 222.

²⁴ For recent discussion of the collecting of Japanese art in Britain, see for example, Monika Bincsik, "European Collectors and Japanese Merchants of Lacquer in 'Old Japan'", *Journal of the History of Collections* 20, 2008, 217-36.

²⁵ According to Watanabe, there were very few signs of art professionals' cognisance of Japanese art before the 1862 International Exhibition in London. Following this crucial event, several discussions of the nature of Japanese art appeared in Europe and America. They included, among others, *International Exhibition* (1862), *The Capital of the Tycoon: A Narrative of a Three Years' Residence in Japan*, 2

When millions of visitors encountered more than 600 Japanese artefacts in the 1862 International Exhibition in London, positive comments from art professionals, including design critics and theorists, affirmed the high aesthetic value of Japanese art for improving British design.²⁶

By the end of the nineteenth century, Japanese scholars, poets and artists who studied in Britain and other European countries took an increasingly important part in early twentieth-century art in the West.²⁷ John Clark states that Britain's economic and political strength, the military cooperation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902, and the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910, increased the awareness of Japanese art in Britain.²⁸ Personal contacts and cultural exchanges between Japanese and British scholars played an important role in shaping the latter's conception of the art and culture of Japan and its neighbouring countries. Simultaneously, modernization led to the rise of modern Japan's military power and foreshadowed its victories in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-5) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5). Joe Earle suggests that British attitudes toward the advanced and unconquered civilisation of

Vols (1863), and *Art and Art Industries in Japan* (1878) by the British diplomat in China and Japan Sir Rutherford Alcock (1809-1897). Other critical writings included, for instance, William Michael Rossetti's (1829-1919) "Japanese Woodcuts" in *The Reader* (Vol. 2, 31 October and 7 November 1863, 501-3, 536-8), and James Jackson Jarves's (1818-1888) "Japanese art" in *The Art Journal* (Vol. 90, June 1869, 182-3). Rossetti and Jarves later published their revised works in *Fine Art, Chiefly Contemporary* (1867) and *A Glimpse at the Art of Japan* (1876), respectively. For the different perspectives in early writings of Japanese art by British and American scholars, see Earle, "The Taxonomic Obsession", 864-70; Toshio Watanabe, *High Victorian Japonisme*, Bern and New York 1991, 89-91, 113-48, 159-65.

²⁶ During the 1850s Owen Jones (1809-1874) was a leading figure in promoting Oriental design. He paved the way for the British appreciation of Japanese design in the 1860s when John Leighton (1822-1912), William Burges (1827-1881) and Christopher Dresser were among the early designers discussing characteristics of Japanese design in journals. The 1867 Paris Exposition Universelle further consolidated the reputation of Japanese design in Europe. For details, see Watanabe, *High Victorian Japonisme*, 149-59; Yuko Kikuchi and Toshio Watanabe, "The British Discovery of Japanese Art", in Gordon Daniels and Chushichi Tsuzuki (eds), *The History of Anglo-Japanese Relations 1600-2000*, Vol. 5 Social and Cultural Perspectives, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York 2002, 147-53.

²⁷ For Japanese artists' activities in pre-World War II Britain, see Keiko Itoh, *The Japanese Community in Pre-War Britain: From Integration to Disintegration*, Surrey 2001, 110-20; John Clark, *Japanese Exchanges in Art 1850s-1930s, with Britain, Continental Europe, and the USA*, Sydney 2001, 213-9.

²⁸ Clark, *Japanese Exchanges in Art 1850s-1930s*, 213.

Japan was reflected in the attitudes of Victorian officials and curators toward Japanese artefacts, while the Japanese were also usually regarded as superior to other non-Europeans.²⁹

In contrast, civil war in China and the military attacks by the West, including the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901), caused severe destruction to the trading ports of Nanking (Nanjing), Shanghai and Canton. Incessant warfare further threatened the stability and military power of China and the political control of the Qing court. According to Catherine Pagani, British opinion of the mid-eighteenth century considered the Chinese to be “a happy pig-tailed race dwelling in fanciful pavilions whose institutions were to be admired”.³⁰ However, China’s failure in the First Opium War and thereafter its declining economic power and esteem changed British perception. Arthur Hacker points out that after the 1840s and during the Arrow War numerous Western artists visited the newly opened treaty ports in China, while British magazines sent war artists to China. Their sketches were reproduced by skilled wood engravers back in London and appeared regularly in magazines like the *Illustrated London News* (Fig. 6) and *The Graphic*. Sometimes they were used along with wood engravings copied from photographs.³¹ Writings on China in the popular press were generally associated with its social unrest and progress in wars.

²⁹ The British generally appreciated the design and craftsmanship of Japanese artefacts, especially applied arts and woodblock prints. However, criticism of Japanese art and artists in the writings of some collectors and art critics, such as those by Sir Rutherford Alcock, John Ruskin (1819-1900) and William Morris (1834-1896), also reflected the negative side and their ambivalent attitudes. See Joe Earle, “The Taxonomic Obsession: British Collectors and Japanese Objects, 1852-1986”, *Burlington Magazine* (hereafter *BM*) 128, December 1986, 864-6; Kikuchi and Watanabe, “The British Discovery of Japanese Art”, 157.

³⁰ Pagani, “Chinese Material Culture and British Perceptions of China in the Mid-Nineteenth Century”, in Barringer and Flynn (eds), *Colonialism and the Object*, 28.

³¹ See Arthur Hacker, *China Illustrated: Western Views of the Middle Kingdom*, North Clarendon 2004, 84-91.

In his discussion of the “otherness” of China at the time of the 1851 Great Exhibition, Jeffrey Auerbach provides a striking example of the British stereotype of the Chinese. Henry Sutherland Edwards’s (1828-1906) long, satirical poem, *An Authentic Account of the Chinese Commission, which was sent to report on the Great Exhibition* (1852) (Fig. 7), revealed a negative image of Chinese people – which was barbaric, uncouth, cruel, unjust and arbitrary. Although the manufactures shown in the Chinese pavilion at the Great Exhibition, which were mainly collected by the East India Company, might have disappointed the British public, Edwards’s libelous poem and its accompanying caricatures reflect the British colonial prejudice toward the Chinese Emperor and civilization in the mid-nineteenth century.³² Craig Clunas remarks that the supply of Chinese objects of high status and aesthetic quality displayed in Britain was limited before the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911. Following the collapse of Qing rule and the Western craze for excavation of early artefacts in early twentieth-century China, the British perceived that “Chinese culture has a glorious past, a decayed and exhausted present and no future.”³³

While the economic and political development of Japan and China proceeded in different directions, how did British collectors and connoisseurs distinguish between the art and culture of the two nations? In 1878, a small number of Japanese and Chinese drawings were shown in the *Exhibition of Japanese and Chinese Works of Art* at the Burlington Fine Arts Club. Francis [Frank] Dillon (1823-1909), who

³² Although British perceptions of Chinese people became negative around the 1840s, Catherine Pagani remarks that their attitudes to Chinese art were far more positive as reflected in the positive reviews on the 1842 Exhibition of Nathan Dunn’s Chinese Collection. However, the disorganized assortment of Chinese goods, mixed with several Japanese objects, gave a bad impression to the British public that China offered nothing new or did not make any “progress”. See Jeffrey Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display*, New Haven and London 1999, 174-8, 186-7; Pagani, “Chinese Material Culture and British Perceptions of China in the Mid-Nineteenth Century”, in Barringer and Flynn (eds), *Colonialism and the Object*, 34-9.

³³ Clunas, “China in Britain: The Imperial Collections”, in Barringer and Flynn (eds), *Colonialism and the Object*, 47.

visited Japan in 1875-6 to study the life of the people and the landscape, was the exhibition organizer.³⁴ He found that Japanese and Chinese art “have yet so much in common that they will always be ranked together when a comparison is instituted between the art productions of the East and West.”³⁵ Thus, the exhibition provided an opportunity for comparing and contrasting the works of the two countries.

Porcelain, Cloisonné Enamel, and Bronze, examples of which abound in the Museums of Europe, as well as in private collections, have been exhaustively described by competent authorities who have made these arts their special study. But hardly sufficient stress has hitherto been laid upon the decoration for which these beautiful objects have been the medium, and as it is the art of Japan and China which the promoters of the present Exhibition desire especially to illustrate, ... is due for the prominence that has been given to pictorial art.³⁶

Dillon claimed that a sufficient number of Chinese drawings were exhibited to suggest the close relationship of the pictorial arts of China and Japan. However, the decorative and applied arts actually dominated the exhibition space. Among about 180 drawings, only twenty-one pieces were produced by anonymous Chinese artists, mainly of the Ming dynasty. Most of the drawings in the exhibition were actually Japanese, which were either of Chinese subjects or imitated the style of Chinese masters.³⁷ They showed how the Japanese had traditionally looked upon “China as their classic land, adopting her systems of philosophy, and accepting her precepts both in art and literature.”³⁸ The exhibition showed that while British collectors might realize the high aesthetic value of Chinese pictorial art, their major interests were still based upon the art of Japan. It is evident that Chinese painting, which Laurence

³⁴ Frank Dillon stayed in Japan for fourteen months and did numerous drawings on Japanese subjects. See Frank Dillon, “Exhibitions of Japanese Drawings”, *Times*, 23 April 1888, 16.

³⁵ Frank Dillon, “Introductory Remarks”, in the Burlington Fine Arts Club, *Exhibition of Japanese and Chinese Works of Art*, London, 1878, B.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 7.

³⁷ For the details of drawings shown in the 1878 Exhibition, see the Burlington Fine Arts Club, *Exhibition of Japanese and Chinese Works of Art*, 28-9, 46-56.

³⁸ Dillon, “Introductory Remarks”, in *ibid*, B.

Binyon recognized as “the central and most typical of the arts of China”,³⁹ was not the major interest of British collectors and connoisseurs in the late nineteenth century.

Publications and exhibitions of Japanese art were more popular than those of Chinese art in late nineteenth century. In particular, the love of nature expressed in Japanese art suited the direction of the Arts and Crafts Movement in late nineteenth-century Britain.⁴⁰ Although the notion of nature was central to Chinese art, Chinese art was only introduced in books on Japanese art for the purpose of comparison, as demonstrated by William Anderson’s substantial publications of 1886, namely *The Pictorial Art of Japan* and *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue of a Collection of Japanese and Chinese Paintings in the British Museum*, as well as the periodical *The Kokka: An Illustrated Monthly Journal of the Fine and Applied Arts of Japan and other Eastern Countries* (《國華》) published by Shinbi Shoin since 1889, with illustrations from private Japanese collections and temples.

While British interest in Chinese painting was weak and grew very slowly in the late nineteenth century, the European literature on Chinese pictorial art was extremely inadequate. It was not until 1905 that Herbert Giles (1845-1935), who had lived in China between 1867 and 1892, and had a knowledge of Chinese language, published *An Introduction to the History of Chinese Pictorial Art*, which was the first book in English dedicated to the subject of Chinese painting. Following the change of British taste from eighteenth-century *Chinoiserie* to the late nineteenth-century vogue for *Japonisme*, the appreciation of traditional Chinese pictorial art finally flourished

³⁹ Laurence Binyon, “Introduction”, in Leigh Ashton, *Chinese Art*, London 1935, x.

⁴⁰ For an account of early books on Japanese art, see Akiko Mabuchi, “Introduction: The Textual Sources of Japonisme”, in James Jackson Jarves, *A Glimpse at the Art of Japan*, Japanese Art and Japonisme Series, Vol. 1, Part 1, Bristol and Tokyo 1999, v-xvii.

and the rehabilitation of Chinese culture took place in Britain and other Western countries in the early twentieth century.

Structure of the Dissertation

The early chapters examine the British taste for Chinese pictorial art in the late nineteenth century, and document the first major acquisitions of Chinese drawings and paintings at the British Museum. In Chapter I, the small section of Chinese paintings in the William Anderson collection (1881) and Anderson's writings are analyzed in order to reveal his taste in forming the nucleus of the British national collection of Chinese paintings.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, Laurence Binyon began to develop his interest in Chinese painting. His career at the British Museum and his early methods of study of Oriental art form the subject of Chapter II. Early writings about Oriental painting by European and Japanese scholars helped to shape Binyon's understanding of Japanese and Chinese art and influenced his interpretation of these subjects. In Chapters III and IV, Okakura Kakuzo's *The Ideals of the East* (1903) and Herbert Giles's *An Introduction to the History of Chinese Pictorial Art* (1905) will be discussed in order to show their influence on Binyon's understanding of the thought and aesthetic ideas of ancient China.

In the early 1900s, expeditions and voyages to Asia encouraged greater familiarity in the West with early Chinese artefacts and antiquities, and led to the growth of museum collections of early Chinese art of a higher artistic quality. Following the excavations of early Buddhist paintings, manuscripts and other

antiquities in Central Asia by Sir Aurel Stein and other archaeologists, Chinese art gradually became more collectible. In Chapter V, Binyon's involvement with the Stein collection (1909) and the Frau Olga-Julia Wegener collection (1910) is examined in order to show the growing interest in Chinese art in Britain around 1910. In Chapter VI, I argue that Binyon's experience of studying splendid collections of Chinese painting in Germany, and especially in America, was important for broadening his vision and deepening his interest in Chinese landscape painting. Through correspondence and visits, Binyon was encouraged by art collectors and curators outside the circle of the British Museum to extend his reputation to America, Japan and other countries. All these experiences resulted in his visit to the Far East and encouraged his ambition to promote an appreciation of Oriental art – and Chinese painting in particular.

Binyon explored the thought and art of non-Western cultures from a comparative and inter-disciplinary perspective. In Chapter VII, the key ideas promoted in Binyon's influential writings and the issue of Chinese painting historiography will be discussed in relation to the social and cultural context of the early twentieth century. To demonstrate the relevance of Chinese painting for the development of modern British art, the last chapter ends with a discussion of British modernists' responses to Chinese art during the 1910s, with special reference to their interest in Chinese aesthetics in the writings by Binyon and other Sinologists.

Chapter I

Early Collections of Chinese Paintings in the British Museum

The British Museum played an important part in introducing the appreciation of Chinese pictorial art to the British public. This chapter examines the major acquisitions and exhibitions of Chinese painting at the British Museum in the late nineteenth century, which marked the beginning of serious study in Britain. I also discuss British taste for the collecting of Chinese painting during a period when the taste for Japanese art was still predominant.

The British Museum's Collections of Chinese Drawings, 1723-1880

Prior to the 1880s, the appreciation and collection of Chinese painting, especially those produced in older times, were not popular among European collectors. Even in the British Museum, the founding collection of Sir Hans Sloane (1660-1753) did not contain traditional Chinese painting, but a set of twenty-nine large Chinese woodblock colour prints of flowers (Fig. 8), with couplets from poems, produced by the renowned printing and publishing house, the Ding family, of Suzhou during the 1660s. The Sloane collection also included twenty-eight prints of figures, flowers and birds in silk brocade and embroidery which may have been dismembered from some original books.¹ Sir Hans purchased the botanic illustrations from the family of a

¹ Sir Hans Sloane wrongly thought that the Chinese colour prints were watercolours. According to Basil Gray, "a series of Chinese woodcuts, mounted in an album..., numbered Additional 5[2]52, and lettered on the spine 'Japanese and Chinese pictures: e Mss. E. Kaempfer'" was preserved in the Department of Manuscripts. The woodcuts were taken out of the album and transferred to the Department of Prints and Drawings in 1906. See Impey, "Oriental Antiquities", in MacGregor (ed.), *Sir Hans Sloane*, 224-5; Basil Gray, "Sloane and the Kaempfer Collection", *British Museum Quarterly* 18, 1953, 21-2; Laurence Binyon, *A Catalogue of Japanese and Chinese Woodcuts at the Sub-Department of Oriental*

well-known German physician, scholar, collector and traveller, Dr Engelbert Kaempfer (1651-1716), in 1723-5.² During his residence in Japan in 1690-2, Kaempfer purchased woodblock colour prints and Japanese and Chinese books in Nagasaki, the entrepôt in Japan for trade with Dutch and Chinese merchants since 1688. Basil Gray noted that

Dr. Kaempfer was thus able to acquire specimens of Chinese books and prints as well as Japanese, and it is not surprising that among them are examples of the elaborate colour-prints in an art invented in China in the seventeenth century, in which the Japanese took the greatest interest; for it was to lead with them in due course to a far wider use of the process during the eighteenth century.³

As a physician, collector and botanist, Sir Hans's major concern was not the aesthetic quality of the prints or their sophisticated techniques and decorative styles. His main interest was in the different species of flowers, birds and insects of Japan and China.

Today, two albums of Chinese drawings which originally formed part of the Sloane manuscripts albums are kept at the Department of Asia. The one entitled *Birds, Flowers, etc.* (Fig. 9) includes twenty species painted in ink and colours on paper with decorative details. The handwritten note at the beginning of the album shows that it was transferred from the Library to the Department of Prints and Drawings on 28 November 1906. "Eight woodcuts were removed from this album & are now to be

Prints and Drawings, London 1916, 582-90.

² In November 1690, Dr Kaempfer signed on with the Dutch East India Company and joined the annual voyage to gather information on Japan. In his two years residence in Japan, Kaempfer learnt about Oriental medicine, acupuncture and moxabustion, and gathered information for his writing on the history of Japan. In 1723, Sir Hans purchased Kaempfer's unpublished German manuscript of *The History of Japan* and his collection of Chinese colour prints. Kaempfer's botanical specimens and illustrations became the first major collection brought to the West from Japan. Johann G. Scheuchzer (1702-1729), a Swiss scholar and librarian to Sir Hans, translated Kaempfer's manuscripts into English and published the two-volume *The History of Japan* (1727) at London. See Gray, "Sloane and the Kaempfer Collection", 20-3; John Bowers, "Engelbert Kaempfer: Physician, Explorer, Scholars, and Author", *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 21, 1966, 237-59; Yu-Ying Brown, "Japanese Books and Manuscripts: Sloane's Japanese Library and the Making of the History of Japan", in MacGregor (ed.), *Sir Hans Sloane*, 278-90.

³ Gray, "Sloane and the Kaempfer Collection", 21.

found as Chinese woodcuts B. 50-57.”⁴ The album *Fishes* (Fig. 10), consists of eleven ink drawings on paper, showing fifteen species of fish. Each plate bore a seal of Yipu 藝圃 which was the mark of Yuan Shijing 袁世經, Chinese painter of landscape and flowers in the seventeenth century. It is “[a] book of fishes curiously drawn with Indian ink in China, brought by & bought of Mr. Butler.”⁵ The ink gradation suggests the volume and the movement of the fishes. These albums were probably produced by native artists in the Western style for the foreign market. The botanic prints and drawings of fish reflect Sloane’s interest in natural history and serve as visual resources for his study of the botanical and zoological species of China.

Apart from their interests in natural history, European collectors also had an avid curiosity for Chinese culture and topography. In 1807, the British Museum purchased from the Lansdowne collection three albums of Chinese export paintings, including *Fifty Views in China by Chinese Artists, Vol. I and II* (Fig. 11) which consisted of fifty landscape views of China in each volume showing the topography of actual places, mainly in south China.⁶ As noted in the second volume, the landscapes in the region of Canton were painted in 1794 for Andreas Everardus van Braam Houckgeest, Dutch

⁴ In 1907, Binyon discussed the material and colour of the birds and flowers album of Chinese drawings from the Sloane collection. The original set included twenty-nine woodcuts, measuring 29.4 x 36.9cm. The subjects included flowering sprays, boughs of fruit, birds and insects. These Chinese prints were brought to England by Dr Kaempfer in 1692-3, and later passed to Sir Hans. See the front page of the album *Birds, Flowers, etc.*, Department of Asia, the British Museum (hereafter BM), Add11 (previously catalogued as SL 5303.4); Laurence Binyon, “A Note on Colour-Printing in China and Japan”, *BM* 11, April 1907, 31-2.

⁵ This album was transferred from the Sloane manuscripts to the Sub-Department of Oriental Prints and Drawings in 1928. See the handwritten notes in the front page of the album *Fishes* and the British Museum online database, Add59 (previously catalogued as SL 5503.3).

⁶ The original catalogue numbers (Nos 1349 and 1350) of the *Fifty Views in China by Chinese Artists* in the Lansdowne collection were replaced by a new catalogue number “Lansdowne 1243” in 1817. The two albums were transferred from the Department of Oriental Printed Books and Manuscripts to the Sub-Department of Oriental Prints and Drawings on 10 March 1928. The third album of Chinese export watercolours of various subjects, including trades, flowers, fruit and boats, was transferred from the British Library to the British Museum in 1973. Its original catalogue number “MS Lansdowne 1242” was replaced by a new registration number “Add379”. See the British Museum online database records and the handwritten notes in the *Fifty Views in China by Chinese Artists, Vol. I and II*, Department of Asia, BM, Add60 and Add61.

envoy to the Emperor Qianlong (r. 1736-1795).⁷ Chinese names of each place were printed in ink at the bottom of the right-hand corner, with English translations and Chinese transliterations noted in pencil (Fig. 12). The pictures were executed in a style with a strong Western influence. Light colours and linear lines were applied in the realistic representation of landscapes. A strong sense of spatial depth shows that the painter had paid much attention to delineating the architectures, as well as the shape and texture of the mountains.

No additional acquisitions of Chinese export paintings were made at the British Museum until 1860 when three albums of fifty-six pieces of highly finished drawings of Chinese manners, customs, principal buildings and cultivation of rice (Fig. 13) were purchased from Mr Edward Boys.⁸ In 1877, the British Museum purchased from Mr J. Orsi twenty-one Chinese watercolours, depicting figures and punishments. In the same year, Mrs Elizabeth Reeves donated an enormous collection of 1,417 Chinese export drawings to the British Museum, and in 1878, presented another eighty-five works.⁹ The Reeves collection was formed by John Reeves (1774-1856) and his son John Russell Reeves (1804-1877). Between 1812 and 1831 John Reeves

⁷ *Fifty Views in China by Chinese Artists, Vol. II*, Department of Asia, BM, Add61. Also see Whitfield, "Landmarks in the Collection and Study of Chinese Art in Great Britain: Reflections on the Centenary of the Birth of Sir Percival David, Baronet", in Wilson & Cayley (eds), *Europe Studies China*, 207-8.

⁸ See the *Print Room Register of Purchases and Presentations*, 13 October and 10 November 1860.

⁹ Mrs Elizabeth Reeves was the widow of John Russell Reeves. On the death of her husband, she donated almost 1,500 pieces of export watercolours, arranged in themed albums, to the British Museum in 1877 and 1878. The 1877 donation includes eight small Chinese sketch books, including four views in China in lithography and a series of twenty-two engraved plates representing bouquets of the Emperor of China. In the same year, Mrs Reeves also presented the Reeves collection of fish drawings, containing 481 figures (124 folios) of fishes with descriptions, dating 1828-30, to the Zoological Library of the British Museum (Natural History). According to the British Museum online database records, individual registration number was given to ninety-six items of album paintings from the donation of Mrs Reeves. Some items may contain more than one scene or drawing. For instance, CP361 showed eleven scenes of flowers and bamboo, while CP363 depicted nineteen scenes of plants, insects and figures. For the actual number of watercolours in the Reeves collection, see *Print Room Register of Purchases and Presentations Vols 34-5* and *Presentations to the Print Room Vol. 3* at the Department of Prints and Drawings. Also see P. J.P. Whitehead, "The Reeves Collection of Chinese Fish Drawings," *Bulletin of the British Museum (Natural History)*, Historical Series 3.7, 1969, 191-233.

worked for the East India Company as Inspector of Teas in Canton and commissioned Chinese artists to paint specimens of animals and plants for the study of natural history, as well as subjects of popular religion, daily life and occupations.¹⁰ The album leaves showed a wide range of subject matter, including costumes and figures, birds and flowers, marriage and funeral, deity and punishment, cultivation of tea and cotton, monasteries and street scenes. Some of the works were done in linear ink drawing, but most of them were painted in ink and colours with delicate details. Some drawings, especially the figures' facial expressions and draperies, and the background settings, reflect the techniques of chiaroscuro and spatial depth of Western art (Fig. 14).¹¹ These export watercolours serve as a visual representation of the ethnography of China, but are not reliable examples of traditional Chinese painting.

The William Anderson Collection of Chinese Paintings (1881)

Due to the lack of fine specimens and little knowledge of Chinese pictorial art, the British Museum's collection of Chinese paintings was formed very slowly and haphazardly in the nineteenth century (Appendix I). When we look at the growth of the Museum's collections, Chinese painting in the non-export style was not acquired until 1881. Sir Sidney Colvin explained,

¹⁰ When John Reeves worked in Canton, he devoted his leisure to collecting plants for the British Museum and the Royal Horticultural Society of London. Reeves also offered help and patronage to collectors sent out by the Society to China. Fan Fa-ti thinks that Reeves's most important contributions to natural history were the botanical and zoological drawings that he sent to the Horticultural Society and his other scientific correspondents. For John Reeves's collecting of Chinese drawings, see Fan, *British Naturalists in Qing China*, 43-57; Patrick M. Synge, "Chinese Flower Paintings: An Important Purchase by the Royal Horticultural Society", *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society* 78, 1953, 209-13.

¹¹ In the last three decades of the nineteenth century, the South Kensington Museum acquired a large number of Chinese export watercolours which were executed in a similar style and motif as the Reeves collection in the British Museum. In 1882, the National Museum of Scotland also acquired a set of eleven Chinese export watercolours which were painted by artisans in workshops in Canton and Shanghai and brought back by traders. It shows that public museums in Britain shared a common interest in acquiring Chinese export paintings during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. See Clunas, *Chinese Export Watercolours*, London 1984; Jane Wilkinson and Nick Pearce, *Harmony & Contrast: A Journey through East Asian Art*, Edinburgh 1996, 83-4.

Though the decorative and applied arts of China and Japan had for two centuries and more been the objects of enthusiastic study, collection, and imitation in the West, their pictorial arts properly so-called – the paintings executed on rolls of silk or paper by successive schools and generations of famous artists and their imitators – were almost unknown until the Trustees of the British Museum acquired in 1881 the very extensive collection formed by ... William Anderson, ... during his residence in Japan as medical officer to the British Legation.¹²

The Anderson collection of Japanese and Chinese paintings was acquired by Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks (1826-1897), Keeper of British and Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnography. With his personal wealth and collecting expertise, Franks purchased objects from Japan, Korea, China, and Thailand through his contact with London and Parisian auction houses and dealers in Asia.¹³ Franks's purchase of Chinese and Japanese objects ranged from "the extensive collections made by [William] Gowland [(1842-1924)] in Japan of Japanese prehistoric Dolmen material, to Chinese and Japanese lacquer of the eighteenth century."¹⁴ In the early 1870s, Franks met Stephen Bushell who was a major figure in the interpretation of Chinese art for Western audiences and highly influential in the formation of a number of important public and private collections both in Britain and America.¹⁵ With Bushell's assistance and

¹² Sidney Colvin, "Preface", *British Museum Guide to an Exhibition of Chinese and Japanese Paintings (Fourth to Nineteenth Century A.D.) in the Print and Drawing Gallery*, London 1910, 3.

¹³ Although Franks was not a pioneer collector of Oriental ceramics, he contributed in portraying "oriental ceramics for the first time in Britain as a legitimate subject for academic study and didactic display." His efforts "lay the foundations for the serious study of Chinese material culture within the British Museum". See Jessica Harrison-Hall, "Oriental Pottery and Porcelain", in Marjorie Caygill and John Cherry (eds), *A. W. Franks: Nineteenth-Century Collecting and the British Museum*, London 1997, 220-1.

¹⁴ Soame Jenyns, "The Franks Collection of Oriental Antiquities", *British Museum Quarterly* 18, 1953, 105. Nicole Rousmaniere states that Franks was interested in collecting a wide range of Japanese objects. Franks's collections projected "his identity as a scientist, as a shaper and organizer of historical 'other' things which bolstered the feeling of the British self at the zenith of empire." See Nicole Rousmaniere, "A. W. Franks, N. Ninagawa and the British Museum: Collecting Japanese Ceramics in Victorian Britain", *Orientalism* 33, February 2002, 28-34; Rousmaniere, "Augustus Wollaston Franks (1826-17) and James Lord Bowes (1834-1899): Collecting Japan in Victorian England?", in Hugh Cortazzi (ed.), *Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits*, Vol. 6, Folkestone 2007, 262-70.

¹⁵ Stephen Bushell served as Medical Attendant to the British Legation in Peking from 1868 to 1899. With his experience in China and knowledge of Chinese language, Bushell had obtained access to several palaces and private houses of native collectors. He collected Chinese objects, especially porcelain and pottery, on behalf of friends, for museums, and for his own commercial business. Bushell became a renowned collector, connoisseur and historian of Chinese art in the early twentieth century. He published a two-volume account, *Chinese Art* (1904 and 1906), introducing the Chinese

knowledge of Chinese texts, both Franks and the South Kensington Museum obtained Chinese ceramics of high quality directly from China.¹⁶ Franks's comprehensive collection formed between the 1850s and 1876 include, among other things, more than 1,000 pieces of Chinese porcelain and pottery, and about 550 pieces of Japanese ceramics, mostly dating from the Qing dynasty.¹⁷ Soame Jenyns shows that, other than the good examples acquired through Bushell, the rest of Franks's Chinese porcelain consisted of pieces "either decorated for the European market in China in the eighteenth century in Western taste or imported in the white and decorated in Europe by European enamellers".¹⁸ With his indiscriminate taste for Oriental objects, Franks's knowledge and experience was limited for evaluating the aesthetic value of Anderson's Japanese and Chinese paintings.

On 19 and 25 May 1881, Dr William Anderson (1842-1900), a pioneer of the study of Japanese and Chinese art in Europe,¹⁹ offered for sale his collection of Japanese and Chinese paintings and sketches which consisted of "about a thousand

collections at the Victoria and Albert Museum. For details of Bushell's collecting activities in China, see Green, *Britain's Chinese Collections, 1842-1943*, 97-120. For the relationship between Franks and Bushell, see Pearce, *Photographs of Peking, China 1861-1908*, 4, 49-50.

¹⁶ With Franks's recommendation, Bushell had deposited his own collection of bronzes on loan to the Museum from 1874 to 1899, and acquired 240 pieces of Chinese ceramics for the South Kensington Museum in 1882-3. Jessica Harrison-Hall notes that Bushell's choice of objects was not guaranteed because he was duped by unscrupulous Peking dealers in some of the purchases. See Harrison-Hall, "Oriental Pottery and Porcelain", in Caygill and Cherry (eds), *A. W. Franks*, 224.

¹⁷ Franks published *The Catalogue of a Collection of Oriental Porcelain and Pottery lent for Exhibition by A. W. Franks* for the exhibition of his collection held at the Bethnal Green Museum in 1876. It was presented to the British Museum in 1878. With additional purchases made in later years, the Franks collection which consisted of over 3,000 pieces of ceramics was finally transferred to the Museum in 1885. For details of Franks' collection of Oriental ceramics, see *ibid*, 221-9; Jenyns, "The Franks Collection of Oriental Antiquities", 105.

¹⁸ Jenyns, "The Franks Collection of Oriental Antiquities", 105.

¹⁹ William Anderson was appointed Medical Director of the Imperial Naval Medical College, Tokyo in 1873. A year later he became the medical officer to the British legation in Japan. He built an extensive collection of Japanese and Chinese paintings, books, wood engravings, and other objects during his residence of over six years in Japan. In June 1879, Anderson was the founder and president of the English Asiatic Society of Japan in Yokohama, and published his paper on the history of Japanese art in *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*. In 1880, Anderson returned to London and was appointed Assistant Surgeon at St Thomas's Hospital. See "Obituary" for William Anderson, *Times*, 31 October 1900, 4; Ryugo Matsui, Noboru Koyama, and Kenji Makita, *Tatsujintachi no Daiei Hakubutsukan*, Tokyo 1996, 163-5.

hanging and roll painting and a very large number of unmounted drawings on silk and paper”, for the price of £3,000.²⁰ Anderson had previously shown his collection to Sir Edward August Bond (1813-1898), Principal Librarian of Manuscripts, who spoke favourably of its value. Anderson had spent many years bringing the objects together, and believed that his collection was “not merely the largest collection in Europe but the only one of any historical & technical completeness”.²¹ Anderson also provided full information of the period, artist, school, and subject of each specimen. Four months later, Anderson reiterated the value of his collection: “an extensive collection of Japanese and Chinese paintings illustrating most fully the history and styles of the pictorial art of two countries”, and indicated that Sir Augustus Franks had kindly offered his residence at the British Museum for the selection and examination of drawings.²² To encourage the acquisition of the Anderson collection, Franks wrote to George Reid (1819-1897), Keeper of Prints and Drawings, on 8 November 1881, “expressing a high opinion of the artistic value of the collection, and advising its immediate purchase”, because more than one foreign dealer (including French dealers) was anxious to secure it.²³ Franks praised the collection in his “Notes on Japanese Drawings”:

It has been usual to consider Japanese art as self grown, and as very superior to Chinese art. Dr. Anderson’s collection shows that this is not the case, excepting in the new Popular School, originated by Hokusai: the rest being more or less based on foreign rules of art, but fortunately on the older Chinese style, which evinces far higher powers of design, and greater boldness of execution than

²⁰ Anderson also offered to sell his collection of carvings on wood and ivory, and metal work. He highly recommended the offer of 1,100 volumes of Japanese books at £400. William Anderson to the British Museum, CE4 Original Papers (hereafter CE4-OP), 25 May 1881, the British Museum Central Archive (hereafter BMCA), London, Box OP176, Vol. 77, P No. 2201.

²¹ Anderson thought of placing his collection on the market before he left England. Some of his Parisian friends would have liked to purchase the collection, but Anderson preferred for it to remain in England. See Anderson to Edward A. Bond, CE4-OP, 19-20 May 1881, Box OP176, Vol. 77, P No. 2138.

²² Anderson to the British Museum, CE4-OP, 27 September 1881, Box OP176, Vol. 77, P No. 4097.

²³ CE3 Minutes of Meetings of Trustees’ Standing Committee (hereafter CE3-SC), 12 November 1881, BMCA, Box C11, Vol. 40, 15782-73.

modern Chinese.²⁴

He highlighted some of the fine Japanese drawings of different schools, and pointed out the influences of Korean and Indian paintings on Japanese paintings. However, Franks emphasized that the strongest influence of all was Chinese painting, especially that of the Song (960-1279 CE) and Yuan (1271-1368 CE) dynasties, which were held up as models for Japanese artists. In the Anderson collection, he found a number of remarkable Chinese paintings of the Song and Ming dynasties, especially Chen Yuan's 陳遠 (active 1368-1398) portrait painting (Fig. 15) which reminded "one in the excellence of the portraiture of the works of Holbein."²⁵ Reid fully agreed with Franks's remarks on the artistic merit of selected specimens, and found the early specimens of Chinese art of a highly interesting character. Reid also believed that the Anderson collection was "a most desirable acquisition for the Museum, as giving an excellent representation of the rise and progress of Japanese art, and a good idea of its merits as compared with the European Schools."²⁶ In November 1881, the Trustees and the Treasury approved Reid's recommendation to pay the sum of £3,000 in three annual grants from 1882 to 1885.²⁷

Anderson's Judgment of Chinese Painting

At the time, the Anderson collection, which illustrated the history and development of Japanese art, was considered to be the finest in Europe and became a

²⁴ Sir Augustus Franks, "Note on Japanese Drawings", CE4-OP, 12 November 1881, Box 176, Vol. 77, P No. 4818.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ George Reid, Report to the Trustees, CE4-OP, 11 November 1881, Box 176, Vol. 77, P No. 4952.

²⁷ Reid also suggested the acquisition of Anderson's Japanese books which "should not be separated from the rest of the collection". He recommended this purchase for the Department of Printed Books at £400. Finally, more than 3,000 items of Japanese paintings, engravings, etching and illustrated books from the Anderson collection were acquired by the British Museum, while 2,969 items of Japanese and Chinese paintings and drawings were recorded in the register of the Department of Prints and Drawings. See *ibid*; CE3-SC, 12 November 1881 and 10 December 1881, Box C11, Vol. 40, 15782-3, 15807; *Print Room Register of Purchases and Presentations*, 10 December 1881, Vol. 38B.

valuable source for the study of Japanese painting in Britain. It mainly consisted of a majority of Japanese paintings of all schools, and varied greatly in quality. A small section of early and modern Chinese paintings was only added to demonstrate the relationship between the arts of Japan and China. It is clear that Anderson was more enthusiastic for collecting and studying Japanese art during his residence of over six years in Japan.

To provide guidance for the study of his extensive collection of Japanese and Chinese paintings, Anderson compiled, “with the help of the best native and other authorities”,²⁸ a *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue of a Collection of Japanese and Chinese Paintings in the British Museum* (1886), “illustrating an ancient and remarkable phase of art in its historical, intellectual, and technical developments, and the principal motives by which it had been inspired.”²⁹ He also published its companion, *The Pictorial Arts of Japan: With a Brief Historical Sketch of the Associated Arts, and Some Remarks upon the Pictorial Art of the Chinese and Koreans* (1886),³⁰ which attempted to introduce the history, technique, forms and characteristics of Sinico-Japanese painting, together with a review of different applications of pictorial design. In his book review, J. W. McCarthy praised

Mr. Anderson’s two books, taken together, [which] may be regarded as forming one of the most interesting and valuable artistic works of recent years. They reveal to the student, in more than one department of human effort, a wholly new and unexpected field. The industrial arts of the Far East have become tolerably familiar in recent years in Europe; the pictorial arts, on which all others ultimately rest, have been hitherto unknown, except to one or

²⁸ Sidney Colvin, “Prefatory Note”, in William Anderson, *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue of a Collection of Japanese and Chinese Paintings in the British Museum* (hereafter *DHC*), London 1886, front page.

²⁹ Anderson classified the paintings according to schools, and gave a general account of the history of each school, with a list of principal artists whose names were included in native biographical records. See Anderson, *DHC*, v; Colvin to Mr Bond, 9 July and 28 July 1886, in Letter Books at the Department of Prints and Drawings, the British Museum (hereafter *DPD*).

³⁰ William Anderson, *The Pictorial Arts of Japan* (hereafter *PAJ*), London 1886.

two students, and have been wholly inaccessible to the West.³¹

Anderson's English writing on Japanese and Chinese paintings became the first to expound its mysteries to the West. With more public collections being formed in the late nineteenth century, Anderson believed that

Sincio-Japanese art may be expected to become a recognized branch of study in the West, where now it has received little attention except from a few ardent collectors and investigators, amongst whom may be named Messrs. Burty, Duret, Cernuschi, Gonse, Montefiore, and Bing in France; Drs. Gierke and Naumann in Germany; Professor Morse and Mr. Jarves in America; Captain Brinkley, Professor Fenollosa, and Mr. Gowland in Japan; and Messrs. A. W. Franks, E. Gilbertson, A. B. Mitford, Ernest Hart, T. W. Cutler, G. A. Audsley, J. L. Bowes, F. and E. Dillon, W. C. Alexander, H. S. Trower, and Sir Rutherford Alcock in this country.³²

This shows that collecting Japanese and Chinese art was prevalent among middle-and upper-class collectors and connoisseurs. Among the British collectors, Edward and Frank Dillon, T. W. Cutler (1841-1909), and Sir Augustus Franks, had been contributors to the Exhibition of Japanese and Chinese Works of Art at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1878. Cutler, and especially the Dillons, contributed their collections of Japanese and Chinese drawings to the Exhibition, while Franks showed a few Japanese objects.³³ It is remarkable that Franks not only took the initiative to enrich the Museum's collection with Japanese and Chinese paintings by making the significant purchase of the Anderson collection, but also built his own collection of Chinese painting and contributed twenty-five important specimens to the Chinese section of Anderson's *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue of a Collection of Japanese and Chinese Paintings*. Their subject matter revealed Franks's taste for immortal figure painting, especially the figures of Buddhism and Daoism.

³¹ See J. W. McCarthy, Book Review of "The Pictorial Arts of Japan, and Descriptive and Historical Catalogue of a Collection of Chinese and Japanese Pictures in the British Museum", *Quarterly Review* 164, 1887, 117-8.

³² Anderson, *DHC*, vi.

³³ See the Burlington Fine Arts Club, *Exhibition of Japanese and Chinese Works of Art*, London 1878.

Anderson found that China had hitherto received little attention in the West, and even in the present day, Europeans had “false impressions concerning the character and history of Chinese people.”³⁴ As for the European understanding of Chinese art,

[T]he richest corner still rests unexplored, for there yet remains, outside the treasures of ceramic ware, jade, ivory, and metal work which we have already learned to admire, a mine of wealth awaiting the effort of those who possess the qualifications and opportunity necessary for the investigations, and all lovers of the beautiful will have reason to be grateful when the pictorial treasures of the Middle Kingdom are brought within their ken.³⁵

With his experience in Japan and prior knowledge of Japanese painting, Anderson knew more about Chinese art than other art collectors who had never been to Asia. Although Anderson’s publications showed a tentative attempt to introduce the aesthetic quality and originality of Chinese art, a short account of the history of Chinese painting given in his early essay “A History of Japanese Art” (1879) shows that Anderson’s knowledge of the development of Chinese painting in the pre-Song periods was very limited.³⁶ A brief survey of Chinese pictorial art highlighting Chinese painters and their styles from the third to the seventeenth century was printed as an appendix to Anderson’s *The Pictorial Arts of Japan* (1886), while a shorter account was given in his *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue* (1886), which came to be regarded as “a Handbook to Japanese Pictorial Art”.³⁷

It is arguable whether Anderson was a reliable authority for the study of Chinese painting. His brief discussion of the early history of Chinese painting is far

³⁴ See Anderson, *DHC*, 481.

³⁵ Ibid. He reinstated in *The Pictorial Arts of Japan* that “it will appear strange that the highest and most suggestive section of Chinese art – that of painting – has been hitherto passed over unstudied and almost unnoticed.” Anderson, *PAJ*, viii.

³⁶ Anderson nearly skipped the early history of Chinese painting in his short account. See William Anderson, “A History of Japanese Art”, *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* 7, 1879, 363.

³⁷ McCarthy, “The Pictorial Arts of Japan, and Descriptive and Historical Catalogue of a Collection of Chinese and Japanese Pictures in the British Museum,” 117.

too general and incomplete. In his remarks on Chinese painters in the *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue*, Anderson put much emphasis on Wu Daozi 吳道子 (c. 683-760) who was recognized as the most honoured Chinese master of the Tang dynasty (618-907 CE) in Japan. Based on brief remarks and a list of selected painters mainly from the Song to Ming dynasties, it would have been difficult for European readers to get a balanced picture of the styles and achievements of Chinese painting of different periods. The aesthetics behind Chinese painting was almost entirely neglected. Inaccurate and incomplete information concerning the distinctive features of Chinese painting and artists is to be found in both the reference notes and the supplementary index. For instance, Yan Liben 閻立本 (c. 600-673) of the Tang dynasty was wrongly named as Yuan Liben 圓立本, while Xia Gui 夏珪 (c. 1180-1230) of the Song dynasty was mistakenly named as Yao Gui 要桂.³⁸ With the Chinese names transcribed mostly in Japanese Romanization, it increased the complexity of figuring out the identity and original names of the Chinese painters.

More strikingly, Anderson's way of classifying the styles of Chinese art is unclear and absurd. His concept of different periods of Chinese dynasties is ambiguous, while his method of classification according to mode of outline and colouring also differed from the conventions of Chinese art criticism. Although the theory of calligraphy-painting had long been discussed in Zhang Yanyuan's 張彥遠 (c. 815-875) *Lidai Minghua Ji* (*The Record of Famous Paintings in Successive Dynasties* 《歷代名畫記》) and other art critics in subsequent periods,³⁹ it was uncommon to

³⁸ See Anderson, "Supplementary Index", *DHC*, 4, 9.

³⁹ Chinese brush painting and calligraphy share the same techniques and derive from the same origin. In his treatise, Zhang discussed the similarity of the origin of written characters and picture, and the complimentary relationship between calligraphy and painting, especially in the principle of using brush

use different script styles of Chinese calligraphy to classify different styles of Chinese painting, as Anderson suggests in his *Catalogue*. In general, Chinese art critics would normally use *Gongbi* to describe fine and meticulous brushwork, while *Xieyi* corresponds to the freehand brushwork as characterized by vivid expression and bold outline.

Anderson's discussion of Chinese art was unconventional because he used Western painting techniques as the standard for his judgments of Chinese painting. For instance,

2. Perspective isometrical. A few works of the pure Chinese school and some Buddhist pictures suggest a rudimentary idea of linear perspective by showing the convergence towards a vanishing point of lines that are parallel in nature, but the point is wrongly placed, and in other respects the rendering of distance indicates a lack of intelligent observation.

3. Chiaroscuro sometimes absent ... Projected shadows always omitted. Reflections, whether of form, light, or colour, always ignored ...⁴⁰

These criteria were reminiscent of the six main characteristics (composition, drawing, manipulation, laws of perspective, colouring and chiaroscuro) which he used to characterize the older Chinese pictorial art in his essay of 1879.⁴¹ Anderson's criticism of the techniques of Chinese painting, including little elaboration of detail and weakness in chiaroscuro and perspective, was also obvious in *The Pictorial Arts of Japan*.⁴² By using Western painting values as a standard for measuring the quality of Chinese painting, it is evident that Anderson's way of seeing Chinese painting was Occidental. Although Ernest Fenollosa praised Anderson for his masterly and eloquent treatment of the history of Japanese painting in *The Pictorial*

and ink. He thought that the function of calligraphy is to present ideas, while the function of painting aims at depicting images. See Zhang Yanyuan, *Lidai Minghua Ji*, Yu Jiahua (ed.), Hong Kong 1973, 2-3.

⁴⁰ Anderson, *DHC*, 491-2.

⁴¹ See Anderson, "A History of Japanese Art", 363-4.

⁴² Anderson, *PAJ*, 261-2.

Arts of Japan, as “beyond comparison the most full and trustworthy” and “his criticisms are marked by a true artistic feeling and a judicial discrimination”,⁴³ Fenollosa found that Anderson almost invariably criticized Chinese and Japanese art from the point of view of realism. Anderson’s eyes were so used to Western art that all Chinese art was distortion and affectation.⁴⁴

When he compared the pictorial arts of China and Japan, Anderson recognized the glory of Chinese painting in the Tang, Song and Yuan periods, but did not appreciate its development in the Ming and Qing dynasties.

7. Applications of [Chinese] pictorial art, as in wood-engraving, decoration of pottery and lacquer, embroidery, & c., as a rule, far less intelligent, skilful and varied than in Japan.

“Our painting,” says a Japanese writer of the last century, “is the flower, that of China is the fruit in its maturity.” Europeans, however, who compare the works of the Naturalistic and Popular schools of Japan with the contemporary art of the Middle Kingdom may not be inclined to agree with this modest self-depreciation, for while Chinese pictorial art has been drifting into evil ways, the Japanese have created for themselves an individuality, both in motives and treatment, that has altogether reversed the former relations of the two countries.⁴⁵

For Anderson, Chinese art of “the Ming period commenced a steady and progressive decadence”, thus, Chinese painting lost its amazing vigour and creativity in earlier dynasties.⁴⁶ With his personal preference for a particular painting style and stronger interest in Japanese art, Anderson’s understanding of both early and modern Chinese painting was severely limited; as was the authenticity and quality of the Chinese painting he purchased in Japan. Thus, Anderson’s classification of Japanese and Chinese paintings and his judgment on dating and authorship in his *Catalogue* was

⁴³ Ernest Fenollosa, “The Pictorial Art of Japan”, *Blackwood’s Magazine* 141, 1 February 1887, 281, 290.

⁴⁴ Ernest Fenollosa, *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art*, Vol. 1, New York 1913, xxv.

⁴⁵ Anderson, *DHC*, 491-2.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 489.

later largely corrected by subsequent curators at the British Museum.⁴⁷

Anderson's Taste for Chinese Painting

In a small section of “Chinese Pictorial Art” in Anderson’s *Catalogue*, 117 pieces of Chinese pictures and nineteen modern copies from Chinese pictures mainly produced by Japanese artists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were recorded.⁴⁸ To examine the authenticity and nature of the Anderson collection, interesting findings can be found in the following aspects:

		No. of pieces	% (to 1 decimal place)	
1	Ownership of the 117 Chinese paintings	Dr William Anderson	90	76.9
		Sir Augustus Franks	25	21.4
		Mr J. Gilbertson	2	1.7
2	Mounting	Hanging scroll	96*	82.1*
		Handscroll	9	7.7
		Unmounted drawing	12	10.3
3	Medium	Ink	16	13.7
		Ink and colours	101	86.3
4	Material	Silk	101	86.3
		Paper	16	13.7
5	Date attributed by William Anderson	Tang	1	0.9
		Song	12	10.3
		Yuan	2	1.7
		Ming	64	54.7
		Qing	38	32.5

* This number might slightly overstate the actual amount due to the discrepancy found in the *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue of a Collection of Japanese and Chinese Paintings in the British Museum* (1886) and the recent records of the British Museum online database.

⁴⁷ Anderson’s *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue* was largely revised by Laurence Binyon with the help of Kohitsu Ryonin 古筆了任 (1875-1933), a Japanese expert from the Imperial Museum of Tokyo (now Tokyo National Museum), in March-April 1902. Subsequent curators and visiting scholars at the British Museum also made additional notes on their views of the authorship and dating of selected paintings in the Anderson collection. For details, see Binyon’s handwritten notes in the annotated copy of *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue* (2 Vols) at the Japan Student Room, as well as the British Museum online database.

⁴⁸ The total number of Chinese paintings in the Anderson collection is varied due to different judgments and classifications of Chinese and Japanese by Anderson and other Asian scholars who later were invited to give expert help in cataloguing the British Museum’s collections of Oriental paintings. For instance, the first item “The Nirvâna of S’âkyamuni” (Museum number: JP17) which was thought by Anderson to be a Chinese painting by Li Longmian 李龍眠 (c. 1049-1105), but is now re-attributed to a Japanese work of the Buddhist school by Kose Hiroataka in the twelfth century. Some paintings (e.g. CP23 and CP24) were also omitted in the Chinese section of the *Catalogue*, whereas some paintings (e.g. CP324 and Add5) which were put in the Japanese section are now re-classified into the Chinese section.

The Anderson collection not only formed the nucleus of the collection of Chinese painting at the British Museum, but was also the first to introduce Chinese painting mounted in the form of hanging scroll and handscroll. Most of the works were painted in ink and colours or on silk. This type of painting gave a stronger sense of antiquity and had more commercial value during Anderson's residence in Japan in the 1870s. According to Anderson's judgment on the dating, most of the Chinese paintings in his collection were painted either in the Ming or Qing dynasties when the heavy use of ink and colours and delicate details were commonly applied to painting. However, only about 13% of works were thought to be produced in the Tang, Song and Yuan dynasties. In fact, this group of traditional Chinese paintings fascinated Franks who appreciated "the older Chinese style, which evinces far higher powers of design, and greater boldness of execution than modern Chinese", as he wrote in his "Notes on Japanese Drawings."⁴⁹ This note suggests that there is a discrepancy between the actual rarity of Chinese paintings in the Anderson collection and Franks's prior expectation of it. It also shows that Franks might not have had a clear idea of the aesthetic value of the Anderson collection when he recommended its purchase to Reid and the Trustees.

The subject matter of the Anderson collection consists mainly of birds and flowers, figures of rishi and sage, animals, with a few landscapes. Most reflect Japanese taste and were in keeping with British taste in Chinese painting. Anderson compared the styles of Chinese painters with those of Japanese artists. Like Franks, he also associated the skills of Chinese painters with the painting techniques in European

⁴⁹ Franks, "Note on Japanese Drawings", CE4-OP, 12 November 1881, Box 176, Vol. 77, P No. 4818.

art. For instance, Anderson found that the faces of the three principal figures in the *Philosopher and Disciples* (No. 37), attributed to Xijin Jushi 西金居士 (active twelfth to thirteenth century), “are drawn with a feeling and a truth of detail worthy of Holbein.”⁵⁰ Interestingly enough, Anderson confessed that some of the Chinese paintings, such as *Very Brilliant and Beautiful Women* (No. 75) and *Sage with Basket, Ch’uu Yung-tsze* (No. 110) (Fig. 16), purchased by himself and Franks, were modern productions and bore forged signatures, “probably painted for sale to foreigners”.⁵¹ It is true that the Anderson collection included Chinese paintings which were possibly painted by artists and amateurs in Japan and China for the foreign market. Even though some of them might be produced by Chinese painters, they were possibly made in a period later than the date attributed by Anderson. For instance, it is hard to believe that a pair of crane paintings (Nos 15 and 16) (Fig. 17) was by Mi Fu 米黻 (or Mi Fei 米芾) (1051-1107), a famous landscape painter of the Song dynasty. The heavy use of colour, the awkward postures, and the decorative details of the cranes, as well as the lack of harmony in the foreground and background, show that the set was probably painted in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁵² It adopts a popular and propitious subject, but bore a forged Chinese seal and signature. It is clear that some Chinese paintings in the Anderson collection were not truly attributed to the painters noted in his *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue* but were clothed in Japanese and modern colours.

Apart from the works attributed to unknown artists, Anderson thought that his

⁵⁰ Anderson, *DHC*, 501.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 507-8, 515.

⁵² These crane paintings were probably done in the late Ming or early Qing dynasties. They are now considered to be the works by a Ming painter, Wen Zheng who was well-known for painting cranes, or the copies in the style of Shen Quan by an anonymous painter from the Qianlong period. See the curator’s comments in the British Museum online database, CP47 and CP48.

collection also included good works by famous Chinese painters in different dynasties, such as Emperor Huizong 宋徽宗 (1082-1135) and Muqi (or Muxi) 牧谿 (c. 1200-1270) of the Song dynasty, Yan Hui 顏輝 (active late thirteenth century) of the Yuan dynasty, Lu Ji 呂紀 (c. 1439-1505), Qiu Ying 仇英 (c. 1494-1552), Bian Wenjin 邊文進 (c. 1456-1528), and Zhou Zhimian 周之冕 (c. 1550-1610) of the Ming dynasty, as well as Shen Quan 沈銓 (c. 1682-1760) of the Qing dynasty. As Anderson mentioned in his “A History of Japanese Art”, these names were recorded as some of the most honoured Chinese masters by Japanese connoisseurs in a catalogue of calligraphers and artists of the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, published in 1777.⁵³ Although the authorship and dating of Chinese paintings in the Anderson collection has been revised by subsequent curators at the British Museum and other visiting Chinese experts, Anderson’s judgments reflect his taste in collecting specimens of high artistic and market value in Japan.

Surprisingly, the Anderson collection included some fine examples of birds and flowers painting. For instance, a pair of hanging scrolls, *Pheasants and Other Birds, with Plum-tree* and *Ducks and Various Small Birds, with Willow and Plum-trees* (Fig. 18), showed the style of Lu Ji who excelled in painting birds and flowers with different styles. The pheasants and plum tree were decorated with brilliant colours in a minute and inhibited style, while the ducks on the river bank and the willow trees were expressively drawn in graded ink and water, as well as with freehand brushwork. Another remarkable painting was a 500cm long handscroll of insects, butterflies, and flowers (Fig. 19), painted in ink and delicate colours on silk. Its motif, composition

⁵³ The most famous Chinese masters also included Wu Daozi of the Tang dynasty, as well as Ma Yuan 馬遠 (c. 1190-1279) and Xia Gui of the Song dynasty. See Anderson, “A History of Japanese Art”, 362-3.

and style are very similar to another handscroll in the British Museum, *Fascination of Nature* (《乾坤生意》), a plants and insects painting of the Yuan dynasty.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the painting of insects and flowers in the Anderson collection did not include any inscription, colophon or seal, but depicted over forty specimens of the subjects in fine detail. With its greater variety, larger quantity and longer length, it suggested the painter's interest and enjoyment in recording insects, butterflies and flowers of all kinds. With its decorative quality and accuracy, the Anderson painting of the late Ming period shares the same subject matter and composition as *Fascination of Nature*. These fine examples of birds and flowers, as well as plants and insects in the Anderson collection surpassed the Chinese drawings with similar subjects in the Sloane and Reeves collections. The British knowledge of Chinese painting was no longer confined to basic depictions of indigenous flora and fauna, but gradually came to explore different media, artistic expression in different styles, brushworks, and genres.

Exhibitions of Chinese Pictorial Art in the 1880s

Before the Anderson collection of Japanese and Chinese paintings was put on public display, the International Inventions Exhibition was held at the Albert Hall in South Kensington in 1885. Several displays of Chinese and Japanese objects illustrated interesting features of the life, culture, and craft of the Far East. With the collaboration between the Chinese and British governments, a Chinese section was set

⁵⁴ *Fascination of Nature* was a handscroll painted in ink and colour on silk by Xie Chufang 謝楚芳 (active late thirteenth to early fourteenth century) in 1321. The date 1797 and the signature of William Butler (1748-1822), which are found on the silk cover of the painting, were the earliest documentation for a Chinese painting in a British collection. The flower and insect painting in the Anderson collection and the *Fascination of Nature* have recently displayed in the exhibition of "Fascination of Nature: Birds and Flowers" at the British Museum in January-August, 2008, for comparison. See Roderick Whitfield, *Fascination of Nature: Plants and Insects in Chinese Painting and Ceramics of the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368)*, Seoul 1993.

up in the East Gallery, next to a Chinese Restaurant and Tea House. Exhibits borrowed from different provinces of China included, among others, porcelain, furniture, curios, tobacco and pipes, musical instruments, silks, and weapons. It is interesting that there were also “books prepared to enable Europeans to study Chinese”.⁵⁵ In 1887, the exhibition of Chinese and Japanese illustrated books at the King’s Library in the British Museum further introduced the British public to explore engravings, calligraphy and prints, as well as the close connection between the pictorial arts of China and Japan.⁵⁶ Specimens of early printed books illustrated the history of printing in the two countries. The displays included over seventy Japanese prints and sketches but only ten Chinese prints of birds, plants, figures and landscapes. Due to their popularity among collectors and artists, Japanese prints still received more attention than works from China and Korea.

The British public got a chance to appreciate the pictorial arts of Japan and China in 1888, when the British Museum opened the first exhibition of Chinese and Japanese paintings in the large east Print and Drawing Gallery.⁵⁷ Sir Sidney Colvin who collaborated with Anderson to mount the exhibition perceived that the art of the two nations was “essentially one of decoration, convention, and suggestion.”⁵⁸

Beauty and vivacity of decorative effect: in regard to touch and handling, the

⁵⁵ See *International Inventions Exhibition Official Catalogue*, London 1885, 315.

⁵⁶ See the British Museum, *A Guide to the Chinese and Japanese Illustrated Books Exhibited in the King’s Library*, London 1887.

⁵⁷ According to Antony Griffiths and Reginald Williams, the large east gallery which had held the 1888 exhibition is now subdivided into rooms 43 to 45 at the British Museum. In the same year, an exhibition of Japanese art, including lacquer, bronzes, porcelain and pottery, was held at the rooms of the Fine Art Society. Anderson also issued a *Catalogue of Prints and Books Illustrating the History of Engraving in Japan* for a supplementary exhibition at the Burlington Fine Arts Club. A selection from Anderson’s collection was later exhibited in the White Room at the Museum between 1889 and 1892. See “Exhibition of Japanese Art”, *Times*, 16 January 1888, 4; “Japanese Engravings at the Burlington Fine Arts Club”, *Times*, 18 February 1888, 6; Antony Griffiths and Reginald Williams, *The Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum User’s Guide*, London 1987, 3.

⁵⁸ Sidney Colvin, “Preface”, in the British Museum, *Guide to the Exhibition of Chinese and Japanese Paintings in the Print and Drawing Gallery*, London 1888, 4.

utmost attainable degree at once of decision and sensitiveness: and in regard to nature, a system of extreme simplification and abstraction, combined with the most expressive and direct rendering of the vital facts of form, movement and character, in the elements selected: these, speaking generally, are the qualities at which they aim, and which they often achieve – especially in designs taken from the life of animals and plants – with a perfection to which the art of the West hardly affords a parallel.⁵⁹

Among the 273 exhibits, only thirteen examples (4.8%) of Chinese painting were displayed in the Ceramic Gallery. One might well ask what the function and significance of the small number of Chinese paintings was. It seems that Chinese painting still only served as complementary material for the study of Japanese painting, which was then more enthusiastically appreciated by the British public.

Although there are several Chinese paintings of the Ming and Qing dynasties in the Anderson collection, Colvin chose only five pieces of modern Chinese painting, but eight works from the Song and Yuan dynasties for the exhibition. Their subject matter varied from Buddhist figures and portraits of famous personages to the representations of landscape and natural history. Colvin appreciated the noticeable style and a sense of freedom in Chinese painting from older times:

The elements so selected are expressed, in the works of the early Chinese masters, in a manner in which dignity of style is singularly combined with rapidity and sweep of hand: it having been above all things required of the painter that his work should exhibit the same freedom and certainty of touch as was displayed by the masters of calligraphic handwriting, - an art which among these races both demanded far more skill, and earned far higher rewards and reputation, than in the West.⁶⁰

In the exhibition review in the *Times*, the rarity of the thirteen Chinese paintings also received high recognition, with eye-catching paintings, such as *Cock and Chicken, with a Peony* (No. 4), *Wild Geese in the Rushes* (No. 8), and *Philosopher and*

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 7.

Disciples (No. 10).⁶¹

Unlike the taste of Franks and Colvin, Anderson did not have a strong sense of nostalgia for the older pictorial art of China, but instead very much admired the style and skills of Japanese painters from modern periods. In the Exhibition Guide of 1888, he gave a brief introduction to the history of Chinese pictorial art which was mostly extracted from the *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue*, and reiterated the decadence of Ming art. Anderson confessed that the painter of a pair of crane paintings which was formerly claimed to be by Xiang Yang Mi 襄陽米 was unclearly attributed. He insisted that the signature was that of Mi Fu, otherwise known as Mi Yuanzhang 米元章, being different names used by the same artist. On the one hand, he felt confident in judging the dating and authorship of the crane paintings; on the other hand, he sought technical advice from experts to classify Chinese and Japanese paintings. Among the exhibits, there were three Buddhist paintings which were attributed to Japan and recorded accordingly in the *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue*. Having consulted expert advice, Anderson subtitled them “Paintings probably Chinese” in the Exhibition Guide.

Although discrepancies and mistakes can be found in Anderson’s criticism and judgment of Chinese painting, the British public believed that each of the exhibits “is authenticated either by writing upon the painting itself, or by strong external evidence, or by both.”⁶² At the time Anderson was generally recognized as a pioneer and expert on Japanese pictorial art in Britain, as Colvin claimed:

Great as has been the interest and admiration long felt in Europe and America

⁶¹ See “Japanese Painting at the British Museum”, *Times*, 10 March 1888, 4.

⁶² *Ibid.*

for the minor and industrial arts of the Japanese, the history and productions of their regular schools of painting had attracted comparatively little attention previously to the researches made by Mr. Anderson during his residence in the country.⁶³

In his preparation of the *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue* and *The Pictorial Arts of Japan*, Colvin asserted that “Anderson used every available means of investigation, and has accepted no attribution that has not the authority of the most accredited native experts.”⁶⁴ As we have seen, it is questionable whether Anderson provided a reliable interpretation of Japanese and Chinese painting for the British public, and whether Franks and Colvin’s admiration for Anderson was simply their courtesy expressed to the pioneer collector of Japanese and Chinese paintings. In any case, the Anderson collection introduced to the British public a large number of interesting specimens from Japan and influenced the curators’ taste and study of Japanese and Chinese paintings at the British Museum.

Colvin regretted that “[s]ince then [1881] no very important addition has been made to the Museum Collection of Japanese paintings, though some interesting examples have come in from the Collection of the late Dr. Ernest Hart [the medical journalist,] and other sources.”⁶⁵ Nevertheless, there was never a shortage of Japanese art in London. As shown in Appendix II, numerous Japanese exhibitions opened in London almost every year from 1888 until the end of the nineteenth century.

⁶³ The British Museum, *Guide to the Exhibition of Chinese and Japanese Paintings in the Print and Drawing Gallery*, 3.

⁶⁴ Akiko Mabuchi points out that William Anderson’s evaluation in *The Pictorial Arts of Japan* was more in keeping with Japanese value criteria of the time, in comparison with Louis Gonse’s *L’Art Japonais* (1883). However, Anderson’s assessment in the value of Japanese art in specific periods in *Japanese Wood Engravings* (1895) departed considerably from present views. In his *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue*, Anderson also dismissed the talent of Tōshūsai Sharaku, a great master of *ukiyo-e*, whom contemporary critics admired. See Mabuchi, “Introduction: The Textual Sources of Japonisme”, in Jarves, *A Glimpse at the Art of Japan*, xiii-xv; The British Museum, *Guide to the Exhibition of Chinese and Japanese Paintings in the Print and Drawing Gallery*, 4.

⁶⁵ The British Museum, *Guide to an Exhibition of Chinese and Japanese Paintings (Fourth to Nineteenth Century A.D.) in the Print and Drawing Gallery*, London 1910, 4.

The exhibitions included a large quantity of Japanese objects of all kinds, such as lacquerware, ivory and wood carving, bronze and inlaid metal work, pottery, porcelain and cloisonné, painting and drawing, embroidery and miscellaneous art objects. On the contrary, Chinese paintings were usually displayed together with Japanese art in the two exhibitions of 1888 and 1889, with only one solo exhibition of watercolour drawings of Central Asia held in 1894. It is clear from these statistics that the study and appreciation of Chinese art was still subordinated to Japanese art in late nineteenth-century Britain.

The gift of Japanese and Chinese paintings and woodcuts presented by the late Sir Augustus Franks before his death in 1902 was a major addition to the British Museum's collections of Oriental works after the purchase of the Anderson collection. In 1904, selected Chinese export paintings in the Reeves collection were exhibited at the British Museum,⁶⁶ followed by the second exhibition of Japanese and Chinese paintings in 1910, when significant acquisitions were made and Laurence Binyon was assigned to take charge of the Oriental collections. After the death of William Anderson, Binyon became a leading figure in promoting the new subject of Oriental painting. He was also the first British curator to devote his lifelong career to the appreciation of Chinese painting by turning it into a serious and independent study.

Binyon realized that

Since in the last quarter of the nineteenth century the art of Japan began to captivate the Western world, collectors and students have gradually come to understand that the colour-prints, the lacquer, and the small ivories which were the first revelation of that art to Europe are, in fact, but subordinate manifestations of a great pictorial tradition.⁶⁷

Behind the exquisite objects of *Chinoiserie* and the decorative and graphic arts of

⁶⁶ See CE3-SC, 11 June 1904, Box C15, Vol. 51, 1960

⁶⁷ Laurence Binyon, *Painting in the Far East* (hereafter *PFE*), London 1908, v.

Japan, Binyon found Chinese pictorial art comparable to the painting of the great European schools. Nonetheless, he discerned that Chinese export paintings produced by Cantonese artisans bore influences from Europe, and were souvenirs for the foreigner. “These paintings are pretty things, but ... can hardly count as belonging to that great and ancient tradition which is the supreme national art of China.”⁶⁸ With his strong sensitivity to the beauty of pictorial art, Binyon discovered the aesthetic values of traditional Chinese painting after making a close study of an early scroll, *The Admonitions of the Court Instructress* (《女史箴圖》) that the Museum acquired in 1903. The scroll surpassed the importance of the Anderson collection and ignited Binyon’s passion for the study of Chinese painting. The old dragon of China finally awakened the British ignorance of Chinese pictorial art and challenged the fashion for Japanese art.

⁶⁸ Laurence Binyon, *Chinese Paintings in English Collections*, Paris and Brussels 1927, 9.

Chapter II

Binyon's Early Study of Traditional Chinese Painting

When Robert W. Raper (1842-1915), Fellow of Trinity, supported Binyon's application for the British Museum position in October 1892, he praised Binyon for being "a born poet and artist" with a good sensitivity to beauty. Robert Bridges (1844-1930), poet and close friend of Binyon, also pointed out that Binyon had "real enthusiasm and natural turn for art: proved by the success of his English verse".¹ Binyon not only had an enthusiasm for literature, he had "always taken the greatest interest in Art of all kinds" and engaged in the study of prints.² On 8 September 1893, he was initially appointed as the Second Class Assistant in the Department of Printed Books, cataloguing about twenty to thirty books a day. It allowed him to read those which were of interest.³ About two years later, Sidney Colvin allowed Binyon to work where he had first wanted, in the Department of Prints and Drawings. He recommended to the Trustees that Binyon was "specially qualified for the work of the Print Room" and for the replacement of the Assistantship vacated by the retirement of

¹ While he was a student at Oxford, Binyon met Robert Bridges who was graduate of Corpus Christi College became a prolific poet and master of lyric verse. The two men shared their common interests in poetry and read about the literary works by Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889) and George Santayana (1863-1952). In May 1890, Binyon won the Newdigate prize for poetry with "Persephone". He published *Primavera: Poem, by Four Authors* (1890) with his cousin Stephen Phillips (1864-1915), as well as his friends Manmohan Ghose (1869-1924) and Arthur Cripps (1869-1952). See Binyon's Testimonials by R. W. Raper and Robert Bridges on 8 and 10 October 1892, respectively, in R. L. Binyon's Application Paper, BMCA, CE 33/38/9-10; Donald E. Stanford (ed.), *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Vol. 19: British Poets, 1880-1914*, Michigan 1983, 27, 41-55. For Binyon's early education and his prize poems, see David Steel, *Laurence Binyon and Lancaster: An Exhibition held at Lancaster Museum 28th April – 26th May 1979*, Lancaster 1979, 7-8.

² Binyon's Application Papers on 5 October 1892, CE 33/38/2, P 3404.

³ Binyon commenced his duties on 9 September 1893. He mentioned his job duties in a special reading room in "Prize Give Speech to St Pauls". See Archive of Laurence Binyon, British Library, London, Loan 103 (hereafter ALB), Vol. 28. Also see CE3-SC, 14 October 1893, Box C13, Vol. 46, 19285-6; Binyon to Robert Bridges, 15 November [1893], Robert Bridges Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Dep Bridges, 106/2, fol. 96.

Lionel Cust (1859-1929).⁴ Binyon became involved in projects and publications on Western artists, in particular those of the British school. He also gradually developed an interest in the study of Oriental art, and became a recognized authority on Chinese pictorial art. This chapter aims to illuminate how Binyon began his study of Japanese and Chinese painting, with reference to his contacts with collectors and scholars of Japanese art, the acquisition of the *Admonitions* scroll, and his study of the *Kokka* magazine.

The Supervision of Sir Sidney Colvin

The experience of working in the Print Room with Sir Sidney Colvin brought Binyon the opportunity to work on both Western and Oriental art. When Binyon transferred to the Department of Prints and Drawings, he first worked on European drawings and engravings. In 1895 Colvin persuaded the Government to give a special grant for the acquisition of the John Malcolm of Poltalloch collection. It consisted of 940 drawings and 312 engravings, showing numerous magnificent examples of the work of the great Italian, French, Dutch, German and Flemish painters, along with some other illuminated manuscript pages. Colvin was amazed that it had “almost doubled the importance of the department I had the honour to serve.”⁵ Binyon recognized that the acquisition of the Malcolm collection was a magnificent addition to the treasures of the Department. It was also “the most notable achievement of Colvin’s Keepership”.⁶ E. V. Lucas stated that Colvin was

⁴ The Trustees approved Binyon’s transfer on 6 April 1895 and granted the confirmation of his appointment on 12 July 1895. See CE3-SC, Box 13, Vol. 47, 19658-9, 19733.

⁵ See Edward Miller, *That Noble Cabinet: A History of the British Museum*, London 1973, 296-7; Sidney Colvin, *Memories and Notes of Persons & Places: 1852-1912*, London 1921, 207.

⁶ For Colvin’s achievements during his Keepership (1884-1912) of the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum, see Robert Ross, “A Great Curator: An Appreciation of Sir Sidney Colvin”, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 7 June 1912, 8; Hatcher, *LB*, 37-40, 47; Griffiths and Williams, *The Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum User’s Guide*, 25; Colvin to Trustees, 25 January 1912, Reports at the DPD, 9-13.

A fine scholar, with keen literary enthusiasm, and a social acquaintance both wide and distinguished, he brought a new atmosphere into the Print Room. He had had predecessors who knew their special subject extremely well and were regularly consulted by collectors for authoritative opinions ... [I]t is certain that Colvin greatly raised the standard of scholarship expected in the staff. He brought to his special work all the interests of a wide culture ...⁷

According to Binyon, Colvin was well acquainted with all the schools of painting, with special preference for early Italian art and modern British art, such as the Italian Quattrocento and the art of Edward Burne-Jones and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. With his various interests in art and culture, Colvin grew to take “an ardent interest in the collections of Chinese and Japanese art, and very greatly enriched them by his purchases”, during the later years of his Keepership.⁸ Binyon shared Colvin’s vision and interest in expanding the boundaries of art appreciation, but his main duties in the late nineteenth century consisted of publications on British art.

Colvin oversaw the “new breed of university-trained scholars” and guided them in several curatorial projects.⁹ He allowed Binyon to take charge of British watercolours, etchings, and the Reading Room. Binyon also played a vital role in writing guides for non-specialist visitors and students to Print Room exhibitions. The Print Room not only brought Binyon to meet his future wife Cicely Margaret Pryor Powell (1876-1962), but also provided a platform for cultural, social and intellectual interactions.¹⁰ It was a popular meeting place for Binyon and his poet friends (e.g. William Butler Yeats, Robert Bridges), and artists (e.g. Charles Holmes, Roger Fry, Charles Ricketts, William Strang, Thomas Sturge Moore, Selwyn Image, and Herbert

⁷ See E.V. Lucas, *The Colvins and Their Friends*, London 1928, 181. Also see Colvin, *Memories and Notes of Persons & Places*, 205.

⁸ Lucas, *The Colvins and Their Friends*, 184.

⁹ Griffiths and Williams, *The Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum User’s Guide*, 25.

¹⁰ Binyon to Ricketts, 27 May [1903], Ricketts and Shannon Papers, British Library, London, 58090, Vol. VI, ff.33.

Horne), as well as art collectors (e.g. William Anderson, William A. Pye, Bernard Berenson, and Arthur Morrison).¹¹ In particular, Binyon's connection with collectors of Oriental art was crucial for building up his knowledge of the subject at the beginning of his career.

Binyon entered the art publication world in 1895 when he began the study of wood-engraving with the Scottish artist William Strang (1859-1921), and produced woodcuts for several of his own literary books.¹² Binyon's first publication on art was *Dutch Etchers of the Seventeenth Century* (1895), followed by a revised second volume of the *Index of Artists represented in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum* (1896) which was previously compiled by Lionel Cust.¹³ The four-volume *Catalogue of Drawings by British Artists and Artists of Foreign Origin working in Great Britain, preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings* (1898-1907) was another massive cataloguing project for Binyon. Colvin highly praised it: "Mr. Binyon makes excellent expedition with this catalogue, which in Mr. Colvin's judgment is admirable both for care and style."¹⁴ In the same period, Binyon established his reputation in English watercolours with additional publications, his specialty being the landscape paintings of John Crome (1768-1821) and John Sell Cotman (1782-1842), and the art of William Blake (1757-1827). He also contributed a chapter or a preface to other books and exhibition catalogue on English art. The

¹¹ Among the named visitors, Arthur Morrison (1863-1945) made frequent visits to the Print Room every month, followed by Roger Fry, Charles Ricketts, and Thomas S. Moore (1870-1944). See *Visitors Books at Print Room, DPD*.

¹² Steel, *Laurence Binyon and Lancaster*, 10.

¹³ Lionel Cust compiled an Index to the Dutch, Flemish, and German artists represented in the Print Room. After publishing the first volume of the Index in 1893, he started the second volume for the French artists. In 1895 Cust accepted the directorship of the National Portrait Gallery but resigned from the position in 1909. He then turned to join Roger Fry and More Adey, editing the *Burlington Magazine* for ten years until 1919. See "Obituary" for Sir Lionel Cust, *Times*, 14 October 1929, 19; "Sir Lionel Henry Cust, K. C. V. O.", *BM* 55, November 1929, 251; Sidney Colvin, "Preface", *Index of Artists represented in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum*, London 1896, b.

¹⁴ Colvin to the Trustees, 30 January 1902, Reports at the DPD.

experience of cataloguing was useful for Binyon's future duties organizing the growing collection of Oriental prints and drawings.

An Exploration of Pictorial Art in the East

In his early career, Binyon was very much concerned with the cultivation of art by the public, when there was a growth of free national and municipal museums and galleries. He regretted that

Up to the beginning of this [nineteenth] century art was considered solely as a luxury for the few, and only by degrees did the democratic conception of art, as a national glory and possession for all to share in, win its way to recognition ... [E]very one, however poor, should have the chance of satisfying thus whatever instinct towards beauty he possesses. The masses are only affected through individuals; and to reach the chosen spirits, "fit though few," is all that is needed.¹⁵

For Binyon, art was a real factor in the general life of the nation. Pictorial art had an extraordinary effect upon children because

Pictures ... serve a use in giving a fit and beautiful embodiment to ideal conceptions, as well as being, by the sheer influence of beauty, an illumination and delight to those who live where sordid and ugly things abound ... Moreover, pictorial art is an earlier mode of expression than writing; and as science tells us that the history of the race is repeated in the individual, we should naturally expect that children would be more sensitive to the former mode of expression, which experience also confirms; and therefore this should be the first influence in the education of the young.¹⁶

With his strong mission to cultivate the quality of life of the British public, Binyon became an educationalist in a national museum in order to affect the masses, especially students, by educating them about the pictorial art of different nations.

Like his contemporaries, Binyon had come into direct contact with the fashion for Japanese art. He first encountered *ukiyo-e* woodblock colour prints from the

¹⁵ Laurence Binyon, "The Popularisation of Art", in James Samuelson (ed.), *The Civilisation of Our Day: A Series of Original Essays on Some of its More Important Phase at the Close of the 19th Century*, London 1896, 327.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 328-9.

Japanese print collections of his artist friends, such as Charles Ricketts (1866-1931) and Charles Shannon (1863-1937).¹⁷ In 1894 Binyon first saw some fine specimens of Japanese prints through his friend, an unidentified English painter, who bought them from a sale. Binyon and his friend were fascinated by the sure sense of colour and the novel harmonies revealed in the prints.¹⁸ A year later, Binyon studied Japanese ink paintings in the Anderson collection, with the aid of the *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue of a Collection of Japanese and Chinese Paintings in the British Museum* and *The Pictorial Arts of Japan* as additional references.¹⁹ At this time, Binyon shared his interest in Japanese prints with his friends and encouraged Charles Holmes (1868-1936) to write an article on Utagawa Hiroshige 歌川広重 (1797-1858) which was published in the third number of the *Dome* in September 1897.²⁰ With Binyon's encouragement, Holmes wrote a little book on Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾北斎 (1760-1849) for the Artist's Library series in 1899.²¹

With his multifarious interests in the literature and art of the East and West, Binyon not only studied Japanese prints but also explored the literary world of the Orient. In 1894, Binyon wrote to Robert Bridges:

¹⁷ Charles Ricketts and Shannon formed together a fine collection of European old master drawings and paintings, and began to collect objects of Oriental art, including Japanese prints and drawings, from the late 1890s. Sometimes Binyon took his guests to see Ricketts's collection. Ricketts also provided advice on the quality of the British Museum's collections of Japanese prints. The two artists later bequeathed the main part of their collection to the British Museum and the Fitzwilliam Museum. See Joseph Darracott, *The World of Charles Ricketts*, Sussex 1980, 136-7; Binyon to Ricketts, 10 February 1916, Ricketts and Shannon Papers, 58091, Vol. VII, ff.3-4.

¹⁸ Binyon possibly referred the English painter to Charles Ricketts. Laurence Binyon, *Impressions of Japanese Art*, Tokyo 1941, 4.

¹⁹ Soon after Binyon transferred to the Department of Prints and Drawings on 12 July 1895, Dr William Anderson's name appeared on the Visitors Book on 17 July and 9 October. Thus, Binyon had probably met Anderson in person in the Print Room and studied the Anderson collection of Japanese and Chinese paintings as early as 1895. See Visitors Book at Print Room, BM, Vol. 11.

²⁰ See Charles Holmes, *Self & Partners (Mostly Self) Being the Reminiscences of C. J. Holmes*, London 1936, 152-3, 186-7.

²¹ Although Holmes took a great interest in British painting, he studied "Japanese art to the point of trying to learn the language." His little book on *Hokusai* (1899) later brought him a job in the Oriental Department at South Kensington. *Ibid*, 190.

Persian is certainly attractive (esp. as I believe it is quite easy when the characters are once learnt). But an Oriental once told me a lot about Persian poetry, & from what he said, I don't think it would help much. Their ideal style is mystically vague, & their perpetual metaphors must be very tedious, if the translations of Sadi I have seen are faithful. No doubt their poets are great in their way, but I imagine quite antipathetic to our ways of writing – at any rate to mine.²²

The Oriental friend mentioned by Binyon was possibly Manmohan Ghose, a close Indian friend he met at St Paul's School, London. In their frequent correspondences of 1897, the two men discussed poetry, European art, and Buddhism.²³ Ghose expressed his strong enthusiasm for buying reproductions and photos of European painting and sculpture of all Schools.²⁴

Interestingly enough, Ghose shared Binyon's incipient interest in Japanese art. He asked for reproductions of good Japanese paintings and sought Binyon's advice on buying a copy of William Anderson's *The Pictorial Arts of Japan* which included eighty plates.²⁵

The Anderson book has arrived, full of most delightful reproductions of Japanese things. The text, too, is interesting and in fact, to an ignorant person like myself, indispensable. The things I like most are the birds, plants, and fishes out of which the most heavenly effects seem to be got in endless variety ... Then there are those wonderful misty landscape[s] giving such a sense of space and atmosphere ... Of the human figure he gives very little, only one in fact, a facsimile of a coloured woodcut "Japanese Ladies reading and writing" by Katsugawa Shūnsho, but in this I am entranced by the ineffable fall and fold of endless drapers and the pure sweet colouring. I wish Anderson had given more like this.²⁶

²² Binyon to Robert Bridges, 9 March 1894, Robert Bridges Papers, Bodleian Library, Dep Bridges 106/2, fols 100-1.

²³ Ghose told Binyon that his father was a Buddhist. He also got a book by Edwin Arnold (1832-1904) from an English lady who was also Buddhist and hoped that Ghose and Binyon would also become Buddhists. In his poem "The Indian Prince", Binyon expressed his admiration for a spiritual meditation in the faith of Buddhism. See Ghose to Binyon, 15 April [1897], ALB, Vol. 5; Laurence Binyon, "The Indian Prince", *The Monthly Review* 1, November 1900, 152-6.

²⁴ Ghose asked Binyon to get more Italian prints from the National Gallery and bought him some photos of painting and sculpture of Italy and Greece during his visits to Florence, Rome, Pisa, Siena, and Venice in April 1897. See Ghose to Binyon, 14 February 1897, ALB, Vol. 5.

²⁵ Ghose to Binyon, 14 February 1897 and 10 March 1897, ALB, Vol. 5. Also see Hatcher, *LB*, 8-9, 73-5, 114-5, 165.

²⁶ Ghose to Binyon, 17 May 1897, ALB, Vol. 5.

Ghose was fascinated by the reproductions of Japanese paintings, whereas Bridges who had heard of Binyon's study of Chinese painting in 1898 was interested in seeing some Chinese art at the British Museum in 1901.²⁷ The fine examples of Chinese painting that Binyon showed Bridges were possibly from the Anderson collection, and other album leaves, hanging scrolls, and handscrolls acquired between 1884 and 1901. Binyon shared the taste of Franks and Colvin who favoured Chinese paintings from the early periods. He found the *Landscape: Wangquan Villa* (Fig. 20), acquired in 1889 and claimed to be by Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫 (1254-1322) of the Yuan dynasty, to be of "great interest" and of "high antiquity and importance".²⁸

Apart from his work on the Catalogue of English drawings, Binyon's time in 1902 had been largely taken up, with the help of Kohitsu Ryōnin and Arthur Morrison, in studying and re-classifying the existing collections and new acquisitions of Chinese and Japanese paintings and woodcuts, and in completing and expanding the departmental copy of Anderson's catalogue, in order to bring it up both to the actual condition of the collections and to the present state of actual knowledge on the subject.²⁹ Morrison, who wrote fiction and journalism, had, since 1890, formed a collection of works of art from Japan and China, especially Japanese paintings, woodcuts and porcelain. His articles on "The Painters of Japan" were published in the *Monthly Review* between July 1902 and January 1903. A much richer and complete two-volume *The Painters of Japan* (1911) was published nine years later, with guidance from Kohitsu and assistance from many of his Japanese friends. Morrison's

²⁷ See Bridges to Binyon, 13 March [1898] and 22 June 1901, ALB, Vol. 2.

²⁸ Laurence Binyon, "A Landscape by Chao Mêng-fu in the British Museum", *T'oung Pao* 6, March 1905, 56-7.

²⁹ Colvin to the Trustees, 30 January 1903, Reports at the DPD, 4-5.

understanding of Oriental art also owed much to the *Kokka* magazine and other relevant publications by William Anderson, Ernest Fenollosa, Captain F. Brinkley (1841-1912), Okakura Kakuzo and others.³⁰ The account of several schools of Japanese art in Morrison's *The Painters of Japan* was reminiscent of Anderson's *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue*. Interestingly, after ten years training, Binyon realized the drawback of Anderson's scholarship:

The weakness of that most valuable pioneer work was the inadequacy of its author's aesthetic judgment: he applied a standard of conventional realism which would be grievously at fault in the criticism of European masterpieces, and which had no sort of relations to the aims of the Japanese artists. Mr. Morrison can certainly not be accused of want of sympathy with those aims, or want of understanding of them. Some will rather accuse him of being more Japanese at times than the Japanese themselves.³¹

Through regular contact at the Print Room,³² Binyon shared Morrison's interest in Chinese and Japanese paintings and admired his knowledge of Japanese connoisseurship from native Japanese artists and experts. With his honorary membership of the Nihon Bijutsu Kyokai (The Association of Japanese Art) and his authority among Japanese scholars, Morrison surpassed William Anderson and other Western connoisseurs in both his judgments and knowledge, and also corrected earlier writers' inaccurate interpretations of Japanese art.³³

Binyon's first Japanese friend was possibly Kohitsu Ryōnin from the Tokyo

³⁰ Arthur Morrison, *The Painters of Japan*, Vol. 1, London 1911, vii-viii. For Morrison's literary achievements, see Robert Calder, "Arthur Morrison: A Commentary with an Annotated Bibliography of Writings about Him", *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920* 28, 1985, 276-97.

³¹ Laurence Binyon, "The Painters of Japan", *Times Literary Supplement* (hereafter *TLS*), 27 July 1911, 276.

³² Arthur Morrison's name first appeared on the Visitors Book at Print Room on 3 and 22 December 1897, with other frequent visits made in subsequent years. It is possible that Binyon met Morrison a few years before he worked with Kohitsu Ryōnin on the project of Japanese and Chinese paintings. See Visitors Book at Print Room, BM, Vol. 12.

³³ Binyon praised Morrison's interpretation of Japanese art from the native point of view and made a full justice in the discussion of the Tosa school which was previously misconceived by earlier writers, like Louis Gonse (1846-1921) and William Anderson. Binyon also acknowledged in his *Painting in the Far East* (1908) that Morrison's knowledge and counsel had long aided his study. Morrison's "The Painters of Japan" in the *Monthly Review* (1902) were useful references for him. See Binyon, "The Painters of Japan", *Saturday Review* (hereafter *SR*) 112, 30 September 1911, 427-8; Binyon, *PFE*, ix-x.

Imperial Museum, a descendant of the famous Kohitsu family of hereditary professional authenticators in painting and calligraphy since the seventeenth century. In 1902-3, Kohitsu took a business trip to Europe, which included Britain, France, Germany and Italy, in order to investigate the recent development of arts and crafts, as well as museums in Western countries.³⁴ The reputation of Kohitsu was known among national museums in London. Sidney Colvin praised him as “the most skilled of living authorities on old Japanese paintings” and employed Kohitsu to catalogue the British Museum’s collections of Chinese and Japanese paintings.³⁵ In March 1902, Kohitsu collaborated with Colvin and Binyon to examine and re-arrange the entire collections of Oriental paintings. He made a careful examination of the Franks collection of Japanese and Chinese paintings and found it of “sufficient interest and value to be retained for the collection.”³⁶ Kohitsu also inserted additions and corrections in an interleaved copy of Anderson’s *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue* in the autumn and winter of 1902.³⁷ The two-volume annotated copy of Anderson’s *Catalogue* which includes many of Binyon’s handwritten notes is now kept in the Japan Student Room at the British Museum. It is valuable evidence which shows Binyon’s effort to enhance his knowledge of Japanese and Chinese paintings, and remedy the misjudgments of his predecessors.³⁸

³⁴ For Kohitsu’s experience in London, see Princess Akiko of Mikasa, “The William Anderson Collection Saiko”, *Annual Bulletin of the Center for Comparative Japanese Studies* 4, 2007, 125-8.

³⁵ Colvin recommended the Trustees to employ Kohitsu in March and April 1902, at the rate of £1 a day, with the total cost of the service not to exceed £25 for the expected occupy from three weeks to a month. Through Binyon, Kohitsu met Thomas S. Moore (1870-1944) in London and had been working at the British Museum in 1903. On the 19th June, Binyon said goodbye to Kohitsu who left England the day after. See Colvin to the Trustees, 7 March and 6 June 1902, Reports at the DPD; Binyon to Moore, 19 June [1903], Thomas Sturge Moore Papers, Senate House Library, University of London, MS978/Box28/145.

³⁶ The bequeathed collection of Japanese and Chinese paintings by the late Sir Augustus Franks contained forty-one rolls, twenty-six albums and a large number of traced copies. Among the items, eleven handscrolls and nine albums are Chinese. See Colvin to the Trustees, 7 March and 6 June 1902, Reports at the DPD.

³⁷ Colvin to the Trustees, 1 September and 1 October 1902, and 30 January 1903, Reports at the DPD.

³⁸ When he reviewed Anderson’s *Catalogue*, Binyon found that one Japanese painting was wrongly included in the catalogue of Chinese paintings, whereas five Chinese paintings were wrongly in the

Binyon's Encounter with the *Admonitions* Scroll

Binyon's ability in acquiring Chinese and Japanese paintings was recognized by Colvin in his report to the Trustees: "This gentleman's high general intelligence, his industry & quickness, his excellent taste and sense of style, and his courtesy in dealing with students and visitors, make him an especially valuable member of the staff."³⁹ Binyon's early involvement in Oriental art encouraged him to explore the history and aesthetic quality of Chinese painting and develop a taste for early paintings in a rhythmic and spontaneous style. His favourite Chinese painting came to the British Museum in 1903 when he and Colvin purchased *The Admonitions of the Court Instructress* (Fig. 21), an early Chinese painting hitherto attributed to Gu Kaizhi 顧愷之 (c. 334-406) of the Eastern Jin dynasty (317-420 CE).⁴⁰ The scroll was regarded as the oldest and most important monument of Chinese painting in existence.

In December 1902, an Indian Army cavalry officer, Captain C. Johnson, who had acquired the early Chinese scroll in the Summer Palace, Peking in 1900 after the Boxer Rebellion, proposed to sell the treasure to the British Museum.⁴¹ Captain Johnson confessed that he did not have much knowledge of Chinese painting and

section of Japanese paintings. See Binyon, "A Landscape by Chao Mêng-fu in the British Museum", 56-7.

³⁹ Colvin to the Trustees, 30 January 1903, Reports at the DPD, 7.

⁴⁰ It is a roll of brown silk, 24.4cm in height and 343.8cm in length. It shows painted scenes and a detached group of figures, interrupted by a landscape with a man shooting a pheasant, and with a tiger on a mountain. On the scroll, there are moralising texts by Zhang Hua 張華 (232-300) illustrating the correct behaviour of ladies of the imperial harem. However, the scroll lacks two of the 11 original narrative registers. They are now preserved in the Southern Song dynasty copy of the painting in the Palace Museum in Beijing. Several inscriptions found on this scroll were translated by Arthur Waley in 1923. See photographic and online database records of Chinese painting in the Department of Asia, BM, Add. 1; Tang Lan, "Shilun Gu Kaizhi de Huihua", *Wenwu* 6, 1961, 7.

⁴¹ For how the *Admonitions* scroll came into Captain Johnson's possession during the Boxer Rebellion, see Zhang Hongxing, "The Nineteenth-Century Provenance of the *Admonitions* Scroll: A Hypothesis", in Shane McCausland (ed.), *Gu Kaizhi and the Admonitions Scroll*, Percival David Foundation Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia, No. 21, London 2003, 277-87.

asked Colvin for a price for the scroll.⁴² In his report to the Trustees, Colvin wrote that

This is a specimen of extraordinary rarity and interest, nearly three centuries older than any other examples of Chinese or Japanese silk-painting which is known to exist ... [T]he workmanship distinguished by great skill in portraiture and extreme beauty and delicacy of line. The silk is much worn and rubbed, and bears many traces of ancient repair. Besides the signature of the artist, pronounced by all experts who have examined it to be genuine, the roll bears the seals of many collectors, several of them imperial, as well as an autograph eulogy in verse of one emperor, Chi'en Lung. The antecedent improbability of the preservation of so ancient a roll is great: but Mr. Kohitsu, the chief expert of Japan, Mr. Arthur Morrison, Professor Giles, & others after the most minute examination have satisfied themselves that there can be here no question of copy or forgery, and the specimen is a historical curiosity of the first rank.⁴³

Colvin and his friends were fascinated by the rarity and antiquity of the *Admonitions* scroll, as well as by its archaic style, technique, and material. Having consulted the advice of different scholars in Japanese art, and Chinese language and literature, the *Admonitions* scroll was purchased for £25 in April 1903,⁴⁴ and became a valuable treasure of the Museum's collections of Chinese paintings. Binyon was glad that the British Museum had secured the *Admonitions* scroll and shared his happiness with Cicely Powell, who became his wife in April 1904. He wrote,

I think the European countries have all behaved like savages in China, more or less & of course our painting ought to be in China, but now that it is here I think it ought to stay, & I think it would have been most wrong of us not to buy it from that ignorant & stupid officer. It certainly is extraordinary the way that certain English people cannot bear to see any good in England.⁴⁵

To get a better understanding of the historical background of the *Admonitions* scroll, Binyon devoted much time to the study of Chinese art and literature. In July 1903, he wrote, "I spent this morning mostly in the Museum studio – a hot-house of a

⁴² See Captain C. Johnson to Colvin, 7 December and 15 December 1902, Letter Books at the DPD.

⁴³ Colvin to the Trustees, 27 March 1903, CE4-OP, Box OP192, Vol. 100, P No. 959.

⁴⁴ The Treasury sanctioned the purchase of the *Admonitions* scroll on 4 April 1903, although the payment was settled in May. See Captain C. Johnson to Sidney Colvin, 7 January and 21 March 1903, Letter Books at the DPD; CE3-SC, Box C15, Vol. 51, 1804.

⁴⁵ Binyon to Cicely Powell, 19 February [1904], ALB, Vol. 59.

place, watching over the Chinese picture being photographed.”⁴⁶ He also read about Chinese poetry, possibly in Herbert Giles’s *A History of Chinese Literature* (1901), a copy of which he owned.⁴⁷ Binyon showed his reverence for Tao Qian 陶潛 (also known as Tao Yuanming 陶淵明) (c. 365-427), “a Chinese poet who resigned a governorship because he objected to wearing ceremonial robes when he had to receiving an imperial envoy.”⁴⁸ In the same year, Binyon began writing about Chinese painting:

[Arthur] Morrison came in & read my Chinese article & thought it good. I often fear I bore & tease you [Cicely Powell] with my interest in these things ... I have got so much from the East – it has opened a new world of beauty for me – so I can’t help wanting you to share it: & I feel that if you saw enough you would grow to have great pleasure from it all.⁴⁹

Interestingly enough, Binyon’s growing interest in Chinese painting was even reflected in his dream:

Last night I dreamed that I looked through a book of drawings. I can’t remember all, but two or three are still vivid to me ... [S]ome one brought me Oriental pictures; & I unrolled one, which glowed with rose-colour & gold – it seemed to fill the air like a rainbow - & in the signature I thought I recognized the name of Godoshi [Wu Daozi], the great painters of China; which was a terrible excitement, for all his paintings have perished. But looking it up this morning I find, alas!, that the signature is a dream-signature, & not a name at all.⁵⁰

Although Binyon may not have had enough knowledge to recognize the name and signature of Chinese artists in their original form, both in his dream and his work, he recognized that some of the simple Chinese characters bore an interesting meaning. He even manipulated the Chinese characters in order to express his love to Cicely:

This morning I came on a certain Chinese character 安 & found its meaning. The upper part is a roof, the lower part a woman: & the meaning of the whole

⁴⁶ Binyon to Cicely Powell, [9 July 1903], ALB, Vol. 59.

⁴⁷ Binyon might have first met Herbert Giles in 1898 when Giles visited the Print Room on the 11th August. See a list of Binyon’s possessions of books on Chinese art, in ALB, Vol. 37. Also see *Visitors Book at Print Room, 1898*; Binyon, *PFE*, 54.

⁴⁸ Binyon to Powell, 21 July [1903], ALB, Vol. 59.

⁴⁹ Binyon to Powell, [7 July 1903], ALB, Vol. 60; Binyon to Powell, 24 July [1903], ALB, Vol. 59.

⁵⁰ Binyon to Powell, 16 October [1903], ALB, Vol. 59.

is – Peace. I think of our house that is to be & you in it - & am indeed sure that there my peace is, with my love & my delight.⁵¹

In January 1904, Binyon's first article on "A Chinese Painting of the Fourth Century" was published in the *Burlington Magazine*.⁵² Although he doubted if his article would ever appear, he was finally rewarded with £9 for his hard work and received another invitation from Roger Fry, editor of the *Burlington Magazine*, to write a series of articles on Chinese art.⁵³ In his article, Binyon praised the *Admonitions* scroll as full of a confident, spontaneous, and direct painting style. He thought it unlikely to be a copy but the handiwork of a great master.⁵⁴ However, the authenticity of the *Admonitions* scroll as a genuine work from the hand of Gu Kazhi has long been disputed. According to the opinion of Japanese and Western scholars, including Taki Seiichi in the *Kokka*, Arthur Waley in his *An Introduction to the Study of Chinese Painting* (1923), and Paul Pelliot (1878-1945) in *T'oung Pao*, the *Admonitions* scroll was possibly either a Tang or Song copy which was recorded in Emperor Huizong's catalogue of Chinese paintings in his collection, *Xuanhe Huapu* (*The Painting Catalogue of the Xuanhe Era* 《宣和畫譜》) of the Song dynasty, and had once been in the possession of Emperor Qianlong. Contemporary scholars have generally considered the *Admonitions* scroll to be a Tang copy of the original.⁵⁵

In the first decade of the twentieth century, Binyon's knowledge of all forms of

⁵¹ Binyon to Powell, 4 December [1903], ALB, Vol. 59.

⁵² An extract of Binyon's article was also published in *Globe*, 13 January 1904, and *South Wales News* (Cardiff), 23 Jan 1904. See ALB, Vol. 40.

⁵³ See Binyon to Powell, 13 October [1903], 26 January [1904] and 29 May 1904, ALB, Vol. 59; Binyon to Powell, 1 October [1903], ALB, Vol. 75.

⁵⁴ Laurence Binyon, "A Chinese Painting of the Fourth Century", *BM* 4, 1904, 41.

⁵⁵ See Taki Seiichi, "Ku K'ai-chih's Illustration of the Poem of Lo-shén", *Kokka* 253, June 1911, 349-54; Arthur Waley, *An Introduction to the Study of Chinese Painting*, London 1923, 50-8; Paul Pelliot, "Le Plus Ancien Possesseur Connu du "Kok K'ai-tche" de British Museum", *T'oung Pao* 30, 1933, 453-5. For recent discussion of the dating of the *Admonitions* scroll, see Appendix III.

Oriental art grew. However, the lack of first hand experience of China, and direct contact with Chinese scholars, might explain why Binyon misjudged the dating and the authorship of the *Admonitions* scroll. It is noteworthy that Binyon and Colvin did not consult any Chinese artists and connoisseurs for the research, exhibition, publication and reproduction of the *Admonitions* scroll. They rather sought advice from European scholars, including the collectors Arthur Morrison and Bernard Berenson (1865-1959), the Sinologists Herbert Giles, Édouard Chavannes (1865-1918) and Paul Pelliot, as well as the eminent Belgium scholar Raphael Petrucci (1872-1917). On the other hand, they consulted art historians from Japan, including Kohitsu Ryōnin, Fukui Rikichiro 福井利吉郎 (1886-1972), Taki Seiichi, and Tanaka Toyozō 田中豊蔵 (1881-1948).⁵⁶ It is clear that Binyon and Colvin's study of Chinese painting invariably relied very heavily on Western and Japanese expertise.

The Shift from Japanese Art to Chinese Painting

Although the *Admonitions* scroll was not a genuine work from the hand of Gu Kaizhi, Binyon and his colleagues believed in it because no Chinese painting of so early a date existed in Japan, or any other country, in the early twentieth century. Binyon was stimulated by “an actual work of the hands of a great painter who flourished nine hundred years before Giotto”.⁵⁷ He wrote,

This thought of itself is kindling to imagination; but the full significance of this human document is yet more stimulating. It comes not only to bring before us in glowing shape the daily habit and atmosphere of a long-past time, but to clothe with life the recorded character of a known personality.⁵⁸

The rarity and antiquity of the *Admonitions* scroll also inspired Binyon to discover

⁵⁶ Shane McCausland, “Nihonga Meets Gu Kaizhi: A Japanese Copy of a Chinese Painting in the British Museum”, *Art Bulletin* 87, 2005, 698.

⁵⁷ Binyon, “A Chinese Painting of the Fourth Century”, 41.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

that

The porcelain, bronzes, and embroideries of China have during the last few centuries been well appreciated and studied in the west. But as far as painting is concerned a wide opinion prevails that the sole merit of Chinese art is to have provided a sort of rough foundation or starting point for the Japanese; and the Japanese have been, and still are, regarded as the painters *par excellence* of the east.

In reality the artists of Japan think of China much as English artists to-day think of Italy; as the country where painting grew and flourished as in no other land, where the religious ideas and creative imagination of Asia received through maturing ages their most powerful and splendid expression, where every branch of the pictorial arts could show models of a final excellence.⁵⁹

Colvin shared Binyon's idea with his claim:

Japanese painting, as is well known, owed to Chinese both its origin and a renewal of its inspiration at several successive dates, and works by the classic masters of China have long been collected and revered in Japan as we collect and revere the works of the great Italians or Flemings.⁶⁰

Binyon compared the aesthetic value of Chinese painting with Italian art, in order to divert the attention of connoisseurs from Japanese art to Chinese painting. He asked,

How, then, has it happened that, while Japanese art has been so enthusiastically appreciated in Europe, and has exerted so vivid and so wide an influence, the great parent art of China, the central inspiration of all Asia, has been so profoundly neglected? For the amateurs of everything Japanese are often more authoritative than other people in ignorant disparagement of Chinese painting.⁶¹

Binyon was sensitive to the fact that connoisseurs and artists in Britain enthused over the collecting of Japanese colour prints and made themselves acquaintance with the art of Japan of all periods. In addition, Chinese paintings sold in auction houses were mostly produced in a Western style to please European taste. Without reliable and fine specimens of Chinese painting, it was difficult for the British public to understand the historical development and original style of Chinese pictorial art. The *Admonitions* scroll was a critical stimulus which ignited Binyon's passion for the study of Chinese

⁵⁹ Ibid, 39.

⁶⁰ Colvin, "Preface", in the British Museum, *Guide to an Exhibition of Chinese and Japanese Paintings (Fourth to Nineteenth Century A.D.)*, 3.

⁶¹ Binyon, "A Chinese Painting of the Fourth Century", 39.

painting and motivated him to discover its long tradition and aesthetic ideas. With it Binyon discovered the charm of Gu Kaizhi's painting style and the Chinese philosophy of Confucianism. These subjects were not present in Anderson's scholarship. This early scroll from the imperial collection also encouraged both Binyon and Colvin to shift their attention from Japanese art to the pictorial arts of ancient China.

Because the study of Chinese art and culture was in its infancy, Binyon faced a lack of reliable translations of Chinese texts, as well as few good specimens of Chinese painting. He confessed that his actual acquaintance with Chinese painting depended very much on the Japanese.⁶² In China, incessant wars and foreign incursions had destroyed many paintings in the imperial collections. The looting of Chinese artefacts by Western armies led to their dispersal, through the Eight-Nation Alliance at the time of the 1900 Boxer Rebellion. This resulted in the increasing availability of high quality Chinese cultural relics, including ritual ornaments and vessels, books and manuscripts, from the Forbidden City, imperial resorts and temples in Peking, as well as officials' private collections, in auction houses, antique shops, private and public collections in Europe, America and Japan. There was also a long history of Chinese paintings in Japanese collections. Following the Xinhai Revolution in 1911, an enormous number of art works from both imperial and private collections, including the splendid collections by Prince Gong 恭親王 (1833-1898) and Duanfang 端方 (1861-1911), ended up in Japan. Many of these Chinese items were sold to the dealer Yamanaka Sadajirō 山中定次郎 (1866-1936) who resold them through his

⁶² Ibid, 40.

Yamanaka & Company (山中商会) to America, Britain, France, China and Japan.⁶³

Although these sales encouraged the collection of Chinese art in Britain, Japanese connoisseurship invariably influenced the British way of seeing Chinese art.

According to Basil Gray, Binyon's disciple and son-in-law,⁶⁴ in the first decade of the twentieth century "Chinese art was subsidiary in taste to Japanese art." Before the First World War, Chinese art was seldom considered independently of Japanese. Gray thought that "this had a very significant corollary, that Chinese art was viewed through Japanese spectacles,"⁶⁵ which was certainly true for Binyon. Following the Meiji Restoration, Japan began a remarkable program of modernization. Western techniques were incorporated into the development of industry and technology, and European oil painting techniques replaced the traditional Japanese ink techniques in the public schools. With the establishment of the Japan Art Institute, founded by Okakura Kakuzo in 1898, Japanese painters visited China, India and Europe for work and study. Through these visits, Binyon made contact with Japanese scholars who

⁶³ Yamanaka Sadajirō opened branches of Yamanaka & Company in Boston, London, Peking and Paris in 1899, 1890, 1901 and 1905, respectively. The Yamanaka enterprise further extended to several international cities, such as New York, Chicago, and Shanghai. In 1923 the Company was well established in Japan and several countries. Through auctions and exhibitions, the Yamanaka & Company sold a large quantity of Chinese antiquities, mainly porcelain, to collectors and museums in the West during the 1910s and 1920s. William Bigelow (1850-1926), Ernest Fenollosa, Charles Lang Freer and John Rockefeller (1839-1937) were some of the loyal customers. After the establishment of the Sub-Department of Oriental Prints and Drawings, especially from 1919 onwards, Binyon made regular purchases of Japanese and Chinese paintings and prints from the Yamanaka & Company for the British Museum. He also acquired Chinese paintings and prints from other art dealers, including Mr Hogitaro Inada, Mrs Probsthain & Company, Mrs Sotheby & Company, and Bernard Quaritch Limited. For the detailed discussion of the transmission of Chinese art to Japan and the West, see Tomita Sho, *Jindai Riben di Zhongguo Yishupin Liuzhuan yu Jianshang*, trans. Zhao Xiumin, Shanghai 2005. For the acquisition source and price of Chinese paintings in the British Museum, see the Museum's Minutes of Meetings of Trustees' Standing Committee, BM.

⁶⁴ Basil Gray had taken the Assistantship in the Department of Prints and Drawings a year after Arthur Waley resigned at the end of 1929. After Binyon's retirement in 1933, Gray transferred to a new Department of Oriental Antiquities. In the same year, he married to Binyon's elder daughter Nicolette Binyon (1911-1997). See CE3-SC, 12 January and 12 October 1929, Box C17, Vol. 62, 4518, 4588; CE3-SC, 10 January 1931, Box C17, Vol. 63, 4730; Griffiths and Williams. *The Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum User's Guide*, 25.

⁶⁵ Gray, "The Development of Taste in Chinese Art in the West 1872 to 1972", 21.

came to gain experience in London. During his stay in London between December 1901 and July 1903, Kohitsu Ryōnin went through the Anderson collection with Binyon and gave him a lesson in Japanese connoisseurship. Binyon later acknowledged in his *Painting in the Far East: An Introduction to the History of Pictorial Art in Asia, Especially China and Japan* (1908) that Kohitsu was his “invaluable helper towards appreciation of the spirit and character of Japanese and Chinese art”, and “from whom in personal intercourse [Binyon] learnt much which books could never teach.”⁶⁶ Through Morrison, Binyon also met Shimomura Kanzan 下村観山 (1873-1930), Okakura’s protégé, who studied Western painting methods, especially watercolour, in London’s museums and art schools between April 1903 and March 1905.⁶⁷ Binyon showed Kanzan the *Admonitions* scroll and even asked him to repair the work.⁶⁸ The two men kept their lifelong friendship and met in Yokohama in 1929 during Binyon’s first visit to Japan when he was invited to have tea in Kanzan’s house.⁶⁹ In early 1903, Binyon also met the poet and critic Yone Noguchi 野口米次郎 (1875-1947) who wrote on various aspects of Japanese culture.⁷⁰ They not only

⁶⁶ Binyon, *PFE*, ix.

⁶⁷ Shimomura Kanzan studied under Kanō Hōgai 狩野芳崖 (1828-1888) and Hashimoto Gahō 橋本雅邦 (1835-1908) when he was young. He graduated first at the Government school, Tokyo School of Fine Arts (now Tokyo University of the Arts) in 1889, and became a teacher of figure painting at the same institution. Kanzan was one of the Japanese artists to join Okakura in the establishment of a private institution, Japan Art Institute in 1898. In 1903-5, he received a Japanese Ministry of Education Overseas Student grant to study watercolours and to copy masterpieces of paintings in Europe. Arthur Morrison admired Shimomura’s technique of Japanese painting and regarded him as “the fast-rising hope of the old Tosa school”. See Victoria Weston, *Japanese Painting and National Identity: Okakura Tenshin and His Circle*, Ann Arbor 2004, 239-41; Aiko Satou, *Nihon Meigaka Den* (Bukko Hen), Tokyo 1967, 149-50; Morrison, *The Painters of Japan*, viii.

⁶⁸ Weston, *Japanese Painting and National Identity*, 244.

⁶⁹ Binyon, Cicely, Sophy, and Robert L. Hobson (1872-1941) went together to Kanzan’s house at Yokohama on 15 October 1929. As Cicely described, it was a place “on a hill looking over the sea & things like Japanese anemones – very tall, grow up out of the grass, not massed but singly.” Cicely Binyon to Nicolette Binyon, 16 October [1929], ALB, Vol. 56.

⁷⁰ Yone traveled from New York to London in November 1902 and formed his connection with several leading literary figures in England, including William B. Yeats, Binyon, Mary Fenollosa, and Ezra Pound. They were members of Yone’s international poet’s club and admired his incorporation of Japanese subjects in modern English poetry. Apart from his literary talent, Yone was interpreter of Oriental art to Westerners. Binyon was impressed by Yone’s *From the Eastern Sea* (1903) and *Hiroshige* (1921), while Yeats and Pound acquired knowledge of Japanese writing from *The Pilgrimage*

met at Roche's restaurant but also in the British Museum when Yone went to see a large hand-illuminated book of William Blake's.⁷¹

Binyon's understanding of Chinese art was formed by Anderson and Morrison, as well as by the cultural interaction between Japanese and British scholars in London in the early 1900s. McCausland argues that Britain's deepening understanding of East Asian art mirrored the role of Japan in the early twentieth century, "as a kind of displaced China, a window on China, and a conduit or force for the shaping of British notions of China."⁷² With her military success from the 1890s to the 1910s, Japan's parity was finally recognized by the Western powers. McCausland also believes that the 1910 Japan-British Exhibition at the White City in London was an important event which marked "the end of an Orientalist japonisme and the beginning of a more serious encounter with Japanese culture and, along with it, the founding East Asian culture to which Japan was also turning, that of China."⁷³ Therefore, "Japan had, by 1910, become positioned as a key mediator between the West and Asia, and it was through Japan that the British Museum's curators moved beyond an understanding shaped through study of the applied arts toward learning more about China's long painting tradition."⁷⁴

The Study of Reproductions in the *Kokka*

As well as the influence of Japanese scholars and collectors of Japanese art in Britain, Binyon's knowledge of Chinese painting was also enriched by the superb

(1909) and *Japanese Hokkus* (1920). See Hakutani Yoshinobu, "Ezra Pound, Yone Noguchi, and Imagism", *Modern Philology* 90, August 1992, 46-69; Hatcher, *LB*, 80-1.

⁷¹ See Yone Noguchi, *The Story of Yone Noguchi Told by Himself, Illustrated by Yoshio Markino*, London 1914, 129-31.

⁷² McCausland, "Nihonga Meets Gu Kaizhi", 697.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

reproductions in the *Kokka*, a Japanese-English monthly journal of Oriental art. The *Kokka* which was launched by Okakura, Takahashi Kenzō 高橋健三 (1855-1898) and others in 1889 became a highly influential channel for the dissemination of ideas about Japanese art for both the Japanese and European public.⁷⁵ The title of the magazine means “flowers of the nation”, and illustrated mainly painting, as well as sculpture and Japanese and Chinese applied arts, from the earliest times to the present day. Each issue has about four to five articles on Oriental art, mostly by Japanese scholars, accompanied with four to six woodcuts or line drawings in collotypes. The articles included discussions and research on the art of Japan and China, with a strong emphasis on Buddhist art. The issues published between 1889 and 1898 were all in Japanese, while an English contents list and descriptive notes for illustrations were added to most of the Japanese issues after 1903. Due to the growing interest in the art of Japan and other Asian countries in the West, an English parallel or near-parallel edition was printed in Western format from 1905 to 1918.⁷⁶ The new English edition was also a way of diverting the West’s attention from Japan’s military success to the beauty and spirit of her national art and cultural institutions. In particular, Japanese scholars claimed that

The majority of Western students of Japanese art have taken as their authorities the observations of their own countrymen, and these have often led them into glaring misconceptions. For this we are in a measure answerable, through our neglect to present authoritative views from a purely Japanese standpoint.⁷⁷

As a beginner in the study of Oriental art, Binyon found it difficult to understand both Japanese and Chinese characters. He was concerned for foreign students, and recognized the need to translate some of the essays. In his journal review of 1904,

⁷⁵ See Fred Notehelfer, “On Idealism and Realism in the Thought of Okakura Tenshin”, *Journal of Japanese Studies* 16, 1990, 324-6.

⁷⁶ See Fujikake Shizuya, “Taki Hakase no Tsuioku (Jyou)”, *Kokka* 651, June 1946, 67-8.

⁷⁷ The English edition of the *Kokka* began in July 1905. See “Introduction to the New English Edition”, *Kokka* 182, July 1905, 4-5.

Binyon wrote:

Chinese pictures are included, and many, if not most, of the legendary subjects are of Chinese origin. In the English text these names are given only in the Chinese form. But in England the Japanese forms are the best known, and are far more easily remembered and pronounced. We should be grateful if both forms were given.⁷⁸

Similar to his dream of “Godoshi”, in the early years of his study, Binyon was more familiar with Chinese names in Japanese Romanization which was commonly adopted in publications by William Anderson, Ernest Fenollosa and other Western scholars in the late nineteenth century. Nevertheless, some Chinese names transcribed into Japanese were different from the original names known in China. Due to the language barrier and limited English translations of Japanese articles, Binyon paid more attention to the reproductions of original works of art in the *Kokka*.

In March 1904, the British Museum purchased 851 plates of reproductions from the *Kokka* for £32, “nearly half of them in the finest manner of wood-engraving in colours, from the classical works of Chinese and Japanese painting”.⁷⁹ On 24 November, Binyon wrote to Cicely, “Today I begin a job I shall vastly enjoy – arranging prints from that Japanese magazine which I have had cut up.”⁸⁰ He continued: “[t]he reproductions in this magazine were indeed a revelation. For here were things we had not dreamed of.”⁸¹ Although reproductions were not as valuable as original works, Binyon recognized that their function and effectiveness could help the public study art at its leisure. In particular, reproductions were important for

⁷⁸ Laurence Binyon, “A Japanese Magazine of Art”, *TLS*, 8 April 1904, 110.

⁷⁹ Colvin purchased the reproductions from Bernard Quaritch Publishing Company. The reproductions of Chinese paintings are classified into the works of various artists in different periods, and now kept in hard green boxes at the Department of Asia, the British Museum. See Colvin to the Trustees, 28 March 1904, Reports at the DPD, 2.

⁸⁰ In the British Museum, the plates of the *Kokka* had been detached from the text and arranged according to schools and artists for the convenience of the student. Binyon found that it helped students find what they want and was convenient for making comparison. See Binyon to Cicely Powell, 24 November [1904], ALB, Vol. 60; Binyon, *PFE*, London 1959, viii.

⁸¹ Binyon, *Impressions of Japanese Art*, 7.

students who could not travel abroad to see original works of art and exhibitions. When a business trip to the Far East could not easily be arranged, Binyon acquired a basic knowledge of Japanese and Chinese art from the superb reproductions in the *Kokka*. He found that

No nation probably has preserved its works of art so continuously and carefully as the Japanese ... Collectors and connoisseurs have always existed in Japan; but, as with us, it was not till photography was applied to the reproduction of pictures that a comparative and trustworthy method of criticism became possible.⁸²

During the Meiji era, many significant works of art were acquired by the nobility and rich collectors for their private collections. The reproductions in the *Kokka*, either in polychrome woodblock or black and white collotype printing, served as useful material for research, and spread an awareness of the national art of Japan to a wider audience. For Binyon, the reproductions in the *Kokka* provided immediate visual references for his study of Oriental art.

It is not the only Japanese publication of its kind, but, all things considered, it is the best. For the foreign student it is absolutely indispensable, since it illustrates countless pictures, in private hands or in temples, which the traveller never sees. Had it existed earlier, most of the European writers who are accepted as authorities would have been saved from many serious misconceptions.⁸³

In addition, the *Kokka* introduced several technical innovations to improve the standard of the chromoxylographic reproductions. The illustrations in the *Kokka* surpassed the quality of old colour prints in the collections of European collectors.⁸⁴

Binyon found the hand-made coloured prints of particularly high quality:

⁸² Binyon, "A Japanese Magazine of Art", 110. For Binyon's view of the importance of photography in art education, see Binyon, "The Popularisation of Art", in Samuelson (ed.), *The Civilisation of Our Day*, 322.

⁸³ Binyon, "A Japanese Magazine of Art", 110. Also see Binyon, "Japanese Art and Art Criticism", Review of *Masterpieces of Thirty Great Painters of Japan* by the Kokka Company, Tokio, *TLS*, 14 December 1906, 415.

⁸⁴ Concerning the new features applied in the process of producing colour prints for the *Kokka*, at least a hundred woodblocks were employed for printing a picture, while no more than thirty or forty blocks were usually used in the past. The skilled engravers also adopted new methods and better quality pigments when they applied colours to the blocks. For details, see "Introduction to the New English Edition", *Kokka* 182, 5-6; Binyon, "Colour-Reproduction in Europe and Asia", *TLS*, 28 June 1907, 204.

Nothing in the way of coloured reproduction made in Europe can compare with the beauty and fidelity of these prints, except possibly the Goupil prints after Degas' drawings, which are infinitely more expensive. The *Kokka* prints are produced in exactly the same manner as the woodcuts we all admire ... The skill, the taste, above all the patience requisite may well seem almost incredible beside our hasty commercial ways.⁸⁵

When he looked at the superb reproductions of birds and flowers, portraits, landscapes and Buddha, Binyon was attracted to the "ideality" of landscape painting in China and Japan which was absent in European art. He realized that

Landscape plays a great part, especially in the great time of the Chinese renaissance in the fifteenth century. But Japanese landscape is rarely or never the portrait of an actual scene. It is a liberating vision, in which the foreground is nothing, but the eye travels out into vast spaces where far-off torrents plunge among towering peaks, and wild geese sail over mists that veil the marshes ... In passion for intimate nature the Far East has anticipated Europe by many centuries. The architecture of composition in Raphael or Veronese is not matched in Japanese painting, nor the heroic nude of Michelangelo. Their art works rather by suggestion, preferring a singleness of subject which suppresses all that does not help the idea desired.⁸⁶

In fact, mature Chinese landscape painting played a central role in the Song dynasty, a few centuries earlier than Binyon thought. The liberating vision of Chinese and Japanese landscape painting, as well as the representation of Buddha and Saints in religious painting, opened Binyon's mind:

[W]e shall be wrong in thinking that this art is concerned only with birds, flowers and landscape. Great in treating these it is; but when we number over its crowning masterpieces we think rather of the marvelous early picture of Buddha and his saints descending on a cloud from which soft flowers fall ...⁸⁷

For Binyon, the *Kokka* was an essential reference for developing his taste in Oriental painting, and specifically Chinese:

During the last few years we have suddenly discovered that the whole idea of the art of China and Japan previously held in Europe must be altered. China was supposed to produce little but fine porcelain and fantastic carvings in

⁸⁵ Binyon, "A Japanese Magazine of Art", 110.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

wood and metal. Japan was associated with gay colour-prints, graceful bronzes, delicate lacquer, and a thousand of quaint and clever trifles, not to mention gaudy fans, and cheap bric-à-brac. Now we are beginning to realize that Japan has produced sculptors and painters for some ten centuries whom it is no exaggeration to call great; and yet her achievement is neither ancient nor so majestic as the parent art of China.⁸⁸

Binyon's knowledge of Oriental art was not limited to the visual illustrations in the *Kokka* but also included the writings of Okakura Kakuzo. The influence of Japanese connoisseurship on Binyon's understanding of Chinese painting will be further examined in the next chapter.

⁸⁸ Binyon, "Japanese Art", Review of the *Kokka*, *BM* 6, 1904, 163-4.

Chapter III

Early English Writings on Chinese Painting (I):

Okakura Kakuzo and Eastern Thought

Binyon began to write about Japanese art in the *Times*. His first review article, “Japanese art at Whitechapel”, was published on 22 August 1902. Although Japanese colour prints had had a widespread influence on European art, Binyon was attracted to Chinese art:

As Rome went to Greece for all her inspiration in the arts, so has Japanese gone to China ... Yet the Japanese are the first to acknowledge their absolute indebtedness to China. They resemble the Greeks, it is true, in their unsentimental nimble-wittedness and modernity, no less than in their fresh and vital sense of beauty; but it is just in creative originality that they have been lacking. China has supplied their need.¹

While Binyon was still exploring the historical relationship between Chinese and Japanese art, he received more commissions from the *Times* to review publications on Japan. However, in his letter to Cicely on 1 October 1903, he confessed:

I have had a request to review a large work on Japan for the *Times*. They seem to think I really know about Japan, as they always refer to me when books on the subject come out. It is quite a mistake, but I dare say I can conceal my ignorance, after the long course of training in that art which I have had here.²

Binyon felt ignorant about Japan because “hitherto a full and serious history of the nation has been lacking”.³ Without the knowledge of Asian languages, English writings on Oriental art and culture were Binyon’s only sources.

Binyon’s review of the “large work on Japan for the *Times*” – Captain F.

¹ Laurence Binyon, “Japanese Art at Whitechapel”, *TLS*, 22 August 1902, 253.

² Binyon to Cicely Powell, 1 October [1903], ALB, Vol. 59.

³ Laurence Binyon, “A History of Japan”, *TLS*, 6 November 1903, 319.

Brinkley's *Japan and China* (1903), a two-volume book on the history, art and literature – was published in November 1903. He claimed that it “promises to be the standard work” on the study of the past of Japan.⁴ Before he reviewed Brinkley's books, Binyon had actually been reading *The Ideals of the East, with Special Reference to the Art of Japan* (1903) by Okakura Kakuzo, which he reviewed for the *Times Literary Supplement* on 6 March 1903. It is doubtful whether Binyon had a firm grasp of Okakura's interpretation of Eastern thought, and confessed his ignorance of Japan six months after his book review was published. This suggests that Binyon's review of *Japan and China* was not a very professional account of the subject. Nevertheless, writing literary reviews gave Binyon a chance to read more about Oriental art. Interestingly, Binyon wrote to Cicely on 28 July 1903, that “I had thoughts of sending you ‘Ideals of the East’, which I reviewed last year in the *Times* & which I have been reading again. But it is so full of unfamiliar names & allusions I think it would put you off.”⁵ This chapter will examine the importance of Okakura's *The Ideals of the East* for Binyon, and how Okakura's writings shaped his conception of Eastern thought and Chinese painting.

The Image of Japan in *The Ideals of the East* (1903)

When Binyon reviewed *The Ideals of the East*, he found that

This book would be remarkable if only for the fact that it is written by a native of Japan in perfectly accurate, idiomatic, and even eloquent English. But, apart from this fact, it is a work of extraordinary interest. The author, Mr. Okakura, is distinguished as a scholar for his knowledge of Oriental history and of Buddhist archaeology.⁶

As Binyon described, “unlike many of his countrymen”, Okakura was “an earnest upholder of national traditions against the powerful influx of European methods and

⁴ Ibid, 319.

⁵ Binyon to Cicely Powell, 28 July [postmark 1903], ALB, Vol. 59.

⁶ Laurence Binyon, “The Ideal of the East”, *TLS*, 6 March 1903, 73.

ideals which threatens to swamp them, and is the head of an arts school in which these principles are taught.”⁷ In 1898, Okakura founded a private institution, the Japan Art Institute at Yanaka, in a suburb of Tokyo, with the aim of promoting traditional Japanese art, especially painting, against the imported styles of the West. Members of the Institute formed connections with American and British scholars and travelled abroad to India, China and the West, seeking to deepen their understanding of painting and culture and gain insight for the national art educational system.⁸ Through English publications, Okakura portrayed himself as an international scholar and presented his ideas about the arts of China, Japan, and India, and their relationship, to Western readers.

In Britain, Okakura first published an article “Notes on Contemporary Japanese Art” in the *Studio* in 1902,⁹ followed by *The Ideals of the East* which became an influential reference for Western understanding of the philosophy and art of Asia. He then turned to establish his fame in America and published *The Awakening of Japan* (1904) in New York, which was reprinted in London in 1905. *The Book of Tea* (1906) was published in New York when Okakura became curator of the Chinese and Japanese Department at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.¹⁰ Okakura’s three

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ According to Victoria Weston, the period from 1902 to 1905 was one of great internationalism for the Japan Art Institute. By 1902 the Japan Art Institute had gone from ambitious intentions to financial ruin within three years. Members had also received negative criticism for their works on regional exhibitions and their significance in the Tokyo art world. Therefore, Okakura changed by developing his connections with Western connoisseurs and scholars, particularly Americans. See Weston, *Japanese Painting and National Identity*, 218-9.

⁹ To reaffirm the vigour of native traditions and art heritage, Okakura advocated a new movement which encouraged a combined training in Western art and Japanese traditions for modern artists of the New School at his Japan Art Institute. Okakura Kakuzo, “Notes on Contemporary Japanese Art”, *Studio* 25, 1902, 126-8.

¹⁰ Noriko Murai states that Okakura actively involved in social and cultural activities organized by influential women in Boston. In particular, Isabella Stewart Gardner (1840-1924) acted as a major force behind Okakura’s success in Boston and beyond. Likewise, Okakura helped Gardner consolidate her identity as a modern, cosmopolitan collector. Okakura’s *The Book of Tea* was based on a series of lectures on East Asian art and culture that he gave to the female benefactors and volunteers of the

English books, published in rapid succession between 1903 and 1906, coincided with Japan's military victory in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5), and influenced Western understanding of the art history, philosophy, and culture of East Asia. He illuminated the historical development of Japanese art by dividing its art into periods, and by comparing it with the art of its neighbours, including China, India and the West. According to He Qing, Okakura's approach of periodization and comparative study was indebted to modern Western concepts. He also used the same method in his lecture on "The History of Japanese Art" at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts in 1890.¹¹

It is noteworthy that "a strong confrontation with Western civilization" and a "fervent idealization of the concept of a united Asia that might be roused against the threat of Western imperialism" are emphasized in Okakura's writings.¹² It was because

Okakura had long ago accepted the Hegelian structure put forth by Fenollosa with its emphasis on Eastern spirituality and Western materialism. This

Museum of Fine Arts and at private residences. For Okakura's early publications and his contribution in promoting Japanese art in the West, see Fukui Prefectural Museum of Art, *Exhibition of Okakura Tenshin and Nippon Bijutsu*, Fukui 1981; Sunao Nakamura (ed.), *Okakura Kakuzo: Collected English Writings*, Vol. 1, Tokyo 1984. See also Alan Chong and Noriko Murai (eds), *Journeys East: Isabella Stewart Gardner and Asia*, Boston 2009, 31-8, 72-6.

¹¹ He Qing points out that Okakura's approach of historical studies owed much to Fenollosa who had later mentioned the method of periodization in his *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art* (1912). Besides, Okakura compared the aesthetic theory of Chinese painting with the painting method of Western art. He also used the comparative approach to discuss the arts of China and Japan. The comparative perspective can also be founded in Fenollosa's "Chinese and Japanese Traits", published in *Atlantic Monthly* in 1892. Similar to the Japanese artists from the Kano School, Okakura appreciated the artistic ideas and techniques of the Song art, but denied the aesthetic quality of Chinese literati painting of the Yuan dynasty. Like Anderson and Fenollosa, he generally labeled the art of the Yuan and Ming periods as decadence. Thus, Okakura's discussion of Chinese painting usually finished with his praise for the ideals and art of Song without showing a complete picture of the development of Chinese painting. See He Qing, "Okakura Tenshin dui Zhongguo Meishu de Renshi", *Art History* 2, 1995, 77-81; Ernest Fenollosa, "Chinese and Japanese Traits", *Atlantic Monthly* 69, 1892, 769-74.

¹² In his insightful article, Notehelfer gave an in-depth analysis of the thought of Okakura in his various important publications in 1903-6. Chen Zhenlian argues that Okakura's books reveal not only his promotion of Asian culture but also a very strong enthusiasm for Japanese nationalism. In particular, *The Ideals of the East* and *The Awakening of Japan* bear a sense of agitation. Thus, Okakura's publications failed to provide an objective account of Asian art and culture but were political manifesto. See Chen Zhenlian, *Weixin: Jindai Riben Yishu Guannian de Bianqian – Jindai Zhong Ri Yishu Shi li Bijiao Yanjiu*, Hangzhou 2006, 288-9; Notehelfer, "On Idealism and Realism in the Thought of Okakura Tenshin", 330.

structure, one must add, was particularly appealing to nineteenth-century Westerners such as Fenollosa and Lafcadio Hearn, who had found in Japan the perfect spiritual values and society with which to resist the mammonism of the industrial revolution and its depersonalized social order in the West.¹³

Since the 1880s Ernest Fenollosa was not only the model for Okakura, but also guided his disciple to become involved in art education projects for the Japanese government, and later for private art-supporting organizations, with their aim of preserving Japan's cultural heritage and national life.¹⁴ In 1888, Okakura was appointed to head the art section of the Tokyo Imperial Museum, while Fenollosa worked on the administrative board. A year later, the two men, with other Japanese, founded the government Tokyo school of Fine Arts, the first Japanese fine arts academy in Tokyo. In 1889, Okakura and Fenollosa collaborated with other Japanese scholars to launch the influential art magazine, *The Kokka*, which became the channel for the dissemination of their ideas to both the Japanese and Western public.

With Okakura's intense patriotism, one might ask whether *The Ideals of the East* presented a balanced view of the art and philosophy of China, Japan, and India.

Binyon commented that

¹³ Notehelfer, "On Idealism and Realism in the Thought of Okakura Tenshin", 331. Although Okakura adopted Fenollosa's Hegelian structure in reforming Japanese art heritage, the two men had different focus in illuminating the relationship between Japanese art and its neighbours. Okakura emphasized much on the unique position of Japan in his discussion of its relationship with China and India, whereas Fenollosa treated Japanese art as part of Orient art and included Korean art in his *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art* (1912). See Yan Xiaomei, "Cong Riben Meishushi dao Dongyang zhi Lixiang", *Book Town*, September 2008, 84-5.

¹⁴ Fenollosa went to Japan with his wife in 1878, and taught political economy and philosophy at the Tokyo Imperial University (now University of Tokyo). In the 1880s, he was an active interpreter of Japanese art in Tokyo, and from 1886 to 1889, received a number of honours from the University of Tokyo and the Emperor. In 1890, he returned to Boston Museum of Fine Arts and became the curator of the Department of Oriental Art. According to Jin Jiechen, Fenollosa did not read Japanese or Chinese and had never been to China. His friends and students, such as Okakura, served as translators for his study of Chinese and Japanese treaties. For the relationship between Okakura and Fenollosa, see Notehelfer, "On Idealism and Realism in the Thought of Okakura Tenshin", 317-29. For Fenollosa's interest in art and his experience in Japan, see Lawrence Chisolm, *Fenollosa: The Far East and American Culture*, New Haven and London 1963, 20-75; Ernest Fenollosa, "The Coming Fusion of East and West", *Harper's* 98, 1898, 115-22; Jin Jie-chen, "Fenollosa yu Okakura Tenshin – Kaiqi Jindai Riben 'Zhongguo Huihuashi' Yanjiu de Xianqu", *Heritage Magazine* 263, 2005, 83; Mary Fenollosa, "Preface", in Fenollosa, *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art*, Vol. 1, xiv-xxii.

This little work, then – all too short for the subject with which it deals – is an attempt to explain to Europeans what lies behind the art of the Far East: to write of it from within. Hitherto, that art has been far too often treated as a fascinating isolated phenomenon which no one has troubled to explain, and we have been so captivated by the delicate flower that we have not cared to ask from what seed it sprang or on what tree it grew. But no vital art can help being national. Mr. Okakura sets himself to trace the successive phases through which the national life in Japan has passed and the character which each has stamped on the country's art.¹⁵

A very controversial idea in *The Ideals of the East* was Okakura's idealized grand thesis:

Asia is one. The Himalayas divide, only to accentuate, two mighty civilizations, the Chinese with its communism of Confucius, and the Indian with its individualism of the Vedas ... For if Asia be one, it is also true that the Asiatic races form a single mighty web.¹⁶

With the great diversity of races, cultures and religions of China, Japan and India, it is questionable whether Okakura's assertion of an Asian unity had much meaning. In 1984, Okakura Koshirō 岡倉古志郎 defended his grandfather's Pan-Asian thought:

“Asia is one,” was abused as a slogan for the conquest of Asia by the Japanese militarists and expansionists. Although this was a distortion of Okakura Kakuzo's ideals, because of this, by the time the war in the Pacific ended and Japanese militarism collapsed, Okakura Kakuzo was cast into the false role of a narrow-minded ultra-nationalist in the minds of the Japanese people.¹⁷

Victoria Weston argues that

Okakura's Pan-Asianism asserted an idealized commonality among Asian cultures, which he broadly characterized as peaceful, communal, and spiritual. His Asia represented half of a Hegelian model, in which Asia formed the thesis to be favorably contrasted with the anti-thesis of the industrialized, militarized West. Radicalized by Western imperialism, Japanese thinkers, Okakura included, worked to develop a concept of Japanese culture that might help Japan weather that challenge, its “national” character intact.¹⁸

The Ideals of the East was indeed potent cultural-political propaganda to show

¹⁵ Binyon, “The Ideal of the East”, 73.

¹⁶ Okakura Kakuzo, *The Ideals of the East* (hereafter *IE*), Tokyo 1985, 1, 3.

¹⁷ Okakura Koshirō, “Preface”, in Nakamura (ed.), *Okakura Kakuzo: Collected English Writings*, Vol. 1, viii.

¹⁸ Weston, *Japanese Painting and National Identity*, 4.

the West the national ideal and civilization of Japan. Okakura not only “homogenized historical and regional specificity in order to present an integral, peaceful Asian culture”,¹⁹ but uplifted the unique position of Japan and her national life.

At this moment Japan, in the re-awakened consciousness of her national life, was eager to clothe herself in new garb, discarding the raiment of her ancient past. To cut away those fetters of Chinese and Indian culture which bound her in the maya of Orientalism, so dangerous to national independence, seemed like a paramount duty to the organizers of the new Japan. Not only in their armaments, industry, and science, but also in philosophy and religion, they sought the new ideals of the West, blazing as that was with a wonderful luster to their inexperienced eyes, as yet indiscriminating of its lights and shadows.²⁰

To position a new and international image of Japan in the West, Okakura assimilated the *Zeitgeist* of the Meiji era with the Renaissance period in Europe. He established a twofold assimilation by welcoming ancient culture and past ideas, as well as the new spirit of science and liberalism which became a new solution to revivify the old Asiatic unity.²¹

In spite of Okakura’s Japanese nationalism, Binyon was sympathetic to Okakura’s assertion that “Asia is one”. He explained in the Charles Eliot Norton lecture at Harvard University in 1933-4:

I have heard this assertion vigorously disputed ... The claim seems extravagant. Nevertheless we shall find that, in art at least, the countries of Asia have more in common than might be supposed. No Asiatic painting can be mistaken for a European painting ... Common to all these countries, from Persia to Japan, is a felicity and vitality of line-drawing such as the West has scarcely ever, if ever, rivaled. These are not mere accident; they are symptoms of an attitude of mind; they tell of a mental attitude which cannot rest in the material world as an ultimate reality.

But besides this common mental attitude we are to trace currents of influence passing to and from between the various countries, the wanderings of Ideas, those strangely potent, sometimes terrible essences that seize upon whole

¹⁹ Ibid, 232.

²⁰ Okakura, *IE*, 219; also see 5, 19-20, 211-5.

²¹ Ibid, 220-1.

nations, to transform them.²²

What concerned Binyon were both common and distinctive artistic qualities and underlying philosophical ideas behind Asian art. These concerns were also consistent with his study of rhythmic line in the *Admonitions* scroll, and of the Eastern attitude to life and nature, especially the thought of Daoism and Buddhism, which was embodied in Chinese painting.

On the other hand, Okakura considered Japan to be “the real repository” for the study of Chinese art. Such treasures included the opened dolmens of the imperial collections, the temples of Nara, as well as the works of art and manuscripts of the daimyos’ treasure-stores. They represented Han workmanship, Tang culture, as well as the art of Song and Yuan dynasties.²³ Due to the dynastic upheavals and incessant wars and devastation by Tartar and Mongol barbarians, the refined works of the Tang and Song dynasties were dispersed to foreign countries. The cultural treasures which had been snatched from China during wars turned Japan into a repository for Asia in “a physical sense”.²⁴ Okakura asserted that “Japan is a museum of Asiatic civilization; and yet more than a museum, because the singular genius of the race leads it to dwell on all phases of the ideals of the past, in that spirit of living Advaitism which welcomes the new without losing the old.”²⁵ Binyon also admitted that Japan was a good place for the European to study the treasures of Asiatic culture:

The insular position of Japan and the unbroken course of her national

²² In *Asiatic Art in the British Museum (Sculpture and Painting)* (1925), Binyon also mentioned Okakura’s saying: “Asia is one”. He agreed that the various manifestations of art in different Asian countries had something in common; the affiliations related them to each other. See Laurence Binyon, *Asiatic Art in the British Museum (Sculpture and Painting)*, Paris and Brussels 1925, 13; Laurence Binyon, *The Spirit of Man in Asian Art* (hereafter *SMAA*), New York 1965, 37-8.

²³ See Okakura, *IE*, 7; Nakamura (ed.), *Okakura Kakuzo: Collected English Writings*, Vol. 1, xviii, 433-5; “Kakuzo Okakura: Some Reminiscences by Surendranath Tagore”, in Nakamura (ed.), *Okakura Kakuzo*, Vol. 2, 233-42.

²⁴ Notehelfer, “On Idealism and Realism in the Thought of Okakura Tenshin”, 332.

²⁵ See Okakura, *IE*, 7-8.

existence have safeguarded treasures which war after war or long neglect have destroyed in India and China. This is in the main true, though we have reason to think that more of the old art has been preserved in China than Mr. Okakura implies.²⁶

More than twenty years later, Binyon got a chance to verify the opinion he shared with Okakura during his only trip to Japan and China in 1929-30.

There were some fine works here [in the imperial collection in the Forbidden City, Peking], but the attributions could not be trusted. It is said that successive Generals have stolen all the finest things for this collection; but it is impossible to find out the truth. In any case, whatever treasures may lie hidden in China, the older Chinese painting can be studied far more profitably in Japan.²⁷

In Japan, Binyon found that “Chinese painting is well represented, particularly the art of the Sung period. Many of these works are convincing, & provide the best standard now available anywhere.”²⁸

Okakura’s Interpretation of Eastern Thought

For Okakura, the ideals of China and India were preconditions for an understanding of their national life and art.

Art with us, as elsewhere, is the expression of the highest and noblest of our national culture, so that in order to understand it, we must pass in review the various phases of Confucian philosophy; the different ideas which the

²⁶ Binyon, “The Ideal of the East”, 73.

²⁷ Binyon’s report to the Trustees, 28 January 1930, CE4-OP, P 432. Binyon’s comment was not entirely true. When Binyon visited the Forbidden City in mid-September 1929, the Palace Museum was undergoing a series of renovation works, while forming executive committees and departments. At the time the imperial collection in Peking did hold a splendid collection of classical Chinese paintings with about 4,000 works. Since the establishment of the Palace Museum in October 1925, a systematic examination of the holdings of the imperial collection was carried out for the first time. In late September 1929, the Palace Museum was also investigating the lost of imperial treasures, including over 1,000 Chinese paintings and rare books which were illegally moved to Tianjin by the last Chinese Emperor, Puyi 溥儀 (1906-1967). In addition, a large number of Chinese paintings and rare books were lost in the hand of the Qing officials due to the bad management of loan service and cataloging system in the imperial court. Under all these circumstances, Binyon was unable to study the finest classical Chinese paintings in large quantity during his short stay in Peking. For details of Chinese paintings in the imperial collection, see The National Palace Museum, Beijing, *Gugong Yiyi Shuji Shuhua Mulu Sizhong*, Beijing 1926; Department of Antiquities, the Palace Museum, *Gugong Shuhua Ji*, 47 Vols, Beijing 1930; The National Central Palace Museum, *Gugong Shuhualu*, 3 Vols, Taipei 1956. For the history of the Palace Museum in late 1920s, see The Palace Museum, *Gugong Bowuyuan Bashu Nian*, Beijing 2005, 25-45.

²⁸ Binyon’s report to the Trustees, 28 January 1930, CE4-OP, P 432.

Buddhist mind has from time to time revealed ...²⁹

Thus, in *The Ideals of the East*, Okakura dedicated three chapters to “Confucianism – Northern China”, “Laosim and Taoism – Southern China”, and “Buddhism and Indian Art”. They paved the way for Western readers to explore the historical development and philosophical ideas of Oriental art. Okakura also attempted to show how the reception of Indian spirituality carried by Buddhism, and of Chinese humanistic values by Confucianism and Daoism, had turned Japan into a spiritual repository of Asia.

Interestingly, Okakura’s interpretation of Eastern thought facilitated Binyon’s understanding of the *Admonitions* scroll. When Binyon first saw an early scroll of Chinese painting, he was eager to explore the contextual background of the Eastern Jin dynasty when metaphysics and the belief of Laozi 老子 (600-470 BCE) prevailed among the literati, including Gu Kaizhi, the poet-painter of the Laoist School (老子學派). As Binyon suggested in “A Chinese Painting of the Fourth Century” (1904), Okakura’s *The Ideals of the East* was possibly the first useful reference for his understanding of Laoism, Daoism and Buddhism.³⁰ In his *Painting in the Far East* (1908), Binyon later recommended that readers should consult Okakura’s *The Ideals of the East* for “the trend of thought and development of ideals”.³¹ For instance, he quoted Okakura’s book in a footnote as his reference for illuminating how Confucian ideas were developed in practice in the state of Han (206 BCE-220 CE) in the first century.³² He also referred to Okakura’s scholarship for the classification of Daoism

²⁹ Okakura, *IE*, 9.

³⁰ Binyon, “A Chinese Painting of the Fourth Century”, 44.

³¹ Binyon, *PFE*, New York 1959, 280.

³² *Ibid*, 59.

and Laoism.³³

Moreover, *The Ideals of the East* gave an account of Gu Kaizhi who “was held admirable for three virtues, being called ‘first in poetry, first in painting, and first in foolishness.’ He is the earliest voice to speak of the necessity of concentration on the dominant note, in an art-composition.”³⁴ Gu was famous for his saying that the secret of portraiture was revealed in the eye of the subject, which constituted the lifelike representation of the figure. He was first in the history of Chinese painting to give “the first systematic criticism of painting” and “the basis for a future generalization of aesthetics” in China and in Japan.³⁵ In his encounter with the *Admonitions* scroll, Binyon unquestioningly supported Okakura’s admiration for Gu Kaizhi’s achievement and distinctive status. It is evident that Binyon’s conception of the ideals and art of China was indebted to Okakura’s interpretation and connoisseurship.

Instead of prescribing art with the function of ethical education in a Confucian society, Okakura advocated ideals which infused art with the freedom to liberate expression and individuality. It was a quest for self-realization or attainment, and cosmic consciousness through the practice of creativity. He admired the ideals of Daoism and Buddhism from southern China, with their love of art-expression, the intense adoration of nature, the love of freedom, and the spirit of individualism. Okakura canonized Laozi, who was the author of *Dao De Jing* (*The Book of the Way and its Virtue* 《道德經》). In this work, Okakura learnt of “the greatness of retiring

³³ Ibid, 63.

³⁴ Okakura, *IE*, 51.

³⁵ Ibid, 52.

into self and freeing ego from the trammels of convention.”³⁶ In his turn Laozi was visualized as “the dragon” by Confucius. Okakura acknowledged an innate love of Nature and Freedom which was embodied in Chinese literature and landscape paintings, and would “bring forth the mighty concept of the Dragon, that awful emblem, born of cloud and mist, of the power of Change.”³⁷ The symbol of the “dragon” became a fascinating subject for Binyon who named his second book of Oriental art *The Flight of the Dragon* (1911), and strongly promoted Daoist thoughts and the beauty of Song landscape paintings.

Binyon was clearly inspired by the Eastern thought discussed in *The Ideals of the East*:

We have not space to follow Mr. Okakura in his account of the stages through which the Japanese nation passed under the successive waves of Continental influence and the transmitted ideals of Buddha, Confucius, and Laotsze. We can only say that the story is a fascinating one and briefly touch[es] on one or two points of special interest to Europeans.³⁸

For Europeans seeking an antidote to an industrialized society, ancient Eastern religions promised spiritual refreshment and a return to humanity. When he read *The Ideals of the East* again, Binyon wrote to Cicely on 3 August 1903: “I send Okakura’s book. The best chapters are, I think, those from p. 152-184, but the earliest chapters are interesting – only much too condensed. Don’t go on with it if you are put off by all the names & allusions. A lot of it I find very hard to get a grasp of.”³⁹ The chapters

³⁶ Ibid, 44-5.

³⁷ Ibid, 55.

³⁸ Okakura emphasized the transmission of Buddhism from India to Japan, and its impact on the development of Japanese art. He also remarked how Buddhism became a predominating impulse of the Tang China, and how the India spirit permeated Chinese literature and decorative arts. The quest for harmony had been brought forward by the Song dynasty when Confucians, Daoists, and Buddhists became a single unity. See *ibid*, 112-5; Binyon, “The Ideal of the East”, 74.

³⁹ The most difficult names were probably those names of Chinese artists and art critics which had been translated by Okakura in Japanese Romanization *rōmaji*. For instance, he used “Kogaishi” to denote “Ku K’ai-chih” (in Wade-Giles) or “Gu Kaizhi” (in *Pinyin*). For Binyon who did not read Chinese or Japanese in the early 1900s, it is understandable that he found difficulty in recognizing the names and

which most interested Binyon concerned the discussion of the historical relationship of Japan, China, and India, as well as the religions of Confucianism, Laoism, Daoism, and Buddhism. Binyon summarized his thoughts which he shared with Cicely:

Did you get anything out of Okakura? What remains – with me most is the Zen idea of a consciousness in man & a parallel consciousness in nature, of which art is the relating link & the only type of perfect life. I think this is a better account of art than any European one. Besides it is suggestive for more than art. We have always been too fond of separating man from nature, & those who rebel from the glorification of man glorify Nature; but each wants the others, doesn't it? I can't write clearly about such things & don't think very clearly, I'm afraid. But I know what thoughts stimulate me.⁴⁰

The thoughts which stimulated Binyon were mainly Daoism and Buddhism. In Okakura's words, Buddhism was “a message of the Freedom of the Soul”,⁴¹ as well as a powerful force in the development to culture and art of the East.⁴² In particular, the Buddhist thought of the Southern School – the *Zen* sect (*Chan zong* 禪宗) of Buddhism – which aspired to unify spirit and matter and resulted in the realization of individualism.⁴³

[I]ndividualism, the underlying fire of modern life and speculation, was only waiting to leap through the classic crust and flame up once for all into the freedom of the spirit. Spirit must conquer Matter, and though the differing idiosyncrasies of the Occidental and the Oriental mind lead to differing expression, the modern idea of the whole world runs inevitably to Romanticism.⁴⁴

allusions in *The Ideals of the East*. A Japanese translation of *The Ideals of the East* which published in Tokyo in 1987 shows the names of person and place in the form of *kanji* or Chinese characters. It helps to resolve the confusion made by different systems of Romanization. See Binyon to Powell, 3 August [postmark 1903], ALB, Vol. 59; Okakura Tenshin, *Toyo no Riso*, trans. Saeki Shoichi, Oketani Hideaki, Hashikawa Fumizo, Tokyo 1987.

⁴⁰ Binyon to Powell, 19 August [1904], ALB, Vol. 60.

⁴¹ See Okakura, *IE*, 67, 70-4.

⁴² When he traced the development and transmission of Buddhist thought in India, Japan and China from the sixth to the nineteenth century, Okakura discussed the influence of Buddhism on Chinese sculpture of the Tang and Song dynasties, while the Buddhist ethos in early Tang period also inspired Japanese art in the Nara period (710-794 CE). Okakura also noted that Buddhist sculpture of the Han period, especially the abstract ideal, the tenderness of expression and beautiful proportions of the statue of Guanyin (觀音), had inspired Japanese sculpture in the Asuka period (538-710 CE). See Okakura, *IE*, 89-93, 102-6, 118-20.

⁴³ The new idea of individualism was also encouraged in the later Chinese idea of Neo-Confucianism which “consists of the Confucian justification of all, *plus* the new spirit of individualism” and culminated “in the revival of the polity of Shu with a deepened modern significance.” See Okakura, *IE*, 168.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 165-6.

Okakura speculated that romantic thoughts, including the ideas of individualism, freedom and spirit, would come to dominate modern life. This echoed Fenollosa's idea that "the glory of art is its individuality."⁴⁵ From the Muromachi period (1336-1573 CE), Japanese art had adhered to the "Oriental Romantic Ideal", as "the expression of the Spirit as the highest effort in art."⁴⁶ Okakura conceived spirituality as "the essence or life of a thing, the characterization of the soul of things, a burning fire within."⁴⁷

The great World-soul permeated men and nature alike, and by contemplation of the world-life, and by contemplation of the world-life expanded before us; in the wonderful phenomena of existence, might be found the mirror in which the artistic mind could reflect itself.⁴⁸

When the idea of the spiritual was applied in art,

A painting, which is a universe in itself, must conform to the laws that govern all existence. Composition is like the creation of the world, holding in itself the constructive laws that give it life ... Each stroke has its moment of life and death; all together assist to interpret an idea, which is life within life.⁴⁹

It suggests that true enlightenment will lead to a harmonious communion of man and nature:

Freedom, once attained, left all men to revel and glory in the beauties of the whole universe. They were then one with nature, whose pulse they felt beating simultaneously within themselves, whose breath they felt themselves inhaling and exhaling in union with the great world-spirit.⁵⁰

This implies that a painting is not merely a representation of matter, but an expression of the painter's freedom and a vitalization of the life of things.

⁴⁵ Ernest Fenollosa, "The Significance of Oriental Art", *Knight Errant* 1, 1892, 65.

⁴⁶ Okakura, *IE*, 168.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 169.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 179-80.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 174.

Zen Buddhism which incorporated Daoist doctrines formulated an elaborate tea ceremony in fifteenth-century Japan. Okakura developed his interpretation of Zen thought in his *Book of Tea* (1906), in which he stated that Japanese interest in “Daoism and Zennism ... lies mainly in those ideas regarding life and art which are so embodied in what [they] call Teism.”⁵¹ No wonder Binyon realized that “the doctrines of the Zen sect of Buddhism [which] so profoundly penetrated Japanese thought and painting and even daily life and manners.”⁵² The Zen thought also “lies far deeper and springs from reverential sympathy with life”.⁵³

In fact, the teaching of the Zen sect was “perfected under the Sung dynasty, by the Southern Chinese mind”.⁵⁴ The Zen ideal was also embodied in Song landscape art, especially the ink paintings of Song Huizong, Ma Yuan, Xia Gui, Muqi and Liang Kai 梁楷 (active late twelfth to early thirteenth century). Chinese art and philosophy were crucial for Japanese painting in the fifteenth century. The artistic ideas and style of Southern Song landscapes profoundly influenced the Kano School of Japanese painting in the Muromachi period.⁵⁵ Almost 500 years later, Japanese artists of the

⁵¹ Okakura explained that “Zen is a name derived from the Sanscrit word Dhyana, which signifies meditation. It claims that through consecrated meditation may be attained supreme self-realisation.” He admitted that Zennism emphasizes the teachings of Daoism and is a strong advocate of individualism. He examined the relationship of Daoism and Zennism, and finally reached a conclusion: “The whole ideal of Teism is a result of this Zen conception of greatness in the smallest incidents of life. Taoism furnished the basis for aesthetic ideals, Zennism made them practical.” See Okakura Kakuzo, *Book of Tea*, New York 1964, 19, 25-9.

⁵² The Zen thought was introduced into China through Bodhidharma 菩提達摩 in 520 and became predominant in Japan in the Kamakura period (1185-1333 CE). See Okakura, *IE*, 171; Binyon, “The Ideal of the East”, 74.

⁵³ Binyon, “The Ideal of the East”, 74.

⁵⁴ See Okakura, *IE*, 159, 178.

⁵⁵ In the mid-fifteenth century, the trade and diplomatic activities between Japan and China at Ningbo encouraged cultural exchanges. When he accompanied the Japan embassy to China in 1467, Sesshu Toyo 雪舟 (1420-1506), a well-known Zen Buddhist artist of the Kano School, learned about the pictorial design and style of Southern Song court paintings and that of the Zhe School (浙派) of Chinese painters in Ningbo and Peking. Japanese court painters also gained inspiration from the bird and flower paintings by Lu Ji from the Zhe School. Since then, Chinese paintings in the style of Song and the Zhe School influence the art of the Kano School and became widely appreciated in Japan. See “Art Exchanges Abroad”, *Tracing the Che School in Chinese Painting* (National Palace Museum,

Meiji era sought for “a higher realization of the possibilities of ancient Japanese art”, and aimed at “a love and knowledge of the most sympathetic movements in Western art-creations”.⁵⁶ Modern Japanese artists inaugurated the revival of the Song and Muromachi masters, as well as assimilating Daoist ideas in their art. Fenollosa explained why the art of Song was the supreme inspiration for modern Japanese artists in “The Significance of Oriental Art” of 1892:

Oriental art as a whole, that is, the visual arts of China, Corea, and Japan since the fourth century of our era, is but the coronal efflorescence that plays around the central glory of Hang-Chow in the twelfth. We may pass towards this brightness or away from it. We may even discern amid the nebulous beauty semi-independent orbs which cluster about the luminary. As the history of European art reveals sinuosities of multiform struggle and failure, so also does that of Asiatic. The dragon’s tail coils about the mountain, but its eye is at the apex. So the glory of Japanese art down through the ages, and to present day, is that it connects by vital tissue of vein and nerve with the soul of Hang-Chow ... [I]n Japan, until her recent catastrophe, there have been no art museums and no art schools, because the real flame still burned in the altar of the heart. The art of Hang-Chow was a stimulus to re-creation, not a benumbing tradition.⁵⁷

Inspired by the ideals of the Southern Song and Muromachi masters, modern Japanese artists were refreshed with a new spirit. As Okakura advocated:

[F]reedom is the greatest privilege of an artist, but freedom always in the sense of evolutionary self-development. Art is neither the ideal nor the real. Imitation, whether of nature, of the old masters, or above all of self, is suicidal to the realization of individuality, which rejoices always to play an original part, be it of tragedy or comedy, in the grand drama of life, of man, and of nature.⁵⁸

This was an attempt to discourage Japanese artists from imitation, and encourage the idealistic process of self-realization and liberation. “Art thus becomes the moment’s repose of religion” and a “pilgrimage in search of the Infinite, lingering to gaze on the accomplished past and dimly-seen future”, which was “a suggestion of the spirit”.⁵⁹

Taipei, [date accessed, 30 November 2009]), http://tech2.npm.gov.tw/cheschool/zh-tw/index.aspx?content=e_2_0.

⁵⁶ Okakura, *IE*, 226-7.

⁵⁷ Fenollosa, “The Significance of Oriental Art”, 67.

⁵⁸ Okakura, *IE*, 228.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 229-30.

Binyon's Conception of Art, Religion and Life

Fenollosa and Okakura's ideas of Japanese art, especially their veneration for the artistic ideals of the Kano School and the Southern Song painting, encouraged Binyon to explore the aesthetics and spiritual ideas of Song landscape art. Nevertheless, the question remains as to why Binyon found Chinese philosophies and their relationship to art so fascinating. In fact, Binyon had already been considering the relationship between religion and poetry. A few years before he learned about Eastern thought from Okakura's *The Ideals of the East*, Binyon had been reading George Santayana's book on the unity of poetry and religion, which questioned the meaning of life.⁶⁰ He expressed his view on religion (mainly Christianity), life, and poetry at length in his letter to Cicely on 10 March [1903]:

[T]he sole authority of religions was the ideals they embody: & I mean by ideal the revelation of, or rather initiation into, the eternal life. The Way to this attainment is what religion ought to teach ... What we usually call religion – dogmas, rites, etc – are in essence poetry. And poetry is always true ... Men live by imagination; and to religion as to poetry every material thing & every temporal act is a symbol of the reality beyond. This & this alone gives life & meaning to both rites & dogmas.⁶¹

Binyon believed that life was good because

Life, as we conceive it in ideal, should be full, intense & free; a harmony of body & soul; radiant & radiating, not dulled & slothful; victorious over material conditions, yet happy & without violence. It must be real. The world which our senses apprehend is a chaos of impressions, only reason gives it coherence. Therefore the life which is real must be penetrated by a consciousness of realities, of what exists when matter is destroyed ... It has a good meaning, its meaning is the will of God. To live in that will & that meaning is to belong to the eternal

⁶⁰ It was probably George Santayana's *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion* (1900) which impressed Binyon's ideas of poetry and religion. Santayana, a Harvard philosophy professor, claimed that "religion and poetry are essentially identical in essence, and differ merely in the way in which they are attached to practical affairs." They had the universal moral function of expressing what is ideal, the meaning and values of existence. Binyon agreed with Santayana that "poetry at his greatest & best, does the same work as religion; it treats facts as an appearance & their ideal import as reality." He also recommended Santayana's book as one of the favourite books of 1901. See George Santayana, *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*, New York 1900, v; Binyon to Powell, 28 September [1903], ALB, Vol. 60; "Favourite Books of 1901", *Academy*, 7 December 1901, 568.

⁶¹ Binyon to Powell, 10 March [1903], ALB, Vol. 60.

life.⁶²

He continued in another letter on 20 August 1903:

Eternal life is what everyman has always thirsted for: but it is not a postponed futurity, it is here & now, & has been, without beginning, though it is only by glimpses & moments that we realize it. Life moves in rhythm; & if we could only join that rhythm & be lost in it, we are free, & time & space drop off.⁶³

Being of Quaker ancestry and from a devout Christian family,⁶⁴ Binyon did not stick to an institutionalized religion but was concerned with the essence of life, with his quest for a harmonious state between man and the universe, as well as the liberation of individual will.⁶⁵ “By regarding everything as part of the whole, as related to the essence of life, as a symbol, the outward sign of an inward grace,” Binyon believed that religions would make “peace between the soul & the senses, the soul & the world.”⁶⁶

From his study of Santayana’s analogy of religion and poetry to Okakura’s discussion of the Daoist and Zen thought in Oriental art, Binyon found a shared spirit for religion, poetry and art. According to Santayana, religion colours life harmoniously with the ideal.

The good man is a poet whose syllables are deeds and make a harmony in Nature. The poet is a rebuilder of the imagination, to make a harmony in that ... Religion is poetry become the guide of life, poetry substituted for science or supervening upon it as an approach to the highest reality.⁶⁷

The universal and moral function of poetry and religion can also be found in the art of Asia. Binyon realized, “the Zen idea of a consciousness in man & a parallel

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Binyon to Powell, 20 August [1903], ALB, Vol. 59.

⁶⁴ Binyon’s father was vicar of parish church, while his grandfather and many ancestors were Quakers. For the background of Binyon’s ancestry, see Steel, *Laurence Binyon and Lancaster*, 3-6.

⁶⁵ Although Binyon was baptized after his birth, he disliked institutionalized religion and was against the idea of a Church. John Hatcher states that Binyon’s formulations of religions and eternal life sound curiously like the Quakerism of his ancestors shorn of its Christian theology. See Hatcher, *LB*, 129-33.

⁶⁶ Binyon to Powell, 10 March [1903], ALB, Vol. 60.

⁶⁷ See Santayana, *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*, 287-9.

consciousness in nature, of which art is the relating link & the only type of perfect life.”⁶⁸ The idea of the harmony of man and nature was generally absent from the tradition of Western art. *The Ideals of the East* opened Binyon’s mind to the ancient ideals of Asia which led him to realize the shared spirit of religion, poetry and art. More importantly, Okakura’s ideas and connoisseurship shaped Binyon’s way of seeing Chinese art.

When he gave a lecture on “Chinese Art and Buddhism” at the British Academy in 1936, the idea of Zen Buddhism was still central to Binyon’s interpretation of Chinese painting. He stressed that

Its appeal to the Chinese was all the greater because of its affinity to Taoism. Indeed, it may be said to have given new life to the original teaching of Laotzū, so soon clouded over and degraded into magical practices and superstitions ... Zen may have originated in India, but it owes its growth and influence to its Chinese expounders. The practical Chinese mind has not the Indian gift for metaphysical subtleties; it is concerned above all with the art of living in the world ... In the art inspired by Zen there are no longer majestic images of still Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, but landscapes, mist among the mountains, a flowering spray, a bamboo, a fisherman in his boat: any casual sight or incident would serve for motive. For Zen lays stress on usual life.⁶⁹

Binyon admired Zen for seeking to be in harmony with the ever-changing movement of life. With its religious fervour and its thorough discipline, Zen also gave to Daoism a new direction and a vigorous life. Thus, Binyon found a purely Chinese expression to Zen Buddhist painting.⁷⁰ It is interesting that Binyon shared the ideas of Chinese artists by perceiving art (as well as poetry) as an embodiment of spiritual ideas and individual consciousness. To achieve harmony between man and nature, Binyon realized that Western artists in the early twentieth century had to change.

In a time like our own, when there is much gift for art but little direction, when the artist has largely lost relation of any vital kind with his public, and when

⁶⁸ Laurence Binyon to Cicely Binyon, 19 August [1904], ALB, Vol. 60.

⁶⁹ Laurence Binyon, *Chinese Art and Buddhism*, London 1936, 19-20.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 21.

the conscious search for new modes of expression issues in a mental restlessness, in such a time it is impossible without envy to contemplate an art growing and expanding in response to an interior need in the heart of mankind, spontaneously reflecting every change of thought or mood as surely as such changes are reflected in the features and colour of a face. And at the same time we are reminded that, however great the force and mastery of an individual gift, it loses sap and virtue if it is exercised in separation from our common life, if it does not draw its sustenance from those sources that feed and fructify the human spirit.⁷¹

The new thoughts (especially about Daoism and Zen Buddhism) in Okakura's *The Ideals of the East* opened Binyon's eyes to a new mode of expression in Western art. Eastern thought showed Binyon how art fused with life by expressing artist's mental vision, freedom and individuality. All these ideas Binyon later assiduously promoted in his writings on Chinese painting, which will be discussed in Chapter VII.

⁷¹ Ibid.

Chapter IV

Early English Writings on Chinese Painting (II):

Aesthetic Theory and Classical Treatise

While Fenollosa and Okakura infused Japanese patriotism into their lectures and writings in Britain, America, and Japan, Sinologists in the West also began to introduce Chinese art to Europeans. In 1905, Herbert Giles published *An Introduction to the History of Chinese Pictorial Art* in an inexpensive form for the general public, especially students, in order to explore the development of Chinese painting. It was the first attempt to deal with the history of Chinese pictorial art in any European language, accompanied by English translations of original treatises.¹ Giles stated in the “Preface”:

The present volume is intended to serve at any rate as temporary stopgap, being for the most part composed of extracts from authoritative works, here translated for the first time, thus exhibiting something of the theory of Chinese pictorial art from the point of view of the Chinese themselves.²

In its use of Chinese sources and introduction of aesthetic ideas, Giles’s *Chinese Pictorial Art* became an authoritative reference for Binyon. Unlike William Anderson’s publications on Japanese and Chinese painting, Giles’s book focused only on Chinese pictorial art, with ideas derived – though not exclusively - from the Chinese point of view. Before Binyon began his study of the Chinese language and was acquainted with Chinese scholars, English translations of Chinese sources were

¹ Herbert Giles remarked that no translations of Chinese works on art provided the necessary data for foreign writers in the early twentieth century. Consequently, Chinese pictorial art has always been neglected in European text-books. However, Frances Wood thinks that Giles ignored the late nineteenth-century writings on Chinese art in French and German, while giving an incomplete history of Chinese in his *Chinese Pictorial Art*. See Herbert Giles, *An Introduction to the History of Chinese Pictorial Art* (hereafter *IHCPA*), Shanghai 1905, v-vii; Wood, “From Ships’ Captains to the Bloomsbury Group”, 124, 127.

² Giles, *IHCPA*, London 1918, vii.

indispensable for his in-depth study of Chinese painters and aesthetic theory. First collaborating with Giles in 1905, and from 1913 with Arthur Waley, Binyon built up his knowledge of Chinese aesthetics and classical treatises. This chapter examines Binyon's involvement in the publications of Giles's first (1905) and second (1918) editions of *An Introduction to the History of Chinese Pictorial Art*, and his changing views of Giles's scholarship when Waley became his personal assistant and translator of Oriental art and languages.

Herbert Giles's *An Introduction to the History of Chinese Pictorial Art* (1905)

Giles was neither an artist nor an art critic, but a Sinologist and professor of Chinese at the University of Cambridge.³ *An Introduction to the History of Chinese Pictorial Art*, which was his only book on Chinese art, provided a general sketch of the progress and development of Chinese painting. Giles extracted Chinese painters from the Han to the Ming dynasty, and arranged them in chronological order under the dynasties to which the painters belonged. In each chapter, he provided information on the number of recorded painters in each dynasty, followed by numerous anecdotes concerning both major and minor painters. He also briefly explained the technical and aesthetic ideals of Chinese painting, as well as the influence of race and geography. At the end of each chapter, he highlighted some of the leading Chinese treatises on art in each dynasty.

The remarkable value of Giles's books was his translation of Chinese sources

³ Herbert Giles joined the China consular service as a student interpreter in 1867, and worked in several Chinese cities, including Tianjin, Shanghai, and Canton. He was appointed British Vice Consul at Pagoda Island (1880-3) and Shanghai (1883-5), and Consul at Danshui (Tamshui) (1885-91) and at Ningbo (1891-3). Returning to England, Giles replaced Sir Thomas Wade (1818-1895) as professor of Chinese at Cambridge in 1897. See Janette Ryan, "Herbert Allen Giles", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford 2004-6, Online article 33401.

which added to the sense of authenticity, although a list of classical treatises on Chinese painting, calligraphy, and music had previously appeared in Alexander Wylie's *Note on Chinese Literature* (1867).⁴ Giles demonstrated his ability to read Chinese texts by referring to authoritative treatises on Chinese painting in different periods. These included:

<u>Periods</u>	<u>Titles of the Treaties</u>
Southern Qi dynasty (479-502 CE)	Xie He's <i>Guhua Pinlu</i> (<i>The Record of the Classification of Old Painters</i> 《古畫品錄》)
Tang dynasty	<i>Tangchao Minghua Lu</i> (<i>The Record of Masterpieces of Painting of the Tang Dynasty</i> 《唐朝名畫錄》) Zhang Yanyuan's <i>Lidai Minghua Ji</i> (<i>The Record of Famous Paintings in Successive Dynasties</i> 《歷代名畫記》)
Song dynasty	<i>Xuanhe Huabu</i> (<i>The Painting Catalogue of the Xuanhe Era</i> 《宣和畫譜》) Mi Fei's <i>Hua Shi</i> (<i>The History of Painting</i> 《畫史》)
Yuan dynasty	Tang Hou's <i>Hua Jian</i> (<i>The Connoisseurship of Painting</i> 《畫鑑》)

On the other hand, Giles consulted Western publications on Oriental art, such as William Anderson's *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue of a Collection of Japanese and Chinese Painting in the British Museum* and *The Pictorial Arts of Japan* of 1886, as well as Arthur Morrison's articles on "The Painters of Japan" in the *Monthly Review* of 1902.

As the first English book on the subject of Chinese painting, Binyon praised Giles's *Chinese Pictorial Art*, which gave the British public "the traditional native

⁴ Alexander Wylie, *Notes on Chinese Literature: With Introductory Remarks on the Progressive Advancement of the Art, and a List of Translations from the Chinese into Various European Languages*, Shanghai and London 1867, 108-14.

view”.⁵ When he wrote his first introductory book on Oriental art *Painting in the Far East* (1908), Binyon made reference to Giles’s literary records of early Chinese painting, especially the biographical details of Gu Kaizhi.⁶ In his second book of Oriental art *The Flight of the Dragon* (1911), Binyon made frequent reference to Giles’s translations of aesthetic theories of Chinese painting and his biographies of representative painters. For instance, he found the biographical details of the Tang painters (including Wu Daozi and Wang Wei 王維 (699-759)) and the Song painters (such as Emperor Huizong, Su Shi 蘇軾, also known as Su Dongpo 蘇東坡 (1037-1101), and Mi Fei) useful for his understanding of Chinese pictorial art.⁷ More strikingly, Giles introduced Binyon to the aesthetic theories of Chinese painting, including Xie He’s 謝赫 (active fifth century) “Six Canons” (*Liufa* 六法) and Guo Xi’s 郭熙 (c. 1020-1090) *Linquan Gaozhi* (*Noble Features of the Forest and Stream* 《林泉高致》), which became major aesthetic ideas discussed in Binyon’s writings on Chinese painting.⁸

***Qiyun shengdong* and “Rhythmic Vitality”**

“Six Canons” were the six principles of Chinese painting taken from the preface to Xie He’s *Guhua Pinlu* in the late fifth century. They were the first attempt at a systematic approach to a critical theory of Chinese painting. The six principles included:

- 1) *qiyun shangdong* 氣韻生動;
- 2) *gufa yongbi* 骨法用筆;
- 3) *yingwu xiangxing* 應物象形;

⁵ Binyon, “A Chinese Painting of the Fourth Century”, 40.

⁶ See Binyon, *PFE*, 58, 280.

⁷ See Binyon, *The Flight of the Dragon* (hereafter *FD*), London 1911, 12, 29, 43, 69-70, 80, 83, 84, 96.

⁸ “Six Canons” was a term used in Giles’s translation of *Liufa*, while some scholars would render *fa* with other wordings, such as “Principles”, “Laws”, and “Elements”.

- 4) *suilei fucai* 隨類賦彩;
- 5) *jingying weizhi* 經營位置; and
- 6) *chuanyi moxie* 傳移摹寫.

In *The Ideals of the East* (1903), Okakura introduced the first and second principles of “Six Canons” after he discussed the background of Gu Kaizhi. He wrote:

The first of these is “The Life-movement of the Spirit through the Rhythm of Things.” For art is to him the great Mood of the Universe, moving hither and thither amidst those harmonic laws of matter which are Rhythm.

His second canon deals with composition and lines, and is called “The Law of Bones and Brush-work.” The creative spirit, according to this, in descending into a pictorial conception must take upon itself organic structure. This great imaginative scheme forms the bony system of the work; lines take the place of nerves and arteries, and the whole is covered with the skin of colour.⁹

Two years later, Giles revised the English translations of “Six Canons” and for the first time explained the principles of their aesthetic theory for British readers. Giles translated them as follows:

- (1) Rhythmic vitality;
- (2) Anatomical structure;
- (3) Conformity with nature;
- (4) Suitability of colouring;
- (5) Artistic composition; and
- (6) Finish.¹⁰

Giles’s English translations of “Six Canons” was generally adopted by other Orientalists in early twentieth-century Britain. For instance, similar wordings of the six principles can be found in Friedrich Hirth’s *Scraps from a Collector’s Notebook* (1905), Stephen Bushell’s *Chinese Art*, Vol. II (1906), as well as Binyon’s *Painting in the Far East* and *The Flight of the Dragon*. With his experience of living in China for more than twenty years (1867–92), Giles became the British authority on China.¹¹

⁹ Okakura, *IE*, 52-53.

¹⁰ Giles, *IHCPA*, 29.

¹¹ Giles modified the Mandarin Chinese Romanization system established by Sir Thomas Wade in the mid-nineteenth century, and transformed it into the Wade-Giles Chinese transliteration system. Between the 1870s and the 1920s, Giles published nearly sixty works on China, including Chinese history, literature, language, translation, as well as other descriptive and historical works on China. They include, among others, *A Chinese-English Dictionary* (1892), *Chinese Biographical Dictionary*

Since Chinese scholars had long debated the original meaning of “Six Canons”, Western Sinologists found it extremely difficult to provide accurate English translations in precise and concise phrases, especially in the case of the first principle *qiyun shengdong*. According to Shao Hong’s recent research on English translations of Xie He’s “Six Canons”, Giles only translated the first principle “rhythmic vitality” with the aid of a thesaurus, and avoided the logical relationship between the first two words *qiyun* and the last two words *shengdong*.¹² Due to the difficulty of interpretation, modern scholars generally use *Hanyu Pinyin* to indicate the meaning of “Six Canons”, followed by an elaboration of the ideas, when they discuss this theory in English. When Giles first dealt with the history of Chinese painting in 1905, he equated *qi* with “vitality” and *yun* with “rhythmic”. Although there is a discrepancy between Giles’s translation with both the original idea of Xie He and the recent interpretations by Chinese scholars, Giles drew Binyon’s attention to the central aesthetic theory of Chinese painting which had a close relationship with the art of Gu Kaizhi.

Giles disagreed with Xie He’s classification of the chief painters arranged in six classes. He criticized “[a]ltogether, Hsieh Ho’s criticisms, though curious and

(1897), and *A History of Chinese Literature* (1901). These all show that Giles was capable of providing English translations of Chinese treatises on painting for foreign readers.

¹² Alexander Soper re-introduced “The First Two Laws of Hsieh Ho” in 1949 with a new translation: “animation through spirit consonance”. Soper’s translation was later supported by contemporary art historians like James Cahill and Sherman Lee. In general, *qi* had commonly been translated as either “spirit” or “vitality”, whereas some British scholars later translated it as “pneuma” or “ether”. The problem of interpretation also occurred in the case of *yun*. It has generally been translated as “rhythm”, but some contemporary Chinese scholars changed it to “harmonious manner” or “decorum”. For the discussion of English translations of the “Six Canons”, see Alexander Soper, “The First Two Laws of Hsieh Ho”, *Far Eastern Quarterly* 8, 1949, 412-23; Clay Lancaster, “Keys to the Understanding of Indian and Chinese Painting: The ‘Six Limbs’ of Yaşodhara and the ‘Six Principles’ of Hsieh Ho”, *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 11, 1952, 95-104; James Cahill, “The Six Laws and How to Read Them”, *Ars Orientalis* 4, 1961, 372-81; Wen Fong, “Ch’i-Yün-Sheng-Tung: ‘Vitality, Harmonious Manner and Aliveness’”, *Oriental Art* 12, 1966, 159-64; Zhao Hong, “Xie He ‘Lufa’ ji ‘Qiyun’ Xichuan Kaoshi”, *Wenyi Yanjiu* 6, 2006, 112-21.

valuable, must be received with a certain amount of caution. To place Ku K'ai-chih in the third class, and Tsung Ping [(Zong Bing 宗炳 375-442)] in the sixth class, is so contrary to tradition that some allowance must be made for the idiosyncracies of the critic."¹³ Like Binyon, Giles very much admired the artistic ideas of Gu Kaizhi's painting. In Giles's classification, Gu should be ranked in the first class. He agreed with Tang Hou's 湯垕 (active late thirteenth to early fourteenth century) criticism in *Hua Jian* of the Yuan dynasty that Gu Kaizhi painted his *Admonitions* scroll "as a spring silkworm spins silk. At first sight the pictures seem flat and occasionally wanting in resemblance, but a closer inspection shows that the Six Canons are all observed. His ideas are like clouds floating in space, or a stream hurrying along, – perfectly natural."¹⁴ Historically, Gu Kaizhi's paintings had been considered as the exemplar of the actualization of *qiyun shengdong*. Giles affirmed that "Ku K'ai-chih seems to have been generally regarded as a kind of Oliver Goldsmith of art."¹⁵

Interestingly, Binyon shared Giles's recognition of Gu Kaizhi, and praised him:

[T]he painter has perfect mastery over his materials, and his delight in it overflows in the exquisite modulations of the brush with which the floating draperies are expressed. For beauty of sweeping yet sensitive line, few paintings in the world approach this. Yet charming touches of actual life prevent the art from being over-calligraphic.¹⁶

Binyon also emphasized the value of the British Museum treasure of the *Admonitions* scroll:

As writers on the subject have assumed that no work of this period remains, and have conjectured that only rude beginnings existed before the introduction of Buddhism and Indian art, this painting of Ku K'ai-chih is of extreme importance to students as well as of high aesthetic value.¹⁷

¹³ Giles, *IHCPA*, 28.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁶ Binyon, "Scene from 'The Admonitions of the Imperial Preceptress'", in Giles, *IHCPA*, 20.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

As I discussed in Chapter II, the authenticity of the *Admonitions* scroll has long been disputed. However, Binyon insisted that the documentary evidence and seals, as well as the mastery of workmanship, all favoured its authenticity. Being one of the experts invited by Sidney Colvin to evaluate the quality of the *Admonitions* scroll in 1903, Giles supported Binyon's supposition of the dating with evidence quoted from the Chinese treatises of art criticism. In the second edition of *Chinese Pictorial Art* which Giles revised and enlarged considerably in 1918, he also pinpointed the occidental views of Arthur Waley and Stephen Bushell on the indispensable seals of the *Admonitions* scroll.¹⁸ Whether Binyon grasped the original idea of *qiyun shengdong* or not, he believed that the *Admonitions* scroll, in the style of Gu Kaizhi, was connected to the modern ideas of "life", "spirit", "rhythm" (in Okakura's wording), and "rhythmic vitality" (in Giles' wording). Binyon frequently used these words in his writings on Chinese painting. His interpretation of Chinese painting will be discussed in Chapter VII.

Binyon's Selection of Illustrations

To facilitate the discussion of Chinese pictorial art, Binyon chose twelve full-page illustrations for Giles's book and added illuminating notes. The illustrations were used to indicate "the principal lines of Chinese painting, – history, religion (Buddhism and Taoism), landscape, flowers, birds, beasts, and portraiture."¹⁹ Regardless of the unsourced illustrations, the first edition includes three illustrations taken from the British Museum's collections of Chinese paintings, one from the Sir Aurel Stein collection, one from Bernard Berenson's collection, and one from Charles Freer's

¹⁸ See Giles, *IHCPA*, 20-1.

¹⁹ Giles, *IHCPA*, London 1918, vii.

collection. Later, seven more illustrations from the British Museum, together with four reproductions from the *Kokka* and one from the Arthur Morrison collection, were added to the second edition. The choice of illustrations reveals Binyon's knowledge of important collections of Chinese painting in both national and private collections. The well-chosen illustrations and annotated notes were praised by book reviewers.²⁰

In his illuminating notes, like Fenollosa and Okakura before him, Binyon adopted a comparative approach to Chinese painting. When he commented on *An Arhat and an Apsara*, a magnificent example of the religious painting of the Song dynasty, Binyon found that the painter had expressed serenity and grandeur by “means of a rhythm of fluid lines building up a majestic composition, apparent also in the calm and superhuman figures, ... similar to those from which Phidias and Raphael were produced.”²¹ It is interesting that Binyon paralleled the art of the Song dynasty with that of the Classical and Renaissance periods. He noted that “[i]n such periods the energy and force of a previous age have attained balance and harmony, which in their turn have not yet given way to insipid grace and mannered skill.”²² The assimilation of Chinese painting and European art can also be found in the illuminating notes on *A Landscape* by Zhao Lingrang 趙令穰 (active 1070-1100):

The Sung age was one of the few ages of the world which have had the intellectual character we call ‘modern.’ This is most marked in its conception of landscape. Not till the 19th century in Europe do we find anything like the landscape art of China in the Sung period, – a disinterested love of beauty in nature for its own sake, regardless of associations imposed by the struggles of existence. Europeans till the 19th century looked, with few exceptions, upon mountains as ‘horrid crags,’ suggestive only of cold discomfort and possible brigands. To the Sung artists and poets, mountains were a passion, as to Wordsworth. The landscape art thus founded, and continued by the Japanese in

²⁰ See book review of “An Introduction to the History of Chinese Pictorial Art”, *BM* 7, 1905, 405; Stephen Bushell, “Chinese Art”, *TLS*, 11 August 1905, 258.

²¹ Binyon, “An Arhat and an Apsara”, in Giles, *IHCPA*, 121.

²² *Ibid.*

the 15th century, must rank as the greatest school of landscape which the world has seen. It is the imaginative picturing of what is most elemental and most august in nature ...²³

It is clear that Binyon echoed Okakura's praise for the art of the Song dynasty, and admired Chinese painters for their passion for landscape and their intimacy between man and nature. Undoubtedly, Binyon found the artistic and spiritual ideals of Song landscape painting superior to Western landscape painting, but he also found in the art of Camille Corot (1796-1875) the same intimacy of man and nature expressed in Zhao's *Landscape*.²⁴

Apart from the harmony of man and nature, Binyon found Chinese painting full of romance. This was exemplified by *Group of Figures* by Qiu Ying 仇英 (1509-1551) who was "best known for his pictures of Court scenes and illustrations to romances" in the Ming dynasty.²⁵ In Zhao Mengfu's *Landscape* of the Yuan dynasty, Binyon commented that "[w]ithout the modern and 'intimate' feeling of the Sung, the T'ang landscape, if we may judge from this picture, showed an extraordinary sense for the *romance* of nature."²⁶ The "romance" of nature in the Song landscape received a higher praise than the paintings of plant and flower by great masters of the Renaissance period. Binyon explained in his notes on *Rose-Mallow* by Li Di 李迪 (971-1047):

As in landscape, so in the painting of isolated subjects from nature – flower and bird, or both combined – the Sung artists are pre-eminent. We shall look in vain in European art for anything approaching the imaginative completeness with which they treated such themes. The studies of plant and flower by Leonardo and by Dürer are marvels of beautiful mastery, but they remain studies, inspired by the wide curiosity and intellectual interest of those men. But with the great Chinese, a blossoming spray, subtly relieved and enhanced

²³ Binyon, "A Landscape", in Giles, *IHCPA*, 128.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Binyon, "Group of Figures", in Giles, *IHCPA*, 47.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 56.

by the spacing of the design – the vacant space being as much a factor in its beauty as the thing drawn – becomes the subject of a masterpiece. It is not only a question of arrangement of colour, though in these the Sung artists unsurpassed, but of a radically different view of the world from that pervading the mind of Europe.²⁷

This implies that the aesthetic ideal suggested by the vacant space was the major element which distinguished the Song landscape from European landscapes. Binyon continued: “Sensitiveness to natural beauty, combined with a sort of reverential tenderness for the life of things, inspired an art which concerned itself with things as they grow and exist for themselves, not as detached from their own life for the use of man.”²⁸ In other words, great art should embody the artist’s sensitivity to natural beauty and his reverence for the life of things; landscape art should not be under the constraint of imitating nature, but show the essence of nature. Binyon realized that the Song artists pre-eminently demonstrated their mastery of visualizing symbols as a living force. Muqi’s *Tiger* was a typical example:

In Chinese art the Tiger is not merely a wild animal, but one of those great traditional symbols the meaning of which is fluid rather than fixed, acquiring new phases of significance in the fluctuations of a nation’s mind. It is usually painted as a pendant to the Dragon, and seems to stand for the elemental force and rages of nature opposed to the infinite soul; ‘the tiger roaring his incessant challenge to the unknown terror of the spirit’ (Okakura, ‘Ideals of the East’). With this symbolism in mind we can afford to waive the claims of naturalism, and accept the artist’s conception, portraying certainly a beast that is alive and fearful with all the tiger’s sullen and boundless fury, compressed in the slow drag of the contracting body, the laid-back ears, the quivering tail.²⁹

The tiger became a symbol rather than a mere imitation of nature. It also embodied the energy and feeling of the artist who represented it.

While Binyon provided his expertise in art appreciation and criticism and made good examples of Chinese painting in national and private collections available

²⁷ Binyon, “Rose-Mallow”, in Giles, *IHCPA*, 140.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Binyon, “Tiger”, in Giles, *IHCPA*, 153.

to the public, Giles's English translations of Chinese treatises made the original sources known to students, including Binyon. Nevertheless, Stephen Bushell criticized Giles's limited knowledge of Chinese painting:

The number of artists whose names have come down to us is legion, while the literature is most voluminous, though often uncritical and discursive, so that a competent guide through some of its mazes is very welcome ... It would be presumption to criticize the Professor's knowledge of Chinese, but his acquaintance with pictures is apparently not so intimate, and he is occasionally betrayed into an inadvertence in his rendering of their titles.³⁰

This suggests a demand for a more reliable publication on Chinese pictorial art which was met by Binyon's *Painting in the Far East* (1908; revised editions 1913, 1923, 1934) and Arthur Waley's *An Introduction to the Study of Chinese Painting* (1923).

Arthur Waley's Assistance in Translations

In addition to his criticism of William Anderson's *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue* in 1911, Binyon was conscious of the limitations of Giles's *Chinese Pictorial Art*. In 1917, he wrote to seek permission to use illustrations from the collection of Charles Lang Freer. He complained:

I am grateful for your letter of [January] 6 & permission to use your Ma Yüan for Giles's book. I will write to Giles & tell him of your generous offer to let him use other paintings from your collection; but I'm afraid he is not likely to be able to have more than a few illustrations. I want him to discard several from the old edition (published when so little was available) but he doesn't seem inclined to do this.

Of course the whole book wants re-doing, but Giles is not really the man to do it, as he knows nothing himself about the painting. My assistant Arthur Waley has been translating a lot from Chinese sources, & it's a pity he can't have the job to do. He says that Giles makes a lot of mistakes through not recognizing technical terms of art criticism. However we all owe a great debt to Giles as pioneer, & naturally he likes to keep the thing in his own hands.³¹

³⁰ See Bushell, "Chinese Art", 259.

³¹ Because of expense, Giles refused to make extensive additions to the second edition of his *Chinese Pictorial Art*, but considered inserting notices of Chinese masters which were omitted in his first edition. See Binyon to Charles Freer, 24 and 31 January 1917, Charles Lang Freer Papers, Freer Gallery of Art/Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Washington D. C. (hereafter CLFP-FGA), Box 3 Folder 20, Nos 12-3.

Almost three months later, Binyon reiterated his concern:

I'm rather afraid from what Giles said in his last letter that his new edition may be already in the press, but I hope he will be able to find room for a few insertions at least. Of course the whole book wants re-working, as it can never be satisfactory, because Giles knows nothing of the art at first hand.³²

This suggests that Giles did not improve on his limited knowledge of Chinese pictorial art between 1905 and 1917, while Binyon devoted this time to the study of Oriental art and became the leading authority on Chinese painting in the West. After the arrival of Arthur Waley in 1913, who was the first Assistant in the newly established Sub-Department of Oriental Prints and Drawings at the British Museum, Binyon no longer had to rely on Giles's expertise.³³

Waley, who studied Classical Languages at King's College, Cambridge, had a great talent for both European and Asian languages. According to Basil Gray, Waley claimed in his application that "he could already read easily Italian, Dutch, Portuguese, French, German and Spanish and speak the last three fluently. He had some Hebrew and Sanskrit, as well as Greek and Latin, in which he had obtained a I(2) at Cambridge in 1910."³⁴ Waley had no difficulty in teaching himself Chinese and Japanese simultaneously after he began to work with Binyon in 1913. He studied the two Asian languages during the First World War, when he was medically unfit for other services, and could spend time on English translations of Chinese sources.

³² Binyon to Freer, 3 April 1917, CLFP-FGA, Box 3 Folder 20, No. 14.

³³ Arthur Waley who formerly named Arthur Schloss adopted his mother Jacob Waley's surname in 1914. It was said to be a response to anti-German sentiment at the beginning of the First World War. According to Basil Gray, who later succeeded Waley in January 1930, Waley was a friend of Oswald Sickert, brother of the painter Walter, and Sir Sydney Cockerell (1867-1962), Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum. With these two friends of Binyon, and Sir John T. Sheppard (1881-1968), tutor at King's College, Cambridge, Waley was offered a job at the British Museum which was vacated by Sidney Colvin's retirement at the Department of Prints and Drawings in 1912. Waley first worked with Campbell Dodgson (1867-1948), newly appointed Keeper of Prints and Drawings, but soon became the Assistant of Binyon who headed the new Oriental Sub-Department in the spring of 1913. For Waley's background, see Basil Gray, "Arthur Waley at the British Museum", in Ivan Morris (ed.), *Madly Singing in the Mountains: An Appreciation and Anthology of Arthur Waley*, New York 1970, 37-44.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 39.

Interestingly, Binyon finally resolved to study Chinese language in August 1916, possibly motivated by Waley's interest in Asian literature, and the leisure time resulting from the stagnancy of Museum business during the war. He told Freer that

As all our best things are put away, I am trying to learn a little Chinese, but I fear I shan't get at all far.

One ought to be young to make such attempts, & besides I am so interrupted. However my assistant Waley is forging ahead & I believe will prove a first-rate scholar. He is digging out all sorts of interesting information about painting & painters from Chinese books, & is getting to know the technical language of Chinese art criticism, ignorance of which has led astray many of the translators, who hitherto have been almost all scholars interested in literature & knowing nothing of art.³⁵

As Waley told him, some important artists were omitted from Giles's first edition of *Chinese Pictorial Art*, or were named under another spelling due to the inconsistent and vague transliteration of Chinese names.³⁶ Obviously, Binyon alluded to Giles as one of the translators who was ignorant about art.

On the other hand, Binyon also introduced Waley's translations of classical Chinese poems to Ferris Greenslet (1875-1959), Director of the Houghton Mifflin Co., and praised "Waley [as] a real Chinese scholar & not an ignoramus like Ezra Pound."³⁷ Waley's special talent for languages encouraged him in 1917 to publish English translations of Chinese poetry, and Chinese treatises on painting. In particular, a series of nine articles on "Chinese Philosophy of Art" were published in the *Burlington Magazine* between December 1920 and December 1921. They showed that Waley and Binyon collaborated in their study of Chinese aesthetics and art criticism.

³⁵ Binyon to Freer, 31 August 1916, CLFP-FGA, Box 3 Folder 20, No. 11.

³⁶ Binyon to Freer, 3 April 1917, CLFP-FGA, Box 3 Folder 20, No. 14.

³⁷ In an undated letter, Greenslet expressed his interest in receiving the manuscripts from Waley. See Binyon to [Ferris] Greenslet, 10 November 1916, in Houghton Mifflin Company's Correspondence and Records, 1832-1944, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, BMS Am 1925 (204).

More strikingly, Waley referred to Taki Seiichi's writing on the translation of "Six Canons" in the *Kokka*, and challenged the European translations, especially Giles's, in his "Chinese Philosophy of Art- I. Note on the Six 'Methods'". He insisted that

The word "method" is the same which is used to translate the Buddhist expression Dharma. It would perhaps be more accurate to speak of the "Six Component-Parts" rather than the Six Canons or Methods of painting. They are (in pidgin-English) as follows:

- (1) Spirit-harmony – Life's Motion.
- (2) Bone-means – use brush.
- (3) According to the object depict its shape.
- (4) According to species apply colour.
- (5) Planning and disposing degrees and places.
- (6) By handing on and copying to transmit designs.

... Instead of "harmony", another character is often used which means "revolutions, influences". I would therefore translate "The operations of the spirit". The use of the words "rhythm, rhythmic", etc., is very misleading, for nothing like symmetry of design or balancing of "forms" is meant. These "operations" produce "Life's Motion"; and it is this process which the painter must illustrate.³⁸

This suggests that Giles's translation of "Six Canons", especially the first principle of "rhythmic vitality" had misled Binyon in his understanding of Chinese aesthetic ideas.

In support of his interpretation, Giles referred to Friedrich Hirth's *Scraps from a Collector's Note Book* (1905) for additional information about the art of the Qing dynasty. Through Binyon, Giles also got reference books from Charles Freer for information about important Chinese painters represented in famous collections in Peking and Shanghai. The three books included:

"Descriptions of Famous Chinese Paintings" – Collection of Lee Van Ching

[李文卿]

"Antique Famous Chinese Paintings" – Collected by P'ang Lai Ch'en [龐萊

臣]

³⁸ An almost identical illustration later appeared in Waley's *An Introduction to the History of Chinese Painting* (1923). See Arthur Waley, "Chinese Philosophy of Art-I", *BM* 37, 1920, 309-10; Waley, *An Introduction to the History of Chinese Painting*, 72-4.

“Masterpieces in Chinese National Art” – Collection of Mr. Seaouke Yue
[游筱溪]

... In these three books you will find the names in Chinese characters along with very poor English translations, of a number of important Chinese artists not mentioned by Giles, and inasmuch as nearly all of the pictures mentioned in the catalogues are now owned in America, the owners who consult the Giles' book will be disappointed if in the book they can find no allusion to the painters.

I send the books feeling that you may care to let Giles consult them, but I would like you to accept the books for your own permanent reference should you deem them worthy. Some of the finer specimens mentioned in the catalogues have fallen into my care and some day I hope to have you give them personal inspection.³⁹

Waley was asked by his chief to go through the books and “made a list of the really important ones who [sic] are not to be found in Giles's first edition.”⁴⁰ Binyon then sent the names to Giles who used Pang's and Yue's books as additional references in the second edition of *Chinese Pictorial Art*.

The professional advice and reference books from Freer were invaluable for Binyon's understanding of Chinese painting, and suggested the idea of publishing a catalogue of them in the British Museum.

I have it in my mind to set about making a select catalogue of the Chinese paintings in the B.M. with full notes: and to this might be added an index of all artists represented here whether by actual paintings (or copies) or by reproductions. This would bring in all the Japanese publications as well as such things as the catalogues you have so kindly sent us; so that the great majority of the most important Chinese masters would be represented in some way or another ... We have the Chinese books of reference now, & Waley's scholarship makes all the difference. Whether the Museum will be allowed funds to produce any more books for some time after the war, I don't know, but I hope it will; & I think a small edition of such a work would sell well. However, we have got to finish the war first!⁴¹

³⁹ Freer chose the three books from his personal Library and sent them to Binyon to keep for permanent use. The *Descriptions of Famous Chinese Paintings from the Very Large Collection of Mr. Lee Van Ching* (1915) and the *Biographies of Famous Chinese Paintings from the Private Collections of Mr. L. C. Pang* (1915) can still be found in the departmental library of Asia at the present day. Freer to Binyon, 24 February 1917, CLFP-FGA, Box 3 Folder 20, No. 27.

⁴⁰ Binyon to Freer, 3 April 1917, CLFP-FGA, Box 3 Folder 20, No. 14.

⁴¹ Binyon to Charles Freer, 3 April 1917, CLFP-FGA, Box 3 Folder 20, No. 14.

Waley was assigned to prepare descriptive notes for the Museum's collections of Chinese paintings, although most of them remained unpublished. But *An Index of Chinese Artists represented in the Sub-Department of Oriental Prints and Drawings in the British Museum* (1922) was completed, with the help from Dr Lionel Giles (1875-1958), son of Herbert Giles and Assistant Keeper of Department of Oriental Printed Books and Manuscripts. The Index was in the succinct form of a biographical dictionary, with very brief information about the Chinese painters represented by nearly 400 paintings (excluding the Stein Collection of Buddhist paintings), with a very large number of reproductions at the Sub-Department of Oriental Prints and Drawings.⁴² The Index also included many names which were not mentioned in Giles's *Chinese Pictorial Art* and Hirth's *Scraps from a Collector's Notebook*.

Although Giles's second edition of *Chinese Pictorial Art* was included as one of Waley's few English references, his primary sources included fourteen Chinese treatises and two Japanese source books, as well as reproductions from fifteen books and journals. Waley's *Index of Chinese Artists* surpassed the early works on Chinese painting of Giles and Bushell, in both quantity and variety. No wonder his pioneer Index was well received:

[E]very serious student of Chinese painting must possess it. It provides brief particulars of many more artists than those to whom the four hundred pictures in the Museum Collection are ascribed; in fact, it is a comprehensive dictionary of the most notable artists of all periods – the first of its kind in any language. Of special value are the references to extant originals or accessible reproductions of each artist's work.⁴³

⁴² Binyon, "Preface", in Arthur Waley, *An Index of Chinese Artists represented in the Sub-Department of Oriental Prints and Drawings in the British Museum*, London 1922, v-vi.

⁴³ Walter Perceval Yetts, Book Review of "An Index of Chinese Artists represented in the Sub-Department of Oriental Prints and Drawings in the British Museum", *BM* 42, 1923, 99. Another reviewer also praised Waley's comprehensive *Index*, but pointed out the problem of not having a Chinese character index, and the confusion made in Chinese Romanization. See A. J. K., "Review" of *An Index of Chinese Artists represented in the Sub-Department of Oriental Prints and Drawings in the*

A year later, Waley published *An Introduction to the Study of Chinese Painting* (1923) which he dedicated to Binyon. He gathered and co-ordinated information which was either scattered among learned journals in Europe or buried in old and unprocurable books, with the aim of illustrating the history and traditions of Chinese pictorial art. The style was modeled on the works of Giles and Hirth, but Waley emphasized that his translations of Chinese treatises differed widely from the two scholars.⁴⁴ Waley also provided a more comprehensive study of artistic styles, genres, and famous painters in different periods, including a lengthy chapter on Gu Kaizhi. It is noteworthy that Waley's translations of inscriptions for the *Admonitions* scroll are still adopted by curators at the British Museum today.

Waley's approach to Chinese painting was largely literary. His knowledge of Chinese language not only helped his translations but also his study of Chinese poetry and painting; and was justified by the intimate connection between poetry and painting which had long existed in the artistic tradition of China.⁴⁵ With their common interests in poetry and art, Binyon and Waley worked hand in hand to develop the Sub-Department of Oriental Prints and Drawings. While Binyon was immersed in the philosophical and spiritual world of Eastern thought and promoted the appreciation of Oriental painting, Waley assisted him by translating Chinese and Japanese sources. From Okakura to Giles and Waley, Binyon's approach to Chinese painting was not limited to Japanese expertise, but also included English translations of Chinese texts. Binyon's criticism of Giles and his praise of Waley also reflected his growing concern for accurate translations of Chinese treatises – which were particularly important for

British Museum, Transactions and Proceedings of the Japan Society 19, 1921-2, 182-3.

⁴⁴ Waley, *An Introduction to the Study of Chinese Painting*, 3, 8.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 4.

those who only knew a “little Chinese”.

Chapter V

The Popularity of Chinese Painting 1909-14:

The Wegener and Stein Collections in the British Museum

The competition for territory and sovereignty of western China among the imperial countries was an important factor in encouraging the acquisition of Chinese antiquities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Since 1870 troops of scientists and archaeologists had been sent by the governments of Britain, Russia and France to Xinjiang, to explore the documents and relics of ancient China, with the purpose of gathering local information for military planning. The remains recovered from ancient sites in western China not only served as tangible “archaeological proceeds” but were also very profitable investments. The increasing interest in “archaeological survey” of Chinese antiquities led to numerous archaeologists’ expeditions, sent by governments of Sweden, Germany, Finland, America, Canada, and Italy, to the provinces of Xinjiang and Gansu. A large number of seventh to tenth century relics of Buddhist art were excavated from Dunhuang, an oasis and historic town, but also a very prosperous city for foreign trade and cultural exchange along the Silk Road.¹ Japan was the only Asian power to loot a significant amount of relics from Dunhuang, and treasures of Chinese art from the imperial courts. “[I]t was Japanese scientists and critics, and not artists or painters, that began investigations in regard to the ancient art of China. At first, they sought after sculpture and architecture,

¹ For the foreign looting of Chinese antiques and Dunhuang relics in 1860-1945, see Chen Wenping, *Liushi Haiwai de Guobao* (Wenji Juan), Shanghai 2001, 63-90, 107-14; The International Dunhuang Project (IDP) is an international collaboration between the British Library and several leading museums and libraries in the East and West. It provides detailed information and images of over 100,000 manuscripts, paintings, textiles and artefacts from Dunhuang and other Silk Road sites on the internet. Online resources can be accessed through <http://idp.bl.uk/>.

but their inquiries were soon extended to penmanship and painting.”² The new mania for objects of ancient Chinese art boosted the foreign interest in traditional Chinese painting.

To maintain the imperial power of Great Britain and compete with other neighbouring countries, the British Museum expanded its collections of Oriental art with specimens of high quality and rarity. In 1906-8, Sir Aurel Stein made his second Central-Asian expedition, on the joint initiative of the India Office and the Trustees of the British Museum. He brought back a large number of Buddhist paintings, manuscripts, textiles, and other objects which were removed from Cave 17 at the Thousand Buddhas cave complex (*Qianfodong*), about twenty-five kilometres south-east of Dunhuang. These early treasures became primary sources for the study of Buddhist art and its ancient civilization, and significantly enhanced the British collections of Chinese painting, both in quantity and quality, in Europe.

In January 1909, Stein’s Dunhuang materials were delivered to the British Museum for temporary storage, conservation and research before the division was made with the Indian Government.³ Laurence Binyon was assigned to supervise work on the Stein collection, and in August, promoted to Assistant Keeper of Prints and Drawings. While Stein was aware of competition from German and French expeditions in Central Asia,⁴ Binyon was concerned in maintaining the Museum’s leading position as collector of Oriental painting. The competition among Western

² “The Popularity of Chinese Paintings”, *Kokka* 254, July 1911, 4.

³ Stein’s materials were temporarily stored in the basement of the Natural History Museum, and later transferred to the rooms in the east basement of the British Museum on 10 August for a period not exceeding two and a half years. For the arrangement of furnishing Stein’s materials, see CE3-SC, 12 June, 3 July and 9 October 1909, Box C15, Vol. 54, 2598, 2608, 2635.

⁴ Roderick Whitfield, *The Art of Central Asia: The Stein Collection in the British Museum*, Vol. 1, Tokyo 1982, 12.

museums led to the second major acquisition of the Frau Olga-Julia Wegener collection in 1910. It was the acquisition of Chinese painting brought from Peking, which enhanced the national collection in its rivalry with Germany and France.

Altogether the Stein and Wegener collections dramatically increased the size of the Museum's collections of Chinese painting by over 400 works.⁵ To showcase pride in its new acquisitions, a series of exhibitions of Japanese and Chinese paintings were held at the British Museum and other galleries in London between 1910 and 1914. All these acquisitions and exhibitions reflected a new mania for ancient Chinese art and awakened the British public to discover the artistic value of Chinese painting. In order to show the significance of the two new acquisitions, this chapter will reconstruct how the British Museum acquired the Stein and Wegener collections of Chinese painting. I will also illuminate Binyon's role in supervising the acquisition, exhibition and publication of the two collections.

The Frau Olga-Julia Wegener Collection of Chinese Paintings (1910)

In the Department of Prints and Drawings, Binyon was the key person to deal with the registration and general arrangement of the English, Chinese and Japanese collections, while Campbell Dodgson who was a recognized authority on early German woodcuts, engravings, and drawings, concentrated on European works in the collection. Sir Sidney Colvin found that the two men were first-rate and had equal merit and official standing to take up the Assistant Keepership.⁶ He recognized

⁵ The Stein collection of Chinese pictorial works recovered from Cave 17 in Dunhuang includes, among others, over 240 works of paintings on silk and paper and over sixty groups of fragments of painted silk and paper, while the Wegener collection includes 145 works of Chinese painting. See Helen Wang (ed.), *Handbook to the Stein Collections in the UK*, Occasional Paper of the British Museum, No. 129, London 1999, 12.

⁶ Colvin to Trustees, 16 January 1907, Reports at the DPD.

Binyon's effort in promoting the appreciation of Oriental painting among students at home and abroad.

Mr. Binyon also receives an increasing share of European recognition for his work in connection with Chinese and Japanese art, and for the present devotes the greater part of his time to these Oriental branches of the collection, without losing the grasp on the general work of the Department and on his former special field of study, namely, English drawings.⁷

He has also made himself a Continental & American, as well as English, reputation in a new subject of which the importance, as represented in the Museum collections, & the interest to students in general, are daily growing, namely Oriental painting and wood-engraving, especially Chinese & Japanese. He is also well-versed & useful in the miscellaneous work of the department ... Mr. Binyon has the advantage in point of manner and address.⁸

After considering the performance and private circumstances of the two candidates,⁹ the Principal Trustees of the British Museum appointed Binyon to succeed Freeman O'Donoghue (1849-1929) as Assistant Keeper of Prints and Drawings on 21 August 1909.¹⁰ In his report of 28 January 1910, Colvin remarked that "Mr. Binyon, while still chiefly occupied with the care and cataloguing of the Oriental Branch of the Department collections, has fully justified his recent appointment as Assistant-Keeper by the able, rapid, and punctual discharge of the new duties which it has brought upon him."¹¹ One of these "new duties" was the acquisition of the Frau Olga-Julia Wegener collection of Chinese painting.

Frau Olga-Julia Wegener (?-1938), who was wife of Professor Georg Wegener

⁷ Colvin to Trustees, 20 January 1909, Reports at the DPD.

⁸ See Colvin to E. Maunde Thompson, 3 July 1909, CE4-OP, Box OP195, Vol. 106, P No. 2480.

⁹ Colvin realized that Binyon had to work very hard in both his official hours at the Museum and his private time in order to earn enough for his family. The strain on Binyon's health nearly resulted in a breakdown. To avoid the loss of Binyon's services to the Museum, Colvin decided to promote Binyon to Assistant Keeper in 1909. Dodgson was then asked to succeed to the Keepership in 1912 when Colvin retired from the post. Binyon's financial worry was revealed in his letter to his mother: "This is at present a secret, but I believe I am to be made Assistant-Keeper at the Print Room almost immediately. This will make a great difference to us, of course, the pay brings from 500 a year ... I was getting rather desperate about money." See Binyon to his mother, 8 July [1909], ALB, Vol. 73.

¹⁰ James William Lowther to Binyon, 21 August 1909, ALB, Vol. 37.

¹¹ Colvin to Trustees, 28 January 1910, Reports at the DPD.

(1863-1939), Secretary of the Berlin Geographical Society, formed her collection of Chinese painting in China between 1907 and 1909. According to Ernst von Boerschmann who met Frau Wegener at the Embassy in Peking between March and May 1908, Olga-Julia Wegener had a strong personality and felt confident with her taste in Chinese art. Although Chinese art was still under valued, Frau Wegener was one of the German collectors to build her own collection of Chinese art with paintings, ceramics, bronzes, wood carvings, belt buckles and other objects.¹² While the majority of German people did not know much about Chinese art and culture, 230 paintings from the Wegener collection were exhibited in the new Royal Academy of the Arts in Berlin between 9 December 1908 and 10 January 1909.¹³ Possibly due to the high price and questionable quality of the Wegener collection, the purchase was declined in Germany.¹⁴ Guillaume Apollinaire noted that people in Berlin “heaped violent reproaches on the German museums for having allowed a first-rate German collection to escape from them”.¹⁵ Ironically, “in order not to let it seem as if they regretted their earlier decision, the representatives of the German museums are continuing to look down on Mme. de Wegener’s collection.”¹⁶

¹² When her husband was on an expedition to Kiangsi (Jiangxi) in January 1907, Frau Olga-Julia Wegener went to Peking for a short stay. She planned for her next visit to China between January 1908 and April 1909. The acquisitions she made in this period formed the major part of her collection. In 1912 she went back to China; in Peking, a central place for art trading, she devoted much time to acquisition and visited art dealers and collectors daily. Although Olga-Julia Wegener’s understanding of Chinese art was absent from scientific study, she was recognized authority on Chinese art in her circle of art lovers. See Ernst von Boerschmann, “Chinesische Gürtelschnallen, Sammlung Olga Julia Wegener, im China-Institute Frankfurt a. M.”, *Sinica: Monatsschrift (Aftw. Zeitschrift) für Chinakunde und Chinaforschung* 15, 1940, 3-5.

¹³ Prior to the Exhibition in Berlin, the Wegener collection of Chinese paintings was shown in the Ninth International Geographical Congress in Geneva on 26 July-7 August 1908. See “The International Geographical Congress”, *Times*, 11 August 1908, 2; an extract was published in *Science* 28, 4 September 1908, 299-300. For the Berlin Exhibition Guide, see Königliche Akademie der Künste zu Berlin, *Ausstellung chinesischer Gemälde, Aus der Sammlung der Frau Olga-Julia Wegener*, Berlin, Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1908.

¹⁴ Ernst Arthur Voretzsch (1868-1965) told Charles Freer that he was afraid the Chinese paintings in the Wegener collection were imitations. See Voretzsch to Freer, 21 July 1910, CLFP-FGA, Box 24, Folders 12.

¹⁵ LeRoy C. Breunig (ed.), *Apollinaire on Art: Essays and Reviews, 1902-1918*, trans. Susan Suleiman, London 1972, 127.

¹⁶ Wilhelm von Bode pointed out that the German Emperor was averse to the Chinese race and its art.

In contrast, the Wegener collection was much appreciated and valued by art collectors and connoisseurs in Britain. Between July 1907 and June 1923, Frau Wegener proposed several Chinese objects, including buckles, châtelaine-loops, brocades, paintings and other materials, to the Victoria and Albert Museum for inspection, exhibition and sale. Following the first purchase of twenty pieces of Chinese military costumes from the Wegener collection in July 1907, some hundred pieces of metalwork, jewellery and personal ornaments in various materials were lent to the Museum for six months in July 1909.¹⁷ At the same time, Frau Wegener presented a Chinese hanging scroll of *Peonies* (Fig. 22), with the seal of the late Dowager Empress Cixi 慈禧太后 (1835-1908), as a gift to the Victoria and Albert Museum. It had probably been given to Frau Wegener during her residence in Peking.¹⁸ Although several Chinese paintings were thought to be of “undoubted interest and importance”, not every specimen of Chinese paintings in the Wegener collection was of high artistic value. After examining the specimens exhibited in a private studio, the curators of the Victoria and Albert Museum were not persuaded to borrow or buy the Wegener collection of Chinese paintings.¹⁹

At the same time, Frau Wegener made her first visit to the Print Room of the British Museum on 19 July 1909, and on her second visit on 30 October, showed

He also did not appreciate the heavily over-painted quality and expensive offer of the Wegener collection. See Breunig (ed.), *Apollinaire on Art*, 128; Wilhelm von Bode, *Mein Leben*, Vol. 2, Berlin 1907, 231-2.

¹⁷ For details of the transactions of the Frau Olga-Julia Wegener collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum, see the minutes and original papers at the Archive of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, MA/1/W1076.

¹⁸ The painting was probably commissioned by Cixi but painted by Miao Jiahui 繆嘉惠 (1842-1918), one of Cixi's female painters in service in the Good Fortune and Prosperity Hall of the Forbidden City. See Frau Wegener to the Victoria and Albert Museum, 16 July 1909, in *ibid*, AM3579; also see the online records of the Victoria and Albert collections (Victoria and Albert Museum, London [date accessed, 3 December 2009]), <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O40346/hanging-scroll-peonies/>

¹⁹ See the minutes at the Archive of the Victoria and Albert Museum, MA/1/W1076, AM3188/09.

Binyon her collection of Chinese paintings.²⁰ On the next day, Götz von Seckendorff (1889-1914) wrote to Colvin encouraging the British Museum to secure the Wegener collection of Chinese paintings:

Indeed the Collection of early Chinese hangings brought home by Frau von Wegener is a most unique and valuable one, and I am sorry it has not remained at Berlin. It would have admirably completed our Chinese Collection. But as it has not been done, no country like England would value it more and appreciate it. You must not let it go and I am sure benevolent people like Sir T. Wernher or Mr. Beit would help in seeing this fine collection remain in England.²¹

Colvin believed that “the great qualities of the older Chinese masters are just beginning to be fully realized in Europe, and will assuredly be more & more valued and studied as time goes on.”²² On 6 November 1909, he recommended the acquisition of the Wegener collection for £9,000, with some 120 to 150 pieces out of 220 Chinese paintings being bought at a reduced price. Colvin stressed that “[n]o such collection was ever brought to Europe before.”²³ Frau Wegener had been in touch with Chinese connoisseurs and private collectors in China, and was knowledgeable about what she owned. Thus, Colvin believed that the Wegener collection of Chinese painting, dating from the eighth to the eighteenth century, included a certain number of important works and a representative variety of both subjects and styles.²⁴

To secure the purchase of the Wegener collection, Binyon went to some effort to raise funds by private subscription. On 9 November 1909 he begged for help from

²⁰ Between July 1909 and July 1910, Frau Wegener made almost sixty visits to the British Museum. She visited the Print Room for two to three times a week between December 1909 and February 1910, in order to deal with the sale of her collection of Chinese paintings. See Visitors Books of the Print Room, DPD, BM, Vols 20-1.

²¹ [Götz von] Seckendorff to Colvin, 31 October 1909, Letter Books at the DPD.

²² Colvin to the Trustees, 6 November 1909, CE4-OP, Box OP195, Vols 106-7, P No. 4002.

²³ Colvin also asked for permission to hold a private exhibition for special guests on 15-27 November, in order to raise necessary funds by private subscription. However, the Trustees disapproved of the proposed exhibition. See Colvin to the Trustees, 6 November 1909, CE4-OP, Box OP195, Vols 106-7, P No. 4002; CE3-SC, 13 November 1909, Box C15, Vol. 54, 2649.

²⁴ See Colvin to the Trustees, 6 November 1909, CE4-OP, Box OP195, Vols 106-7, P No. 4002.

William Rothenstein (1872-1945):

We have no money, but desperately want to get it & are trying to get subscribers. If you know of anybody that would be likely & able to help, we should be so grateful if you could tell them. I hope we shall get leave to have a private show of the best of the paintings here next week: if so, you must come & see them. Meanwhile you may rely on it that the collection is a really important one. No such collection has been brought from China before. Frau Wegener made a thorough study of our collection before going out, so did not buy haphazard.

I want to impress people with the fact that here is a chance for England to show herself the foremost to appreciate an art that is going to be more & more valued. Freer of Detroit is now in China: so you may be sure prices will go up fast, & collectors become more numerous & keen. We should hope to get the collection for about £7,000. The price seems high perhaps but is not really excessive I think. After all, it represents 3 years continual work in China & choosing from thousands of pictures. It will be a calamity if we have to let it go.²⁵

Although the price of the Wegener collection was relatively high, it was considered enormous in comparison with £3,000 for the Anderson collection of Japanese and Chinese paintings almost thirty years before. What attracted Binyon was probably the origin of the Wegener collection which was formed originally in China, rather than Japan. Interestingly, Otto Beit (1865-1930), a German-born British connoisseur who was involved in the purchase of the Wegener collection, told Colvin a rumor which he heard in Hamburg:

I was informed that when this Collection was offered in Berlin, it was submitted for examination to a man who is supposed one of the very few absolute connoisseurs of Chinese paintings, but whose name I have unfortunately forgotten, and the statement was made that a great many of these paintings were not of the age or period claimed for them. It is true that a very much larger sum was asked for the Collection then, but the reason why its purchase was declined is supposed to have been the first mentioned one.²⁶

The German opinion of authenticity and dating led to a different response to the Wegener collection in Britain.

²⁵ During this time the acquisition of the Wegener collection bothered Binyon a lot. Few days later he wrote to his wife: "So rushed & flurried I don't know what to do. Frau Wegener [is] in a great state." See Binyon to William Rothenstein, 9 November 1909, in the Papers of Sir William Rothenstein, Houghton Library, Harvard University, bMS Eng 1148 (126); the same copy is kept in ALB, Vol. 75; Binyon to Cicely Binyon, 15 November 1909, ALB, Vol. 61.

²⁶ Otto Beit to Colvin, 22 February 1910, Letter Books at the DPD.

The competition between public museums and private collectors in Europe and America put much pressure on Binyon, who was the key person with responsibility for enriching the Museum's collections of Oriental painting. This resulted in competition with his friend the American millionaire, Charles Lang Freer. While they shared the latest news of new acquisitions made in their own countries, the two men were in competition for fine specimens of Chinese art in order to maintain the strengths and leading position of their national collections. In addition, the popularity of Chinese painting around 1910 generated an increasing demand for fine specimens of Chinese art in the art markets in China, Japan, Europe and America. The increasing price of art was another concern of the British Museum which had a tight budget for making acquisitions. Unlike Freer who had abundant financial resources to travel to China to obtain fine objects of Chinese art, Binyon had to raise funds from the Trustees of the Museum and other private contributors.

In the winter of 1909, Binyon only had a week to raise £4,000, although he had already done much better than Colvin who "seems unable to get money".²⁷ Martin White consoled Binyon that "[t]he collection struck me as remarkably cheap and, on a commercial basis, I think that a very large profit could be made on the sale of them. Indeed, when I was looking them over, I felt quite envious at your getting an offer for them at the price you have."²⁸ White also reminded him that

Whether there may be any outpouring of Chinese kakemono due to the absorption of Western ideas, I do not know, but I think it extremely unlikely that there will be enough to run down the price, and if it should run down, it

²⁷ Binyon also asked Robert Ross (1869-1918) for a contact of E. P. Warren who was interested in Chinese painting. See Binyon to Robert Ross, winter 1909, in Margery Ross (ed.), *Robert Ross, Friend of Friends*, London 1952, 175-6. A hand written copy of the letter dated 1910, with the same content, is kept in ALB, Vol. 75.

²⁸ Martin White to Binyon, 20 December 1909, Letter Books at the DPD.

would only be temporarily.

I am quite sure that I know the man – he is a personal friend – who would buy these kakemono[s] at a very high price and present them to a great national collection abroad. You must not let them go abroad. They are too fine.²⁹

To attract more contributors, special guests, including artists and art critics, were invited to a private preview of the Wegener collection in December 1909.³⁰ Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema (1836-1912) found the paintings of birds, flowers, animals, figures all equally valuable and of a high standard, while Arthur Morrison praised the collection as “an extraordinarily fine and valuable lot” which included “so many of the first importance and scarcity”.³¹ Roger Fry, Charles Ricketts and Bernard Berenson also enthusiastically advocated its purchase.³² Binyon sent his friend Charles Freer a little catalogue of the Wegener collection. Freer was unable to judge the quality of the work from the catalogue, but expressed the hope that it contained many fine things.³³ Nevertheless, Freer told Ernst A. Voretzsch that the purchase of the Wegener collection rather surprised him as he supposed that “the British Museum would buy only masterpieces of the earlier periods.”³⁴

On the other hand, Colvin sought a grant of £2,000 from the Reserve Fund with strong reasons detailed in his report to the Trustees:

²⁹ Martin White to Binyon, 27 January 1910, Letter Books at the DPD.

³⁰ Selected paintings of the Wegener collection were possibly showed to potential contributors between December 1909 and January 1910. Binyon found that “[t]he reflections in the exhibition room are frightful. The Geese quite invisible; so I must take heroic measures.” It was early evidence showing how Binyon cared for his most favourite eleventh-century *Geese* painting from the Wegener collection. Binyon to Cicely Binyon, 3 January 1910, ALB, Vol. 61.

³¹ Alma-Tadema to Colvin, 11 December 1909; Morrison to Colvin, 13 January 1910, CE4-OP, Box OP195, Vol. 106, P No 504. Copies can also be found at the DPD.

³² See Colvin to Trustees, 11 February 1910, CE4-OP, Box OP195, Vol. 107, P No. 504. Copies can also be found at the DPD.

³³ Freer to Binyon, 11 April 1910, ALB, Vol. 4.

³⁴ Frau Wegener showed Voretzsch her collection, but the latter told Freer that “they are not in our line, although some of the late Ming- and Tsing-specimens may pass.” The British Museum purchased the Wegener collection because too little of Chinese painting was known in London. See Freer to Voretzsch, 20 June 1910, CLFP-FGA, Box 24, Folder 12.

Chinese painting, in comparison with Japanese, is now only beginning to attract in the West the attention it deserves. Prices, very high already, are sure to rise, as fine examples become almost impossible to procure. With reference to Frau Wegener's price, £7,500, a collection of this kind is very difficult to value, since its best prices are of a kind which hardly ever occur in the market. According to the best advice which Mr. Colvin is able to obtain, some four or five of its most rare and ancient pieces would be likely to sell in Japan, Paris or America for quite £3,500, possibly much more, some thirty others for about £2,500 and the remaining hundred for say £1,500.³⁵

With special funds from almost thirty contributors and recommendations provided by artists and art critics, the Trustees immediately sanctioned, on 12 February 1910, the purchase of the chief part of the "Frau Olga-Julia Wegener Collection", consisting of 145 examples of classical Chinese paintings, dating from 800 to 1800 CE, for £7,500.³⁶

Colvin was delighted with the British Museum's purchase of the Wegener collection:

Even collectors with a wide knowledge of Chinese porcelain are often completely ignorant of Chinese painting. Yet it is beyond dispute that the Chinese masterpieces rank with the masterpieces of the world. English amateurs will soon have an opportunity of realizing to some extent the range and beauty of this art, so long unknown, so unaccountably neglected ...

Even with the help of the materials for study made available in the last decade or so the subject remains extremely complex and difficult. We owe a great debt to the Japanese, who for a thousand years have been as assiduous and enthusiastic collectors of Chinese art as we in England, since the seventeenth century, have been of Italian art. They have published, in reproductions of exquisite beauty and fidelity, great numbers of the Chinese masterpieces owned by private collectors and by temples in their country, and have thus

³⁵ For additional reasons noted in Colvin's report, see Appendix IV. Colvin to the Trustees, 11 February 1910, CE4-OP, Box OP195, Vol. 107, P No. 504. A copy can also be found at the DPD.

³⁶ Frau Olga-Julia Wegener felt very moved that her collection needed to transfer to the British Museum. She attached a few conditions on the sale, including her free access to her pictures at the Museum. The payment which consisted of £5,212.5s by means of private subscriptions, £2,000 from the Reserve Fund of the Museum, and £287.15s from the annual grants of the Department were settled by installments between February 1910 and May 1911. See Colvin to the Director and the Trustees, 6 November 1909, CE4-OP, Box OP195, Vol. 106, P No. 4002; 11 February 1910, Vol. 107, P No. 504; 29 March 1910, CE4-OP, Box OP196, Vol. 108, P No. 1573. Also see CE3-SC, 13 November 1909, Box C15, Vol. 54, 2649; CE3-SC, 12 February 1910, Vol. 55, 2679; Colvin to Frau Olga-Julia Wegener, 16 February 1910 and 5 May 1911; Frau Olga-Julia Wegener to Colvin, 10 and 17 February 1910; Georg Wegener to Colvin, 6 and 10 March 1910, Letter Books at the DPD.

provided a guide and touchstone for the student.

Hitherto almost all the important Chinese pictures acquired by Europeans or Americans have been bought in Japan. We have been apt, therefore, to view Chinese art through the medium of Japanese art, much as till comparatively recent times Greek sculpture was seen through the medium of Roman sculpture. Most of the phases of Chinese painting are reflected in the art of Japan, but certain of these have been singled out for special cultivation by the younger race.³⁷

The Wegener collection provided the British Museum with tangible specimens of Chinese paintings and was a catalyst for boosting the recognition of Chinese painting in Britain. Following the single purchase of the *Admonitions* scroll, the Wegener collection was “the first important collection brought from China itself” to Britain, and exhibited “aspects of the art which find little or no reflection in the painting of Japan.”³⁸ Over 90% of the paintings in the Wegener collection were hanging scrolls, with only a few handscrolls and album leaves; they were executed in colours and inks on silk, bearing Wegener’s collecting stamp in Chinese characters: 魏薩氏 (*Wei Sa Shi*) (Fig. 23). Their subject matter reflected Wegener’s strong preference for birds and flowers, portraits of men and women, as well as Daoist figures. Together with the paintings of figures in outdoor scenes, a small portion of animal paintings showed Wegener’s interest in horse racing, while most of the landscape paintings were done in the blue-and-green style which was typical of the Tang landscapes.

In fact, as Otto Beit heard in Hamburg, many of the paintings in the Wegener collection were not of the period claimed for them but were produced in the Ming and Qing dynasties.³⁹ When “Chinese picture mania” prevailed in Europe at the end of the

³⁷ “Chinese Painting at the British Museum”, *Times*, 7 March 1910, 8.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ The attributions of dating and authorship of the paintings in the Wegener collection have subsequently been revised by curators at the British Museum. The records of relevant paintings shown in the Museum online database are therefore not identical with the information given by Binyon in the Exhibition Guide of 1910.

1900s, the works of art for sale in both the Asian and Western markets were not always genuine, but fake copies produced by painters in the Qing dynasty. An essay on “The Popularity of Chinese Painting” in the *Kokka* stated that

We have to-day too many cunning dealers in old curios who try their best to sell counterfeit articles at [exorbitant] prices, and many unlucky patrons of art fall victims to their malicious artifices. In fact, noted collections of art in private or public ownership are never free of counterfeits. This is true in any country, but it is especially so in China ... We fear that the new mania, so to speak, for old Chinese productions must end in the purchase of many bad old pictures, if not base counterfeits, and that too at [exorbitant] prices ...⁴⁰

Frau Olga-Julia Wegener was one of the unlucky patrons who fell into the trap of “cunning dealers” in China. V. W. F. Collier wrote that

[M]odern Chinese artists and picture dealers are the most inveterate imitators, counterfeiters and forgers in the world. The western collector usually falls an easy prey to their deceptions, which can only be guarded against by the closest of specialized study. Some years ago Frau Olga Wegener collected several pictures of the famous local breed of dogs in Peking. The Wegener collection was exhibited in Germany, and a small, but very inaccurate catalogue issued. The collection was acquired in part by the British Museum, and, in consequence of this, too much reliance has been placed upon the statements of the collector regarding the authorship and dates of the pictures ... No authentic painting of Pekingese dogs older than the eighteenth century is known to exist outside the palace in Peking. The Wegener pictures, ascribed to Shen Chen Lin and said to date from 1700, are obvious counterfeits of recent date, for there has been only one well-known Chinese painter of this name, and his pupils now living in Peking testify to the fact that he died only thirteen years ago.⁴¹

Wegener’s *Pekingese Dogs* (Fig. 24) in the British Museum was probably a fake produced in a later period. Nevertheless, Binyon admitted that in the Museum’s collections of Oriental painting, “many of the attributions of the older paintings are necessarily tentative ... In some cases it will be found that paintings are placed with the work of an earlier period than that to which they actually belong, because deliberately executed in the earlier style.”⁴²

⁴⁰ “The Popularity of Chinese Painting”, *Kokka* 254, 4-5.

⁴¹ V. W. F. Collier, *Dogs of China and Japan in Nature and Art*, London 1921, 189.

⁴² Binyon, “Introduction”, in the British Museum, *Guide of an Exhibition of Chinese and Japanese Paintings (Fourth to Nineteenth Century A.D.) in the Print and Drawing Gallery*, 10.

Although the Wegener collection did not contain many genuine works from early periods, it included more works of interest than the William Anderson collection. For instance, *A Little Pony* claimed to be by Han Kan 韓幹 (c. 718-780) (Fig. 25), the landscape paintings and the *Tethered Horses* (Fig. 26) claimed to be by Zhao Mengfu, and the Daoist-inspired landscape painting *The Earthly Paradise* (Fig. 27) are among the more important works which fascinated Binyon.⁴³ In particular, the Buddhist painting *Geese* (Fig. 28), claimed to be by Zhao Chang 趙昌 (active eleventh century), was known as the best example to show the power of the Song artists “to transport the ordinary objects of sight into the realm of idea without abating one jot of their natural appearance”, that is “the rarest and most magical achievement of art.”⁴⁴ It suggested the artist’s relation with his subject as a matter of philosophy and expression of the human spirit, which made Chinese painting fascinating and unique. Binyon asserted that “[t]his picture alone would give the Wegener collection a high distinction.”⁴⁵

The works of the Ming and Qing dynasties were generally considered “decadent” in the criticism of Anderson and Fenollosa. Nevertheless, the Wegener collection included some fine examples of figure paintings which show the magnificent and exquisite use of colour and line in the art of these later periods. For instance, the *Lady with Shoulao* (Fig. 29) is a good example to illustrate the peculiar, exaggerated and individual style of the late Ming master Chen Hongshou 陳洪綬 (1598-1652). The standing figures are painted in monumental size and distorted proportion, while the

⁴³ A black and white image of the *Earthly Paradise* was published in Laurence Binyon, “Chinese Painting in the British Museum – II”, *BM* 18, November 1910, 83; National Art-Collections Fund, *Twenty-Five Years of the National Art-Collection Fund 1903-1928*, London and Glasgow 1928, 172. However, this painting cannot be found in the British Museum’s storage. No digital image is available in the Museum’s online database.

⁴⁴ “Chinese Painting”, *Times*, 8 March 1910, 11.

⁴⁵ Laurence Binyon, “Chinese Painting in the British Museum – I”, *BM* 17, August 1910, 256.

angular contour of layered drapery suggests variations of force and movement. A Qing religious work of *Heavenly Lady Scattering Flowers* (Fig. 30) shows how Xu Mei 徐玫 (c. 1662-1722) imitated the style of Ma Hezhi 馬和之 (c.1131 - 1162), a Southern Song painter whose art owed much to Wu Daozi and Li Gonglin. The rhythmic lines of flowing drapery and tender body movement, as well as the use of gentle colour, make the figure appear romantic and natural. Lively depiction of figures can also be seen in a group portrait *Mirror-polisher at the Door of a Manchu Family Scene in New Year's Morning* (Fig. 31), by Xu Tingkun 徐廷琨 (1777-1853) of the Qing dynasty. A sense of harmony and happiness is not only expressed in the facial expression of women, children and the old men, but in their interactions with each other.

Exhibition of Chinese and Japanese Paintings at the British Museum in 1910

The acquisition of the Wegener collection encouraged appreciation of the distinctive beauty and glory of Chinese pictorial art. The British public now had an opportunity to value the unique qualities of Chinese painting:

[I]n painting the Chinese are the Italians of the East, and that Japanese art, which was discovered with so much enthusiasm in the nineteenth century, is inferior in nearly all the highest qualities to its great original. It is brilliant, vivid, charming; but it bears the same relation to the masterpieces of China that the Rococo bears to the Renaissance. The difference is not in subjects so much as in treatment. There is a kind of Oriental humility in the greatest Chinese painters which often makes them choose the humblest subjects; but this very humility also makes them see and express in such subjects a significance of a beautiful tune ...⁴⁶

It was claimed that “the great Chinese painter speaks a universal language” which Europeans had never felt before. Chinese painting which came from a race so unlike

⁴⁶ “Chinese Painting”, *Times*, 8 March 1910, 11.

Europe had enlarged European's "emotional experience".⁴⁷

In April 1910, Colvin planned an exhibition of Chinese and Japanese paintings, including specimens from the Anderson collection and some incidental purchases made during the last twenty years, as well as the Wegener and Stein collections, with other works of Chinese colour printing from the Sloane collection.⁴⁸ With the approval of the Trustees, Colvin and Binyon soon began the preparation of the exhibition, with Stanley Littlejohn (1876-1916), the departmental repairer and restorer, who assisted in mounting and arranging the works of the Wegener collection.⁴⁹ Between 20 June 1910 and April 1912, 237 works, including 109 (46%) Chinese paintings and 128 (54%) Japanese pictures, were shown in the second Exhibition of Chinese and Japanese paintings in the Prints and Drawings Public Gallery in the White Wing. Following the practice of the previous century, Japanese and Chinese paintings were shown together for the purpose of comparison. Compared with the number of Chinese paintings in the Exhibition of 1888, Chinese displays in 1910 were increased by 41%, whereas the proportion of Japanese exhibits coincidentally decreased by the same percentage. It is evident that Chinese pictorial art received more attention in 1910, whereas Japanese pictures in the Exhibition "nearly all suffer when compared with the Chinese masterpieces."⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Colvin to the Trustees, 4 April 1910, Reports at the DPD; CE3-SC, 9 April 1909 and 11 June 1910, Box C15, Vol. 55, 2704, 2725.

⁴⁹ Littlejohn began his career as an Attendant of Prints and Drawings in the Mounters' Room in 1904 and was appointed as Repairer and Restorer in January 1909. His duties were to prepare, mount, and protect the prints and drawings of old great masters, including Chinese, Japanese and European, and to secure them from future deterioration. To maintain the efficiency of the mounting process, Colvin asked to employ additional labour in October 1909, when the Stein material put an extra workload on the mounters. For the training of Littlejohn, see Littlejohn's appointment documents, in CE4-OP, Museum's stamp: 2 January and 6 February 1909, Box OP195, Vol. 106-7, P No. 520; Sir Aurel Stein to Colvin, 10 March 1910, Letter Books at the DPD. Also see Colvin to the Trustees, 21 October 1909, CE4-OP, Box OP 195, Vol. 106-7, P No. 3739.

⁵⁰ "Chinese and Japanese Paintings", *Times*, 20 June 1910, 8.

The 109 exhibits of Chinese paintings, mainly hanging scrolls painted in ink and colours, came from different acquisitions and donations. Based on the findings of the Exhibition Guide of 1910 (see Appendix V), about 42% of Chinese exhibits came from the recent acquisition of the Wegener collection, followed by 23% from Stein's new discoveries in Dunhuang. Strikingly, about 45% of Chinese paintings dated from the Ming dynasty, with 24% of paintings on banners from the Tang dynasty. Almost 50% of the paintings depicted immortal figures and religious icons, with about 26% of works delineating birds and flowers. The displays exemplified the development of artistic styles of Chinese painting, with a special focus on their characteristics in later periods. While art collectors found it easier to acquire paintings of the Ming and Qing dynasties, their tastes also revealed a strong interest for Chinese philosophy and religious subjects.

The representation of Chinese philosophical ideas, including Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism, was obvious in many of the Chinese paintings in the Exhibition. The rarity of the *Admonitions* scroll in the exhibition was the Museum's unique treasure to illustrate Confucian ideas. The scroll was exhibited in Slope 1 facing the entrance from the Ceramic Gallery, and attracted audiences to its unique aesthetic quality and the rhythmical beauty of Gu Kaizhi's brushwork. Colvin found it "the most memorable" and "the unique roll", while Binyon told the British public that in Gu Kaizhi's painting "instead of archaic stiffness, we find all the refinement of a mature art".⁵¹ In the Guide, Binyon explained the content of the nine scenes painted on the scroll. Quotations from the book entitled *Admonitions of the Instructress in the*

⁵¹ Sidney Colvin, "Preface", in the British Museum, *Guide to an Exhibition of Chinese and Japanese Paintings (Fourth to Nineteenth Century A.D.) in the Print and Drawing Gallery*, 4; Laurence Binyon, "Chinese Paintings", in *ibid*, 11.

Palace by Zhang Hua were taken from translations by the French Sinologist Professor Édouard Chavannes.

The twenty-five banners of various sizes had been selected by Sir Aurel Stein on his second Central-Asian expedition to the cave-temple at Dunhuang. Colvin noted in the Guide:

From a vault in a cave-temple at Tun-huang, walled up at the beginning of the eleventh century, Dr. Stein recovered in 1907 a number of banners and rolls of silk painted with Buddhist religious subjects, some in a style derived from the Greco-Buddhist art of North-Western India, some Chinese with much less of Indian admixture. The work of unpacking and repairing these is still in progress, but we are able to include in our Exhibition enough specimens to show their extraordinary interest (Nos. 2-26).⁵²

Binyon emphasized the artistic value of the new discoveries:

The paintings from the Stein Collection are of the highest archaeological importance as representing the prevailing methods and practice of Buddhist art during the T'ang Dynasty. They illustrate both the Indian features, of symbolism and of style, preserved in it and consecrated by tradition, and the close dependence on it of the early religious painting of Japan. It is noteworthy, however, as modifying theories hitherto generally accepted, that in the narrative scenes from the Buddha legend – as distinguished from the single hieratic figures – types, conventions and treatment have become entirely Chinese, with scarcely a trace of Indian character remaining. These scenes anticipate also the conventions of the Tosa School of Japan.⁵³

The selected specimens, mainly of the eighth and ninth centuries, were of high scarcity and value as examples of the prevailing methods and practice of Buddhist art, as well as for the legend and life of Buddha during the Tang Dynasty (Figs 32-33).

From the Wegener collection, the *Geese* of the eleventh century was said to be painted “as seriously as Rembrandt painted the portrait of a man” and “as noble in design as the finest Greek sculpture”.⁵⁴ Colour was subordinated to form and space,

⁵² Colvin, “Preface”, in *ibid*, 4.

⁵³ Binyon, “Chinese Paintings”, in *ibid*, 11-2.

⁵⁴ “Chinese and Japanese Paintings”, *Times*, 20 June 1910, 8.

while the simple composition emphasized the free solitudes and natural habitat of the geese. The tranquil beauty of execution, high quality of design, and the profound feeling for the interior life of things raised the work to the level of a great religious picture. Binyon was attracted to the simple design, profound mood and universal character of the *Geese* painting. He praised, “[i]t is simply life itself, aggrandized by no artifice, and yet it impresses us as something august, as no longer a fact but an idea.”⁵⁵ The Daoist idealization of nature in the art of Song also inspired painters of the later periods, with looser and freer brushwork. In *The Birth of the Dragon* (Fig. 34) claimed to be by Wu Wei 吳偉 (1495-1508), the legend of a dragon which “came to be associated in the Taoist imagination with the power of the fluid and free spirit”, was painted with “force and truth that it sprang into actual life.”⁵⁶ In *Eagle attacking a Bear* (Fig. 35) by Lu Jiabin 祿嘉賓 (dates unknown), Binyon also found “great qualities of design” and “the absolute realization of animal life and character, observed and portrayed for its own sake”.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, not everyone could see the association of the subject with the underlying philosophical meaning. Binyon told his wife Cicely his frustration in the Museum:

I met H. G. just now with his two boys who had thirsted to see the Rosetta Stone. I told them to see the Chinese pictures. A lady, it seems, asked the policeman in the gallery how he liked the pictures. He shook his head, & said they were not for the likes of him. Pressed, he allowed that ‘of course some aren’t so funny as other[s].’ But as to the Geese, they made such a fuss about, he had looked at it for hours & it was just geese: he couldn’t see why they should make so much of it.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Binyon, “Chinese Paintings”, in the British Museum, *Guide to an Exhibition of Chinese and Japanese Paintings*, 13. Binyon mentioned in other writings about his admiration for Chinese artist’s innate reverence for life, even for the life of the two geese. See Laurence Binyon, “Chinese Painting”, *Asia* 35, November 1935, 670.

⁵⁶ Binyon, “Chinese Paintings”, in the British Museum, *Guide to an Exhibition of Chinese and Japanese Paintings*, 26-7.

⁵⁷ The subject of eagle and bear is a rebus for “hero” which also pronounced “*Yingxiong*”. Ibid, 25; For Binyon’s comments on fine examples of Chinese paintings in the 1910 Exhibition, see Binyon, “Chinese Painting in the British Museum – I”, 252, 255-7, 260-1; Binyon, “Chinese Painting in the British Museum – II”, 82-3, 86-9, 91.

⁵⁸ Binyon to Cicely, 2 September 1910 [post mark], ALB, Vol. 61.

The British public's knowledge of Chinese art was too limited to understand the meaning behind the *Geese* painting, a major task which Binyon endeavoured to remedy for the rest of his career.

Buddhist Paintings recovered from Dunhuang by Sir Aurel Stein in 1906-8

While little Chinese painting and philosophy were known in Britain, the ancient materials recovered by Stein in Dunhuang undoubtedly encouraged the British public to understand the Buddhist art of the Tang dynasty. According to Roderick Whitfield, "Stein was typical of those who were attracted to the area to survey uncharted regions and to secure both the advancement of scholarly knowledge and tangible benefits in the form of 'archaeological proceeds' for [his] sponsoring institutions."⁵⁹ On his first journey to Central Asia in 1900-1, Stein disinterred interesting remains of the ancient civilization which flourished in Khotan. His discovery of manuscripts, paintings, and other objects of Buddhist works were exhibited in the British Museum in 1903 and aroused the interest of other European Governments to send several expeditions to Turkestan.⁶⁰ Under the orders of the Survey Department of the Indian Government,⁶¹ Stein carried out his second Central-Asian expedition between April 1906 and October 1908, travelling widely "from the Hindukush valleys and the uppermost Oxus right across the whole length of the Tārīm Basin to the province of Kan-su on the western marches of China proper."⁶² Altogether Stein discovered over 20,000 pieces of silk paintings, embroideries, textiles, sculptures, wood carvings, fragments of

⁵⁹ Whitfield, *The Art of Central Asia*, Vol. 1, 11.

⁶⁰ The India Office agreed to hold a temporary exhibition on Stein's antiquities at the British Museum in May 1903. Herbert Read recommended the exhibition to be held in the Asiatic Saloon at the Museum. See CE3-SC, 9 May and 13 June 1903, Box C15, Vol. 51, 1817, 1833.

⁶¹ As requested by the Survey Department of the Government of India to survey uncharted regions and to acquire antiquities, Sir Aurel Stein made three expeditions to Central Asia in 1900-1, 1906-8, and 1913-6. For the details of Stein's expeditions, see Stein's publications and reports: *Sand-buried Ruins of Khotan* (1903), *Ancient Khotan* (1907), *Ruins of Desert Cathay* (1912), *Serindia* (1921), and *The Thousand Buddhas* (1921).

⁶² Sir Aurel Stein, *Serindia*, Delhi 1921, vii.

frescoes, manuscripts and other objects in various sites in his second journey. The “proceeds” recovered from western China were of exceptional importance historically and artistically, and became important learning material for the study of ancient Chinese art and Buddhism. In particular, about 500 fine paintings on silk, linen and paper recovered from Cave 17 “have opened a new chapter in the history of Buddhist pictorial art as developed in Central Asia and China, largely under influences transmitted from Gandhāra, and their study ... will need prolonged efforts.”⁶³

The whole collection of antiquities was first delivered to the British Museum on 13 January 1909 for research. Stein was given the special task to work on the collection for a period of two years and three months.⁶⁴ On 25 June, Freer visited the British Museum to study Stein’s newly excavated materials.⁶⁵ He wrote:

It has been my good fortune to meet Dr. Stein and to examine a considerable number of the objects.

The early paintings on silk, embroidery, textiles, sculpture or modelling, wood craving & etc., seems to me to be of exceptional importance historically and artistically. The paintings particularly delighted me by their superb craftsmanship and beautiful colour. They will prove, I believe, of the greatest importance in the history of Oriental art, and I feel that their preservation and future display will confer lasting distinction upon those who may be privileged to undertake the rare responsibility.⁶⁶

The Dunhuang collection includes a large number of banners, wall painting of great size, executed on silk or linen, a small section of woodcuts, with very few roll paintings mounted on paper. They depict figures of donors, divinities, sacred scenes, in the styles of Indian and Chinese Buddhism. Some of them are Nepalese, Tibetan, or

⁶³ *Ibid*, xii.

⁶⁴ In 1911, a temporary portable studio was built in the White Wing quadrangle, in order to speed up the work of photographing Stein’s objects. CE3-SC, 14 October 1911, Box C15, Vol. 55, 2865.

⁶⁵ See Visitors Books of the Print Room, DPD, BM, Vol. 20; Hatcher, *LB*, 170-1.

⁶⁶ Freer dined with Binyon and saw hundreds of Stein’s seventh-century Buddhist paintings during his brief visit in London in 1909. See Freer to [Colvin], 26 June 1909, Letter Books at the DPD; Thomas Lawton and Linda Merrill, *Freer: A Legacy of Art*, Washington D. C. and New York 1993, 77-8.

Turkestan, but some of them are entirely Chinese.⁶⁷ However, most of the Buddhist paintings in the Stein collection demonstrate the skills of copyists by monks and artisans, with only a few reflecting the workmanship of professional painters.

In unpacking the Dunhuang cases, the silk paintings, regarded as an important and interesting branch of the Stein collection, were found to be excessively fragile and delicate; they were “in crumpled fragments crushed together, sometimes separated in different bundles, and sometimes a mass of brittle fragments.”⁶⁸ For their immediate safety, many of the paintings required great care and special handling skills in unfolding and laying flat. The paintings on silk needed to be fixed between protective glass panels, open and transparent gauze, or in some instances specially prepared cardboard.⁶⁹ Stein discussed with Colvin the proper way of preserving the paintings, fragments and banners. Binyon was assigned to supervise the safe treatment, preservation, cataloguing and exhibitions of the Dunhuang paintings.⁷⁰

The fragile paintings provided valuable experience in conservation for the Museum mounters who handled Oriental paintings. Littlejohn who became increasingly interested in Oriental painting during the 1900s headed the conservation programme for the Stein collection in 1910. Colvin observed that

One of the most remarkable members of the staff is Mr. Littlejohn, who has mastered enough of the language of the Japanese, and acquired enough of their confidence, to learn their technical secrets and apply them with a skill which no European, so far as is known, has possessed before. He has also been able in his private hours to make researches both into the chemistry and the symbolism of the pigments used in early Chinese Buddhistic painting which the chief European authority on the subject, Mr. Petrucci of Brussels, regards

⁶⁷ For details of the iconography, dates and styles of the Dunhuang paintings, see Stein, *Serindia*, 837-94.

⁶⁸ Sidney Colvin and Laurence Binyon, “The Late Stanley William Littlejohn”, *BM* 32, Jan 1918, 19.

⁶⁹ A letter to [Colvin], 28 January 1910, Letter Books at the DPD.

⁷⁰ See Stein to Colvin, 10 March 1910, Letter Books at the DPD.

as especially valuable and desires to print and make known.⁷¹

Colvin very much appreciated Littlejohn's efficiency and invention of special methods for mounting a large quantity of Chinese and Japanese prints and drawings. When Littlejohn devised effective method for mounting hundreds of Dunhuang paintings, he "was quick to take advantage, for the sake of Museum work, of the visit to England of some of the best wood-engravers, colour-printers, and mounters in Japan, at the time of the Japanese exhibition at Shepherd's Bush in 1910."⁷²

Between November 1910 and October 1912, Japanese craftsmen, engravers and printmakers from the Far Eastern Advertising Agency Limited, including Mr K. N. Ohashi, Mr Moriai, Mr Sugisaki Hideaki, and Mr Urushibara Yoshijiro (1888-1953), were invited to produce wood-blocks for reproducing one hundred copies of the *Admonitions* scroll for the book published in 1912.⁷³ According to Colvin, Littlejohn was familiar "both with the technical questions involved and with Japanese methods in business, and [was] able to communicate with Mr Ohashi and his workmen in their

⁷¹ Colvin to the Trustees, 25 January 1912, Reports at the DPD, 6. For Littlejohn's research and achievements on conservation, see Colvin and Binyon, "The Late Stanley William Littlejohn", 16-9.

⁷² Ibid, 16.

⁷³ On 5 November 1910, Colvin proposed the facsimile publication of the *Admonitions* scroll of one hundred copies and recommended Mr Ohashi for the project. Binyon contributed an essay to *Admonitions of the Instructress in the Palace* (1912), with reference to relevant discussion of Gu Kaizhi and the *Admonitions* scroll by Herbert Giles and Édouard Chavannes. See CE3-SC, 10 December 1910, Box C15, Vol. 55, 2773; Ohashi to the Trustees, 11 November 1910, and Colvin to Ohashi, 18 November 1911, Letter Books at the DPD. In addition, Binyon continuously supported the copying project for the *Admonitions* scroll. In 1922 he granted permission to Fukui Rikichiro, a Japanese art historian who was lecturing and conducting research on Chinese painting in London for a year, to make a detailed map of the areas of damage, repair, and repainting of the *Admonitions* scroll. In April-June 1923, two Japanese artists Kobayashi Kokei 小林古徑 (1883-1957) and Maeda Seison 前田青邨 (1885-1977) who were sponsored by the Japan Art Institute reproduced a painted transcription of the *Admonitions* scroll. When Fukui Rikichiro moved to Sendai to head the newly created art history department of Tohoku Imperial University (now Tohoku University) in October 1924, he brought with him the transcription and a set of black-and-white photographs. In 1925, Fukui completed the making of collotypes by new technological techniques. He exhibited a monochrome collotype facsimile and the painted copy of the *Admonitions* scroll, with an illustrated exhibition brochure sent to his friends in London. Shane McCausland points out that the making of copy helped sustain the strategic alliance between Britain and Japan, the two leading cultural institutions in the 1920s. A series of reproductions of the *Admonitions* scroll also suggests "the power of the *Admonitions* to focus interests common to Japan and Britain in art history" in light of "the shared imperialist agenda that had underlain the 1910 *Japan-British Exhibition*." For details, see McCausland, "Nihonga Meets Gu Kaizhi", 688-96, 699.

own language.”⁷⁴ It provided a valuable opportunity for Littlejohn to “set himself to master the Japanese methods of mounting and secrets of repairing, and was probably the first European to learn how to mount a painting as a Kakemono.”⁷⁵ When a series of Chinese Buddhist paintings from the Stein collection were on loan to the Festival of the Empire in the exhibition at the Crystal Palace in the summer of 1911,⁷⁶ a number of them were inadequately mounted by Stein and his assistants to protect them from dampness in the walls of the gallery. With his former training under Japanese experts, Littlejohn remounted and re-hanged the damaged paintings.⁷⁷ Colvin highly praised the great skill and success of Littlejohn in “the arduous work of mounting and framing in a secure and finished way.”⁷⁸

The acquisitions of the Wegener and Stein collections, together with hundreds of Japanese prints purchased from Arthur Morrison in October 1906, put a severe strain on the mounting staff of the Museum. Although Littlejohn had advanced conservation skills, he could not cope with the heavy workload. Moreover, the task of mounting a permanent background of a neutral-tinted Japanese silk, stretched over a light wooden frame, required much time and care. Due to technical difficulties and the effects of the First World War, the mounting work on the Stein collection continued throughout the 1910s and subsequent years. To deal with the lengthy and difficult task of mounting without interrupting similar work on the European collections, the woodblock printer

⁷⁴ Colvin to the Trustees, 5 January 1912, CE4-OP, Box OP196, Vol. 109, P No. 122.

⁷⁵ Colvin and Binyon, “The Late Stanley William Littlejohn”, 16.

⁷⁶ CE3-SC, 8 April and 13 May 1911, Box C15, Vol. 55, 2812, 2827.

⁷⁷ Colvin to the Trustees, 4 July and 2 September 1911, 25 January 1912, Reports at the DPD; CE3-SC, 17 June 1911, Box C15, Vol. 55, 2838.

⁷⁸ Littlejohn also supervised the work of W. J. Goodchild, the repairer from the India Office in mounting the remainder of the silk paintings, wood-engraving and other objects discovered by Stein. After the completion of mounting work for the Stein collection, Goodchild was employed to be a new mounter in the Department of Prints and Drawings in November 1911. See Colvin to the Trustees, 10 October 1911, CE4-OP, Box OP196, Vol. 108, P No. 4049; Colvin to the Trustees, 25 January 1912, Reports at the DPD, 3.

and expert mounter Urushibara, who “has proved himself under Littlejohn’s supervision a diligent and conscientious workman”, was employed by the British Museum on a temporary basis between 1912 and 1920.⁷⁹ Through the provision of special mounters for Oriental works of art, traditional Japanese mounting techniques were handed down to Museum staff and for several decades were adopted for Chinese painting.⁸⁰

Interestingly, Japanese mounting techniques were also well received in America. In his letter to Binyon on 24 February 1917, Freer described the practice of mounting Chinese works in his collection:

I have three expert Japanese artists at work here in Detroit mounting my finer Chinese paintings on to permanent panels, and I am greatly pleased with the progress being made, as I feel it not only improves appearance of the paintings, but it also adds greatly to their protection.⁸¹

Binyon was impressed:

I have done the same with our Ku K’ai-chih & other paintings. We got some silk specially woven for us in China some years ago with a T’ang pattern in it, in shades of blue, gray, creamy-white and red: and I think it makes a very successful mount. We are treating all the Stein paintings in this way.⁸²

⁷⁹ Urushibara was employed on a temporary basis at the wage rate of £3 per week for the working hours from 10:00am to 5:00pm. In 1915, Urushibara helped Binyon to reproduce sixty woodcut copies of *Two Geese*, probably based on the one in the Wegener collection. See Campbell Dodgson to the Trustees, 4 and 5 October 1912, Reports at the DPD; CE3-SC, 12 October 1912, Box C16, Vol. 56, 3004; CE3-SC, 13 February 1915, Vol. 57, 3341; Clark, *Japanese Exchanges in Art 1850s-1930s*, 335-6.

⁸⁰ Originally, most of the Oriental art on paper were mounted in standard western-style mounts for storage and exhibition, but Japanese method and material were introduced to the British Museum through temporary employments of Japanese experts in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries when Asian paintings became more appreciated in Britain. It was not until the late twentieth century when Chinese experts were employed to adopt original style for mounting Chinese paintings at the British Museum. See Joanna Kosek, *Conservation Mounting for Prints and Drawings: A Manual Based on Current Practice at the British Museum*, London, 2004, 11-2.

⁸¹ Freer to Binyon, 24 February 1917, CLFP-FGA, Box 3 Folder 20.

⁸² Paradoxically, the way of mounting the *Admonitions* scroll on a permanent wooden panel had caused great difficulty for future conservation. On the occasion of a private view in July 2008, Ms Qiu Jinxian, current Senior Conservator of Chinese Paintings at the British Museum, said that she had discussed possible ways of remounting the scroll with other Chinese experts from the Shanghai Museum. The existing mounting of the scroll, the possible damage on the scroll, and the availability of experts, are some of the major concerns in deciding where re-mounting should be carried out. When Yu Hui, Specialist of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy from the Palace Museum, Beijing, was invited to examine the British Museum collections in November 2006, he criticized Japanese mounting method

Freer continued in another letter:

The Japanese mounters at work in my collection, are performing miracles in mounting Chinese paintings in permanent panel forms, already over two hundred are finished and the effect is superb – the ancient silks obtained in China, make splendid borders and the frames in darkened cherry wood moulded in simple form, prove very suitable – I want you to see the group after all shall have been mounted.⁸³

Stein also appreciated the handling of Buddhist painting under the constant and careful supervision of Binyon. He recognized that Binyon’s “expert care was of great help towards the successful preservation of the delicate silk paintings, found often in a very precarious condition, and also towards their faithful reproduction in the plates of the *Thousand Buddhas* [(1921)].”⁸⁴

After the delicate work of mounting and cleaning was done, a selection of the most important pictures, woodcuts, manuscripts and other archaeological objects from the Stein collection were displayed in a special exhibition at the Ground Floor Gallery of the New Wing at the British Museum in May 1914.⁸⁵ A series of 109 silk paintings from the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas illustrated a later development of Buddhism, known as “Great Vehicle”. Most of the silk paintings belonged to the second half of the Tang period and had been hung up in shrines. “A great number of small narrow paintings were used as banners and ornamented with triangular headpieces, long

which had caused permanent damages to Chinese paintings. For instance, some original colophons and titles were cut or folded in boxes when Japanese methods were used to re-mount Chinese paintings of the Ming and Qing dynasties. See Binyon to Freer, 3 April 1917, ALB, Vol. 73; Kosek, *Conservation Mounting for Prints and Drawings*, 11-2; also see Li Jianya, “Yu Hui: Xunzhao Gugong yu Daying de Duijie”, *Xinjing Bao*, 1 July 2007, (*The Beijing News*, Beijing, [date accessed, 25 November 2009]), <http://www.thebeijingnews.com/culture/xzzk/2007/07-01/015@054936.htm>.

⁸³ Freer to Binyon, 6 June 1917, ALB, Vol. 4.

⁸⁴ See Stein, *Serindia*, xviii, 832.

⁸⁵ On 4 December 1913, the India Office proposed to hold a special exhibition of the Stein collection in the New Wing. The exhibition was later opened to the public on 8 May 1914. One of the reasons for holding this exhibition was to facilitate the ultimate division of the collection between the British Museum and the India Office. CE3-SC, 11 October and 13 December 1913, 9 May 1914, Box C16, Vol. 57, 3137, 3164, 3232.

streamers at the side and below, and a wooden board at the bottom to weight them and keep them in place.”⁸⁶ Favourite subjects included the imagery and legend of different kinds of Bodhisattvas, as well as the Four Guardians of the Quarters of the Universe, Lokapalas or Demon Kings, such as *Virūpākṣa, Guardian of the West* (Fig. 32), *Pure Land of Amitābha* (Fig. 36), *Bodhisattva as a Guide of Souls* (Fig. 37), *Kṣitigarbha as Lord of the Six Ways* (Fig. 38), and *Thousand-armed, Thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara (Guanyin)* (Fig. 39). The paintings presented a great variety of style, including Tibetan and Nepalese, but were mainly Chinese, and showed how Chinese artists transformed the Indian model into their local style and characters.

In the same year, the British Museum held the third Exhibition of Japanese and Chinese Painting, principally from the Arthur Morrison collection. Morrison was very anxious that his collection should go to the British Museum when it was offered for sale for £35,000 in 1912.⁸⁷ Binyon found that

It is the finest private collection in Europe, & would place the Museum beyond reach or rivalry, as no more fine paintings will come out of Japan now. They are stricter than Italy about letting them leave the country. Our present collection is poor in the Japanese side. We shall never have such another chance, if Morrison’s collection leaves England.⁸⁸

Its historical completeness makes it especially desirable for a Museum, where the student expects to find characteristic examples of all the various schools ... [I]t fills up a number of deplorable gaps in the existing Museum collection. It is strong where that collection is weak, and enriches it with examples of eminent masters hitherto unrepresented.⁸⁹

He was eager to find a benefactor to buy and present the Morrison collection, in his

⁸⁶ Stein, “I. Paintings, Drawings, and Woodcuts”, in the British Museum, *Guide to an Exhibition of Paintings, Manuscripts, and Other Archaeological Objects collected by Sir Aurel Stein, K.C.I.E., in Chinese Turkestan*, London 1914, 10.

⁸⁷ The Morrison collection was not delivered to the British Museum until May 1913. See Binyon to the Trustees, 1 March and 17 May 1913, Book of Presents Vol. 34, BMCA, P No. D447.

⁸⁸ Binyon to Edward Marsh, 11 June 1912, ALB, Vol. 74.

⁸⁹ Binyon to the Trustees, 1 March 1913, Book of Presents Vol. 34, BMCA, P No. D447.

own name, to the nation.⁹⁰ Finally, the Morrison collection, which comprised over 600 specimens of Japanese painting and a small portion of about forty Chinese paintings, was presented as a gift by Sir William Gwynne-Evans (1845-1927) in 1913.⁹¹ The paintings bore a collecting stamp “Arthur Morrison” (Fig. 40) carved in the style of a Chinese stamp. Eighty-four Japanese paintings and eight Chinese paintings were arranged for the temporary exhibition, while another eight Chinese paintings,⁹² four Japanese paintings and one Indian painting were displayed in a permanent exhibition at the end of the same gallery. Over 50% of the paintings in the Morrison collection were dated in the Qing dynasty, with about 30% of them in the Yuan and Ming dynasties. The most frequent subjects in the collection were invariably bird and flowers, followed by figures in landscapes and religious portraits. The Morrison collection included a few fine landscapes, such as a long hanging scroll of *Mountain Landscape* (Fig. 41) claimed to be by Wen Zhengming 文徵明 (1470-1559) and a set of twelve album leaves painted in the style of Wang Hui 王翬 (1632-1717) (Fig. 42). Nevertheless, Daoist and Buddhist subjects were selected to echo the theme of religious art in the special exhibition of the Stein collection. In *Tiger by a Torrent*, attributed to Muqi, Binyon admired the power and fierceness expressed by the tiger. This painting also illustrated the “imaginative feeling for wild nature, mountains, mists and streams, which gives the Sung landscape so modern an aspect.”⁹³ In *Lady Lao Yu with a Phoenix* (Fig. 43), painted in the style of Wu Wei, Binyon also found a

⁹⁰ Binyon to Edward Marsh, 11 June and 1 August 1912, ALB, Vol. 74.

⁹¹ The Morrison collection was regarded as “the finest and most representative collection of its kind in Europe”. It was transferred to the Museum in April-May 1913. See CE3-SC, 8 March, 12 April and 24 May 1913, 3064, Box C16, Vol. 56, 3075, 3099. For the value of Japanese paintings in the Morrison collection, see “The Arthur Morrison Collection”, *Times*, 10 March 1913, 8.

⁹² Apart from the new acquisitions made between 1912 and 1913, the *Admonitions* scroll, *A Boy-Rishi riding on a Goat*, *Geese*, *Tethered Horses*, and *The Earthy Paradise* were previously shown in the 1910-2 Exhibition.

⁹³ Binyon, “II. Chinese Paintings”, in the British Museum, *Guide to an Exhibition of Japanese and Chinese Paintings principally from the Arthur Morrison Collection*, London 1914, 18-9. Unfortunately, the painting *Tiger by a Torrent* cannot be found in the British Museum’s storage, thus, no image is provided in this dissertation.

splendid example for illustrating “the largeness and nobility of Sung taste”, but the “more loose and free” brushwork was used in early Ming paintings.⁹⁴

Unfortunately, the outbreak of the First World War interrupted research on Chinese painting. It led to the subsequent closing of the Museum and prevented the organization of further exhibitions. During this stagnant period, Binyon concentrated on cataloging the Stein collection and further acquainted himself with the artistic beauty of Buddhist painting.

The Significance of the Stein Collection for the Study of Buddhist Art

Before the whole collection was divided, according to the agreement between the Indian Government and the British Museum in 1918,⁹⁵ Binyon and Waley took the opportunity to catalogue the Stein collection, and to translate all the inscriptions on the paintings. Between 1909 and 1913 Édouard Chavannes, Membre de l’Institut and Professor au Collège de France, provided authoritative guidance for Stein on the decipherment of inscriptions and the interpretation of ancient sites.⁹⁶ Between 1911 and 1916, through Binyon, Raphael Petrucci, a renowned Belgian Sinologist and pupil of Chavannes, was invited to help interpret the inscriptions on the Dunhuang

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ It took almost ten years for the India Office and the British Museum to reach a final agreement in dividing the whole collection into two parts. Two-fifths of the collection became the property of the British Museum which contributed £3,000 to the total costs of Stein’s second expedition, arranging and describing the collections, with the remaining expenditure covered by the India Office. The distributed manuscripts, including all Chinese documents written on paper and textile fabrics, are now kept in the British Library, while over 300 paintings and fragments on silk, hemp and paper are stored in the British Museum. See CE3-SC, 27 July and 14 December 1907, Box C15, Vol. 53, 2379, 2414; 13 February, 3 April and 8 May 1909, Vol. 54, 2552, 2573, 2585; 14 November 1914, Vol. 55, 3308; 12 Dec 1914 and 13 March 1915, Box C16, Vol. 57, 3320, 3349. For the reasons of postponed division of all the materials, see Whitfield, *The Art of Central Asia*, Vol. 1, 15.

⁹⁶ Chinese inscriptions and records translated and annotated by Édouard Chavannes was attached in Appendix A in Stein’s *Serindia* (1921).

paintings.⁹⁷ With the help of several collaborators, Stein's lengthy accounts of his second Central-Asian expedition were published, which included a two-volume personal account *Ruins of Desert Cathay* (1912) and a five-volume report *Serindia* (1921).⁹⁸ To facilitate the study of Buddhist paintings in the Stein collection, Arthur Waley continued to deal with inscriptions and published *A Catalogue of Paintings Recovered from Tun-huang by Sir Aurel Stein, K.C.I.E. Preserved in the Sub-Department of Oriental Prints and Drawings in the British Museum, and in the Museum of Central Asian Antiquities, Delhi* in 1931,⁹⁹ with the assistance and suggestions of Professor S. Sawamura of Kyoto, Professor Fukui Rikichiro of Sendai University, and Miss Helen B. Chapin (1892-1950) of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Raphael Petrucci "was a man of science, a student of and writer on sociology and biology", but also "had a knowledge of the art of the world which few men in Europe rivaled." According to Binyon, Petrucci "had concentrated his powers chiefly on the study of Oriental art, of the Chinese language, and of Buddhist iconography" for some years before his death in 1917. According to Stein, Petrucci set his plan to work on the Stein collection of Chinese and Tibetan paintings in November 1911, although Binyon thought that Petrucci was engaged by the India Office at the end of 1914. Petrucci, together with Dr Denison Ross (1871-1940), gave advice on the eventual division of the whole Stein collection between the British Museum and the Indian Government. He also assisted in the selection of the paintings to be reproduced in Stein's *The Thousand Buddhas* (1921). Binyon was nominated to represent the British Museum for paintings and suggested certain modifications to Petrucci's report. See CE3-SC, 12 December 1914 and 13 February 1915, Box C16, Vol. 57, 3320, 3349; Sir Aurel Stein, *The Thousand Buddhas: Ancient Buddhist Paintings from the Cave-Temples of Tun-huang on the Western Frontier of China*, London 1921, x-xi, 833-5; Binyon, "Biographical Note", in Raphael Petrucci, *Chinese Painters: A Critical Study*, trans. Frances Seaver, New York 1969, 7-9.

⁹⁸ Apart from his essay, Binyon advised on the arrangement of texts and plates of the *Serindia* and *The Thousand Buddhas*. For the discussion and drafts of the Dunhuang publications between Binyon and Stein, see Binyon to Stein, 29 April and 15 October 1918, in the Papers of Sir Marc Aurel Stein, Bodleian Library, Oxford, MSS. Stein 410 fols 71-2, 112-3; also see fols 75-106, 118-9, 124-5, 131-2.

⁹⁹ In his Catalogue of 1931, Waley provided textual details of paintings on silk, linen, paper, and other materials, as well as a few illuminated manuscripts on paper rolls, and some in the form of small books. 281 objects in the British Museum collections were described in Part I. Almost fifty years later, high quality illustrations of pictorial material from Dunhuang were produced in Roderick Whitfield's *The Art of Central Asia: The Stein Collection in the British Museum*, Vols 1 and 2: Painting from Dunhuang (1982).

¹⁰⁰ Binyon, "Preface", in Arthur Waley, *A Catalogue of Paintings Recovered from Tun-huang by Sir Aurel Stein, K.C.I.E. Preserved in the Sub-Department of Oriental Prints and Drawings in the British Museum, and in the Museum of Central Asian Antiquities, Delhi*, London 1931.

The prolonged effort devoted to the lengthy research on the Stein collection reflected the growing interest in the study of Buddhist art in the West. In “Essay on the Art of the Tun-huang Paintings” of 1921, Binyon recognized the value of the paintings found at the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas:

[T]he Tun-huang paintings are not only illuminating documents for the study of Mahāyāna Buddhism, but of yet greater – and indeed inestimable – value for the study of art, including as they do precious fragments of a period of great art, the productions of which have been almost entirely lost ... [T]hey suggest the greater work behind them in conception and design. We can get from these paintings an idea, probably not inadequate on the whole, of what Chinese Buddhist art was like in the ninth and tenth centuries.¹⁰¹

For Stein and Binyon, the Dunhuang paintings had “special interest for the study of Buddhist art as transplanted from India through Central Asia to the Far East, and with great importance, too, for the history of Chinese art in general.”¹⁰² From the historical point of view, the Stein collection was the most important part of the British Museum’s collections of Chinese painting. Binyon realized that “as scarcely any such paintings of the T’ang period are known to exist, the importance of this group, for the study of Chinese art, can hardly be overestimated.”¹⁰³ Apart from their high value of rarity, the Dunhuang paintings are essential for the study of the early development of Buddhist art in China which was primarily based on Indian conceptions and forms, yet underwent considerable change and development by the great masters in the Tang dynasty. Due to the creative instinct of Buddhist artists in China, the Tang religious art inspired early Japanese Buddhist paintings and the design of Japanese temples.

Binyon defended the Chinese style of the Dunhuang Buddhist paintings and insisted that “even in these Tun-huang pictures, where the subject-matter, the imagery,

¹⁰¹ Binyon, “Essay on the Art of the Tun-huang Paintings”, in Stein, *Serindia*, Vol. 3, 1428.

¹⁰² Stein, *The Thousand Buddhas*, ix.

¹⁰³ Laurence Binyon, “Introductory Essay”, in *ibid*, 5.

and the canons of ideal form are taken over from India, we feel how all this is being fused in the fire of a different genius.”¹⁰⁴ He stated in *The Thousand Buddhas*,

In the Tun-huang painting we feel that the artist obeys an instinct which controls the complex lines of many grouped figures into a continuous reposeful harmony; a subtle relation between form and form and between group and group is set up; these relations rather than delineation of objects engross the painter. There is a sense of movement in the passage of the great Bodhisattva on his pacing elephant, preceded and attended by blessed beings, but it is as if they moved to music; and the sinuous streaming of the cloud on which a cluster of happy souls is borne enhances this effect of serene and rhythmic motion. This is subtle unifying instinct of design inheres in the Chinese genius.¹⁰⁵

When he defended the Chinese style of Dunhuang Buddhist paintings, Binyon quoted Gu Kaizhi as a Chinese genius prior to the Tang period:

In the fourth century the famous painter Ku K’ai-chih painted, we know, many Buddhist subjects, but neither the ‘Admonitions’ in the British Museum, nor the Ló-shen Fu in the Freer Collection, shows any trace of Buddhist or Indian influence; on the contrary, they show the purely native style of China in its integrity. That purely native style is found in the paintings we are examining, but not as a rule in the treatment of the main subjects.¹⁰⁶

It is obvious that Binyon admired very much the “purely native style of China” in both the *Admonitions* scroll and Dunhuang Buddhist paintings. The originality and rarity of the two treasures distinguish them from other examples from the Museum’s collections of Chinese art. Binyon continued to promote the artistic beauty of his favourite treasure of Chinese painting:

We know nothing certain of Chinese painting before T’ang times, except the painting in the British Museum, ‘Admonitions of the Instructress in the Palace’, and the ‘Ló-shen Fu’ in the Freer Collection, both ascribed to Ku K’ai-chih. Whether either of these be allowed to be an original of the fourth century or not, there can be no doubt that they represent the style of that period in its main characteristics: they show a great mastery of expressive drawing of the human figure, an extraordinary command of finely modulated, sinuous line, a love of it both for its own sake and as expressive of movement, and a quite primitive and rudimentary treatment of landscape.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 9.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 8.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 6.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 7. Similar account was given in Binyon’s “Essay on the Art of the Tun-huang Paintings”, in

Nevertheless, in Buddhist painting, Binyon realized “the altered ideal of the human form” and compared the painting style of Eastern Jin dynasty with that of Tang dynasty. He thought,

[I]n place of the tall, slender proportions of Ku K’ai-chih, T’ang art substitutes shorter and more massive proportions. An ideal of power has superseded an ideal of grace. Hints of the treatment of landscape, primitive by comparison with the mature Sung art, but decidedly more advanced than Ku K’ai-chih’s, are also of much interest.¹⁰⁸

Admittedly, Wu Daozi, Binyon found, was another Chinese genius who gave a fresh character to the Tang Buddhist art with his powerful and vigorous brushwork. Due to its original spirit and distinctive character of Chinese art in different periods, Binyon affirmed the Chinese style of the Dunhuang paintings with his claim: “The Chinese genius is strong just where the Indian genius is weak.”¹⁰⁹

Binyon not only found the Dunhuang paintings full of exquisite details but also a combination of delicate expressiveness of drawings with a glowing animation of varied colour. The life and charm in the Buddhist figures, the harmony of forms, the power of suggestion in empty space, as well as the mastery of individual temperament, are some of the remarkable aesthetic qualities which fascinated Binyon. Waley shared Binyon’s appreciation of the Buddhist art in China with his comments made in the Catalogue of 1931:

[T]he peculiarly abstract quality that makes Buddhist figure-painting impressive survives even in the most incompetent copies. The secrets of this quality depend largely upon one principle – the transformation of realistic devices (shading, high-lights, contour-line, and the like) into meaningless schematic forms ... The curing lines which divide the flat surfaces of the Tunhuang paintings show clearly enough their derivation from sculpture. In almost every picture in the collection the devices by which an impression of space is created – perspective not in its narrow, European, but in its widest

Stein, *Serindia*, Vol. 3, 1921.

¹⁰⁸ Laurence Binyon, “Introductory Essay”, in Stein, *The Thousand Buddhas*, 7.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 8.

sense – have ceased to fulfill this function and have been enlisted in the services of that abstract, transcendental quality which is the aim of Buddhist art.¹¹⁰

It is clear that the Stein collection of Buddhist paintings remained the most significant learning and research material for both Binyon and Waley. It enhanced their understanding of Buddhist pictorial art and affirmed the artistic value of early Chinese painting during their prolonged study period from 1909 to the end of their careers at the British Museum.

¹¹⁰ Waley, *A Catalogue of Paintings Recovered from Tun-huang by Sir Aurel Stein*, ix – x.

Chapter VI

Binyon's Visits to Western Collections of Oriental Painting

After the opening of the Exhibition of Chinese and Japanese Paintings at the British Museum in June 1910, Binyon was granted special leave to visit Germany in October to study Chinese painting. This experience enabled him to see the quality of the newly formed collections of Asian art in German museums, and also develop connections with eminent curators and collectors, including Otto Kummel (1874-1952), Ernst Voretzsch, and Adolf Fischer (1857-1914), who had made acquisitions from Japan and China. During his lecture trip to the United States in November 1912, Binyon took the opportunity to visit the renowned collector Charles Lang Freer whom he had met in London in 1908, as well as other leading curators from American museums. At Freer's house in Detroit and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Binyon was impressed by the enormous collections of Oriental painting which were brought from Japan and China by pioneer collectors. This experience further deepened his understanding of Oriental art and gave him new insights into carrying out his curatorial works and research on the British Museum's collections of Japanese and Chinese painting.

It may be noted that the two countries which Binyon visited in 1910 and 1912 were in direct competition with Britain. Although the Stein and Wegener collections ensured the British Museum maintained a leading position in Europe, curators and collectors in Germany and America took the initiative to travel to Japan and China to conduct academic research into East Asian art. This resulted in the establishment of a

Sub-Department of Oriental Prints and Drawings at the British Museum in 1913, with Binyon in-charge. In this chapter, I attempt to reconstruct Binyon's experiences in Germany and America in order to show how he came into contact with art collectors and curators in the two countries. I will also discuss Binyon's role in instituting the independent section of Oriental prints and drawings at the British Museum in response to the growing competition among museums in the West.

Binyon's Visit to Germany in 1910

The experience of studying important collections of Japanese and Chinese art outside Britain was essential for Binyon to carry on his departmental work at the Museum. To facilitate his work of registering the newly acquired Arthur Morrison collection of Japanese colour-printed woodcuts in December 1906, and of preparing a proper catalogue of the Japanese collections, Binyon was initially granted special leave to study important collections of Japanese prints in Paris, including those belonging to Louis Gonse (1846-1921) and other private owners, in April 1907.¹ Almost three years later, in October 1910, Binyon was granted a ten-day special leave for the study of Chinese painting in Hamburg, Berlin and Cologne.² He took this opportunity to learn about the recent development of museums of Oriental art in Germany, and to compare the quality of German and British collections.

¹ In December 1906, the British Museum acquired the Arthur Morrison collection of Japanese colour-printed woodcuts at a reduced price of £4,000 from the original price of £4,500, by means of an exchange of duplicate mezzotints. Colvin soon recommended that "it is proposed to incorporate with the Morrison collection the other Japanese woodcuts (about five hundred in number) derived by bequest from Sir Wollaston Franks and by purchase from Mrs. Ernest Hart, and to mount and arrange the whole in a systematic historical series." To facilitate this work, Binyon was granted special leave for a fortnight, with payment of expenses, to Paris in the Easter of 1907. See Colvin to the Trustees, 16 January, 2 March and 31 May 1907, Reports at the DPD; CE3-SC, 10 November and 8 December 1906, as well as 9 March and 13 April 1907, Box C15, Vol. 53, 2273, 2286, 2317, 2329.

² On 8 October 1910, the Trustees granted ten days' special leave to Binyon. The Treasury sanctioned the payment of Binyon's expenses for his visit to Germany on 19 October 1910. CE3-SC, 8 October and 12 November 1910, Box C15, Vol. 55, 2745, 2759.

Binyon's correspondence is a valuable reference for compiling his itinerary in Germany (see Appendix VI). Binyon began his investigation with a private collection in Hamburg, as Colvin recommended:

The collection to be studied at Hamburg is the very important one formed in recent years by Dr. [Ernst Arthur] Voretzsch, German Consul at Hong Kong, who is one of the very few skilled European authorities on the subject, and who is at Hamburg with the collection for only a few weeks before he returns to China.³

On 21-24 October, Binyon visited Hamburg and saw some attractive and beautiful examples in Voretzsch's collection of Chinese painting.⁴ A bamboo picture of the Yuan dynasty was Binyon's favourite. Nevertheless, he found that the collection was not as important as those paintings, especially the *Geese* picture, in the Wegener collection at the British Museum. Binyon then went to Hamburger Kunsthalle, the Hamburg Print Room, and the Weber Gallery where he saw a number of interesting pictures.

On the morning of 25 October, Binyon arrived in Berlin and stayed there for three days. Through Voretzsch, Binyon met Otto Kümmel, Director of the East Asian Art Department, who had been invited by Wilhelm von Bode (1845-1930), Director General of the Royal Prussian Museums, under the recommendation of his mentor Ernst Große (1862-1927), to build a new non-European art collection in 1906.⁵ Große collaborated with Kümmel in developing the collection of Japanese and Chinese art

³ Colvin to the Trustees, 5 October 1910, Letter books at the DPD.

⁴ Binyon told Cicely his experience of meeting Voretzsch in Hamburg on 21 October 1910 when he saw a few pictures, and on 22 October when he went to a shooting party and an immense dinner. Dr E. A. Voretzsch later became German Ambassador to Japan in 1929-33. His review of Binyon's *The Spirit of Man in Asian Art* (1935) was published in *Artibus Asiae* 5, No. 2/4, 1935, 315-6. See Binyon to Colvin, 23 October 1910, Letter books at the DPD; Binyon to Cicely Binyon, 23 October 1910 [post mark], ALB, Vol. 61.

⁵ Following the establishment of the Islamic Art section in 1904, the East Asian Art section which was established on 8 November 1906, was the second non-European art independent department of the Royal Prussian Museums. Its name changed to the Museum of East Asian Art in 1967. See Willibald Veit, "The Museum of East Asian Art in Berlin", *Orientalism* 31, October 2000, 66.

and introduced him to Hayashi Tadamasa 林忠正 (1853-1906), a Paris-based Japanese art dealer.⁶ It led to the Museum's first acquisition in 1907 after Große accompanied Kümmel to Japan, via America, to supervise his study of museums and private collections. Through examining the collections of the recently deceased Hayashi in Tokyo, and other Japanese collections in Kyoto, between November 1906 and January 1909, Kümmel not only acquired fine works of Japanese and Chinese art for the Berlin Museum but also developed a good eye for Chinese paintings of high aesthetic quality.

After studying philosophy and archaeology in Freiburg, and Japanese at the École des Langues Orientales in Paris, Kümmel acquired knowledge of the history of Chinese and Japanese art and the respective classical languages. He ranked painting as the highest form of art, and took a strong interest in the works of Zen Buddhism.⁷ Like Binyon, Kümmel initially worked on Japanese art and also looked for guidance from Japanese experts in their early studies of Chinese painting.⁸ Nevertheless, Kümmel had gained his experience in Japan twenty-two years before Binyon, for the Berlin Museum were more aggressive in developing their national collections of East Asian art. They established an independent department and sent their curators to Asia

⁶ After his study at the University of Tokyo, Hayashi Tadamasa went to France in January 1878 and in May served as an interpreter at the Exposition Universelle in Paris. In 1883 he opened a Japanese antique shop in Paris and sold a large number of Japanese prints to Europeans. On the one hand, the Japanese prints influenced the art of French Impressionism and Post-Impressionism; on the other hand, Hayashi advocated the contributions of Western painting techniques to the development of modern Japanese painting. In 1884, he was invited to arrange the collections of Japanese art at the British Museum. He was then adviser on Japanese collections in several national museums in Europe and America. In 1900, Hayashi was the Agent General of the Japanese government in the Paris Expo. Chen Zhenlin compared Hayashi's contributions in promoting the cultural exchange between Japan and Europe with those of Ernest Fenollosa, Okakura Kakuzo and other Japanese scholars. See Chen, *Weixin*, 294-305.

⁷ See Lothar Ledderose, "Collecting Chinese Painting in Berlin", in Wilson and Cayley (eds), *Europe Studies China*, 177-80.

⁸ Lothar Ledderose remarks that Kümmel saw Chinese painting through Japanese eyes and completely relied on Japanese connoisseurship and Japanese dealers. In fact, this was also partly true for Binyon who also relied on European sinologists and collectors. After the First World War, Kümmel shifted to a Chinese perspective and only acquired paintings from China. *Ibid*, 188.

for firsthand experience.

Remarkably, by 1914, the Berlin State Museum's collections consisted of only twenty-six Chinese paintings. Although its size was about twenty times smaller than that of the British Museum which had been formed more than two decades before, Kümmel's major concern was artistic quality rather than size.⁹ Lothar Ledderose points out that

In terms of historic and artistic importance these early acquisitions are quite substantial ... It was Kümmel's ambition to create in Berlin the best collection of East Asian art outside Japan ... In 1907 he wrote that the collection had already surpassed the collections in Hamburg, the Louvre, the British Museum, and the Victoria and Albert Museum. In terms of quality that may indeed have been true, yet in terms of quantity, the Berlin Museum was still lagging far behind.¹⁰

At the time Binyon visited Germany, Kümmel was in direct competition with other museums and collectors of Chinese painting in the West. He was Binyon's rival for their museums' leading position in Europe. Yet Binyon had insufficient resources and authority to run an independent section of Oriental painting at the British Museum. No wonder Kümmel was unreservedly critical of the quality of the British Museum's collections of Oriental paintings in response to Binyon's article on the Wegener collection and its Exhibition in 1910. Binyon was angry with Kümmel's provocative criticism which claimed that the British Museum's collection "consists almost entirely of worthless or fifth-rate productions, and has not the least representation character."¹¹ Understandably, Binyon was very critical of his rival and did not enjoy

⁹ The bequests from the collectors, including Große and his motherly friend Marie Meyer (1834-1915), as well as Gustav Jacoby (1857-1921), the Imperial Japanese Consul, expanded the Berlin collections in 1915 and 1919, respectively. For the brief history of the formation of the Berlin collections of Oriental paintings, bronzes, lacquer wares and other objects, see Willibald Veit, "The Museum of East Asian Art", in Margaret E. Taylor (ed.), *Museum of East Asian Art Berlin*, trans. Elizabeth Schwaiger, Munich and London 2001, 4-7.

¹⁰ See Ledderose, "Collecting Chinese Painting in Berlin", in Wilson and Cayley (eds), *Europe Studies China*, 187.

¹¹ Kümmel responded to Binyon's first article of the 1910 Exhibition of Chinese Painting in the

his meeting with Kümmel in Berlin.

Binyon reported his experience to Colvin:

Kümmel's Japanese paintings are quite good of their kind, nearly all ink painting, but cannot be called an impressive show. Voretzsch went with me, & he went into Kümmel to say good-bye to him & so let me in for a meeting I did not desire. However Voretzsch did all the talking. Kümmel pretended not to know what he had exhibited, & instead of bringing art what he had himself bought showed only Chinese purchases of Grosse's, at which he scoffed. (It is quite true they were all copies or unimportant paintings.) What he has got unexhibited I do not know.¹²

In the exhibition, Binyon possibly saw some paintings from the late Hayashi collection and other sources which Kümmel acquired in Japan in 1906-9.¹³ Große's collection also included art works from China and Japan. With his attachment to the German embassies in Tokyo and Peking as scientific advisor from 1907 to 1913, Große not only bought paintings from Hayashi but also from Peking. However, his collection comprised both high and low quality specimens. It remained in the Berlin Museum until the end of the Second World War and was never published or exhibited by Kümmel.¹⁴ It is likely that in 1910 Kümmel perfunctorily showed Binyon and Voretzsch the less important Chinese paintings and deliberately avoided telling them much about the new acquisitions which he had recently brought from Japan. The curatorial exchange between Kümmel and Binyon was not only minimal but also hostile, which he expressed in a letter to his wife:

Kunstchronik on 2 September 1910. See Binyon, "Chinese Paintings in the British Museum – II", 91.

¹² See Binyon to Colvin, 27 October 1910, Letter Books at the DPD.

¹³ Before Kümmel returned to Germany, some of the new acquisitions were first exhibited in the Museum of Applied Arts (Kunstgewerbemuseum) in June 1908, with another exhibition held in 1909. In 1912, Otto Kümmel mounted the first large-scale exhibition of East Asian art in Berlin, and collaborated with William Cohn (1880-1961) to establish the *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift* which became a leading journal for East Asian art in Europe. In the same year, he also participated in a major exhibition of "Ancient East Asian Art" at the Royal Academy of Art in Berlin. For Kümmel's contribution, see Herbert Butz, "Awakening Interest: Pioneering Exhibitions of East Asian Art in Berlin in the Early 20th Century", *Orientalia* 37, October 2006, 40-3.

¹⁴ See Ledderose, "Collecting Chinese Painting in Berlin", in Wilson and Cayley (eds), *Europe Studies China*, 170-85.

I saw Kümmel yesterday [25th October], looking more like a murderer than ever. I didn't want to see him, but Voretzsch had to see him & dragged me in. Our greeting was of the iciest. Cunningly he showed us only things which Grosse, the man he learnt from, had bought & which he scoffed at as copies & forgeries – things he would never have bought. When Voretzsch said we had seen the pictures exhibited, he said 'he didn't know what was exhibition just now.' There are just a few paintings, some quite good but not a very impressive show.

The people at the other Museum, [Albert] von Le [Coq] etc were most cordial & begged specially to be dissociated in every way from Kümmel.¹⁵

Instead, Binyon valued his relationship with Albert von Le Coq (1860-1930) and admired the new discoveries of Buddhist art brought by his friend from Central Asia. As Colvin recommended,

At Berlin there are the contents of the new museum of Far-Eastern Art, including a certain number of Chinese silk-paintings of the classical schools; and more important than these, there is the extensive series of frescoes of mixed Asiatic Schools lately brought from Khotan.¹⁶

The Asian frescoes were brought by Albert Grünwedel (1856-1935) and von Le Coq from their expeditions to Turfan in 1902 and 1904.¹⁷ With Germany in the lead in collecting Oriental art in Europe, the discovery of Buddhist remains significantly enriched the Prussian State Museums' collections with spectacular Chinese antiques of the Tang dynasty. In Berlin, Binyon saw some Chinese silk-paintings and Asian frescoes which impressed him very much:

¹⁵ Binyon to Cicely Binyon, 26 October 1910, ALB, Vol. 63.

¹⁶ Colvin to the Trustees, 5 October 1910, Letter Books at the DPD.

¹⁷ The success of the British and Russian archaeological survey along the Silk Road in the late nineteenth century encouraged German interest in exploring the exotic cultures of Central Asia. Following the decision made at the Twelfth International Congress of Orientalists in Rome in 1899, Professor Albert Grünwedel, Director of the Indian Department, the Munich State Museum of Ethnology, headed a team of experts and assistants to East Turfan in August 1902, with enormous financial support from industrial companies and ethnological bodies. Albert von Le Coq who was a German archaeologist assisted Grünwedel in planning and organizing the second expedition to the regions of western Asia, especially the areas near the Silk Road. Due to Grünwedel's poor health, von Le Coq was assigned to head the three expeditions between 1904 and 1914. During the investigations and excavations in the four expeditions, a large number of mural paintings, documents and sculptures were removed from the Cave of the Thousand Buddhas, Dunhuang and ruined sites nearby. See Chen, *Liushi Haiwai de Guobao* (Wenji Juan), 109-10.

The Turkestan frescoes, etc. are extremely interesting, especially as they do not repeat Stein's things at all. There are two series, Grünwedel's & von Le [Coq's], & these again are different in character. Von Le [Coq] & his colleagues were most friendly & very anxious to be in no way associated with Kummel. None of their treasures are exhibited yet, but they showed me everything they could.¹⁸

For the rest of his time in Berlin, Binyon visited the Kaiser Friedrich Museum (now the Bode Museum) "which is wonderfully arranged & contains endless fine things besides the pictures which [he] had already seen."¹⁹ In the gallery, he saw the Wax Bust and numbers of delightful pictures, especially early German, Van Eyck and Holbein.²⁰ Binyon, then, went to "Kunst Gewerbe Library & was cordially received & went through practically the whole of their Japanese prints – a small but quite good collection. They have a beautiful reading room, excellent catalogues, etc & no formalities."²¹ Before he left for Cologne on the night of 27 October, Binyon summed up his German experience in a letter to Colvin:

I have also seen practically the whole of the Japanese prints. It is not a large collection but very well chosen, arranged & mounted, nearly all good impressions, with a few doubtful or wrong ones but some very interesting rarities. Of course it is not a tithe of our collection. Jessen, who was very cordial, told me there were no important collections in Germany.

Last night I dined with the Wegeners', who seemed pleased to see me. She is exhibiting at Carfax next summer. Our Country Life article has never reached them.

I have been all through the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, where the wax bust is the first thing one sees. I expected it to be rather plausible, & was astounded.²²

¹⁸ Freer also appreciated the priceless value of the Central Asian wall paintings and manuscripts when Albert von Le Coq showed him the works in 1909. See Binyon to Colvin, 27 October 1910, Letter Books at the DPD; Lawton and Merrill, *Freer*, 78-80. For Binyon's praise for Dr von Le Coq's publication on the discoveries of his expedition, see Laurence Binyon, "Chotscho", *BM* 24, October 1913, 10, 12-3, 15-6.

¹⁹ Binyon to Cicely Binyon, 27 October 1910, ALB, Vol. 61.

²⁰ Binyon to Cicely Binyon, 26 October [1910], ALB, Vol. 63.

²¹ Binyon to Cicely Binyon, 27 October 1910, ALB, Vol. 61.

²² Binyon to Colvin, 27 October 1910, Letter Books at the DPD. Binyon also told his wife the dinner with the Wegener couple in other letters. See Binyon to Cicely Binyon, 25-26 October 1910, ALB, Vol. 61.

Although Binyon only had a short stay in Cologne on 28-29 October, he managed to see some fine paintings in a private collection. Professor Adolf Fischer carried Binyon off to the Kunstgewerbe Museum where his Oriental objects were being unpacked. The Fischer couple showed Binyon some of their pictures which were intended for exhibition in a special new museum built for their collection. This was the Museum of Eastern Asiatic Art in Cologne which opened on 25 October 1913, with Fischer as the first Director. The Fischer collection was formed during visits to Asia, including Fischer's three-year residence in Peking where he was a scientific expert at the Embassy.²³ Binyon found that "Fischer's things are amazingly fine, in some sections far surpassing [the British Museum's]. They gave [him] great pleasure."²⁴ He lunched with the Fischers and found them immensely hospitable and "awfully pleased at [his] admiration of their pictures, as [Fischer] has been snubbed by Kümmel & the Berlin people."²⁵ Back in London, Binyon praised the Fischer collection in the *Burlington Magazine*:

In December [1910] a selection of the more important works in the collection were exhibited in a room of the Kunstgewerbe Museum: and, to judge from these, the collection should prove to be one of the finest of its kind in Europe. The early Japanese Buddhist paintings include some specimens of extraordinary beauty and importance; Chinese painting of Sung and Ming periods was represented in the exhibition by a few chosen works of impressive power; and the pieces of early sculpture were also very remarkable.²⁶

Nonetheless, Binyon told Sir Michael Ernest Sadler (1861-1943) his experience of studying Oriental collections in Germany: "They have no Chinese Collection to

²³ The new Museum of Eastern Asiatic Art in Cologne was built on a site adjoining the Kunstgewerbe Museum, with its access through a room of the latter. The Fischer collection formed the stones for the Museum. Secular and religious works of different classes and periods were chosen to illustrate the typical characteristics of the arts of China, Korea, and Japan. Chinese art took the most important place in the Museum's collections, while the displays of Buddhist art reflected Fischer's taste. See Winifred Howe, "The Museum of Eastern Asiatic Art in Cologne", *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 9, August 1914, 172-4.

²⁴ Binyon to Cicely Binyon, 28 October 1910, ALB, Vol. 61.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ See Laurence Binyon, "Cologne Museum for the Art of the Far East", *BM* 18, February 1911, 290-3.

compare with ours.’’²⁷

Binyon’s visit at the Kunstgewerbe Museum was interrupted by Dr Berthold Laufer (1874-1934), the German-American anthropologist and Sinologist, who had been working in Asia for some years for the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago.²⁸ Although Laufer’s recent publications were about Chinese pottery of the Han dynasty, ancient Chinese bronze and jade, he wanted to sell some Chinese pictures to the British Museum. Binyon saw the paintings at Laufer’s house, but rejected the offer.²⁹ Before he returned to England on 30 October, Binyon travelled to Brussels for a day, and saw Raphael Petrucci’s new acquisitions of Chinese and Japanese art.³⁰ Binyon found Petrucci a most generous and loyal friend, with immense energy and force of character. Petrucci’s knowledge of Chinese helped his understanding of Chinese art, especially his translations of treatises on Chinese art. His publications included *La Philosophie de la Nature dans l'Art d'Extreme-Orient* (1910) and *Les Peintres Chinois* (1911), which showed an interest in Eastern thought and Chinese painting. No wonder Binyon invited Petrucci to participate in the collaborative work on the Stein collection of Buddhist paintings.³¹

After his visit to Germany in 1910, Binyon maintained a correspondence with Voretzsch who gave him practical advice on planning a trip to the Far East (See

²⁷ Binyon to Sir Michael Ernest Sadler, 2 November 1910, the British Library, London (hereafter BL), Add49997, Binyon 3.

²⁸ For Berthold Laufer’s background and his publications on Chinese art, see Arthur Hummel, “Berthold Laufer: 1874-1934”, *American Anthropologist* 38, January-March 1936, 101-11.

²⁹ Laufer wrote on a wide range of Chinese subjects but occasionally discussed Chinese painting in journals and books in 1912, 1924-6, and 1930. Also see Binyon to Cicely Binyon, 28 October 1910, ALB, Vol. 61.

³⁰ See Binyon to Cicely Binyon, 26 and 28 October 1910, ALB, Vols 61, 63; Binyon, “Biographical Note”, in Petrucci, *Chinese Painters*, trans. Frances Seaver, 7-9.

³¹ The English edition of *Les Peintres Chinois* was later translated by Frances Seaver, with its title *Chinese Painters: A Critical Study* (1920). It included illustrations drawn from Petrucci’s private collections, the British Museum, and other important collections in Europe.

Appendix VII). Voretzsch sent photographs and lengthy descriptions with commentaries on eight Chinese paintings which he saw in Mukden (now in Shenyang): “[t]hey very much remind one in this respect on the height of the art during the Sung or on some of Whistler’s pictures.”³² Unlike Kümmel, Voretzsch generously shared with Binyon the interesting treasures he discovered in China. The photographs and descriptions of the works helped Binyon to imagine the fantastic world of the Orient. Nevertheless, he longed for a study trip to the East, and envied the visits of his friends. When his friend the poet Robert Trevelyan (1872-1951) travelled to India in 1912, Binyon stated frankly: “How I envy you going East!”³³

The Establishment of the Sub-Department of Oriental Prints and Drawings

Resuming work at the British Museum, Binyon was occupied with work on the growing Oriental collections. In 1911, he “managed to write some poems and a (Chinese) play”, although most of his “evenings & spare time have to be devoted to ‘pot-boiling’”.³⁴ A year later, he had no spare time for poems but had to prepare for his autumn trip to America to give lectures and study collections. Binyon also had to work very hard in order to keep his family going. When Colvin retired from his Keepership, Binyon doubted whether he would succeed to the position. In Colvin’s appraisal,

The Assistant-Keeper, Mr. Binyon, continues to do high credit to the Department by his personal and literary distinction, and his excellent manner and tact in his relations alike with students, visitors and staff, as well as by his solid industry in carrying out the various tasks assigned to him. His special occupation of the last few years in connection with the Far-Eastern branch of the collections has not prevented his keeping a firm hold on the general work of the Department.³⁵

³² Voretzsch to Binyon, 16 July 1911, ALB, Vol. 11.

³³ Binyon to Robert Trevelyan, 5 September 1912, ALB, Vol. 75.

³⁴ Binyon to a friend [unknown recipient], 27 January 1912, ALB, Vol. 73.

³⁵ Colvin to the Trustees, 25 January 1912, Reports at the DPD, 5.

Technically, it was difficult to appoint Binyon as the Keeper at this stage because Dodgson had waived his appointment as Assistant Keepership in favour of Binyon in July 1909. Due to this previous agreement and Dodgson's seniority (six months more service than Binyon's), Dodgson was chosen to succeed Colvin as Keeper in June 1912.³⁶

Binyon expressed his disappointment in a private and confidential letter to Henry Newbolt (1862-1938):

You doubtless saw that Dodgson got Colvin's post. This forces me very seriously to think of my future. I cannot consent to pass my whole life in my present slavery, even if my health would stand it. The whole of this year, for instance, I am prevented from writing alone of poetry, though I have plenty in my head, because even though working at pot-boiling things practically all my evenings & most of my Sundays & holidays, I can only just make both ends meet (& hardly that).

Well, Colvin is very much upset about the appointment, & he & Kenyon & I believe the Principal Trustees (this is very confidential) are all anxious to do something for me. Kenyon is going to propose in October that I should have additional salary as looking after the Oriental section, but with no independent control. & Dodgson is completely ignorant of the Oriental things ...

The fact is, I am fighting for the creation of a new quite small dept. of Oriental Prints & Drawings, & I want all the support I can get.

Kenyon's idea is to get me extra pay as a stepping-stone to the future creation of such a [department]. But I wholly distrust the Treasury, & want the new [department] made now, when we are going into new quarters. I want it on a public grounds & in the interests of the Museum, & have plenty of arguments but wont bore you with them now if there is any chance of getting a talk with you, as there is a good deal to say.

I simply want to be used by my country & not wasted. I would like to be used to the last ounce. But life shortens terribly every year & I have so much to do & am in such a cage. So I must make an effort, & now is the time. If you can help me in this it would be real good of you. I don't much want to be driven to America for good.³⁷

³⁶ Colvin ended his twenty-eight years of Keepership of Prints and Drawings on 18 June 1912. CE3-SC, 3 June and 6 July 1912, Box C16, Vol. 56, 2954, 2968.

³⁷ Binyon also told Sir Michael E. Sadler his "hopeless" financial situation at the British Museum and wondered whether he "shall have to retire to America!" See Binyon to Henry Newbolt, undated [1912], ALB, Vol. 74; Binyon to Sadler, 29 June 1912, BL, Add49997, Binyon 5.

It was admirable that Binyon should want to serve his country in this way. On the other hand, he felt the stress of developing an Oriental section:

What I feel about my position here is that I am unable to devote myself to the Oriental section of this [department] in the way the study requires. While Germany, France & the States are recognizing more & more the importance of the subject, we are in danger of falling behind. What I hope is that the section will be made a separate [department] – the move to new buildings gives an opportunity, – so that I could have time to work properly at the subject – complex & difficult enough - & build up the collection, without being perpetually called off to other duties as now. Of course at present I am the only one in the [department] who knows anything about the subject, now Colvin is gone. I believe the new [department] is accepted in principle by Kenyon, but I believe he thinks of asking merely for extra pay for me (without extra responsibility) as a preliminary step in [October].

I believe myself the Treasury will refuse this, & want to get him to ask for a new [department] straight away.

Please regard all this as entirely between ourselves. I shall do my best, through Colvin, to work Kenyon up to the scratch; he is very anxious to do something for me. What I want to get is support for the scheme when broached. But I feel I must walk warily.³⁸

In the United States, Ernest Fenollosa, Okakura Kakuzo and Charles Freer contributed to the incomparable American collections of Oriental art. In Paris, Hayashi Tamadasa, Louis Gonse, Marcel Bing and his father Siegfried Bing (1838-1905) contributed to the appreciation of Japanese prints. In Germany, Ernst Große and Otto Kummel were building German collections with high quality paintings and ceramics from Japan and China. This competition was a source of stress for Binyon in maintaining the British Museum's leading position in the West. It undoubtedly required a strong initiative in order to catch up with the growing pace set by other museums in Europe and America.

Tactically, Colvin paved the way for Binyon to concentrate his curatorial work on Oriental art and further his research on Chinese painting in a separate section,

³⁸ Binyon to Newbolt, 19 August 1912, ALB, Vol. 74.

without having to compete with Dodgson's work on European art. Prior to his retirement in January 1912, Colvin wrote a lengthy report to the Trustees asking for structural change in the Department, with additional staff and financial resources to create an independent section of Oriental art.³⁹

Financial support was another major concern since the departmental grant from the British Government had remained unchanged for thirty years. During this time, acquisitions came mainly from the bequests of private collectors, or purchased at a good deal by special grants negotiated through Colvin's personal influence, with the help of private subscriptions in the art community. While the prices of high quality prints and drawings had increased five to twenty folds, Colvin's second earnest hope was for a large increase in purchasing power.⁴⁰

To gain support from the Director of the Museum, Binyon wrote to Sir Frederick Kenyon (1863-1952) in September 1912:

A large staff is not required: but I feel everyday the need of more freedom to concentrate on my special studies. The Continental Museums are having special sections - & beginning to have special museums - for the subject: the French, Germans, & Americans have spent largely on missions to the East for purposes of study & collection: & I feel that, while our collection of Far Eastern paintings & drawings is the most important in Europe, I cannot keep up to the mark myself while I have to give so much of time, as Assistant-Keeper, to other things. Quite apart from my own affairs & I am sure it would be far better for the collection if I were able to devote my whole energies to it & have real control ...

The state of the mounters' work shows how unwieldy this [department] has

³⁹ In 1884 when Colvin began his Keepership with only one assistant, his first-rate staff Dodgson, Binyon and Hind, joined the Department in 1893, 1895 and 1903, respectively. Colvin's request coincided with the expansion of the Department in new quarters in the North Wing. Colvin called the Trustees' attention to the fact that additional staff of all grades, with no less than five officers, including Keeper, Assistant Keeper and at least three Assistants, were necessary for dealing with the daily operations of departmental work and carrying out new projects which he had planned before his retirement. Colvin to the Trustees, 25 January 1912, Reports at the DPD, 9-11.

⁴⁰ See *ibid*, 13-4.

become. Though the Oriental work has made great inroads on the mounters' time, & delayed the other work. The mounting of the Japanese prints has had to be entirely neglected for over two years. Yet they are asked for everyday by students.⁴¹

Binyon's argument convinced Kenyon, who submitted his proposal for the establishment of a Sub-Department of Oriental Prints and Drawings on 12 October 1912. He also recommended that the Treasury should grant an allowance of £100 for the officer in charge of it, as well as an additional Assistant and one Attendant, together with additional assistance in the Mounters' room.⁴² Binyon, who was the only expert of Oriental painting in the Museum, was nominated as the chief officer to take charge of the Sub-Department.⁴³ He was thrilled when the good news from Kenyon reached him during his stay at Freer's house in Detroit. Binyon expressed his gratitude to Kenyon on 24 November:

Your two letters came together, & I needn't say how glad I was to get them. I am indeed grateful to you for what you have done. It will be an immense relief not to be always worrying & doing pot-boilers. This is just a line to thank you, as it seems impossible to get time for writing a proper letter.⁴⁴

Colvin who foresaw the increasing need of such a separate organization welcomed Binyon's promotion which was a first step towards the establishment of a new department of Oriental prints and drawings.⁴⁵ On 12 April 1913, the Trustees approved the proposal for the new Sub-Department.⁴⁶ As I mentioned in Chapter IV, Arthur Waley became Binyon's first Assistant in the Oriental section, to help with the

⁴¹ When Basil Gray asked for relevant documents by Binyon for the events of 1912-3, Janet Wallace found this unregistered correspondence of Sir Frederick Kenyon in the British Museum Central Archive. A photocopy of the manuscript was sent to Gray and is now kept in the Archive of Laurence Binyon, Vols 73 and 75 at the British Library. See Janet Wallace to Basil Gray, 30 June 1986; two separate letters from Gray to Wallace and Lawrence Smith, 14 July 1986, ALB, Vol. 37.

⁴² CE3-SC, 12 October 1912, Box C16, Vol. 56, 2991-2.

⁴³ William Hunt (1842-1931), graduate of Trinity College, Oxford, was proud of Binyon taking up a new appointment. Binyon also found the promotion a great help for bringing extra money for his family. See William Hunt to Binyon, 26 December 1912; Binyon to Henry Newbolt, 28 August 1913, ALB, Vols 6, 74.

⁴⁴ A photocopy of original manuscript from Binyon to Kenyon, 24 November 1912, ALB, Vol. 73.

⁴⁵ Colvin to Mr Dryhmer, 27 February 1913, CE4-OP, Box OP197, Vol. 110, P No. 1000.

⁴⁶ CE3-SC, 12 April 1913, Box C16, Vol. 56, 3075.

translation and cataloguing of Japanese and Chinese works. They set to work by filling gaps and strengthening weak and inadequately represented aspects of the British Museum's collections of Oriental art. In doing so they created the prototype for the future Department of Oriental Antiquities which was established in 1933. The Trustees' Sub-Committee expressed their satisfaction with the good start made by the new Sub-Department which "will no doubt continue to expand as occasion serves".⁴⁷

Binyon's Connection with Okakura, Fenollosa and Freer

While he was waiting for the good news from Kenyon, Binyon was immersed in the remarkable collections of Oriental painting in America, which were larger and richer than those in Europe. Binyon had been developing his connections with influential collectors and curators of Japanese and Chinese art in the United States since 1908, especially those affiliated with the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston whose Asian collection has often been recognized as the finest in the world.⁴⁸ Impressed by Okakura's *The Ideals of the East* in 1903, Binyon briefly met the author who had a short stay in London in May 1908.⁴⁹ At that time Okakura was first Adviser and Curator of the Department of Chinese and Japanese Art at the Boston Museum and contributed to the arrangement and cataloguing of their vast Oriental collections, especially the rapid growth of Chinese painting with acquisitions made from China and Japan. He offered his help to do things for Binyon in Tokyo, and looked forward

⁴⁷ Minutes of Meetings of Trustees' Sub-Committee, 13 February 1915, BMCA, CE7, Box SC2, Vol. 5, 2849.

⁴⁸ The excellence of the Boston Museum's collections of Japanese and Chinese art owed much to the collective efforts of early collectors and curators, including Edward Sylvester Morse (1830-1925), Ernest Fenollosa, William Sturgis Bigelow (1850-1926), Charles Goddard Weld (1857-1911), Okakura Kakuzo, and Denman Waldo Ross (1853-1935). See Osvald Sirén, *Chinese Paintings in American Collections*, Paris and Brussels 1927, 1-12; Jan Fontein, "Notes on the History of the Collection", in Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *Asiatic Art in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, Boston 1982, 6-11.

⁴⁹ Okakura and his Japanese friends from the Boston Museum visited the Print Room of the British Museum on 11th, 15th, 19th and 25th May 1908. See Visitors Book of the Print Room, DPD, BM, Vol. 19.

to seeing him in Japan someday.⁵⁰

Three months later, Charles Freer of Detroit, an avid collector well known for his splendid collections of the arts of America, the Far and Near East, came to see Binyon at the British Museum during his ten-day visit in London.⁵¹ He was impressed by Binyon's *Painting in the Far East* (1908) which illustrated a magnificent collotype of Li Longmian drawn from the Freer collection in Detroit.⁵²

My first glance at your late book pleased me greatly, for even its appearance is, to me, excellent. I like the type, paper, presswork, illustrations and size ... I have enjoyed certain chapter; ere long I hope to read the book most carefully from beginning to end ... In writing this book you have done great service to "Painting in the Far East" and have placed all of its English-reading lovers and students under deep obligation.⁵³

Freer mentioned Binyon to Fenollosa who was former Curator of Asiatic Art at the Boston Museum (1890-6) and Freer's adviser on Japanese art since 1901.⁵⁴ Fenollosa soon wrote to arrange a meeting with Binyon:

⁵⁰ Okakura to Binyon, 20 May 1908, ALB, Vol. 6.

⁵¹ On 18 August 1908, Freer went to the British Museum. He made his second visit to see Binyon on the 25th. See Freer's dairy, CLFP-FGA, Box 50, Folder 5, Vol. 18.

⁵² Binyon's book was also printed in America. He told Freer about the wrong arrangement of some illustrations in the process of printing. See Binyon to Freer, 23 October 1908, ALB, Vol. 73.

⁵³ Freer to Binyon, Christmas 1908, ALB, Vol. 4. Coincidentally, a young American schoolmaster, who visited the British Museum in 1927, told Binyon that "He & some pupils are very keen on Chinese history & art, & ... [Binyon's] P. in the Far East has a great appeal for the young." See Binyon to Cicely Binyon, 1 September 1927, ALB, Vol. 63.

⁵⁴ Fenollosa left Tokyo to take up his new appointment as curator of Japanese art at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts in 1890. His reputation grew in America and was appreciated by Freer. They probably first met in February 1901 when Fenollosa spent a week in Freer's house at Detroit, followed by his second visit in November 1907. He examined the works of Whistler, the comprehensive and valuable collection of ancient glazed pottery, as well as the small group of Japanese and Chinese paintings. He praised Freer as probably the greatest living expert on artistic pottery, and had a deep understanding of Chinese and Japanese paintings, including works executed in the style of Wu Daozhi, Li Longmian, Xia Gui, and Ma Yuan as supreme examples of Chinese paintings in the Collection. Fenollosa found that the Freer Collection embodied a single taste but also illustrated cultural interaction between Europe and Asia in the late nineteenth century. However, the Collection was weak in sculpture, Oriental porcelain, as well as modern works of European painting and Japanese colour prints. Through correspondence and visits, Fenollosa advised Freer to acquire Japanese *ukiyo-e* and paintings of the Kano School with the characters of Chinese painting of the Southern Song dynasty. He also recommended the purchase of several Japanese works from the New York branch of Yamanaka & Company, and other important collections in Nara, Kyoto and Tokyo. Fenollosa's advice inspired Freer's travel to Japan in 1907. See Fenollosa to Freer, 4 March 1901, 12 October 1902, 8 March 1903, and 12 March 1907, CLFP-FGA, Box 8 Folder 32. Also see Ernest Fenollosa, "The Collection of Mr. Charles L. Freer", *Pacific Era* 1, November 1907, 57-66; Lawton and Merrill, *Freer*, 131-51.

I think I have never had the pleasure of meeting you, but I have heard most pleasant things said of you by Mr. Freer, and other mutual friends.

I have just arrived in London, and should be here until the 22nd, and it will add so much to my visit to the British Museum, if I can, without intruding, have the benefit of your personal advice. Of course I particularly want to see what you have of the earlier art of China and Japan; but a kind word from you will help me in many ways, as, for instance, where to procure the best photographs and lantern-slides. I have so short a stay that I shall not be able to do much in seeing private collection[s]. But I hope to come again next year, and spend most of my summer in London.

But hoping now to have the pleasure of making your acquaintance, and will inquire as to where and when I may call upon you in your office.⁵⁵

On 12 September 1908, Fenollosa met Binyon at the Print Room and saw the *Admonitions* scroll at the British Museum.⁵⁶ Tragically, nine days later, he died from a sudden heart attack. In accordance with his wishes, Fenollosa's ashes were later sent to Kyoto and interred at Miidera, a Tendai temple in Otsu overlooking Lake Biwa, where he first seriously studied Buddhism.⁵⁷ Freer mourned: "America suffers a great loss."⁵⁸ Binyon shared his grief:

But in Europe too there will be many who will grieve to hear of the sudden cutting-off of a life devoted to a study which no other non-Oriental was so competent to understand, before the work which was to embody the results of long years of studious labor had been completed.⁵⁹

On the first anniversary of Fenollosa's death, his ashes were reburied. On his way to China and Japan, in September 1909, Freer attended the mourning ceremony at Miidera (Figs 44-46), and on behalf of Binyon and other friends, arranged for the

⁵⁵ Fenollosa to Binyon, 10 September 1908, ALB, Vol. 4.

⁵⁶ Fenollosa visited the Print Room on 12th, 14th and 15th September 1908. See Visitors Book of the Print Room, DPD, BM, Vol. 19; Binyon, *PFE*, 82.

⁵⁷ See Chisolm, *Fenollosa*, 211-2; Mary Fenollosa, "Preface", in Fenollosa, *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art*, Vol. 1, xx.

⁵⁸ Freer to Nathan Haskell Dole, 1 December 1908, Houghton Library, Harvard University, bMS Am1759.3 (2).

⁵⁹ Binyon also praised Fenollosa's contribution in forming the magnificent collection of Japanese paintings in Boston and in Freer's collection of Oriental art in Detroit. He criticized that Dr William Anderson's "judgment was impaired by overmuch reliance on the academical standards of Western art". On the contrary, "Fenollosa's writing was apt to indulge in exaggeration and rhetoric; but inspired successive periods of production; he was never content merely to criticize from the outside. And this was a real service." See Laurence Binyon, "National Character in Art", *SR* 106, 10 October 1908, 447. Same passage was also published in *Littell's Living Age* 259, 5 December 1908, 627-9.

erection of a memorial stone beside the tomb of Fenollosa (Fig. 47). Binyon passed on his deep sympathy to Mrs Mary Fenollosa, second wife of the late Fenollosa and former Assistant of the Boston Museum.⁶⁰ Freer hoped it would be possible to edit and publish Fenollosa's manuscripts which were in the hands of his widow. In subsequent years, Binyon, Petrucci, Stein, Freer and other Western and Japanese scholars assisted in making the final revision to the pencil manuscripts. The first edition of a two-volume *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art* was published in London in 1912, with a revised edition published in 1913.

Before he left for Japan and China in September 1909, Freer who knew Binyon's initial plan for visiting America originally invited the couple to visit his art collection in Detroit in the autumn. In his letter to Binyon on 23 February, Freer suggested Binyon should look at Japanese and Chinese paintings in a new museum building at Boston and lecture on Oriental topics as Fenollosa did. Although Freer provided practical advice on travelling routes and costs, Binyon did not make his American trip until Freer returned from his Asian trips in 1909-11.⁶¹ During this period, Freer enriched his collection with a large number of Chinese paintings acquired on his two Asian trips.⁶² His enthusiasm for Chinese painting was awoken by their mutual friend, Ernst Voretzsch, who took the place of Fenollosa as adviser

⁶⁰ See Chisolm, *Fenollosa*, 211-2; Freer to Mary Fenollosa, 18 February 1909, CLFP-FGA, Box 8, Folder 36.

⁶¹ Freer suggested that May and June are good months for travel in the States, but September to December was a period for lectures. He also wrote: "if you come, I want you both for a week in Detroit. My bachelor home is a modest one, but I will do my best to give yourself and Mrs. Binyon the repose and quiet needed when viewing the screens, kakemono and pots, all of which shall be placed at your disposal." See Freer to Binyon, 23 February 1909, ALB, Vol. 4.

⁶² Freer first travelled to Asia in 1894-5. With Fenollosa's travel plan, he revisited China and Japan in 1906-7, and met Japanese collectors, including Hara Tomitarō 原富太郎 (1869-1939), a noted banker, silk merchant and art collector, as well as Masuda Takashi 益田 孝 (1848-1938), Head of the Mitsui business enterprise and renowned art collector of Japan. Apart from his visit to West Asia in 1908, Freer made two more visits to Asia, including China and Japan, in 1909 and 1910-1. See Lawton and Merrill, *Freer*, 59-97; Christine M. E. Guth, *Art, Tea, and Industry: Masuda Takashi and the Mitsui Circle*, New Jersey 1993, 161-83.

and encouraged Freer to explore important collections of Chinese art in China. They exchanged ideas about acquisitions, exhibitions, and discussed the attribution of Chinese painting.⁶³ In 1909, Voretzsch also introduced Freer to several prominent Chinese collectors in Hong Kong, and for the first time, the latter discussed Chinese connoisseurship with native experts. It helped him to make the acquaintance of other Chinese dealers and collectors in Peking which Freer found “the best point in China for a collector to work”, and where he acquired 228 pieces of Chinese painting.⁶⁴

During his last visit to China in 1910-1, Freer travelled extensively to different cities and historic places. He met John C. Ferguson (1866-1945), Chinese governmental adviser and art collector, who introduced him to important collectors and dealers in Peking and Shanghai, such as the official of the Qing court Duanfang, Pang Yuanji 龐元濟 (also known as Pang Laichen 龐萊臣) (1864-1949), Lee Van Ching 李文卿 (Li Wenqing, also known as Li Hongyi 李鴻儀), and the preeminent Paris-based dealer Loo Ching-Tsai 盧芹齋 (1880-1957).⁶⁵ The downfall of the Qing

⁶³ Voretzsch and Freer discussed the authenticity of paintings by Zhao Mengfu and Wu Daozi in their purchases, and their 1910-1 itinerary of visiting fine Chinese sculptures in different places in China. For Voretzsch’s correspondence with Freer between 1910 and 1919, see CLFP-FGA, Box 24, Folders 12-3.

⁶⁴ Freer told Voretzsch about his good impression of Peking, and mentioned their mutual friends, including Dr Ernst Große of Berlin and Dr Adolf Fischer of Cologne, whom Binyon met in 1910. Langdon Warner (1881-1955) also recorded Freer’s experience of Peking where he spent most of his time choosing paintings in shops. The new acquisitions made in 1909 increased the size of the Freer collection of Chinese paintings by almost seven times. See Freer to Voretzsch, 20 June 1910, CLFP-FGA, Box 24, Folder 12; database records of the Freer collection, Freer Gallery of Art/Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives; Langdon Warner, “The Freer Gift of Eastern Art to America”, *Asia* 23, August 1923, 591-2.

⁶⁵ John Calvin Ferguson was first involved in missionary and educational works in China. From 1902, he held various official and unofficial advisory posts in successive Chinese governments. After the collapse of the Qing regime, in 1912, Ferguson devoted himself to the study of Chinese art and literature and formed his collection with art works from the Imperial Palace, including the Duanfang collection. He also made acquisitions from the Duanfang collection for the Metropolitan Museum in New York City, while Charles Freer bought the famous *Nymph of the Luo River* handscroll, a Song copy painted in the style of Gu Kaizhi, in 1915. In the same year, Ferguson who was fluent in the Chinese language revised the spelling of Chinese names in the Catalogue of the Pang Laichen collection. Freer sent a copy of the Catalogue, together with two books on the collections of Lee Van Ching and Yue Seaouke (Pang Laichen’s friend), to Binyon in 1917. Nevertheless, Ferguson’s

dynasty provided Freer with a unique opportunity to purchase Chinese paintings of high artistic value from both private and imperial collections. His collection was boosted dramatically by 435 pieces of Chinese painting, including numerous hanging scrolls, handscrolls, album leaves and fans. Freer's preference for landscape painting is reflected in his acquisitions of 1909-11. Unlike the British Museum's collections which included more specimens of immortal figures, birds and flowers but relatively few landscapes, Freer's rich collection provided a valuable source of inspiration for Binyon's understanding of the style and design of Chinese landscape painting.

Binyon's Visit to America in 1912

While Freer explored the treasures of ancient China, Binyon was in charge of the reproduction of the *Admonitions* scroll and the cataloguing of Japanese and Chinese woodcuts. A study trip to the growing and splendid collections of Oriental art in America was bound to widen his exposure and deepen his understanding of Oriental painting. Colvin recommended Binyon be given four-week special leave, in addition to his regular vacation, to study the collections of Chinese paintings and Japanese woodcuts in the United States in the autumn of 1912 (See Appendix VIII).

Colvin stressed that

The two great collections of paintings are that of the Boston Museum and that of Mr. Freer at Detroit. That of the Boston Museum, originally formed from many sources under the direction of the late Mr. Fenollosa and now maintained under the expert advice of Mr. Okakura is probably the richest in the world and the best worth studying for the methods and appliances adopted for the safe keeping and exhibition of the specimens. Mr. Freer's collection is smaller but unrivalled for the specimens it contains of the periods to which it is confined viz., the Sung, Yuan and earlier dynasties.

interpretation and authentication of Chinese art have been questioned by later specialists. See correspondence between John C. Ferguson and Freer, 3 and 10 March 1915, CLFP-FGA, Box 8, Folder 38. For Freer's correspondence with the named collectors and dealers, see CLFP-FGA, Box 14, Folders 1, 17, 18; Box 18, Folders 7, 9; Box 29 Folders 1-6; Also see Thomas Lawton, "China's Artistic Legacy", in Denys Sutton (ed.), *Apollo, Charles Lang Freer as a Connoisseur* 118, August 1983, 127-9; Thomas Lawton, "John C. Ferguson: A Fellow Feeling of Fallibility", *Orientalism* 27, 1996, 67-76.

Of Japanese woodcuts there are many choice collections, especially at New York and at Chicago, principally in private hands. Mr. Binyon has for some years past received pressing invitations to visit these centres and study the collections there to which there has been added this year an invitation to lecture on the subject of Asiatic art at the Lowell Institute in Boston. Sir Sidney Colvin thinks it extremely desirable in the interests of the British Museum that he should be enabled to make use of the opportunity thus afforded of study in the field in which he has of recent years won special distinction both for himself and for the Museum.⁶⁶

The collections of Oriental art at the Boston Museum and at Freer's house were enormous, and included more than 5,000 pieces of Chinese and Japanese painting.⁶⁷

With the approval from the Trustees and the financial support from the Lowell Institute and other sources, Binyon finally got an opportunity to study the American collections of Oriental painting.⁶⁸

Binyon took with him a copy of the reproduction of the *Admonitions* scroll.

This was actually a second copy which had been prepared in advance and presented to Binyon with the recommendation of Campbell Dodgson who believed that

[T]his Museum publication will not only be of service to him in his lectures but is certain to rouse great interest among Transatlantic students and collectors of Oriental art. A valuable opportunity will then be afforded for introducing the facsimile shortly to be published by the Trustees to that section of the American public to which it will specially appeal.⁶⁹

On 1 November 1912, Binyon wrote to Thomas Bird Mosher (1852-1923) that "I am lecturing at the Lowell Institute, at Harvard & elsewhere ... I leave here on Nov[ember]

⁶⁶ Colvin to the Trustees, 8 April 1912, Reports at the DPD.

⁶⁷ In 1912, the Freer collection comprised more than 4,000 objects of American and Oriental arts. At this time, the Collection included 697 pieces of Chinese painting, excluding Chinese screens, wall hangings and tapestries. According to Osvald Sirén, the Bigelow collection at the Boston Museum comprised 59,809 objects of various Far Eastern examples, including 3,634 Chinese and Japanese paintings, while the Fenollosa collection consisted of 1,099 paintings, mainly of Japanese works. See database records of the Freer Gallery of Art; Laurence Binyon, "The Freer Collection", *Art and Progress* 3, June 1912, 613; Sirén, *Chinese Paintings in American Collections*, 7-8.

⁶⁸ The Trustees only granted the special leave of absence for Binyon without payment of expenses. CE3-SC, 13 April 1912, Box C16, Vol. 56, 2932.

⁶⁹ Dodgson to the Trustees, 4 October 1912, Reports at the DPD; CE3-SC, 12 October 1912, Box C16, Vol. 56, 3004.

10 for Detroit (c/o Mr. C. L. Freer, 33 Ferry Avenue) & shall be there about a fortnight.”⁷⁰ According to John Hatcher,

During two weeks in Boston, Binyon spent most of his time at the splendid new Museum of Fine Arts in Huntington Avenue, studying the magnificent Fenollosa-Bigelow collection and musing on the contrast between its spacious Japanese-style exhibition rooms and the cramped Print Room gallery back home.⁷¹

During his trip, Binyon was inundated with invitations to lecture,⁷² and made several short visits to other cities during his two-week stay in Freer’s house. On 12 November, he lectured in Ann Arbor, Chicago. Under the auspices of the Detroit Society of Arts and Crafts, he gave an evening talk on “What is Art? Ideas of Design in East and West” at the Detroit Museum of Art on 14 November.⁷³ He promoted the importance of life, humanity, freedom, and individual consciousness in art. He also introduced the Daoist-inspired spiritual qualities of the arts of China and Japan, which originated with the ideas of Laozi, and were expressed through asymmetric compositions, empty space, and the expression of movement.

Before he left for Toledo and Oberlin in Ohio on 19-21 November, Binyon told William Rothenstein about his experience in Detroit:

Detroit is very different. It produces over 100 motor cars a day. I am working at Freer’s magnificence collection. It takes one’s breath away: & the only drawback is that masterpieces are so exhausting.

Freer is a wonderful man – very American & the best type. His public spirit is magnificent. We found Cram the architect (do you know him?) a very interesting man, & doing some wonderful work.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Binyon to Thomas Bird Mosher, 1 November 1912, in the Mosher Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, bMS Am1096 (133).

⁷¹ Hatcher, *LB*, 171.

⁷² Binyon to Frederick Kenyon, [24] November 1912, a copy in ALB, Vol. 73.

⁷³ The lecture was later published in *Atlantic Monthly* in November 1913. See “Will Talk on Oriental Art” and “Get Connoisseur of Oriental Art”, *Detroit Free Press*, 8 November 1912, a copy in ALB, Vol. 69; Laurence Binyon, “Ideas of Design in East and West”, *Atlantic Monthly*, November 1913, 643-54.

⁷⁴ Binyon to Rothenstein, 17 November [1912], ALB, Vol. 75.

John Hatcher remarks that “Freer showed [Binyon] 5,000 slides of Oriental artworks which Fenollosa had taken in Japan, and lent him a caseful for his lecture to the Japan Society of New York.”⁷⁵ On 24 November, Binyon left Detroit with his precious memories of Freer’s house to carry out his study of Japanese woodcuts in Chicago, Philadelphia, Buffalo and New York.⁷⁶ He stated in his particulars on 27 December 1912 that the one-month visit in America proved to be great value for his work in the British Museum.

Binyon’s experience of studying collections of Oriental art in France, Germany and America gave him new insights to pursue the scientific study of Japanese and Chinese art with tangible specimens.⁷⁷ He increased his knowledge and confidence about Chinese painting. As Voretzsch said, “there is quite a school talking every word of Japanese connoisseur as holy script” in Europe in the early 1910s.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, Binyon began to substitute the predominant influence of Japanese connoisseurship with independent thoughts of his own:

We owe an enormous debt to the Japanese for making so many splendid works known to us in reproductions; but when we come to examine questions of authorship we too often find that what is certainly known amounts to deplorably little: nor must we forget that Japanese connoisseurs differ in their attributions no less widely than our connoisseurs of Italian art, as we have found in the case of the Museum collection. A careful consideration of all qualified criticism must go hand in hand with an unprejudiced study of the paintings themselves.⁷⁹

Freer also found that “the more I hear of Japanese scholarship concerning Chinese art,

⁷⁵ Hatcher, *LB*, 171.

⁷⁶ See Freer’s dairy, CLFP-FGA, Box 50, Folder 9, Vol. 22; Binyon to Rothenstein, 17 November [1912], ALB, Vol. 75.

⁷⁷ After returning from his American trip, Binyon went to see an important exhibition of Japanese prints in Paris in January 1913. It offered an opportunity to clear up some important points in the history of early Japanese prints in connection with his work on the catalogue of Japanese and Chinese woodcuts. The Trustees allowed him special leave for three days, while Treasury sanctioned his expenses at the usual rate. Binyon gave particulars of his visit on 7 February 1913. See CE3-SC, 11 January and 8 February 1913, Box C16, Vol. 56, 3035, 3046.

⁷⁸ Voretzsch to Freer, 13 September 1913, CLFP-FGA, Box 24, Folder 12.

⁷⁹ Binyon, “Chinese Paintings in the British Museum – II”, 91.

the less I value it. With you I fully agree that the Westerners may venture to have opinions of their own.”⁸⁰ Voretzsch echoed: “we must trust our own eyes and get at the bottom of the truth by doing so.” [sic]⁸¹ When Binyon revised his *Painting in the Far East* in 1913, Freer was delighted to do whatever he could to help Binyon illustrate the new edition. He sent Binyon photographs of selected works from his collection, and the copy of an inscription on a portrait which he thought was by Wu Daozi, with English translations by his interpreter Edmund Backhouse (1873-1944) in Peking. He also sent him a negative of the landscape scroll which was originally attributed to Ma Yuan of the Southern Song dynasty, but now recognized as a design of Xia Gui produced in the Ming dynasty.⁸² Binyon later dedicated his second edition of *Painting in the Far East* (1913) to Freer in whose library there is now a signed copy (Fig. 48).⁸³

Binyon’s Contact with the American Circle during the First World War

On 12 November 1914, Binyon lectured at Smith College.⁸⁴ He visited Francis Stewart Kershaw (1869-1930) who was one of the Keepers of Asiatic Art from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, had worked with Japanese experts, including the late Okakura Kakuzo.⁸⁵ They had possibly met in Boston in November 1912 and

⁸⁰ Freer was cheated by a group of Japanese dealers in Kyoto. The bad experience might lead to his deprecation of Japanese opinions. See Freer to Binyon, 30 June 1913, ALB, Vol. 4; Warner, “The Freer Gift of Eastern Art to America”, 590-1.

⁸¹ Voretzsch to Freer, 13 September 1913, CLFP-FGA, Box 24, Folder 12.

⁸² Freer to Binyon, 30 June 1913, ALB, Vol. 4.

⁸³ In August 1923, Binyon inscribed the third edition of his book to his memory of the late Charles Freer. Binyon praised, “[Freer], like Raphael Petrucci and Edouard Chavannes, to whom all students of Chinese art and lore owe so much, is now dead; but the Freer Museum at Washington, opened in May of this year, is an enduring monument of his enthusiasm and public spirit.” See Binyon, *PFE*, xiv.

⁸⁴ Binyon later gave lectures in Ann Arbor and Detroit on 21-24 November. See Freer’s diary, CLFP-FGA, Box 50, Folder 11, Vol. 24.

⁸⁵ Stewart Kershaw studied Japanese drawing under a Japanese friend called Suzuki at the Ohio State University, and after 1907, learnt about Japanese metalwork under the late Okabe Kakuya from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Through Okabe, Kershaw took the Keepership of Asiatic Art at the Boston Museum and oversaw the administrative work during the absence of Okakura. Due to his impaired health, he gradually took up less responsibility in the department and concentrated on the

thereafter maintained correspondence. Kershaw kept Binyon posted with new information about Oriental art in the United States and sent him photographs of recent acquisitions.⁸⁶ With an interest in Chinese ceramics, between 1910 and 1914 Kershaw also exchanged ideas about Chinese pottery with Binyon's colleague Robert L. Hobson.⁸⁷ Back in England, he modified and partly rewrote his lecture on "The Art of Asia" which was published in *Atlantic Monthly* in Boston in 1915. Binyon later gave the same lecture, in an expanded and revised version, at the 151st Joint Meeting of the Japan and China Societies in London on 24 November 1915. Binyon illustrated a comparative survey of the arts of Europe, India, China, Persia and Japan, and encouraged his audiences to explore the historical background and character of other Oriental countries without limiting their viewpoint to any one country or culture.⁸⁸

During the First World War, Binyon maintained correspondence with Freer. They kept each other posted with new acquisitions and exhibitions of Chinese painting in their home countries. At this time, a large number of important specimens of Chinese art, including numerous early paintings, bronzes and sculptures, became available in New York, and Freer secured several of them for his collection. As well as his new acquisition of two superb hanging scrolls by Ma Yuan, Freer secured a

study of Chinese ceramics. On his second visit to America, Binyon expected to arrive in Boston on 6th or 7th November 1914, and planned to visit the Kershaw couple for a few days. He also proposed to give a reading from contemporary English poets at the Worcester Museum. See Binyon to Kershaw, 21 July 1914, in the Henry Oscar Houghton Additional Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, bMS Am2048 (97). For Kershaw's background, see Tomita Kojiro, "Francis Stewart Kershaw 1869-1930", *Artibus Asiae* 3, 1928-9, 238-40.

⁸⁶ Kershaw to Binyon, 10 February 1922, ALB, Vol. 7.

⁸⁷ Hobson saw Freer in New York on 15 January 1914. He studied with Berthold Laufer at the Field Museum in Chicago where he stayed from the 18th to the 21st. He then went off to Detroit and Niagara, and finally saw Kershaw in Boston on the 24th. See Hobson to Kershaw, 24 November 1910, 11 November 1912, 8 January 1913, 9 and 15 January 1914, in the Henry Oscar Houghton Additional Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, bMS Am2048 (102).

⁸⁸ See Laurence Binyon, "The Art of Asia", *Atlantic Monthly*, September 1915, 348-59; Laurence Binyon, "The Art of Asia", *Transactions and Proceedings of the Japan Society* 14, 1916, 2-23. Binyon also contributed his poems to the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1915, 1917 and 1919. See Binyon to Ellery Sedgwick, 26 February 1915, in Special Collections and Western Manuscripts, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Atlantic Monthly MS. FILM 580, Roll No. 117A.

collection of one hundred paintings which had been acquired by his friends in China since his last visit in 1910-1. Freer sent Binyon *Descriptions of Famous Chinese Paintings* (Fig. 49), a Catalogue of the Lee Van Ching collection in Shanghai.⁸⁹ Freer noted that

Nearly all of the American museums of note are interesting themselves very eagerly in Chinese art, and the outlook in America for a better understanding and appreciation of Oriental art is very gratifying.

The terrible catastroph[e] through which Europe is now passing has been the cause of sending many Oriental art objects to America, and it seems in a way unfair that America should profit during the great upheaval through which our friends are passing.⁹⁰

The war led to the part closure of the British Museum. Binyon envied the supply of fine Chinese works to America, and stated regretfully:

But heaven knows when we shall ever get any grant again for making purchases – not for many years, I dare say – so we must be resigned to America getting all the fine things, & to our falling hopelessly behind. As far as Oriental art is concerned you deserve to get the best, for you have been more enterprising & serious than we have in Europe.⁹¹

When new acquisition became impossible, Binyon spent the spring of 1916 finishing the long delayed publication *A Catalogue of Japanese & Chinese Woodcuts* (1916). It had taken him almost ten years to arrange and classify the Museum's large collections of Japanese colour-prints acquired between 1860 and 1910. Fifty-seven Chinese woodcuts from the collections of Stein, Sir Hans Sloane, and books were added for illustration and comparison.⁹² At the same time, Binyon worked on an essay

⁸⁹ The Catalogue of the Lee Van Ching collection is now kept in the departmental library of Asia at the British Museum. Freer to Binyon, 28 February 1916; Binyon to Freer, 18 March 1916, CLFP-FGA, Box 3, Folder 20.

⁹⁰ Freer to Binyon, 28 February 1916, CLFP-FGA, Box 3, Folder 20.

⁹¹ Binyon to Freer, 20 March 1916, ALB, Vol. 73.

⁹² Originally, Binyon was expected to complete *A Catalogue of Japanese and Chinese Woodcuts* in 1909. However, his ignorance of the Japanese language, the difficulty of the task and the slow progress of mounting were critical reasons for the delay in publishing. Japanese experts, including S. Nishigori, S. Takaishi, T. Wakameda and H. Inada, provided Binyon with assistance. The task was also interrupted by Binyon's trips to Paris, Germany and America for the study of Japanese and Chinese art between

on Freer's so-called Ma Yuan scroll, *Grand View of Rivers and Mountains* (Fig. 50).⁹³ It was a handscroll over forty foot long, depicting a grand view of mountains and rivers, with many water ways, boats, bridges, dwellings, temples, pavilions, inhabitants and travellers. It was purchased from a private owner, through Riu Cheng Chai, Peking for \$1,800 on Freer's visit to China in 1910-1.⁹⁴

In 1913, Freer invited a well known photographer from Boston to photograph the Ma Yuan scroll.⁹⁵ Freer was pleased with the Detroit Photographing Company's ten copies. He intended to present them to European and American Museums and wanted the photograph to be accompanied by Binyon's essay.⁹⁶ On 2 November 1915, Binyon was invited by Freer to write a descriptive article on the Ma Yuan scroll which would be privately printed and issued in New York with ten photographs. Binyon accepted the commission and was glad to write something for the Ma Yuan.⁹⁷ The photographic copy of the Ma Yuan scroll reached Binyon in late December 1915 when he was busy in finishing an introduction for *A Catalogue of Japanese and*

1907 and 1914, as well as his supervision of the Stein collection and other projects. See Colvin to the Trustees, 9 April 1907 and 3 July 1908, Reports at the DPD; CE3-SC, 11 May, 9 November and 14 December 1907, Box C15, Vol. 53, 2347, 2406, 2418; Colvin to the Trustees, 2 November 1907, CE4-OP, Box OP 194, Vol. 104, P No. 3776; Colvin to the Trustees, 10 October 1911, CE4-OP, Box OP196, Vol. 108, P No. 4035.

⁹³ There is no record showing Binyon's visit to America between 15 April and 15 June 1912 when the so-called Ma Yuan landscape scroll and other art objects from the Freer collection were exhibited at the National Museum, Washington. However, Binyon published an exhibition review and praised the artistic value of Freer's rich collection of American and Oriental arts. He also mentioned a number of Chinese paintings in his article. See Laurence Binyon, "The Freer Collection", *Art and Progress* 3, June 1912, 613-7. It is noteworthy that the 1912 Exhibition Catalogue provided Chinese painters' biographical notes extracted from the 1905 publications on Chinese painting by Herbert Giles and Fredrich Hirth, as well as the *Kokka*. It shows that Binyon and American scholars consulted the same reference books in their studies of Chinese painting. See National Collections of Fine Arts (U.S.), *Catalogue of a Selection of Art Objects from the Freer Collection exhibited in the New Building of the National Museum, April 15 to June 15, 1912*, Washington 1912, 7-8, 22-37.

⁹⁴ This so-called Ma Yuan scroll of landscape was 64.2cm in height and 1276.4cm in length, painted in ink and colours on silk. Apart from the inscriptions, signatures and seals on the mount, the painting included two inscriptions written by different imperial officials, and a large imperial seal. Nevertheless, the scroll carried a forged signature of the Southern Song dynasty court painter Ma Yuan. See the inventory records of the painting, Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian 66, F1911.169.

⁹⁵ Freer to Binyon, 30 June 1913, ALB, Vol. 4.

⁹⁶ Freer to Binyon, 2 November 1915, CLFP-FGA, Box 3, Folder 19.

⁹⁷ Binyon to Freer, 19 November 1915, ALB, Vol. 73.

Chinese Woodcuts to be published in 1916. Binyon and his friends who had seen the scroll were enthusiastic about the beauty of the painting.⁹⁸ On 18 April 1916, Freer received Binyon's essay, with translations of inscriptions done by Arthur Waley and S. C. Cheng.⁹⁹ He found it most interesting and of lasting value to many students of Ma Yuan's paintings, and sent Binyon £100 as an honorarium.¹⁰⁰ Through his *Ma Yüan's Landscape Roll* (1916),¹⁰¹ Binyon further affirmed his reputation among museums and private collectors in the United States.¹⁰²

Binyon uncritically accepted the authenticity of the Ma Yuan scroll. He overestimated its formal qualities, and overlooked its material history:

If anyone [has] doubts of the authenticity of such a painting as this – and it behoves us to be critical – let him note how his imagination will let him enter the picture and roam this country that it discloses; he will find everywhere his feet on firm ground, he will know where it rises and where it slopes away, he will not confuse the near and the distant or have the sensation of one who misses a step on a dark staircase. But the copyist, and the painter who is not a master, will not endure this test.¹⁰³

The Ma Yuan scroll is now recognized by later experts as a work painted to the design

⁹⁸ On 24 November 1915, the photographic reproduction of the Ma Yuan scroll was shipping to Binyon via American Express Company, with all charges prepaid by Freer. Binyon received the copy a few days before 30 December when Binyon was writing on Japanese prints. The book did not concern with paintings at all, so Binyon believed that it will not interest Freer. See Freer's Secretary to Binyon, 24 November 1915, CLFP-FGA, Box 3, Folder 19; Binyon to Freer, 30 December 1915 and 27 April 1917, ALB, Vol. 73; Fenollosa, "The Collection of Mr. Charles L. Freer", 64.

⁹⁹ See Binyon, *Ma Yüan's Landscape Roll*, New York 1916; curatorial notes on the Ma Yuan scroll in the Freer Gallery of Art, F1911.169.

¹⁰⁰ Two hundred and fifty copies of the Monograph on Ma Yuan were printed by the DeVinne Press to cope with the rapidly growing interest in Chinese art in New York City. Ten copies were sent to Binyon, while about four dozen copies went distributed to several leading museums and private collectors in America. The Monograph on Ma Yuan and the reproduction of the painting attracted lots of attention in America. Freer was pleased to receive expressions of appreciation from the recipients. Meanwhile, Binyon helped advertise the Ma Yuan painting in England and proposed to publish a notice on it in the *Burlington Magazine*. See Freer to Binyon, 13 May, 17 August and 19 September 1916, CLFP-FGA, Box 3, Folder 20; Binyon to Freer, 31 August 1916, ALB, Vol. 3.

¹⁰¹ In his Monograph on Ma Yuan, it is noteworthy that Binyon did not refer to his early reference of Okakura's *The Ideals of the East* but recommended to consult Raphael Petrucci's *La Philosophie de la Nature dans l'Art d'Extrême Orient* (1911) for the understanding of Confucianism, Laoism and Buddhism. It seems to be a way to depart from the influence of Japanese connoisseurship after more European scholars devoted to the scientific study of Oriental art. See Binyon, *Ma Yüan's Landscape Roll*, 15, 19-25.

¹⁰² Freer to Binyon, 17 August 1916, ALB, Vol. 4.

¹⁰³ Binyon, *Ma Yüan's Landscape Roll*, 21.

of Xia Gui, Ma's contemporary. It was not produced in the Southern Song dynasty but the Ming period. According to Yu Hui, Western museums were accustomed to attribute Ming paintings of the Zhe School to the ink paintings of the Southern Song dynasty, and did not re-authenticate the dating and authorship until the 1960s when too many Chinese paintings in Western collections were claimed to be products of the Song dynasty.¹⁰⁴ In fact, Song paintings were transmitted to Japan through trade at Ningbo during the Song and Yuan dynasties. The Song painting styles, especially those of Southern Song court painters like Ma Yuan and Xia Gui, inspired the Ming painters of the Zhe School, whose styles and paintings were later transmitted to Japan through the diplomatic and commercial activities at Ningbo during the mid-fifteenth century.¹⁰⁵ While the development of Chinese art in the Ming dynasty was generally perceived as “decadence” and “decline” by pioneering collectors of Japanese and Chinese art like Anderson and Fenollosa, Freer and other collectors in Europe and America did not actually learn about the Ming art, or the Zhe School and its predominant influence of the Southern Song style, from the early writings of scholars. Likewise, Binyon seems to have been overwhelmed by the romantic moods of Freer's landscape roll, and failed to recognize the different compositional design of the Ma-Xia school.¹⁰⁶ He also failed to recognize the different brushwork of the Song and Ming painters.

¹⁰⁴ See Li Jianya, “Yu Hui: Xunzhao Gugong yu Daying de Duijie”, *Xinjing Bao*, 1 July 2007, (*The Beijing News*, Beijing, [date accessed, 25 November 2009]), <http://www.thebeijingnews.com/culture/xzzk/2007/07-01/015@054936.htm>.

¹⁰⁵ See “Art Exchanges Abroad”, *Tracing the Che School in Chinese Painting* (National Palace Museum, Taipei, [date accessed, 30 November 2009]), http://tech2.npm.gov.tw/cheschool/zh-tw/index.aspx?content=e_2_0.

¹⁰⁶ Ma Yuan and Xia Gui were influential landscape painters of the Southern Song dynasty. They departed from the style of Northern Song landscape and created two unique compositional designs, known as “One-corner Ma” – focusing on the bottom corner of the painting – and “Half-composition Xia” – emphasizing the bottom half of the painting. Their works suggested the loftiness of emotion and grandeur of conception. A large proportion of empty space was used to evoke imagination, while the use of soft tone in mist and remote landscape generated atmospheric effect.

Although Binyon and Freer shared common interests and had a strong taste for classical Chinese painting, their attributions were questioned and revised by later experts. According to Binyon's notes which he made on his visit to Freer's collection, he saw some birds and flower paintings of the Song dynasty, landscape paintings by Guo Xi and Dai Jin 戴進 (1388-1462), a horse painting in the style of Han Kan, as well as a figure painting in the style of Li Longmian.¹⁰⁷ It is true that the Freer collection included some Chinese paintings of the Song and Yuan periods.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, many of the paintings which were originally attributed to the pre-Yuan periods are now recognized as either copies of early specimens produced by later painters or modern works of the Ming and Qing dynasties. Osvald Sirén pointed out that Freer's attributions were mostly based on information conveyed to him by native art dealers, while his historical knowledge was mainly derived from Herbert Giles's *An Introduction to the History of Chinese Pictorial Art* (1905). Freer had great confidence in his own personal feelings and aesthetic reactions, but his attributions lacked critical knowledge. He tended to use the great names of the pre-Yuan masters to support his own and his friends' enthusiasm.¹⁰⁹

Binyon explained that Freer's "policy was to buy any good painting that claimed to be of the Sung period or earlier, on the chance of the claim being established by future research. In most case, of course, the claim has not been

¹⁰⁷ The undated notes in the notebook were rather close to Binyon's itinerary for his 1926 visit to America. He might therefore have seen the relevant Chinese paintings in the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington D.C., rather than in Freer's house in Detroit years before. See Binyon's little black notebook, ALB, Vol. 39.

¹⁰⁸ The Freer Gallery of Art has recently launched a new webpage, showing documentation and images of eighty-five works (including eighty-two paintings) from the collection of Chinese painting and calligraphy dating to the Song and Yuan periods. See *Song and Yuan Dynasty Painting and Calligraphy* (Freer Gallery of Art, Washington D. C., [date accessed 3 February 2010]), <http://www.asia.si.edu/SongYuan/default.asp>.

¹⁰⁹ See Sirén, *Chinese Paintings in American Collections*, 18; Warner, "The Freer Gift of Eastern Art to America", 612-3.

sustained, but the residue of really fine works makes the collection a very important one.”¹¹⁰ Katharine Rhoades (1885-1965), Freer’s assistant, also argued:

Often Mr. Freer left unchanged the dealers’ attributions. It did not overly concern him if a Chinese painting was erroneously attributed to one artist or another; the rendition of a noble tradition was there, he believed the quality was good, and he knew that others would come to amend and ascribe anew; his business was to collect and to provide means for the continuance of both collecting and study.¹¹¹

At a time when so little was known among collectors and curators, it is understandable why the two pioneers lacked reliable information concerning Chinese attributions. Nonetheless, their intuitive judgment showed their shared preference for a particular group of great masters, styles and subject matter of classical Chinese painting. At the beginning of the twentieth century, it was the general belief that the best Chinese painting was to be found in Japan but not in China. Having collected assiduously in China, Freer proved that this was not the case. When other collectors followed, a large quantity of Chinese paintings began to appear on the art markets of Europe and America. “The revelation of the beauty and grandeur of the older Chinese art has had the effect of unduly depreciating the art of Japan.”¹¹² At the same time Binyon expanded understanding of Chinese pictorial art through lectures and publications in Britain and abroad. Hence, both of them made a major contribution to the study of traditional Chinese painting in America and Britain.¹¹³

Unfortunately, Binyon’s enthusiasm for Oriental painting was hampered by the

¹¹⁰ Binyon, Book Review of “Chinese Paintings in America”, *BM* 55, September 1929, 146.

¹¹¹ Katharine Rhoades, “An Appreciation of Charles Lang Freer (1856-1919)”, *Ars Orientalis* 2, 1957, 2.

¹¹² Binyon, *Asiatic Art in the British Museum (Sculpture and Painting)*, 11.

¹¹³ To broaden aesthetic appreciation of Oriental art and culture, Freer offered to bequeath his rich collection to the Smithsonian Institute in 1904. The formal Deed of Gift was executed on 5 May 1906, but the Freer collection did not transfer from Detroit to the new Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, D. C. until 1920. The Gallery was formally opened to the public on 2 May 1923, with first-rate exhibitions and research carried on by experts in their respective fields. See Howard Mansfield, “Charles Lang Freer”, *Parnassus* 7, October 1935, 16-8, 31.

unfavourable economic state of Britain during the war. On 1 March 1916, the British Museum was temporarily closed. Binyon thought that he “shall be more a prisoner here than ever”.¹¹⁴ Binyon was granted a special leave of no more than three months to assist the French Red Cross at the English Hospital for French Soldiers (at Arc-en-Barrois, serving the Army of the Argonne).¹¹⁵ Returning to London in the summer of 1916, he found that “it is dull & dreary indeed to be caged in this closed Museum, especially now that all the best things are put away out of sight for safety’s sake.”¹¹⁶ He also found it difficult making new purchases during the war to maintain the Museum’s collections of Oriental art. During this period, Freer not only served as a listener, but also provided Binyon with information and photographs, catalogues of Chinese art exhibitions in America, and catalogues of Chinese painting in private collections in China.

When the British Museum was “more a desert than ever, with almost everything put away”,¹¹⁷ as I mentioned in Chapter IV, Binyon began to learn a little Chinese, while Waley devoted himself to the study of Japanese and Chinese languages. He also spent most of his time supervising the reproduction of the Stein paintings, which he thought would make a fine portfolio, but it was not published until after the war. Binyon also longed for a chance to see Freer’s recent acquisitions after his last visit in 1914. On the other hand, he wanted to join the army if the Museum granted him permission.¹¹⁸ At that time Binyon was a machine gunner, but his age (forty-nine)

¹¹⁴ Binyon to William Rothstein, 17 February 1916, Asia, Pacific & African Collections, BL, Mss Eur B213/46.

¹¹⁵ In 1917, Binyon took another special leave, with his ordinary vacation, to serve at English hospitals for French soldiers on 3-30 May. For details, see CE3-SC, 11 December 1915, 8 January 1916, 24 February and 9 June 1917, Box C16, Vol. 58, 3425, 3434, 3527, 3541; CE4-OP, 1 June 1917, Box OP199, Vol. 113, PNo 1043.

¹¹⁶ Binyon to Freer, 4 August 1916, ALB, Vol. 73.

¹¹⁷ Binyon to Freer, 6 May 1918, ALB, Vol. 73.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

and physical fitness made him more suited to lecturing to the soldiers in France about Chinese and Japanese civilization and art.¹¹⁹

Sadly, Binyon lost his companion on 25 September 1919 when Freer died in New York City. He did not make his third visit to the United States, which included a visit to Toronto, with its museum's rich collection of Oriental art, until November 1926.¹²⁰ Binyon was eager to see all his American friends, including Langdon Warner from the Pennsylvania Museum of Art,¹²¹ and Stewart Kershaw from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and to see recent acquisitions of Oriental art in the American collections made after his last visit in 1914. Binyon made pencil notes of some remarkable paintings which he saw in various places.¹²² In Chicago, he saw several important collections of Japanese prints and some Chinese paintings, including a landscape painting in the style of Wang Wei and a figure painting by Liu Songnian 劉松年 (1174-1224) at the Field Museum. He also saw some Buddhist paintings at the Cleveland Museum of Art in Ohio. Revisiting the Freer collection, now in the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, D. C., Binyon studied figure and animal paintings of the

¹¹⁹ Binyon mentioned in a letter to Sir Aurel Stein that he was invited by the Y. M. C. A. to lecture to the French troops for a fortnight on Chinese civilization. See Binyon to Freer, 17 October 1918, ALB, Vol. 73; Binyon to Stein, 15 October 1918, the Papers of Sir Marc Aurel Stein, Bodleian Library, MSS. Stein 410, fols 112-3.

¹²⁰ For Binyon's third American travel in 1926, see Binyon to Warner, 20 April 1926, ALB, Vol. 75. Binyon to Cicely Binyon, 2, 4, 7, 21 and 25 November, ALB, Vol. 64; "Vigorous Art of T'ang Period discussed by Oriental Expert", *Christian Science Monitor* 18, 23 November 1926, 1. A copy is kept in ALB, Vol. 23.

¹²¹ Langdon Warner was curator of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts from 1906 to 1913, and appointed as instructor and lecture at Harvard University from 1912 to 1915. In 1906 he made his first visit to Japan and developed a strong interest in Japanese art and culture. In 1914, Warner undertook investigations in Europe and Asia, on behalf of the proposed School of Archaeology in China and an Asiatic Institute with headquarters in New York, as well as the Cleveland Museum. He went to Turkestan and China, via Europe, for field work. During his stay in London, Warner met Binyon in the British Museum. In 1917, Warner became Director of the Pennsylvania Museum, and in 1922 returned to Harvard University, taking up a fellowship for research in Asian art at the Fogg Museum. See Freer to Binyon, 2 November 1915, CLFP-FGA, Box 3, Folder 19; [Freer to Binyon], undated, ALB, Vol. 4; Jr. Benjamin Rowland, "Langdon Warner 1881-1955", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 18, December 1955, 447-50; Theodore Bowie, *Langdon Warner through his Letters*, London 1966, 35-80.

¹²² See Binyon's little black notebook, ALB, Vol. 39.

Tang dynasty, as well as bird and flower and landscape paintings of the Song dynasty. He was particularly impressed by the Song landscapes by Li Cheng 李成 (919-967) and Tung Yuan 董源 (c. 934-962) as reflected in his pencil sketches. He also saw several paintings by renowned Chinese painters, such as Ma Yuan, Xia Gui, Fan Kuan 范寬 (c. 956-1026), Qiu Ying, and Shen Zhou 沈周 (1427–1509). In Boston and New York, Binyon studied Indian, Korean and Japanese paintings. Furthermore, Binyon lectured on Chinese poetry, Chinese art of the Tang and Song dynasties, Indian painting, and read some of his English poems to his American friends and students in Chicago, Providence, Boston, and New York. His fame in the United States resulted in him taking the distinguished American Charles Eliot Norton Professorship at Harvard University in 1933-4, after his retirement from the Keepership of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum.¹²³

¹²³ Binyon was offered the Norton Professorship in 1926 for giving six lectures during his residence at Harvard between September 1927 and June 1928. Due to the British Museum and family circumstances, he did not take it up until 1933. See Binyon to Cicely Binyon, 7 and 21 November 1926, ALB, Vol. 64.

Chapter VII

A Quest for Spiritual Ideals: Binyon's Interpretation of Chinese Painting

Between 1895 and 1942 Binyon published numerous works on European and Oriental art in the forms of books, exhibition guides, catalogues, journal articles, and chapters in books. He gradually extended his study to Oriental art, but continued to write art criticism on European art, with a special interest in William Blake and English watercolourists, in books, journals and newspapers, such as the *Saturday Review* and the *Times*. Around 1903 Binyon decided “to write something about Rhythm, - not in verse only, but in all art & in life. It is what gives life to all good painting ... & is why art is superior to nature.”¹ The unity of poetry and painting and their common element “Rhythm”, as well as their functions in “life”, became central ideas to Binyon’s writings on Chinese painting.

Between 1907 and 1913 Binyon worked full-time preparing *A Catalogue of Japanese & Chinese Woodcuts* (1916), a critical and historical catalogue of the Museum’s Japanese colour-woodcuts for the use of students. At the same time, he was writing verse, plays, and art criticism. In 1908 Binyon published *Painting in the Far East* for a wider public. His aim was to survey the achievements of Oriental painting, to kindle an interest in the art of Asia, and to encourage readers to more exhaustive study.² Binyon used his role in the new Sub-department of Oriental Prints to lecture

¹ Binyon to Carissima, 29 July [1903/4?], ALB, Vol. 59.

² See Binyon, *PFE*, vii-xiii.

on the art of Asia widely, in universities, museums and other cultural societies. Among Binyon's lectures, *The Art of Asia* (1915-6), *Landscape in English Art and Poetry* (1930), and *The Spirit of Man in Asian Art* (1935) were reprinted many times in London and New York. In addition to the British Museum's catalogues, and publications of the Stein collection, Binyon contributed to other books, such as *Asiatic Art in the British Museum (Sculpture and Painting)* (1925), *Chinese Paintings in English Collections* (1927), and *The George Eumorfopoulos Collection: Catalogue of the Chinese, Korean and Siamese Paintings* (1928).

Binyon's conception of Oriental painting determined his taste in acquisitions and his choice of exhibition displays. All these factors had an impact on public taste and shaped the occidental understanding of Oriental art. Further to my discussion of Binyon's early study of Chinese painting in Chapters II, III and IV, this chapter investigates his further approach to Chinese painting. I will also examine Binyon's conception of art and his interpretation of Chinese aesthetic and philosophical ideas. Special attention will be given to the ideas of "rhythm", "life", as well as "harmony of man and nature".

Binyon's Approach to Chinese Painting

In *Painting in the Far East*, as in his other writings on Oriental painting, Binyon adopted a comparative approach to illustrate the art traditions of the East, mainly China and Japan, from the fourth to the nineteenth century. Typical masters of each period were chosen to illustrate predominant ideas of their time. The *Kokka* magazine, Tajima Shiichi's *Select Relics of Japanese Art*³ and *Selected Masterpieces*

³ Tajima Shiichi was the editor of the *Select Relics of Japanese Art*, a twenty-volume set published

from the *Fine Arts of the Far East*,⁴ as well as the paintings in the British Museum and the Freer collection, were the major sources for reproductions. The revised editions also kept general students updated with fine examples and the growth of Oriental painting in British and overseas collections. They indicated the growing interest in Japanese and Chinese paintings among collectors and museums in the West, and Binyon's increasing knowledge of the subject throughout his four-decade career at the British Museum.

In 1908 when he published his first edition of *Painting in the Far East*, Binyon made frequent comparisons of the creative methods, aesthetics and philosophies of Chinese and European art between the East and West. He asserted that

Of all the nations of the East, the Chinese is that which through all its history has shown the strongest aesthetic instinct, the fullest and richest imagination. And painting is the art in which that instinct and that imagination have found their highest and most complete expression. If we are to compare the art of the East and the art of the West, in their essential character and differences, we must take as our type of the former the pictorial art of China.⁵

The great original art tradition of Europe has its home in Greece; the great original art tradition of Asia has its home in China. Each race is pre-eminent in its feeling for harmony and rhythm, the foundation of all art.⁶

Binyon conceived Chinese painting to have the highest aesthetic value among the art

between 1899 and 1908. The set presents reproductions of Japanese art relics from the earliest times up to the Edo period (1603-1868 CE) from collections in Buddhist Temples in Nara and Kyoto and those held in private collectors. The folios bound in Japanese style including 899 black and white double folded leaves collotypes and eighty-eight color woodcuts. Each plate had text in English and Japanese which describes the art and artist, as well as the location of the Japanese relics. Ernest Fenollosa contributed a two-page English introduction to the first volume.

⁴ It was a twelve-volume set of plates of Japanese and Chinese paintings with the great advantage of being arranged chronologically. Volumes 1 to 7 include plates and descriptions of the history of Japanese pictorial art, while volumes 8 to 12 consisted of plates and descriptions of Chinese paintings. See Tajima Shiichi (ed.), *Selected Masterpieces from the Fine Arts of the Far East*, 12 Vols, Tokyo 1909-19.

⁵ Binyon, *PFE*, 7.

⁶ *Ibid*, 56. Binyon mentioned in his lecture on "Ideas of Design in East and West" that Greek art was ideal model because it expresses a harmony of the human faculties and a splendid consciousness of human power. Moreover, Binyon reiterated in *The Spirit of Man in Asian Art* (1935) that "[e]verywhere in Asia it is the art of China which, like Greek art in Europe, has enjoyed the greatest prestige." See Binyon, "Ideas of Design in East and West", 648; Binyon, *SMAA*, 13.

of Asia. In particular, the Chinese instinct for “imagination” was indispensable for generating a series of effects in art, including “expression”, “liberation”, “harmony”, “rhythm”, “movement” and so on. Imagination in art was important to balance the materialistic and scientific conceptions of European art. Binyon’s opinion was that

The art of Europe since the Renaissance, with no very coherent spiritual ideal of life behind it, has fallen back more and more on the material world. It has been the tendency in the West, in art as in religion, to materialize the unseen, to reduce infinity to the finite. We have conceived of as perfection as something that ends activity, as a completion, a state of repose.⁷

While European art was more concerned with the exploration of Nature through scientific discovery, Binyon believed that the imagination in Chinese painting was a truer manifestation of philosophical and poetic ideas. He was fascinated by the rhythm and inner spirit of expressive lines, and by more abstract qualities, such as symbolic subject matter, expressive brushworks, as well as the use of empty space. These pictorial qualities suggested the spiritual idea of life which, Binyon found, was essential for modern Europeans.

Binyon realized that

Most Chinese paintings correspond to the lyric in poetry, being the rhythmical expression of emotion. Many painters were also poets, and often the two arts of writing and painting would be combined, when the artist wrote his own poem in the empty space on his picture; it thus became a very personal production.⁸

This combination was also characteristic of the art of some British Romantics, such as William Blake, who was both painter and poet. Binyon praised Blake as “a kind of prophet” for Europeans of the early twentieth century.⁹ “His poetic temperament

⁷ Binyon, “Ideas of Design in East and West”, 649.

⁸ Laurence Binyon, “Approach to Chinese Art”, *L. S. P. Record* 20, April 1943, 50.

⁹ Rudolph de Cordova, “Some Phases in Literature and Art. An Interview with Mr. Laurence Binyon”, *Great Thoughts*, 23 May 1914, 120.

manifests itself pictorially in his love of movement.”¹⁰ Blake’s art reacted against the Renaissance tradition of scientific progress, and expressed a personal vision through imaginative design, using rhythmical lines and radiant colour. “His paintings were for him a kind of poetry.”¹¹ In “The Art of Blake” of 1904, Binyon wrote that the artistic ideals of Blake were close to that of the Chinese painters of a thousand years ago. They shared the same intention with their subjects, by evoking the shape of flames and water. They too rejected chiaroscuro, and used rhythmically sweeping lines worked in light washes and glowing tones.¹² Such imaginative lyricism was lost by the Impressionists who were committed to optical study and the mere imitation of nature. Although the Post-Impressionists used expressive designs and Futurism addressed the notion of rhythm, Binyon believed that modern art movements, like Cubism, were too theoretically based.¹³ For him, many art movements had been “rising & melting like waves of the sea” during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; “[i]t was often not very clear what each group wanted to achieve. But each

¹⁰ Laurence Binyon, “English Poetry in its Relation to Painting and the Other Arts”, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 8, 5 June 1918, 396.

¹¹ Binyon did not deny all the glories of Renaissance art and found that Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni (1475-1564), whose art created his visions of beauty, power, pity and terror, showed the heights of towering imagination. However, Michelangelo only influenced one side of such an art as Blake desired; his study of muscular form and sculptured mass conflicted with Blake’s inborn ideals and his use of grand and energetic rhythm of line. On the contrary, the slender figures and flowing draperies of medieval sculpture were more consonant with the spiritual fervour of Blake’s mind. For Binyon’s accounts on Blake’s distinctive style, see Binyon, “The Art of Blake”, *Independent Review* 2, April 1904, 411-4; Binyon, *Art and Modern Life: A Lecture*, Bristol 1929, 8, 14-5; Binyon, *Landscape in English Art and Poetry* (hereafter *LEAP*), London 1931, 148-9, 155, 167-95.

¹² At a time when Binyon encountered the *Admonitions* scroll and Okakura’s *The Ideals of the East*, perhaps these experiences drew him to associate Blake’s ideals with the spiritual ideals of ancient Chinese art. However, Binyon noted that Blake was quite ignorant of the existence of Chinese art at his time, although he used much Chinese ink in his work. Thus, the affinity of Blake with Chinese painters was merely Binyon’s assertion. See Binyon, “The Art of Blake”, 411; Binyon, “Some Phases of Religious Art in Eastern Asia”, *Quest*, July 1911, 664.

¹³ Binyon also criticized that Paul Cézanne’s (1839-1906) landscape created solidity and stability and showed a grasp of the structure of things, and of the relationships between them. However, Cézanne’s art was weak in imagining or suggesting movement. For Binyon’s criticism on Post-Impressionism, see Binyon, “Post-Impressionists”, *SR* 110, 12 November 1910, 609-10; Binyon, *LEAP*, 286. For Binyon’s criticism on modern art movements, see also “We Need More Emotional Understanding in our Art”, *New York Times*, 15 December 1912, 14; Binyon, *Art and Modern Life*, 13-4.

got a certain stimulus & enjoyment for attacking the group that went before.”¹⁴ While too much attention was paid to Impressionism, Symbolism, Imagism, Vorticism and other movements, Binyon stressed that “[i]n the arts it is the man & not the movement that creates.”¹⁵ Thus, attention should be paid to the liberation of an artist’s individuality and spirit.

In *Rhythm*, in 1912, Binyon advocated “The Return to Poetry” by introducing the new spiritual vision of Chinese painting. He urged a change in European artistic ideas:

How long have we been sitting down before Nature and letting her impose herself upon us! Our imaginations have been schooled into passivity. Unconsciously enslaved, we were growing benumbed. And now we want to stretch our limbs, to move, to dance, to feel our life-blood running again.¹⁶

When he first travelled to America in November 1912, Binyon also encouraged the American public’s awareness of new horizons. He said:

Science is beginning to tell us that the essence of things is movement; ultimate realities are expressed nowadays in terms of force and energy and rhythm. The understanding of this feeling of movement in the world is what must creep into our art. The realism which we have been worshiping must give way to a different kind of realism.¹⁷

Binyon found Chinese philosophical ideas, embodied in Chinese painting, more important:

At first it seemed just a matter of reticence, an infinite tact in spacing. But we can learn nothing from the outside. These novel solutions of the problem of design, this sufficing simplicity, come entirely from mental outlook, a philosophy of life, a conception of the world. The secret of this art is all in the paradoxes of Lao-tzū, and in his doctrine of the Tao, - the Way, - the ever-

¹⁴ Binyon, “Modern Movements in Art and Literature”, undated [1930s], ALB, Vol. 29.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ See Binyon, “The Return to Poetry”, *Rhythm* 4, Spring 1912, 1.

¹⁷ “We Need More Emotional Understanding in our Art”, *New York Times*, 15 December 1912, 14. In his lecture “The Art of Asia”, Binyon reiterated that the absence of the scientific spirit and its application to art was perhaps the source of the most obvious difference between the painting of East and West. See Binyon, “The Art of Asia”, 359.

moving, ever-changing, eternal and universal rhythm of life.¹⁸

Binyon crowned Laozi as the main source of inspiration for Chinese art, and exclaimed, “Chinese art ten centuries ago was more modern than our art of to-day”.¹⁹

By turning to Daoist thought,

The nightmare of a mechanical universe, substituted by nineteenth-century science, is passing. But not till our minds change will our art change. Only from the poetic view of the world will come rhythmic simplicity into our art ... Painters, suddenly shaking off the shackles of science, seek to exult in their freedom, and are like long-benumbed people trying to dance, how heavily, how uncouthly!²⁰

Binyon extended “change” and “liberation” in modern art to modern poetry, in which “all is energy, relation, change.”²¹ He asserted: “In poetry, as in painting, there is bound to be a time of change and experiment both in speech and in manner. New rhythms will probably be invented.”²² He emphasized this in his lecture “English Poetry in its Relation to Painting and the Other Arts”, given at the British Academy on 5 June 1918:

The unifying principle of all the arts is rhythm; for the movement of life, unimpeded by circumstances, is naturally rhythmical, and art expresses life at its fullest and most intense ... Poetry and painting (sculpture also within its more limited range) are in a parallel condition so far as the relation of matter to form is concerned. Alike in painting and poetry, the rhythmic element,

¹⁸ For Laozi’s ideas, see Feng Youlan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, Derk Bodde (ed.), New York 1958, 65-6, 93-103. Okakura’s *The Ideals of the East* (1903) and *The Book of Tea* (1906), as well as Lionel Giles’s *The Saying of Lao-tzū* (1904) were early references for Binyon’s understanding of Laozi’s ideas. Binyon studied the translation of *Dao De Jing*, the Scriptures of Laozi, and even quoted some of Laozi’s sayings in his *The Spirit of Man in Asian Art*. To seize the spirit of Chinese genius, Binyon recommended to read Laozi’s sayings, see Binyon, *PFE*, 61-3; Binyon, “The Return to Poetry”, 2; Binyon, “The Art of Asia”, 12; Binyon, *SMAA*, 71-7.

¹⁹ “We Need More Emotional Understanding in our Art”, *New York Times*, 15 December 1912, 14.

²⁰ Binyon, “The Return to Poetry”, 2.

²¹ Strikingly, Binyon also applied his poetic view to drama. He promoted the ideas of “blank-verse drama” or “poetical play” which heightened emotion and demanded for rhythm and movement of speech. Thus, he had been deemed to look “for the salvation of art, whether it [might] be art in music, painting, drama, sculpture or architecture, in the adoption of the scientific and philosophical conceptions which he asserts actuated the Chinese artists of a thousand years ago.” See *ibid*, 1; “We Need More Emotional Understanding in our Art”, 14. Binyon reiterated his ideas of blank verse and poetic drama in 1914, see de Cordova, “Some Phases in Literature and Art. An Interview with Mr. Laurence Binyon”, 121-2.

²² de Cordova, “Some Phases in Literature and Art”, 121.

stronger perhaps and more explicit in poetry, evokes an emotional mood.²³

Binyon also made parallels between poetry and religion:

Life is a perpetual readjustment to conditions, and art is the expression of an *everchanging relation* of the human spirit to the world ... For art, as for religion, facts are nothing till they become symbol and idea. They become symbol and idea by becoming parts of ourselves, factors of our imaginative life ... The life within man and the life outside man meet in the imaginative power which blazes forth as art ... [A]rt is an expression of our relation to the world ... We express in art something of our ideal of life ... Art therefore partakes both of ourselves, our dreams and desires, and of the world about us. It is not enough to say that art is the expression of emotion: the emotion expressed must have some vital relation to the things by means of which it is expressed.²⁴

Binyon's conception of art was reminiscent of George Santayana's idea of the unity of poetry and religion, which I mentioned in Chapter III. Nevertheless, Binyon further linked these two subjects to pictorial art in a broader and cross-cultural sense, and emphasized their transcendental and universal moral functions to express the meaning and value of life. For Binyon, art was a sensuous, philosophical and spiritual activity of mankind and embodied an ideal life. "When art is divorced from the religious spirit, there is generally a loss both to art and religion."²⁵

The desire for spiritual ideals in art was provoked by the uncertain conditions prior to the outbreak of the First World War. Binyon believed that conceptions of the world were changing, and moving away from the old idea of a great fixity of things, which had been rooted in European thought for centuries. "At this moment the significant stirring in European painting is the revolt against mere representation, the research into movement, the reaction from excess of solid matter, the new inspiration

²³ Binyon, "English Poetry in its Relation to Painting and the Other Arts", 381-2.

²⁴ Binyon, "Ideas of Design in East and West", 645-6. The affinity of art, religion and life had been discussed extensively in another lecture. See Binyon, *Art and Modern Life*, 1-15.

²⁵ Binyon, *LEAP*, 34.

in the idea of rhythm.”²⁶ This was true for abstract painters, like Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) and Piet Mondrian (1872-1944), who were concerned with the spiritual in their art. They expressed Theosophical ideas, and saw life and the universe through pure form and rhythmic compositions. Modern painting had become a vehicle for expressing the artist’s intuitive feelings for life and the universe.

Binyon criticized the causes of much modernist expression in art.²⁷ In his essay “And What of Art?” of 1918, he condemned “[t]he tragic and spirit-searching experience of the war, the wrestle of fundamental causes which underlies all its waste and horror, [which] draws us down into the burning elements and energies of man.”²⁸ For the younger generation this resulted in “[t]he fear of being ‘literary’ [which] had become a perfect terror”. This was a tendency “to get away from surface-imitation, to liberate energy, to bring into use a more direct and vibrant means of expression. What it lacks is adequate content; it tortures itself with self-consciousness, obsessed by theories of revolt. It is not human enough.”²⁹ While the tragic and spirit-searching experience of the First World War wore down the energies of man, Binyon thought that “[i]ntensity, conviction, human emotion, directness, breadth” was the essential goal of post-war contemporary art.³⁰ He also hoped that “art will no longer be afraid to take all that is human for its province, will picture for us things imagined as well as things observed.”³¹

²⁶ Binyon, “Ideas of Design in East and West”, 653.

²⁷ Binyon criticized that abstract painting in the West represented an effort to be completely independent of forms in nature, but drove to geometry and grew in a strange soil. It was “of necessity a meager kind of art.” Laurence Binyon, “Approach to Chinese Art and Poetry”, *Asiatic Review* 36, July 1940, 562.

²⁸ Laurence Binyon, “And What of Art?”, *Dial*, 31 January 1918, 95.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 94.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 95.

³¹ *Ibid*, 94.

Rhythm and Life

What is rhythm? Binyon conceived rhythm as “a certain related order of movements”; every kind of art is “a spiritual rhythm passing into and acting on material things”.³² Similarly, painting which suggested movement was a series of ordered relations controlled by the will to express a single idea, as the body is controlled in the dance.³³ Binyon thought that rhythm “applies to a series of relations in time, as in music or verse, and is only used by analogy of relations in space”.³⁴ Thus, rhythm suggested a subtle relation, and was the first step in art, which would “come in the end to express a relation between the whole spirit and being of man and the whole universe around him, and understanding and a joy in everything that lives.”³⁵ From a universal perspective, Binyon believed that “[a]rt brings external facts into relation with the artist’s mind. But it can also bring the artist’s inner nature into relation with the world outside him.”³⁶

The idea of “rhythm” and its derived relations between things was not only limited to the relationship between the work of art and the artist, but also had an impact on the spectator’s aesthetic experience. Binyon perceived,

A study of the most rudimentary abstract design will show that the units of line or mass are in reality energies capable of acting on each other; and, if we discover a way to put these energies into rhythmical relation, the design at once becomes animated, our imagination enters into it; our minds also are brought into rhythmical relation with the design, which has become charged with the capability of movement and of life.³⁷

³² Binyon, *FD*, 15.

³³ Binyon reaffirmed his belief in his lecture “Art and Freedom” of 1939: “In art it is the interior freedom of the spirit that matters ... The unifying principal of all the arts is what we call rhythm. And rhythm is law and liberty in one. The oldest of the arts is the dance; and in the attitude and motion of a dancer, who embodies an invisible law, and who by arduous training and discipline has attained the secret of that law and with it the joy of perfect ease, so I seem to see the radiant image of the Freedom we desire.” Laurence Binyon, *Art and Freedom*, Oxford 1939, 37.

³⁴ Binyon, *Art and Modern Life*, 5.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 4.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 5.

³⁷ Binyon, *FD*, 17-8.

For Binyon, art was a hint and a promise of perfect rhythm that life could incarnate, while rhythm was something intimately connected with life. He believed that “Rhythm is subtle and natural, unendingly various, like the waves of wind in the corn. We must feel it in ourselves before we can express it.”³⁸ Binyon found a natural expression of this subtle and spiritual quality in Asian art:

When the rhythm is found we feel that we are put into touch with life, not only our own life, but the life of the whole world ... The power of rhythm is such that not only sounds and forms and colours, but the meanings associated with them become different, take on a new life, or rather yield up their full potentiality of life, fused into radiance and warmth as by an inner fire ... In all the art of China and Japan we find this predominant desire, to attain rhythmical vitality.³⁹

To be clear, the attainment of “rhythmical vitality”, which Binyon sought, originated with the paramount goal of *qiyun shengdong* in Chinese painting:

In this theory every work of art is thought of as an incarnation of the genius of rhythm, manifesting the living spirit of things with a clearer beauty and intenser power than the gross impediments of complex matter allow to be transmitted to our senses in the visible world around us. A picture is conceived as a sort of apparition from a more real world of essential life.⁴⁰

In early Chinese painting, Binyon believed that the secret of art, i.e. “rhythm”, was to bring alive the inner spirit of living things and to put art in touch with both the physical and the imaginative world. A typical example was the *Admonitions* scroll at the British Museum, the handscroll which Binyon had attributed to Gu Kaizhi. “Rhythm” was actualized through expressive brush strokes which enlivened the physical movement and inner soul of the figures.

[N]o painting of later ages surpasses this. It is suave and tender, yet never soft or weak; firm and precise, yet never dry ... We are made to feel all this, and at the same time we feel the painter’s enjoyment of pure rhythm in following with his fine brush the wave of the light drapery that streams from the ladies’

³⁸ Binyon, “The Return to Poetry”, 2.

³⁹ Binyon, *FD*, 18-20.

⁴⁰ Binyon, *PFE*, 11.

robes.⁴¹

This “pure rhythm” brought forth the spirituality of the figures, while Gu’s lively calligraphic brushwork managed to reveal his personality of “an undercurrent of humour and playfulness”.⁴² In the Tang dynasty, Binyon found in Wu Daozi’s Buddhist paintings a more powerful expression of “rhythm”:

It was felt that the true artist, working when the mood was on him, was brought into direct relation with the creative power indwelling in the world, and this power, using him as a medium or instrument, breathed actual life into the strokes of his brush ... For indeed it is not essential that the subject-matter should represent or be like anything in nature; only it must be alive with a rhythmic vitality of its own.⁴³

The rhythmical beauty of Wu’s painting was expressed in his life-communicating power of lines. Through his dynamic brushwork, Wu demonstrated the union of calligraphy and painting, and expressed his imaginative realism and tremendous powers of conception.⁴⁴ Wu’s painting was conceived as a spiritual creation, possessing the painter’s personality and absorbing him into a life greater and more powerful than his own. Compared with the static and symmetrical character of Western decorative pattern, Binyon admired instead the fluid elements in Chinese art which imparted a sense of vibration as of things alive.⁴⁵ He regretted that “[w]e get a mechanical succession which aims at rhythm, but does not attain rhythmic vitality ... Rather, we should think of these elements as living energies acting and reaching on each other.”⁴⁶

Harmony of Man and Nature

⁴¹ Ibid, 49.

⁴² Binyon remarked that the naturalism in Gu’s calligraphic brushwork enchanted Aubrey Beardsley (1872-1898). See Binyon, *PFE*, 49, 52; Binyon, “A Chinese Painting of the Fourth Century”, 42.

⁴³ Binyon, *FD*, 20-1.

⁴⁴ See Binyon, *PFE*, 77-8; Binyon, “The Art of Asia”, *Atlantic Monthly*, 353.

⁴⁵ Binyon, “The Art of Asia”, *Atlantic Monthly*, 353.

⁴⁶ Binyon, *FD*, 94.

The subtle ideas of “rhythm” and “movement” were connected to the philosophy of life. As Binyon discussed in his essay “Ideas of Design in East and West” of 1913,

Wherever there is life, there is movement; wherever there is natural movement, there is rhythm. Mankind delights in rhythm because it is the natural expression of life. Now the Chinese, with their haunting sense of an eternal flow of animation sweeping through all things, man included, held as the cardinal virtue of a work of art that it should be pregnant with this rhythm of life.⁴⁷

Through his imagination the artist could identify his existence and relationship with nature outside himself, while his work crystallized his temperament, mental outlook, emotions, and attitude to life and the universe.

In China, the romantic idea of harmony of man and nature originated with the idealistic idea of Daoism in the Han dynasty. This constant belief prevailed in the Six Dynasties and became deeply rooted in the minds of literati and painters in the following centuries. Nature was conceived of as a potent source for inspiration, contemplation and enlightenment. Landscape painting was regarded as being the highest sphere of art and became an effective way of shadowing forth the manifold moods of man and obtaining the intimate intercourse with nature. The harmony of man and nature was a characteristic of Chinese landscape painting of the Song dynasty.

Taki Seiichi’s *Three Essays on Oriental Painting* (1910) was an early source for Binyon’s understanding of Chinese landscape painting. Taki introduced Binyon to the teachings of Laozi and of Zhuangzi (369-286 BCE) which encouraged Southern inhabitants to have a freer and more imaginative disposition and which “most

⁴⁷ Binyon, “Ideas of Design in East and West”, 652.

faithfully reflect the deeply-rooted taste of the Chinese for nature”.⁴⁸ Daoist thoughts had long nurtured the love of nature among Chinese emperors, poets and painters from the ancient times, and imparted poetic associations to Chinese paintings of birds, animals and flowers. But Binyon discerned that “it is in landscape that the peculiar genius and mental outlook of China find their fullest and most powerful realization.”⁴⁹ Binyon found Taki’s essays “full of most interesting quotations from the sayings of Chinese artists”.⁵⁰ The Northern Song (960-1127 CE) landscape theory of Guo Xi’s *Linquan Gaozhi* and the sixteen kinds of brushstrokes for depicting “mountain wrinkles” which were quoted in Taki’s essay “Chinese Landscape Painting” are referred to Binyon’s *The Flight of the Dragon*.⁵¹ Binyon also gained inspiration from Guo Xi’s “An Essay on Landscapes” (*Shanshui Xun* 〈山水訓〉),⁵² which told the secret of bringing alive the inner spirit of landscapes:

⁴⁸ Taki Seiichi, *Three Essays on Oriental Painting*, London 1910, 33.

⁴⁹ Binyon, Review of “Three Essays on Oriental Painting by Sei-Ichi Taki”, *BM* 19, 1911, 108.

⁵⁰ Landscape painting reached its climax in the Song dynasty. It might be the reason why Taki’s brief survey of representative styles and landscape painters focused more on the periods between the Six Dynasties and the Song dynasty. His accounts of the landscape art from the Yuan to Qing dynasty were general and incomplete. Binyon criticized Taki for not elucidating clearly the mystery of “Northern” and “Southern” schools of the Song landscapes. On the one hand, Taki illuminated the different styles of the two schools according to the topographical features in Northern and Southern China. On the other hand, he paradoxically reputed that the long-standing dividing line of the two schools was absurd and contradictory. Taki also failed to illuminate the original meaning of Dong Qichang’s 董其昌 (1555-1636) theory of Northern and Southern schools of the Ming dynasty, and the influence of Zen thought in the development of Chinese landscape painting. See *ibid*, 108; Taki, *Three Essays on Oriental Painting*, 49-53; Richard Barnhart ... [et al.], *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting*, New Haven and London, 1997, 232-3.

⁵¹ The different brushstrokes Binyon learned from Taki Seiichi’s essay referred to *Cunfa* (皴法). It is noteworthy that Binyon’s writings did not show a clear discussion of different forms of line and dot employed in the Song landscapes. Nor did he demonstrate a full understanding of the basic modeling technique of Chinese landscape painting. It seems that Binyon’s main interest lay in the aesthetics and underlying philosophy of the Song landscapes. Binyon later consulted another Qing treatise, a translation of *Jieziyuan Huapu* (*The Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting* 《芥子園畫譜》) in Raphael Petrucci’s *Encyclopédie de la Peinture Chinoise* (1918). See Binyon, *FD*, 29, 65; Binyon, “Chinese Painting”, in Robert L. Hobson ... [et al.], *The Romance of Chinese Art*, New York 1929, 53-4; Chen Chih-mai, “Chinese Landscape Painting – The Golden Age”, *East Asian History* 12, 1996, 38-9.

⁵² Apart from Taki’s *Three Essays on Oriental Painting* (1910), the *Kokka* No. 244 (September 1910) was another early reference for Binyon’s understanding of the theories of Song landscapes. Some of Guo Xi’s sayings have been quoted in Binyon’s books on Chinese painting. See Binyon, *PFE*, 142-4; *FD*, 14, 29, 63, 83, 85, 96; *SMAA*, 91, 104. Guo’s essay on landscapes was translated into English by Shio Sakanishi in 1935. See Kuo Hsi, *An Essay on Landscape Painting*, trans. Shio Sakanishi, London 1935.

[T]he love of landscape as something innate in man: to get away from the dust and noise of the world to the companionship of woods and springs, mists and vapours, is to realize one's true self. The finest landscapes are those in which one can wander, in which one can live ... Each must have its own life ... To render this, there must be a corresponding life in the brush; and for this there needs the utmost concentration of mind. The essential features must be seized; no mere skill can achieve this. It is the mental effort that is insisted on, the intellectual, the imaginative grasp.⁵³

Undoubtedly, landscape art was an expression of what man feels about nature. Guo Xi's saying reflects the mental effort by which the painter liberated his spirit and brought alive the vitality of landscape. The pictorial space was the world in which the painter could liberate his mind and free his emotion. The whole thing rested upon the integrity of the individual. Brushwork became a medium to reflect the painter's aesthetic experience. Binyon thought that a long training in calligraphy was necessary to translate the artist's conception into the form and tone of ink and colour. He admired Mi Fu's calligraphic brushwork which succeeded in liberating the character of each element in the landscape.⁵⁴ "All this preoccupation with the bones of the picture, as essential to the final effect of rhythm and vitality, shows the masculine character lying behind the lofty idealism of Sung painting."⁵⁵ From the early portraiture of the pre-Song period to the landscape painting of the Song dynasty, "rhythmic vitality" was expressed by different forms of calligraphic brushwork. Binyon affirmed, in Chinese painting, "the aim of rhythmical vitality, the devotion to ideas, has never been lost."⁵⁶

In the Song dynasty, many Chinese poets and painters rebelled against routine because they were so often compelled to take up official posts. Inspired by the Daoist ideas, they escaped from the city and lived a reclusive life in remote places. They

⁵³ Binyon, *SMAA*, 91.

⁵⁴ See Binyon, *FD*, 84; *SMAA*, 93-4; Gao Munsen, *Zhongguo Huihua Sixiangshi*, Taipei 1992, 140.

⁵⁵ Binyon, *FD*, 84.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 96-7.

desired the companionship of hills and streams because they were convinced that in such company the true life of man would be found. Coloured by the doctrines of Zen Buddhism, the feeling for nature resulted in more intimate emotions in the Southern Song period. The ink paintings embodied a contemplation of the life of nature, an effort towards the realization of one's self. Binyon was enchanted with the mature expression of poetic and religious feeling in the Southern Song landscapes which flourished during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This kind of painting was quite modern in outlook and appealed to him. He realized that "Chinese painting touches every side of human life, every relation of the human spirit to the world of nature."⁵⁷ In contrast, in the tradition of European art, landscape had been ranked less important than figure painting and was considered less significant for humanity. Prior to the eighteenth century, Western artists were generally accustomed to regard landscape as an artistic convention rather than the expression of Nature herself. Thus, the relation of man to the rest of creation was imperfectly understood.⁵⁸ Through the study of Chinese landscape painting, Binyon believed that European artists could learn to recover the lost harmony between man and nature.⁵⁹

To restore the imperfect "relation of man to nature" in Western landscape art, Binyon encouraged modern artists to consider the different spirit of nature which Chinese landscape paintings expressed:

⁵⁷ Binyon, "The Art of Asia", *Atlantic Monthly*, 359.

⁵⁸ Binyon did not entirely deny the conception of man and nature in the tradition of European art. For instance, he found that the manuscript illuminations to the calendars of the "Books of Hours" suggested a definite and vital relation between man and nature. Although Joseph M.W. Turner (1775-1851) could give his themes a wider mental horizon, Binyon found that the epic tone and national sentiment expressed in Turner's scenes of sea and mountain were different from Chinese landscape painting. The real emphasis of Turner's great sea-pieces was of the daring and skill of man, who ventured forth against the power of the senseless waves. Binyon looked for a kind of landscape art which merged the topography in the cosmic. For Binyon's analysis of the different style of landscape art in Europe and China, see Binyon, *PFE*, 11-27, 145-6, 150-3; *FD*, 38-41, 53-4; *SMAA*, 80-1.

⁵⁹ Binyon, *PFE*, 21. See also Binyon, "Approach to Chinese Art", 50-1.

[W]e do not feel that the artist is portraying something external to himself; that he is caressing the happiness and soothing joy offered him in the pleasant place of the earth, or even studying with wonder and delight the miraculous works of nature. But the winds of the air have become his desires, and the clouds his wandering thoughts; the mountain-peaks are his lonely aspirations and the torrents his liberated energies ... It is not man's earthly surrounding, tamed to his desires, that inspires the artists; but the universe, in its wholeness and its freedom, has become his spiritual home.⁶⁰

Landscape painting was not merely a realistic rendering of landscape subjects, but captured the intuitions, emotions and liberated energies of the painter. By learning the lofty ideal of Song landscape painters, modern artists could also transform nature into their “spiritual home” where they could freely liberate their mind and energies.

Binyon realized that Daoist ideals had a strong impact on Chinese landscape art. He was most fascinated by the imaginative mind of Chinese philosophers:

He needed no discovery of science to enlighten him; that enlightenment was part of his philosophy, his religion. He understood the continuity of the universe; he recognized the kinship between his own life and the life of animals and birds and trees and plants. And so he approached all life with reverence, giving each existence its due value.⁶¹

This high praise was obviously applicable to Laozi, the prominent exponent of Daoism. Binyon perceived Laozi as “the mystic”, “the man of imagination” and “the seer”. He was fascinated by Laozi’s teaching of the virtues of individuality and freedom. In his writings on Chinese painting, Binyon frequently affirmed the contributions of Laozi in giving Chinese art its romantic and mysterious subject-matter, such as wild Rishi mountain retreats, Dragon (the genius of the element of water, symbolizing the power of the spirit and the infinite), and Tiger (the genius of the mountains, suggesting the power of material forces).⁶² Laozi also inspired the reaction of the individual soul against the communistic system of Confucius, and

⁶⁰ Binyon, *FD*, 24-5.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 26.

⁶² See Binyon, *PFE*, 10-13, 61-72.

imbued landscape painting with the harmony of man and nature. As in Song landscape painting, these Daoist ideas were useful and desirable for modern European art.

In his essay “Ideas of Design in East and West” of 1913, Binyon advocated Chinese ideals, especially the teachings of Laozi, as a noble and inspiring model for Western artists. He praised Song landscape painting, which was charged with Laozi’s ideas, as “a kind of symbol of nature’s infinite growing life ever reaching out beyond the limit of our senses and only to be apprehended by our imagination.”⁶³ Dwelling on Laozi’s idea of emptiness, Binyon advised:

We should make ourselves empty that the great soul of the universe may fill us with its breath. So too in the Chinese picture there is the empty space, that our imagination may enter into and there find its freedom. Never to be stagnant, never to let the dust of the world settle on the wings of the soul, to be spiritually fluid and free – that is the ideal of Laotzū. For so we join the great stream of the cosmic life that permeates all things.⁶⁴

In the Song landscapes, infinite horizons were suggested by the use of empty space. Binyon recognized that the unique system of spacing in Chinese painting was of extraordinary value:

It is the miraculous faculty of design, of pure art, that without recourse to symbol it can take the simplest of living things and convert them from fact into idea, so that we no longer see merely the object represented, but are somehow admitted with seeing eyes into the mystery of life itself, the something sacred at the heart of things which appeals to what is profoundest in ourselves. Something in us of which we were not conscious, far below the surface of our intelligence, comes up into the light.⁶⁵

Space in Chinese landscape painting “is not a final peace, but itself an activity flowing out from the picture into our minds, and drawing us up into a rarer

⁶³ Binyon, “Ideas of Design in East and West”, 650.

⁶⁴ For Binyon’s aesthetic experience of looking at Song landscape paintings, see Binyon, “Ideas of Design in East and West”, 651; Binyon, “Chinese Painting”, 672.

⁶⁵ Binyon, “The Art of Asia”, *Atlantic Monthly*, 354.

atmosphere. It is tranquillizing, but even more it is exhilarating.”⁶⁶ It also evoked aesthetic feeling and drew the spectators’ imagination “to the outer air, to the all-enclosing space of the universe.”⁶⁷

Binyon found the spacing of the Southern Song landscapes, especially those by the Ma-Xia school, most stimulating. He highly praised,

[T]he unsymmetrical, the imperfect, the incomplete has become the principle of design. The picture is not filled; it is waiting for our imagination to enter into it ... [E]mpty space, becomes a positive factor, no longer something not filled and left over, but something exerting an attractive power to the eye, and balancing the attractive power of forms and masses. But, to exert this power, space must be used broadly and with emphasis, as an end in itself ... By such hints the imagination, being stimulated, and left to act on its own account, was roused to greater energy than by the display of forms in their completeness.⁶⁸

The asymmetric balance of the composition, the execution of empty space, the liberation of energy, and the evocation of the imagination, were typical of Ma Yuan’s landscapes. When he looked at the so-called Ma Yuan’s landscape scroll in the Freer collection, Binyon found the purest expression of Daoist-inspired ideas:

[T]here is no more grandly designed landscape in the world. At the first opening of the roll we are taken straight into the heart of the mountains; we breathe keen mountain air. It is a picture in which one can wander all day long ... The themes melt into each other, or are vigorously contrasted; the whole makes up a tremendous full-toned harmony.⁶⁹

It was the finest landscape painting “in which one can wander, in which one can live”. The full-toned harmony of the Song landscape paintings is “Romantic, and also Idealistic”.⁷⁰

However, in great landscape art, painters of both East and West shared similar

⁶⁶ Binyon, *SMAA*, 98.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁶⁸ Binyon, *FD*, 75-7.

⁶⁹ Binyon also praised the loftiness and simplicity of Ma-Xia’s landscapes in his third edition of *Painting in the Far East*. See Binyon, *SMAA*, 99; *PFE*, 151-3.

⁷⁰ Binyon, *SMAA*, 95.

tendencies in their reactions to nature and the universe. Binyon found a correspondence between Chinese landscape painters and English Romantic poets, such as John Keats (1795-1821), Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) and George Meredith (1828-1909), as well as painters, such as Alexander Cozens (1717-1786), John Robert Cozens (1752-1797) and Thomas Girtin (1775-1802).⁷¹ Comparisons between English and Chinese landscapes, and between the English Romantics and Song landscape painters are fully discussed in Binyon's *Landscape in English Art and Poetry* (1931). Like Blake, William Wordsworth (1770-1850) was probably ignorant of Oriental thought and art. However, Binyon admired Wordsworth as "a poet of nature" and of "exquisite humanity". His approach to Nature had much spiritual affinity with Eastern thought, especially the mind of the Song landscape painters.⁷² In several discussions of Chinese landscape painting, Binyon compared Wordsworth's poetic idea with the spirit of Song painters.⁷³ He recommended: "if you want to

⁷¹ Interestingly, Binyon found eighteenth-century English landscape drawings charged with a romantic mood. For instance, he thought that Alexander Cozens's ideal landscapes showed "a curious, though quite unconscious, affinity to Chinese painting of the Southern School." The kinship was reflected in Cozens's use of brown ink or sepia in many of his drawings. Binyon also conceived that Cozens's "classification of various types of composition reminds one of similar classifications in the Chinese encyclopedia of art 'The Mustard Seed Garden'." On the other hand, the landscape drawings of John Robert Cozens and Thomas Girtin expressed a love of solitude, sympathy for nature and a contemplative mind, so Binyon found their art shared the feeling of the Song landscapes. For nineteenth-century European artists, Binyon found that the Japanese and Chinese ideas were expressed in the arts of Whistler, Pierre Puvis de Chavannes (1824-1898), and George Frederic Watts (1817-1904). Binyon believed Watts's art demonstrated incomparable mastery in rendering pearly tones of air and visionary spaces, and had a rhythmic quality. See Binyon, "English Water-Colour Drawings," in the Institute of Art Research, *Catalogue of the Loan Collection of English Water-Colour Drawings held at the Institute of Art Research, Ueno, Tokyo, October 10-24th, 1929*, Tokyo 1929, xviii; Binyon, *LEAP*, 77, 82-6, 105-4, 276-9, 289-94; Binyon, "Watts and National Art", *Independent Review* 5, March 1905, 208-9; Binyon, "Ideas of Design of the East and West", 653; Binyon, "Japanese Design and its Influence on the West", *New World*, [stamped 30 July 1919], 1 (a copy in ALB, Vol. 67); Binyon, *FD*, 35-8.

⁷² Binyon believed that Blake's attitude had remarkable affinities with the Oriental mind, especially in its denial of the reality of matter. Blake conceived of the whole universe in terms of humanity and of all life as a Unity. Similarly, Wordsworth approached this conception through Nature, of which man was a part. Wordsworth had a deep but quiet joy in the Nature; he did not feel the exhilaration that came when the poet or the artist identified himself with Nature's energy. While Shelley and Keats's poems reflected the spirit of Daoism, Wordsworth came nearer to the spirit of Zen. See Binyon, *LEAP*, 143-6, 177, 197, 200, 290.

⁷³ Binyon compared Chinese ideals with Wordsworth's poems in several of his essays and books. Early writings include *Painting in the Far East*, *The Flight of the Dragon*, and "Some Phases of Religious Art in Eastern Art" in the *Quest* of 1911. Binyon also discussed the shared ideals of Chinese painter and

understand the minds of these Sung artists, you can approach it through the poetry of Wordsworth. You may be surprised. But in the poems and sayings of Chinese Taoists you will find constant parallels, almost the same turn of phrase.”⁷⁴ This echoed Binyon’s sayings of Song painters in his *Painting in the Far East*:

We may say of these painters, as Walter Pater said of Wordsworth, “They raise physical nature to the level of human thought, giving it thereby a mystic power and expression; they subdue man to the level of nature, but give him therewith a certain breadth and vastness and solemnity.” To many spirits of the nineteenth century in Europe the Sung painting would have seemed, had they known it, the very expression of their own minds: that is why it is of such living interest to us now.⁷⁵

Flaws in Binyon’s Writings on Chinese Painting

Binyon’s writings on Chinese pictorial art were well received by his contemporaries. Guy Jean Raoul Eugène Charles Emmanuel de Savoie-Carignan, Comte de Soissons (1860-?) praised Binyon’s *Painting in the Far East* for its “true and great consequence”, among English publications on art.⁷⁶ Wen Yuan-ning also praised the book as being more read than any other book on the subject, and for conveying its information with charm and persuasiveness. Binyon’s *The Spirit of Man*

English Romantic poets in “English Poetry in its Relation to Painting and the Other Arts” in Proceedings of the British Academy of 1918, *Landscape in English Art and Poetry* (1931), and *The Spirit of Man in Asian Art* (1935). In 1949, Mary Wyman made a more comprehensive discussion of the kinship of Wordsworth’s conception of “one life flowing through all” with the Neo-Confucian idea of “one life in all”. Compared with Binyon’s exposition, Wyman did not simply limit her discussion to Laozi’s sayings but examined the similar doctrines of Zhuangzi and Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200). She also extended the influence of Confucianism, Daoism, and Zen Buddhism on the formation of Neo-Confucianism, which prevailed in the Song dynasty and motivated many of the nature poems and landscape paintings of the Tang and Song periods, with its ideas of a universal rhythm of life, a sense of unity in all being, a harmony of man and nature, and a realization of man’s individual vision. See Mary Wyman, “Chinese Mysticism and Wordsworth”, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 10, 1949, 517-38.

⁷⁴ Binyon also found in English poetry, such as those poems by Shelley and Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892), an affinity with Chinese poems, both in form and conception. They evoked a mood of feeling, a love of nature and sympathy with the life of birds and flowers. See Binyon, “Chinese Painting”, 670; A slightly revised version of this article was published in “Chinese Painters”, *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 84, 14 February 1936, 369-79. Also see Binyon, “Approach to Chinese Art and Poetry”, 558-61.

⁷⁵ Binyon, *PFE*, 154-5.

⁷⁶ The influence of Binyon’s writings was obvious in the Count de Soissons’s interpretation of “The Pictorial Art of China”. See The Count de Soissons, *The Aesthetic Purpose of Byzantine Architecture and Other Essays*, London 1914, 35-61.

in *Asian Art* was even better.⁷⁷ Mary (1864-1945) and Bernard Berenson were enchanted with Binyon's *The Spirit of Man in Asian Art* which was "exquisitely sensitive to the beauty of the various forms of art" and for "the spiritual significance of each form". Mary also praised "the deep and beautiful things [Binyon said] about the life of the spirit in general".⁷⁸ Ananda K. Coomaraswamy (1877-1947) believed the book was "the work of a poet, perfect in its kind: by sheer sensibility and without reference to the literary sources of Asiatic aesthetic [Binyon] has rightly grasped the religious, if not entirely the metaphysical, essence of Asiatic art, and has known how to communicate this spirit in words that have a beauty of their own."⁷⁹

Nevertheless, in his survey of the history of Chinese painting, Binyon paid most attention to the Eastern Jin, Tang and Song dynasties. His selective discussion not only revealed his taste in Chinese painting, but also his idolatry for the philosophical and artistic ideas of the Song and earlier periods. Although it was not his intention to write a complete history of Chinese pictorial art, Binyon's discussion of selected Chinese ideals and periods shaped the public's conception of Chinese art. To a certain extent, it led to an incomplete understanding of the historical development of Chinese painting. For instance, Binyon did not articulate clearly enough the achievements of painters in the Five Dynasties (907-960 CE) and in the post-Song periods. The contribution of Jing Hao 荆浩 (c. 850- ?) to the development of the Song landscapes was almost entirely omitted.⁸⁰ John Hatcher remarks that the

⁷⁷ Wen Yuan-ning, Book Review of "The Spirit of Man in Asian Art", *T'ien Hsia Monthly* 1, 1935, 595.

⁷⁸ Mary Berenson to Binyon, 23 March 1935, ALB, Vol. 1.

⁷⁹ Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, Book Review of "The Spirit of Man in Asian Art", *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 55, 1935, 325.

⁸⁰ According to Gao Musen, Jing Hao was a pioneer of pursuing "Rhythmic Vitality" in early Chinese landscape paintings. Jing evolved Xie He's "Six Canons" into six aesthetic principles for landscape paintings. His idea of merging the painter's *qi* in landscapes was originated from his early treatise *Bifa Ji* (*Notes of Brushstrokes* 《筆法記》). See Binyon, *PFE*, 84-8; Chen, "Chinese Landscape Painting –

lack of genuine examples of important artists in the Five Dynasties and the Northern Song dynasty “prevented Binyon forming any coherent idea of its pictorial grandeur and intellectual power.”⁸¹ Thus, Binyon’s account was full of gaps. Hatcher also notes that Binyon’s high opinion of Song art was largely based on reproductions in the *Kokka* and other Japanese publications, instead of on original works. Traditional Japanese connoisseurship saw the culmination of Chinese landscape art in the artists of the Southern Song Academy at Hangzhou, especially Ma Yuan and Xia Gui. Therefore, Binyon’s opinion of Southern Song painting was not only occidental but also heavily inspired by traditional Japanese connoisseurship.⁸² Similarly, museums and collectors in the West had relied on Japanese expertise to form their early collections of Chinese painting, thus sharing the taste for Southern Song landscapes. Although the collections of Chinese landscape painting in the British Museum were relatively small, Binyon’s knowledge of the subject was enlarged by examples in American collections of Chinese painting, especially those in the Freer collection and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.⁸³

In his book review of Osvald Sirén’s *Chinese Paintings in American Collections* (1927), Binyon explained:

A Chinese critic would perhaps think that the American collections, like the Japanese, give an undue preponderance to the art of the Southern Sung period. However, it is the landscapes of this period which won for Chinese painting the special admiration of the modern Western world; and the series here reproduced richly illustrates the great qualities of Chinese landscape: even when the execution is pronounced by Prof. Sirén to be by a Ming imitator, the design is often magnificent.⁸⁴

The Golden Age”, 39-40, 44; Gao, *Zhongguo Huihua Sixiangshi*, 137-9.

⁸¹ Hatcher, *LB*, 182-3.

⁸² *Ibid*, 181.

⁸³ Binyon remarked that the Boston Museum alone had enough treasures – more than all Europe could boast – to illustrate the essential character of Southern Song art. Binyon, *SMAA*, 90-1.

⁸⁴ Binyon, Book Review of “Chinese Paintings in America”, 147.

Collectors in Europe also shared the same taste, as Binyon mentioned in *Chinese Paintings in English Collections* (1927). Western scholars believed that the art of Asia declined in terms of calligraphy and decoration, structure and meaning after the Song dynasty. Binyon knew that many collectors took no interest in Chinese painting after the downfall of the Ming dynasty in 1644. Even Ming art was regarded with some disdain. Genuine works of the best Qing painters were not easily obtained in Europe, or were frequently forged.⁸⁵ All these factors have a bearing on why Southern Song landscapes received the most praise in the writings of Binyon and other Western scholars.

On the other hand, Wen Yuan-ning pointed out that Binyon, like other European writers on Chinese art, did not explore the beauty of Chinese painting in the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties. Although the greatness of Chinese pictorial art lay in landscape painting, the whole beauty of Chinese art was not limited to the Song landscapes, but also presented in the distinctive practice of art in the post-Song periods. Thus, Wen wrote that “[t]o ignore Yuan and Ming painters, and especially Ch’ing painters, is a prejudice of the West, which we hope will die away in time when the West gets better acquainted with the best examples of genuine paintings by Yuan, Ming, and Ch’ing artists.”⁸⁶ Binyon believed that Chinese painting gradually lost inspiration after the Song period. His discussion of Yuan paintings was usually limited to Zhao Mengfu’s landscapes and horses, Yan Hui’s Daoist subjects, and Qian Xuan’s 錢選 (1239-1301) figures. Binyon also omitted a discussion of the development of literati painting, which flourished in the Yuan dynasty.⁸⁷ Inspired by the Northern

⁸⁵ Binyon, *Chinese Paintings in English Collections*, 30.

⁸⁶ Wen, Book Review of “The Spirit of Man in Asian Art”, 597-8.

⁸⁷ In the *Painting in the Far East*, Binyon briefly mentioned that the “Literary Style” which originated

Song masters, Yuan literati painters created a personal form of art through expressive use of ink and brushwork, with poetry inscribed on their paintings. This omission was possibly because Binyon had a very limited knowledge of the Chinese language; which meant that he was unable to address the question of inscriptions and colophons in Chinese painting.

In his criticism of Ming art, Binyon identified it as a period of declining inspiration:

Chinese painting begins to be more remote and less near to us than it was in the Sung masterpieces. That peculiar intimacy with nature which strikes us as so modern in the Sung painters yields to a romantic feeling in landscape; and that fine simplicity, the mark both of the manners and the art of a high civilization, is exchanged for elaboration and ornateness.⁸⁸

Compared with Sung or T'ang painting, we are forced to admit that the workmanship lacks fibre and fineness, the mood of its conception lacks intensity and loftiness ...⁸⁹

Binyon was not enthusiastic about Wen Zhengming's landscape painting, nor had he a clear concept of the Wu (吳派) and Zhe Schools which were active in the cultural centers of Jiangsu and Zhejiang, respectively. Dong Qichang's Zen-inspired theory of Northern and Southern schools was not discussed. For Chinese painting of the Qing dynasty, Binyon also omitted various Qing painters' styles, such as the individualistic style of the "Four Monk Masters" and the creative group "Eight Eccentric Painters of

with Wang Wei 王維 (active eighth century) of the Tang dynasty was revived in the Ming dynasty. It was in a sense a return to the Zen ideas which inspired the slight ink-painting of the Song painting. However, Binyon criticized it, for "it was a return which pushed ideas to caricature; and at the back of it was no longer the lofty atmosphere of religious aspiration, having its counterpart in life and conduct, but a dilettantist spirit not averse to fostering a fashionable craze." In his review of Binyon's *Painting in the Far East*, Arthur Morrison gave a different opinion of the literary style of Chinese painting. He wrote that "one would hesitate to say that the painters in this style depreciated strength of technique; rather they concealed it ... In a similar way, by an apparent sacrifice of force of brush, the painter of [literary painting] often attained a curious, seemingly uncalculated grace and sweetness, a spiritual elegance, not immediately apparent to the unaccustomed eye, but none the less present." See Binyon, *PFE*, 227-8; Arthur Morrison, "Chinese and Japanese Painting", *BM* 14, 1908, 160.

⁸⁸ Binyon, *PFE*, 192.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 195.

Yangzhou”. He limited himself to a discussion of the decorative paintings of Shen Quan with their strong sense of Japanese colour.⁹⁰

A more complete picture of the history of Chinese painting was published in Binyon’s brief essay in *The Romance of Chinese Art* (1929). There, the periods of the Five Dynasties, the Yuan dynasty, and the Qing dynasty, are all discussed separately. Binyon also included the names of artists whom he had not mentioned previously. These painters included, among others, “the four Yuan masters” (Huang Gongwang 黃公望 (1269-1354), Wang Meng 王蒙 (1308-1385), Ni Tsan 倪瓚 (1301-1374), and Wu Zhen 吳鎮 (1280-1354)), Dong Qichang of the Ming dynasty, and “the four Wangs” (Wang Shihmien 王時敏 (1592- 1680), Wang Chien 王鑑 (1598-1677), Wang Hui 王翬 (1632-1717), and Wang Yuanqi 王原祈 (1642-1715)) of the Qing dynasty.⁹¹ In such a short essay, however, and without much solid information about the styles of individual painters, Binyon’s actual understanding of them remains in doubt.

⁹⁰ In a recent discussion of Shih Shou-chien, he points out that the approbation of Tang and Song and the disdain for Ming and Qing was basically a response to pre-war Western attitudes towards Chinese art. Western scholars undervalued the art of post-Song periods because they questioned the orthodoxy and influence of Dong Qichang’s literati theory in the history of Chinese painting. Moreover, Western techniques brought to China by contemporary Jesuits, like Giuseppe Castiglione (also known as Lang Shining 郎世寧) (1688-1766), were not well received by art critics. On the other hand, artists and critics always regarded the Tang and Song masters as models for liberating individual artistic expression. Due to the change of political and cultural environments from the 1960s onwards, Taiwanese and American scholars recognized the importance of the literati tradition in Chinese art and paid more attention to the study of Yuan paintings. The abundant material of images and documents at the National Palace Museum in Taipei also attracted scholarly attention to the study of Chinese painting of the Ming and Qing periods. See Shih Shou-chien, “China’s Response to Western Understanding of Chinese Painting in the Twentieth Century”, in the Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo, *Asia in the Twenty-First Century: Toward a New Framework of Asian Studies*, Tokyo 1996, 22-4.

⁹¹ In *Chinese Painting in English Collections* (1927), Binyon named a few painters, like Jesuit Giuseppe Castiglione and Wang Yuanqi, which were seldom mentioned in his writings of earlier periods. See Binyon, *Chinese Painting in English Collections*, 31-2; Binyon, “Chinese Painting”, in Hobson ... [et al.], *The Romance of Chinese Art*, 52-64.

Chapter VIII

British Modernists' Interest in Chinese Aesthetics

By 1910 Binyon's publications on Oriental art had a growing influence on both sides of the Atlantic. Binyon's interpretation of Chinese poetry and landscape painting of the Song dynasty inspired American modernist poet Wallace Stevens (1879-1955) with new ideas, while his *Painting in the Far East* deepened Stevens's knowledge about Asian art and thought.¹ Back in London, on 9 March 1909, William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) had been talking about the literary element in painting with the Irish artist Beatrice Elvery (1881-1970) and "turning over the leaves of Binyon's book on Eastern painting, in which [the author] shows how traditional, how literary it is".² Two years later, Herbert Trench (1865-1923), an Irish poet and a graduate from Oxford, praised Binyon's continuous effort: "I have been reading your 'Flight of the Dragon', & cannot resist writing to tell you how extraordinary fine, & how beautiful in feeling & wisdom I find the book. It is a perfect little treatise, of the rarest kind."³ Sir George Clausen (1852-1944), the English realist and Professor of Painting at the Royal Academy Schools, also stated: "I must write a line to tell you how much I have enjoyed your book on Oriental Painting (which I've just read) – I think your line of thought is absolutely Pound – the last chapter on "East & West" pleased me immensely – I was trying to say something of the same kind yesterday when I had to

¹ See John Hatcher, "Binyon, Stevens, Pound, Eliot", *Poetica: An International Journal of Linguistic-Literary Studies* 64, 2005, 8-10.

² Inspired by Binyon's *Painting in the Far East* and Arthur Henry Hallam's "On Some of the Characteristics of Modern Poetry" in *The Englishman's Magazine* of 1831, Yeats realized that "the literary element in painting, the moral element in poetry are the means whereby the two arts are accepted into the social order and become a part of life, and not things of the study and the exhibition." See Denis Donoghue (ed.), *Memoirs [of] W. B. Yeats: Autobiography [and] First Draft Journal*, London 1972, 179.

³ Herbert Trench to Binyon, 26 July 1911, ALB, Vol. 10.

lecture at the R. A. [a]nd it is all as beautifully expressed.”⁴ All these incidents show that Binyon’s writings on Oriental painting were already influential among academic, literary and art circles in both Britain and America.

Binyon’s direct contact with visitors to the British Museum was another effective channel to disseminate his ideas on Oriental painting. Ernest Rhys (1859-1946), the poet and publisher, admired Binyon for “the instinct of the connoisseur and print-collector, and much of his work in the print room must have been a joy to him.”⁵ Outside the Museum, Binyon’s enjoyment came from social gatherings with friends, including art critics and artists, at the Vienna Café in New Oxford Street, and sometimes at Roche’s restaurant in Soho. These places served as a cultural hub for the exchange of ideas and experiences.⁶ Binyon was renowned for his generosity in helping young artists and writers, including Percy Wyndham Lewis (1882-1957) and Ezra Pound. The two young men later collaborated with Henri Gaudier-Brzeska (1891-1915) to promote a new form of art for which Pound coined the name “Vorticism”.⁷

When Binyon was developing his friendship with Pound, Lewis and other British modernists, new art movements were rapidly emerging in Europe. At the same time traditional Chinese art was becoming more available in museums and on art markets in London and Europe. Coinciding with a dynamic change in modern

⁴ Sir George possibly referred to Binyon’s *Painting in the Far East*. George Clausen to Binyon, 13 January 1914, ALB, Vol. 2.

⁵ Ernest Rhys, *Wales England Wed: An Autobiography*, London 1940, 199-200.

⁶ For the social life of Binyon at the British Museum, see Hatcher, *LB*, 42-53; David Peters Corbett, “‘Make It New’: Laurence Binyon, Pound and Vorticism”, *Paideuma* 26, 1997, 185-6; Qian Zhaoming, *Orientalism and Modernism: The Legacy of China in Pound and Williams*, Durham 1995, 9-14.

⁷ Natan Zach, “Imagism and Vorticism”, in Malcolm Bradbury and James Macfarlane (eds), *Modernism, 1890-1930*, Hassocks 1978, 231-3.

European art, Oriental ideas became an alternative source of inspiration for the West, and were discussed and applied in the work of modern poets and artists in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Through a discussion of Binyon's relationships with Lewis and Pound, this chapter examines how young poets and artists became interested in Chinese art in the 1910s. I also investigate how Chinese art influenced the literary and artistic ideas of English modernism.

Binyon's Relationships with Lewis and Pound

Among the "Lewis-Brzeska-Pound Troupe" of Vorticism,⁸ Wyndham Lewis first met Binyon sometime between 1898 and 1901, when he was a student at the Slade School of Fine Art in London. According to the British Museum visitors' books, Lewis visited the Print Room quite regularly between October 1899 and December 1901.⁹ Even though Lewis might have looked at both European and Oriental paintings and drawings during his visits to the Print Room, he would only have glimpsed selected Japanese and Chinese paintings in the Anderson and Franks collections. Lewis probably developed a knowledge of Chinese art and culture after 1903 when Binyon and other Sinologists, like Herbert Giles, began to publish their writings.

With his growing interest in both poetry and prose, Lewis hesitated between writing and painting after leaving the Slade School in the summer of 1902. Richard Cork states that Lewis "struck up an acquaintance with the British Museum set:

⁸ Horace Brodzky satirized the triumvirate of Vorticist insurgents in a lively little cartoon, called "The Lewis-Brzeska-Pound Troupe." The three were shown "blasting their own trumpets before the walls of Jericho". Reproduced in Richard Aldington, "Blast", *Egoist* 1, 15 July 1914, 272.

⁹ Victor Cassidy thinks that Lewis and Binyon first met about 1900, probably through Sir William Rothenstein. "In subsequent years, Lewis was to show an unusual knowledge of Oriental art in his theoretical and critical writings. Lewis' paintings and drawings at various times showed distinct Eastern influences." See Reginald Williams to Basil Gray, 23 March 1973, ALB, Vol. 37; Victor Cassidy to Basil Gray, 3 March 1973; Cassidy to the Keeper of Oriental Prints and Drawings, BM, 18 November 1972, ALB, Vol. 56.

[Thomas] Sturge Moore, [Richard A.] Streatfield and Laurence Binyon” who gathered at the Vienna Café.¹⁰ Lewis also appreciated the literary work of these intellectual habitués, such as Binyon’s *Porphyryion and Other Poems* (1898) and *Odes* (1901), as well as Moore’s *The Vinedresser and other poems* (1899).¹¹ At the same time these middle-aged scholars were impressed by Lewis’s literary talent and encouraged his interest in poetry.¹² Timothy Materer remarks that William Rothenstein helped Lewis throughout his career as a painter, and Yeats, Moore and Augustus John (1878-1961) set the pattern for Lewis’s artistic life. Among the poets, “Lewis’s relationship with Sturge Moore ... is paralleled by Ezra Pound’s with Laurence Binyon.”¹³

In September 1908, Ezra Pound came to London to start his career as a scholar of contemporary English literature. Pound worked regularly in the Reading Room of the British Museum.¹⁴ On 31 January 1909, the Australian poet Frederic Manning (1882-1935) introduced Pound to Binyon, and on 6 February, the London publisher Elkin Mathews (1851-1921) introduced him to Binyon and Selwyn Image (1849-1930) in a lunch gathering at a small restaurant near the British Museum.¹⁵ Pound was

¹⁰ Richard Cork, *Vorticism and Abstract Art in the First Machine Age*, Vol. 1, London 1976, 2.

¹¹ See Wyndham Lewis, *Blasting and Bombardiering*, London 1967, 273; Letters from Lewis to his mother in c. 1904 and c. 1907, in W. K. Rose (ed.), *The Letters of Wyndham Lewis*, London 1963, 16-7, 35.

¹² See Cork, *Vorticism and Abstract Art in the First Machine Age*, Vol. 1, 2, 22.

¹³ According to Timothy Materer, by 1909 Lewis was identified as a protégé of T. S. Moore who introduced him to the British Museum set, meeting at the Vienna Café. Lewis received advice and encouragement from the mature poets and artists. For the relationships between Lewis, John, Yeats and Moore, see Timothy Materer, “Lewis and the Patriarchs: Augustus John, W. B. Yeats, T. Sturge Moore”, in Jeffrey Meyers (ed.), *Wyndham Lewis: A Reevaluation. New Essays*, London 1980, 47-63.

¹⁴ Rhys remembered: “Once, when the Reading Room was very full I saw [Pound] sprawled diagonally over two desks littered with books and papers, writing his *Ballad of the Goodly Fere*.” Rhys, *Wales England Wed*, 196.

¹⁵ With reference to Pound’s letters to his parents, James Wilhelm lists Pound’s scheduled meetings with friends in London, including the two meetings with Binyon on 31 January and 6 February 1909. However, Qian Zhaoming who also consulted Pound’s manuscripts has claimed that, through Elkin Mathews, Pound and Binyon first met in a restaurant near the British Museum on Friday 5 February 1909. See James Wilhelm, *Ezra Pound in London and Paris 1908-1925*, London 1990, 6-8, 19; Qian, “Pound and Chinese Art in the ‘British Museum Era’”, in Helen M. Dennis (ed.), *Ezra Pound and Poetic Influence*, Amsterdam and Atlanta 2000, 105; Qian, *The Modernist Response to Chinese Art: Pound, Moore, Stevens* (hereafter *MRCA*), Charlottesville and London 2003, 10.

invited to the Museum's Print Room on 9 February, and made subsequent visits on 1 March and 16 June.¹⁶ At the time the Stein collection of Buddhist art had just been delivered to the Museum, and Binyon became Pound's mentor for the study of early Chinese art.¹⁷ In early March, Pound was invited to Binyon's lecture on "Art & Thought in East & West: Parallels and Contrasts" at the Albert Hall, Kensington.¹⁸ Issues covered in the four lectures included, among others, sculpture and the religious art of Asia, portraiture in the East and West, the spirit of Zen Buddhism, the deep feeling for nature in early Chinese poetry and monochrome painting, the Daoist symbolic icons of tiger and dragon, as well as the elemental qualities of Asian landscape painting. Pound admired Binyon's pioneering knowledge of Chinese and Japanese art, and found his lecture "intensely interesting".¹⁹ He christened Binyon with a nickname "BinBin" and was deeply impressed by his statement "Slowness is beauty" which stayed in Pound's mind and was reiterated in his *Rock-Drill de los Cantares* (1955).²⁰

¹⁶ Qian mentions that Pound first entered his name and address into the Visitors Book on 27 September 1912. However, Pound did visit the Print Room as early as 9 February 1909. Between September 1912 and March 1913, Pound made additional visits with his future wife Dorothy Shakespear (1886-1973) who studied materials of Chinese and Japanese art in the Print Room. See Visitors Book of the Print Room, Vols 20, 22-3; Qian, "Pound and Chinese Art in the 'British Museum Era'", 111; Hatcher, *LB*, 157-63.

¹⁷ Qian Zhaoming claims that "Pound did not come into contact with Chinese art in London first." When he had started college in Pennsylvania, Pound saw displays of Chinese art and Buddhist objects at the museum. See Qian, *MRCA*, 3-6.

¹⁸ Binyon gave four lectures, with lantern slides, on Wednesday afternoons, at 5.30pm at the small theatre of the Albert Hall. On 10 March 1909, he gave the first lecture on "Sculpture and Religious Art", followed by "The Renaissance in Europe and in Japan", "Landscape and the Feeling for Nature" and "Popular Art and Realism" on the 17th, 24th and 31st March, respectively. A syllabus of the lecture series can be found in the Papers of Sir William Rothenstein, Houghton Library, Harvard University, bMS Eng 1148 (126). Pound scholars generally accept that Pound attended the second lecture "The Renaissance in Europe and in Japan", while Qian Zhaoming and Rebecca Beasley think that Pound attended at least two of the lectures. For details, see Qian, "Pound and Chinese Art in the 'British Museum Era'", 105-6; Rebecca Beasley, *Ezra Pound and the Visual Culture of Modernism*, Cambridge 2007, 60; David Ewick, "BC Laurence Binyon", *Japonisme, Orientalism, Modernism: A Bibliography of Japan in English-Language Verse of the Early 20th Century* (Chuo University, Tokyo, [date accessed, 20 November 2009]), <http://themargins.net/bib/B/BC/bc34.html>.

¹⁹ Noel Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound*, London 1970, 61.

²⁰ Ezra Pound, "Rock-Drill De Los Cantares LXXXVII", *The Cantos*, London 1975, 572. Also see a letter from Pound to Binyon, 6 March 1934, in D. D. Paige (ed.), *The Letters of Ezra Pound: 1907-41*, London 1951, 340.

Binyon also introduced Pound to the habitués of the Vienna Café. Returning from his study trip to the Continent in 1909, Pound was introduced by Binyon to Lewis at their first meeting in the Vienna Café.²¹ Lewis thought Pound was one of the best poets, yet Pound “arrived as an unassimilable and aggressive stranger; with his Imagism he became aesthetically a troublesome rebel.”²² At first, Pound’s Jewish appearance and American identity made him not a particularly welcome guest. When Lewis met Pound for the third time in 1910, he revised his impression:

Under a skull and crossed lilies, a kind heart that the bogus coronet of Raoul de la Tour Carol made nonsense of. That is what I found. Also, through sailing the China Seas (without the shadow of an academic sanction) this literary pirate had become a very passable, if unsound, Sinologue. And nature had endowed him with more native taste – how exquisite it can be I have only to refer to *Cathay* in order to confound dissent – than all the Cambridge aesthetes could muster between them.²³

Binyon played a significant role in deepening Pound’s interest in Chinese art and culture when the latter was formulating new ideas of form and design in poetry during his early years in London. Through Binyon, Pound met Mary Fenollosa in early October 1913, and was given an opportunity to edit the late Ernest Fenollosa’s notebooks which included his writings on Oriental literature, translations of Chinese poetry and *Noh* plays. The unfinished manuscript encouraged Pound to begin his obsessive life-long inquiry into ideograms and the Orient.²⁴ Based on Fenollosa’s notes, Pound published English translation of Chinese poems *Cathay* (1915), ‘*Noh*’ or *Accomplishment* (1916), and *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry*

²¹ Pound also met T. S. Moore and Robert Bridges at the Vienna Café. See Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound*, 60-1; Pound, “The Pisan Cantos LXXX”, *The Cantos*, 506-7.

²² Lewis, *Blasting and Bombardiering*, London 1967, 275.

²³ *Ibid*, 272.

²⁴ For Fenollosa’s influence on Pound, see Achilles Fang, “Fenollosa and Pound”, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 20, 1975, 213-36; Hugh Kenner, *The Pound Era*, London 1975, 289-98.

(1936).²⁵

Being familiar with Oriental ideas in London, Pound believed:

Ernest Fenollosa's finds in China and Japan, his intimate personal knowledge, are no less potent than Crisolora's manuscripts. China is no less stimulating than Greece, even if Fenollosa had not had insight. And this force of external stimuli is certainly not limited by "what we do"; these new masses of unexplored arts and facts are pouring to the vortex of London. They cannot help bring about changes as great as the Renaissance changes, even if we set ourselves blindly against it. As it is, there is life in the fusion. The complete man must have more interest in things which are in seed and dynamic than in things which are dead, dying, static.²⁶

Pound's interest in Chinese art and in things "which are in seed and dynamic" coincided in the 1910s with the rise of the modernist movement in poetry in the West. The tragic experience of the First World War challenged religious beliefs in America and Europe. The superiority of Western culture became suspect and aroused an interest in Eastern cultures.²⁷ Both English and American modernist poets were subsequently inspired by the "prolonged and rich heritage of intensity, precision, objectivity, visual clarity, and complete harmony with nature" of Oriental art.²⁸ Pound and his Imagist colleagues saw Oriental art as a much-needed model for the West, while Chinese sensibilities in the early twentieth century inspired his Imagist theory and conception of Vorticism.

²⁵ Between 1913 and 1915 Pound also served as secretary to Yeats and together studied *Noh* plays in three successive winters. According to Hakutani Yoshinobu, Yone Noguchi introduced Japanese poetry, art and *Noh* play to Pound and Yeats through his essays and books published between 1913 and 1918. However, the two men had different views on Japanese *Noh* plays due to their differing views about poetry. In 1913-4, Pound studied *haiku* which provided a structural model for his theory of Imagism. His haiku-like sentences appeared in his poetry and essays on Vorticism. See Hakutani, "Ezra Pound, Yone Noguchi, and Imagism", 46-69.

²⁶ Pound, "Affirmations-VI", *New Age* 16, 11 February 1915, 411.

²⁷ See Chung Ling, *Meiguoshi yu Zhongguomeng*, Guangxi 2003, 8; Peter Venne, "Western Opinions and Attitudes: Concerning China: A Historical Survey", *Tamkang Review* 10, 1979, 157-65.

²⁸ Qian remarks that many poet friends of Pound, such as Thomas Ernest Hulme (1883-1917) and Yeats, and later imagist such as Amy Lowell (1874-1925), were also fond of Oriental culture. Qian, *Orientalism and Modernism*, 3-4.

The Idea of “Rhythm” in Pound’s Aesthetics

In 1912 Pound was configuring an entirely new poetics, in which the idea of “rhythm” was shown in his first manifesto of Imagism in *Poetry* in March 1913.²⁹ Pound’s Imagist theory envisaged poetry infused with the dynamic expression to drive its rhythmic movement to create a harmony.³⁰ For him, poetry was the most powerful means of expression. Wyndham Lewis found Pound’s idea of “rhythm” reminiscent of Whistler’s idea:

Pound’s nearest American analogue in the past is not Whitman, however, or Mark Twain, but a painter, James McNeil [I] Whistler – the ‘gentle master of all that is flippant and fine in art’. Whistler signed his pictures with a butterfly ... [B]y the unobtrusive presence of this winged insect was the artist’s identity revealed. Like Pound in the literary art, it was in the extreme-orient that Whistler had discovered the fundamental adjustments of his preference.³¹

Pound appreciated Whistler’s aesthetics in the “Ten O’Clock” lecture,³² and admired Whistler’s music-poetry-painting correspondences.³³ He concurred with Whistler’s idea that a painter should treat a flower “as his key, not as his model”.³⁴ That is to say, the arrangement of forms was far more important than the representation of objects.

²⁹ Zinnes notes that Pound saw a memorial exhibition of Cézanne during the early Cubist period. This influenced Pound’s development of first Imagism and later Vorticism. It was also a consequence of his involvement in London with Hulme, Lewis and Gaudier-Brzeska. Pound expressed his ideas of Imagism in poems, published in the magazine *Poetry* in September 1912. The term *Les Imagistes* was appeared in Pound’s *Riposte* in October 1912. See Harriet Zinnes (ed.), *Ezra Pound and the Visual Arts*, New York 1980, xii; Richard Humphreys, *Pound’s Artists: Ezra Pound and the Visual Arts in London, Paris and Italy*, London 1985, 39.

³⁰ The manifesto was presented in the form of an interview with Pound by Frank Stuart Flint (1885-1960), entitled “Imagisme”. Pound recaptured the three doctrines of “Vorticism” published in *Fortnightly Review* 96, 1 September 1914, 461-71. See Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound*, 132-3; Zach, “Imagism and Vorticism”, in Bradbury and Macfarlane (eds), *Modernism, 1890-1930*, 230.

³¹ Lewis, *Blasting and Bombardiering*, 278.

³² Pound allied himself with Whistler and said, “Whistler was the only man working in England in the “Eighties” who would have known what we are at and would have backed us against the mob.” See Ezra Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir*, Hesse 1960, 119-23, 125.

³³ Whistler, in his “The Red Rag”, said that his paintings can be called “symphonies”, “arrangements”, “harmonies”, and “nocturnes”; he also said, “[a]s music is the poetry of sound, so is painting the poetry of sight, and the subject-matter has nothing to do with harmony of sound or of colour.” James McNeill Whistler, *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies*, New York and London 1967, 126-7.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 128. Pound quoted Whistler’s words in his *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir*, 120. Another relevant quotation by Whistler cited is: “Whistler said somewhere in the *Gentle Art*: ‘The picture is interesting not because it is Trotty Veg [Veck], but because it is an arrangement of colours.’” Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska*, 84.

Like Whistler, Pound derived the “common ground of the arts” from the concept of “harmony” in musical keys,³⁵ as well as their form, arrangement and organisation. It is not difficult to detect the influence of Walter Pater’s (1839-1894) aesthetics – “all arts approach the conditions of music” – which he cited in “Vortex” of 1914.³⁶

Pound’s concern for “arrangement” and “expression” also appeared in his writings on visual art. In March 1914, he collaborated with Lewis, Gaudier-Brzeska and other artists to establish the Rebel Art Centre, a rival to Roger Fry’s Omega Workshop, and prepared the first issue of the magazine *Blast* which attacked the decaying aesthetic idea inherited from the Victorian age. Pound conceived of the “Vortex” as the innate power of man and his momentum, pushing the artist to present his vivid consciousness and emotion in “an intensive art”, similar to a machine working to the point of greatest efficiency and maximum energy.³⁷ The Vorticists were dynamic artists and desired intensity of expression, “for certain forms of expression *are* ‘more intense’ than others”.³⁸ The fluid force or the vortex pushed the artists to the most intense and expressive state. The essence of “an intensive art”, for Pound, was the “arrangement” – just as poets arranged words and images, painters arranged forms and colours, sculptors arranged “planes in relations”.³⁹ Different from simple imitation, the “arrangement”, or the organisation of forms, was a much more energetic and creative action. Pound perceived that

From Whistler and the Japanese, or Chinese, ... the fragment of the English-speaking world that spreads itself into print, learned to enjoy “arrangements”

³⁵ Whistler in his famous “Ten O’Clock” lecture reasserted his ideas, “[T]he artist is born to pick, and choose, and group..., as the musician gathers his notes, and forms his chords, until he bring[s] forth from chaos glorious harmony.” Whistler, *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies*, 143.

³⁶ Pound, “Vortex”, *Blast* 1, 20 June 1914, 154.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 153.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ See Pound, “Vorticism”, 468-71.

of colours and masses.⁴⁰

When a man begins to be more interested in the “arrangement” than in the dead matter arranged, then he begins “to have an eye for” the difference between the good, the bad and the mediocre in Chinese painting. His remarks on Byzantine, and Japanese, and on ultra-modern painting begin to be interesting and intelligible.⁴¹

Interestingly, the development of Vorticism would lead to the appreciation of Chinese painting. Chinese painting became a touchstone for validating the principles of Vorticism. The anti-mimetic nature of Chinese painting was a model for the “intensive art”.

The relationship Pound made between Chinese art and Vorticism is also manifested in his “Chronicles” of 1915.⁴² The approving quotes from *The Flight of the Dragon* show that Pound appreciated Binyon’s phrasing of “ordered relations”, or “organic relation”.⁴³ In particular, he was much enchanted by the Chinese aesthetic concept of “rhythmic vitality”. Binyon’s writings on Chinese aesthetics inspired Pound to correlate the “arrangement” and “rhythm” in Chinese painting with the “movement” and “energy” of Vorticism. Responding to the formal experiments in Western art, as demonstrated in the Manet and the Post-Impressionists exhibition

⁴⁰ Pound found that the rhythmic arrangement of form in Edward Wadsworth’s (1889-1949) painting *Khaki* suggested “an oriental angular grace”. He imagined, “the feeling that went into it is probably very much the same as that which moved certain Chinese painters ... to paint in periods before their form or “school” of art has decayed and become sentimental.” See Pound, “Edward Wadsworth, Vorticist”, *Egoist* 1, 15 August 1914, 306-7; Pound, “Vorticism”, 470. Pound also associated the pictures in Wadsworth’s woodcuts with Chinese ideograph. See Pound to Harriet Monroe, [1914], in Zinnes (ed.), *Ezra Pound and the Visual Arts*, 288-9.

⁴¹ Pound believed that Vorticist artists had given him a new sense of form. He also proudly said that he was “ten times as quick to discriminate between fine and mediocre Chinese or Japanese prints or paintings.” See Pound, “Affirmations-II”, *New Age* 16, 14 January 1915, 277; Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska*, 126.

⁴² Pound, “Chronicles”, *Blast* 2, July 1915, 86. The passage was later reprinted in Pound, *Pavannes & Divagations*, New York 1958, 148-50. Lewis thought that Pound’s “Chronicles” essay was excellent. See a letter from Lewis to Pound, [January 1915], in Timothy Materer (ed.), *Pound/Lewis: The Letters of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis*, New York 1985, 7-8.

⁴³ In his *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (1916), Pound reiterated that he had intended to quote further from Whistler’s “Ten O’Clock” lecture and from Binyon’s *The Flight of the Dragon*, “but it is perhaps enough to remind the reader that these essays exist, and one may by thinking them over, arrive at some degree of enlightenment.” Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska*, 122, 134-5.

organized by Roger Fry in November 1910,⁴⁴ Rebecca Bearsley states that “Binyon develops his previous remarks about rhythm into a formalist vocabulary that effectively marks the difference between the compositional values of Chinese and Japanese art and the mimetic values dominating Western art since the Renaissance, while creating a means to understand it.”⁴⁵ John Hatcher also points out that

Binyon’s emphasis on art as being spiritual and non-naturalistic, his attacks on Western art’s commitment to mimesis since the Renaissance, and his investigations of “rhythm” – the artist’s use of mass, rhythm and design to incarnate the underlying “energies” and “essence” of reality – found their way into Pound’s developing ideas of “absolute rhythm” and organic form. His books and his personal introduction to Pound of the riches of Asian art and thought exerted a lifelong influence, extending through his Imagist, *Cathay* and Vorticist periods and into his decades of work on the *Cantos*. Binyon helped the young Pound move beyond his cosmopolitan but still Eurocentric vision, and thus helped bring a more genuinely multicultural dimension to nascent modernism.⁴⁶

By the time Pound was developing his Vorticist theory, he began to formulate the idea of *The Cantos*. Richard Humphreys infers that the sense of the past and of tradition in *The Cantos* is central to Pound’s version of Vorticism.⁴⁷ Pound was obsessed with the fusion of the “past”, “present” and “future”. In “Vortex” of 1914, he stated that “[t]he DESIGN of the future [is] in the grip of the human vortex. All the

⁴⁴ Binyon found that “European art has become so cumbered with its complete endeavour to represent the complete effect of a scene, sculptural form, light and shadow, natural colour and atmosphere that nine painters out of ten forget the first business of art, which is, with rhythmical design.” However, he thought that “the exhibition itself leaves [him] sad.” For Binyon, Post-Impressionist artists did not discover anything new, but aimed at being childish. See Binyon, “Post-Impressionists”, 609-10.

⁴⁵ Interestingly, Fry found the Chinese idea of rhythmic design in the art of Post-Impressionism: “Matisse aims at convincing us of the reality of his forms by the continuity and flow of his rhythmic line, by the logic of his space relations, and above all, by an entirely new use of colour. In this, as in his markedly rhythmic design, he approaches more than any other European to the ideals of Chinese art.” See Bearsley, *Ezra Pound and the Visual Culture of Modernism*, 61, 67; Roger Fry, “The French Group”, in Grafton Galleries, *Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition*, London 1912, 15. For Fry and Clive Bell’s discussion of “rhythm” and Chinese art, see Ying Ling Huang, *Laurence Binyon’s Conception of Chinese Painting*, M. Litt. Dissertation, University of St Andrews 2004, 63-8.

⁴⁶ Hatcher, “Binyon, Stevens, Pound, Eliot”, 12.

⁴⁷ See Humphreys, *Pound’s Artists*, 44. On the issue of “past” and “tradition” in *The Cantos*, Zhaoming Qian comments on Pound’s “preoccupation with ancient and medieval myths, his tendency to link the Greek culture with the Chinese culture, and his talent for the style of allusion, ellipsis, and juxtaposition.” Qian, *Orientalism and Modernism*, 38.

past that is vital, all the past that is capable of living into the future, is pregnant in the vortex, NOW.”⁴⁸ For Pound, the past served as an impetus to push the momentum and vortex of the Vorticist to design a brilliant future. Woon-Ping Chin Holaday suggests that in *Painting in the Far East*, “Binyon’s analysis of the artist’s relationship to his tradition in the Orient may have adumbrated Pound’s own theories”.⁴⁹ The practice of imitating tradition and surpassing the work of the past not only tested Chinese artists’ originality but also liberated their creative mind to renew tradition. This principle of continuity seems to be a solution which Pound found inspiring and useful for Vorticist artists.

Pound’s experience of seeing Chinese painting in exhibitions also contributed to Imagism, *Cathay*, Vorticism and *The Cantos*. Holaday points out that the motif of seven lakes in Pound’s *The Fifth Decade of Cantos* is reminiscent of the traditional subject of Eight Views above the shores of Lake Dongtin in Chinese landscape painting.⁵⁰ Holaday speculates that Pound saw *Eight Views of the Xiao and Xiang Rivers* (Fig. 51), an album attributed to Sesson Shukei 雪村周繼 (c. 1504-1583) of the Muromachi period, in the William Anderson collection during his visits to the British Museum, and possibly through Binyon’s interpretation in *Painting in the Far East* and the 1910 *Guide to an Exhibition of Chinese and Japanese Paintings*, Pound was exposed to the stillness, harmony and seasonal rhythm of Oriental painting.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Pound, “Vortex”, 153.

⁴⁹ Woon-Ping Chin Holaday, “Pound and Binyon: China via the British Museum”, *Paideuma* 6, 1977, 29.

⁵⁰ Pound, *The Cantos of Ezra Pound*, 49/451-2.

⁵¹ However, Qian Zhaoming points out that the major source of Pound’s “Seven Lakes Canto” came from a gilded book of “Uncle James” (the third husband of “Aunt Frank” who was Pound’s great aunt-in-law). During a visit to Aunt Frank in New York in his last years in America, Pound saw a screen book which reproduced the “Eight Views” of China’s Xiao and Xiang Rivers alongside handwritten Chinese and Japanese poems. See Holaday, “Pound and Binyon: China via the British Museum”, 29-36. Qian, “Pound and Chinese Art in the ‘British Museum Era’”, 100-1.

The growing availability of Oriental objects in art markets and galleries in London, especially the three exhibitions of Chinese and Japanese paintings held at the British Museum between 1910 and 1914, provided Pound with several opportunities to see Oriental paintings of landscapes, flowers and birds, animals, still-life, as well as works expressive of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. According to Qian Zhaoming, Pound almost certainly saw the 1910-2 Exhibition of Chinese and Japanese Paintings at the British Museum when he returned from the United States to England in mid-February 1911. The Stein collection of Buddhist paintings also provided actual pictorial examples for Pound to meditate the stillness of a Goddess of Mercy and Loving-kindness. The Buddhist motif of Guanyin which appeared in *The Pisan Cantos* demonstrated the influence of Zen Buddhism on Pound's writing.⁵² The distinctive aesthetic ideas behind Chinese paintings, including space, suggestion and tonality, also fascinated Pound. Pound's poems reflected his appreciation of Chinese painters' unique sense of colour and vision, as well as new concepts of form and compositional design. For instance, the "blue-and-green style" of Chinese landscapes and the depiction of Dragon and Guanyin appear in Pound's "A Song of the Degrees" and "Further Instructions" of 1913, as well as in "Three Cantos" of 1917, respectively.⁵³

Pound's preference for Oriental culture and Whistlerian aesthetics, together with his personal contact with Binyon at the British Museum, all contributed to his development of Imagism and Vorticism. Pound's method of correlating different cultures allowed him to shuttle between the past, present and future, in poetry,

⁵² See Pound, *The Cantos of Ezra Pound*, 74/455, 462, 471.

⁵³ See Qian, "Pound and Chinese Art in the 'British Museum Era'", 107-8; Qian, *MRCA*, 12-5.

painting and music, thus fusing the arts of the East and West.

Gaudier-Brzeska and Ancient Chinese Art

Among “The Lewis-Brzeska-Pound Troupe”, Gaudier-Brzeska, whom Pound met at the Allied Artists exhibition at the Albert Hall in July 1913, was closest in sharing his aesthetic ideas and enthusiasm for Chinese art.⁵⁴ In response to modern art movements, both Pound and Gaudier sought inspiration from China’s ancient past. Although they advocated the maximum energy of Vorticism, their aesthetics also inclined towards the harmony of nature. Pound appreciated Gaudier’s unique sensitivity to animal life, which resulted in his vivid and harmonious animal drawings with free brushstrokes, such as *Horse* (1912), *Antelope* (1912-3) and *Stags* (1913) (Fig. 52). Gaudier’s love of animals, birds and plants became a part of his artistic expression. The animal drawings were Gaudier’s direct response to nature and the expression of his own ego,⁵⁵ i.e. the presentation of his “intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time”, in Pound’s words.⁵⁶ Pound saw a “style” – the absolute subjugation of details of a given work to the dominant will – in Gaudier’s stag drawings and animal carvings:

[H]e was so accustomed to observe the dominant line in objects that after he had spent, what could not have been more than a few days studying the subject at the museum, he could understand the primitive Chinese ideographs (not the later more sophisticated forms), and he was very much disgusted with the lexicographers who “hadn’t sense enough to see that *that* was a horse”, or a cow or a tree or whatever it might be ...⁵⁷

Gaudier’s sensitivity to forms showed his understanding of Chinese ideographs. In

⁵⁴ The two men’s friendship is vividly presented in Richard Cork’s *Henri Gaudier & Ezra Pound: A Friendship* (1982). Also see Pound, “Letter to William Carlos Williams”, 19 December 1913, in Paige (ed.), *The Letters of Ezra Pound*, 65.

⁵⁵ See Gaudier-Brzeska to Sophie, 19 May 1911, in Jeremy Lewison, *Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, Sculptor, 1891-1915*, Cambridge 1983, 8.

⁵⁶ Pound, “Vortex”, 154.

⁵⁷ Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska*, 46.

fact, most primitive ideographs, which were commonly shown on ancient Chinese bronzes as inscriptions, are representations of natural or animal images in lines. Some ideographs, such as “Horse” (馬) and “Stag” (鹿), are not particularly difficult to comprehend.⁵⁸

Pound was eager to explore Chinese art for the development of modern English art and literature, and he often made reference to Chinese art while formulating his Imagist and Vorticist theories. Pound became infatuated with Chinese characters after reading Fenollosa’s “The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry” in October 1913.⁵⁹ Subsequently, Pound was enthusiastic about translating the Books of Chinese Classics, including *Daixue* (*The Great Digest* 《大學》), *Zhongyong* (*The Unwobbling Pivot* 《中庸》) and *Lunyu* (*The Analects* 《論語》).⁶⁰ He also venerated and used Chinese characters extensively as illustrations in his *The Cantos*.⁶¹ However, contemporary scholars have questioned the accuracy of Pound’s and Fenollosa’s Chinese translations.⁶² Christopher Bush criticizes Fenollosa for not being able to read Chinese.⁶³ Chung Ling also argues that Pound’s *Cathay* turned out

⁵⁸ For the formation and development of Chinese ideographs, see Dai Jiaxiang (ed.), *Jinwen Dazidian*, Shanghai, 1995.

⁵⁹ Pound later published Fenollosa’s essay “The Chinese Written Character as a Medium of Poetry” in the form of essay and book, but it was first published in the four issues of *The Little Review* in October-December 1919. Cai Zong-Qi argues that the dynamic force in Chinese characters which Pound saw as an essential deficiency in Western pictorialism led him to depart from his early Imagist tenets to develop a theory of kinetic Image in the light of Vorticist aesthetics. See Cai Zong-Qi, “Poundian and Chinese Aesthetics of Dynamic Force: A Re-discovery of Fenollosa and Pound’s Theory of the Chinese Written Character”, *Comparative Literature Studies* 30, 1993, 170-87.

⁶⁰ Pound began to read Confucius, probably the French translation of *The Unwobbling Pivot* in early 1915, and started his own translation of the Confucian Classics in 1928. See Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound*, 176, 269-70; William Tay, “Pound and Confucianism”, *Wenxue Yinyuan*, Taipei 1987, 153-9.

⁶¹ Pound projected his intense interest in Confucius and the history of ancient China in several stanzas of *The Cantos*. He even used the calligraphy to depict the traditional Chinese characters in a doodle manner. He also marked transliterations beside the words. See Pound, *The Cantos of Ezra Pound*, 272-575; Chung, *Meiguoshi yu Zhongguomeng*, 174-81.

⁶² See James Wilhelm, *Ezra Pound in London and Paris 1908-1925*, London 1990, 129-35; Qian, “Pound and Chinese Art in the ‘British Museum Era’”, 105, 112.

⁶³ For recent criticisms on Pound’s *Cathay* and Fenollosa’s command of Chinese, see Christopher Bush, “Review Essays”, *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature* 51, 2003-4, 179.

to be a model for many imagist poets. However, to many Sinologists and experts in translation it was a work of inaccurate and “creative” translation.⁶⁴ Unsurprisingly, Pound’s concept of the Chinese ideogram merely reveals his occidental way of seeing. He summarized his thoughts in his *ABC of Reading* of 1934:

[T]he Chinese still use abbreviated pictures AS pictures. That is to say, Chinese ideogram does not try to be the picture of a sound ... [I]t is still the picture of a thing; of a thing in a given position or relation, or of a combination of things. It *means* the thing or the action or situation, or quality germane to the several things it pictures.⁶⁵

Pound was fascinated by exotic Chinese which was the “other” of European language systems. He agreed with Fenollosa’s observation, or speculation to be exact, that Chinese characters are “images”, and that “a language written in this way simply HAD TO STAY POETIC.”⁶⁶ To a great extent, Pound deduced his Imagism in the 1910s from this speculation. But Pound’s interpretation of the formulating principles of Chinese characters was too reductive to be correct. He left out, or was ignorant of, more complicated questions.⁶⁷ Therefore, Pound’s association of “observing the dominant line in objects” and “understanding Chinese ideographs” becomes implausible. His misinterpretation and distortion of the principles of Chinese characters shows that he overestimated Gaudier’s ability to read “a certain amount of Chinese writing without ANY STUDY”.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ See Chung, *Meiguoshi yu Zhongguomeng*, 8.

⁶⁵ Pound, *ABC of Reading*, London 1961, 21.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 22.

⁶⁷ See Chung, *Meiguoshi yu Zhongguomeng*, 174-81.

⁶⁸ Pound wrote that Gaudier, “who was accustomed to looking at the real shape of things, could read a certain amount of Chinese writing without ANY STUDY.” Pound, *ABC of Reading*, 21. See also Evelyn Silber, *Gaudier-Brzeska: Life and Art*, London 1996, 129-30. In *The Modernist Response to Chinese Art*, Qian Zhaoming claims that Chinese ideas were used in the art of Wyndham Lewis, Edward Wadsworth and Henri Gaudier-Brzeska. However, Christopher Bush criticizes Qian’s arguments: “despite this impressive wealth of documentation and historical research, the serious argumentative work, the links between the facts and the claims, are often hedged or problematic. The occasional ‘seems’ or ‘appears’ is perhaps unavoidable, but too many of these and the fabric of the argument begins to unravel.” Thus, he thinks Qian’s assertion of Gaudier’s study of Fenollosa’s *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art* (1912) and primitive Chinese characters, through Pound’s introduction, rested on “imagined encounters and even imagined imaginings” rather than textual evidence. See Qian, *MCA*, 3-21; Bush, “Review Essays”, 181. For another review of Qian’s *The Modernist Response to*

Whether Gaudier consciously used Chinese ideographs in his animal drawings or not, he was sensitive enough to capture the forms, the arrangement of lines, and the expression of emotions in animals. He insisted: “[t]he great thing is: That sculpture consists in placing planes according to rhythm.”⁶⁹ He created geometric yet cartoon-like images of animals in various positions, like the *Cock* (Fig. 53) and *Geometric Horse*, in a Vorticist style. Using forceful brushstrokes, Gaudier brought both energy and emotions to create “rhythm” in his dynamic drawings. It was possibly this energy and rhythm in the highly stylized pen and ink strokes that led Pound to associate his work with Chinese “calligraphic drawings”.

Gaudier’s friend Horace Brodzky (1885-1969) remarked that the artist had worked after hours studying “everything”, including Egyptology and China, during the years 1912-3.⁷⁰ When Gaudier developed a strong interest in China and was influenced by other Oriental enthusiasts, such as Pound and Brodzky, he made some drawings, painted in ink with a flat pliable stick in a calligraphic mode.⁷¹ In his drawing of Brodzky’s head, Pound saw a “calligraphic drawing” theory: “painting and drawing are first of all calligraphy. It is a belief Chinese in origin, or else deduced from Chinese work by some occidental theorist.”⁷² He remembered that Gaudier was studying recondite early woodcuts and Chinese painting.⁷³ Contours which are

Chinese Art, see Feng Lan, “American Poetry and Chinese Art: New Perspectives on a Cross-Cultural Relationship”, *Twentieth Century Literature* 50, Winter 2004, 436-40.

⁶⁹ See Harold Ede, *Savage Messiah*, London 1931, 83.

⁷⁰ Before Gaudier moved to London he saw an exhibition of Japanese prints and sword-hilts in Paris in October 1910. He told Dr Uhlemayr that “[s]ince then I have not stopped proclaiming, in the teeth of opposition, that the yellow civilization is better than our own. Had it not been so they would not have so adeptly appropriated our infernal machinery for our own destruction ...” See *ibid*, 40-1, 52, 232-5; Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska*, 85.

⁷¹ Humphreys, *Pound’s Artists*, 51.

⁷² Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska*, 75.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 105-7.

commonly found in Chinese painting and calligraphy became stimuli for Gaudier's early drawings.⁷⁴

Pound also believed that the animal bronzes of the Zhou dynasty (c.1100-256 BCE) were an important source for Gaudier's sculpture:

The animal drawings and carvings are neutral ground, and in them the only possible influence upon him was archaic. Fonts de Gaume and Chou bronzes, plus life itself and his genius, which was in this case an abnormal sympathy with, an intelligence for, all moving animal life, its swiftness and softness.⁷⁵

In the time of Zhou, most vessels, braziers, and mirrors of bronze were decorated with carvings in the shape of birds, snakes, dragons, and tigers.⁷⁶ These carvings influenced Gaudier's investigation of abstracted animal forms in planes and lines, as well as his way of depicting animals in a geometrical manner. Pound showed that Gaudier had a talent for synthesizing the intimate feeling of animals in nature with the form of Chinese bronzes. In March 1914, he wrote in the *Egoist*:

It is no use saying that Epstein is Egyptian and that Brzeska is Chinese ... Brzeska is in a formative stage, he is abundant and pleasing. His animals have what one can only call a "snuggly", comfortable feeling, that might appeal to a child ... Of the two animal groups, his stags are the more interesting if considered as a composition of forms. "A Boy with a Coney" [(Fig. 54)] is "Chou", or suggests slightly the bronze animals of that period. Brzeska is as much concerned with representing certain phases of animal life.⁷⁷

Ironically, Pound's judgment was challenged by his friend. Gaudier denied the Chinese influence and argued that his work was "better" than the bronze animals of the Zhou dynasty:

They had, it is true, a maturity brought by continuous rotundities – my statuette has more monumental concentration – a result of the use of flat and round surfaces. To be appreciated is the relation between the mass of the rabbit

⁷⁴ However, Pound noted that there was not any trace of calligraphic drawing in Gaudier's later drawings which were almost always done with a stylographic pen. Ibid, 75-6.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 78-9.

⁷⁶ William Watson, *Handbook to The Collections of Early Chinese Antiquities*, London 1963, 47-67.

⁷⁷ Pound, "Exhibition at the Goupil Gallery", *Egoist* 1, 16 March 1914, 109.

and the right arm with that of the rest. The next is a bird.⁷⁸

Nonetheless, Gaudier had studied Chinese bronzes on his visits to museums and art galleries in London in about 1912.⁷⁹ He took particular notice of all primitive statues by the black, yellow, red and white races which he believed had a feeling of individuality. Hence Gaudier studied Egyptian, Assyrian, African, Chinese, Gothic and Greek art.⁸⁰ The primitive sculptures and the Zhou bronzes in the British Museum were valuable resources for Gaudier's investigation into form and movement:⁸¹

Movement is the translation of life, and if art depicts life, movement should come into art, since we are only aware of life because it moves. Our expressions belong to this same big movement, and they show the most interesting aspects of the individual; his character, his personality.⁸²

Gaudier also found that the forms of primitive sculpture could communicate both serene happiness and excessive sorrow, and were more emotive than the work of modern European sculptors.⁸³ The ornamental style and geometrical elements of the bronze animals of the Zhou dynasty also had a sense of individuality for Gaudier. Roger Fry noticed that Gaudier's early sculptures closely resembled early Chinese sculptures of which he was an enthusiastic admirer.⁸⁴

Gaudier's vision of primitive and non-Western cultures was similar to Pound's belief that the past is vital and capable of living in the future. In *Blast* Gaudier

⁷⁸ Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, "Allied Artists' Association Ltd., Holland Park Hall", *Egoist* 1, 15 June 1914, 227.

⁷⁹ Around 1910-1, Gaudier visited several exhibitions of Japanese prints, Goya drawings, French paintings and German engravings. Gaudier also found that German culture helped him understand the art of the East. See Ede, *Savage Messiah*, 19, 40, 50-2; Silber, *Gaudier-Brzeska*, 129.

⁸⁰ See Ede, *Savage Messiah*, 212-3; Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska*, 138.

⁸¹ Several Chinese works of art in the Shang, Zhou and Han dynasties were exhibited in the collections of early Chinese antiquities at the British Museum. For details, see Watson, *Handbook to the Collections of Early Chinese Antiquities* (1963); also see Qian, *MRCA*, 19-21.

⁸² Gaudier to Sophie Suzanne Brzeska, [end of November 1912], in Ede, *Savage Messiah*, 214.

⁸³ Gaudier found Greek sculptures were right in balancing the masses, in studying planes and rhythm and right for form in general. Gaudier-Brzeska, "Letter to Haldane Macfall", 27 January 1912, in Lewison, *Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, Sculptor, 1891-1915*, 6-7.

⁸⁴ Roger Fry, "Gaudier-Brzeska", *BM* 29, 1916, 210.

contrasted the vortex of Indians with that of the Chinese. The former inclined towards the repetitive asceticism of Greek influence, whereas the latter was invested with intense paleolithic feeling from human ancestors, the spirits of the horse, the land and grain. He also appreciated the form of the vortex in the Shang (c.1600-1100 BCE) and Zhou dynasties. According to his “Vortex” of 1914, it appears that Gaudier acquired knowledge of Chinese history and art, and also admired the vortex of China through the Han and Tang dynasties.⁸⁵ In addition, he linked the “vortex” to pre-Christian history from the barbaric world to the end of Impressionism by observing the history of “form” in both the East and West. He admired the art of the East and Egypt at the expense of Greek sculpture which “WAS DERIVATIVE his feeling for form secondary. The absence of direct energy lasted for a thousand years.”⁸⁶ It echoed Pound’s idea: “We have other standards, we have gone on with the intentions of Pico, to China and Egypt.”⁸⁷ The non-European cultures had broadened Gaudier’s vision, “[i]n like manner he analyses the Chinese and Mexican and Oceanic forms. The sphere, the vertical, the horizontal, the cylinder and the pointed cone; and then the modern movement.”⁸⁸

Through his study of primitive sculpture, Gaudier began a gradual process of formal geometric reductions, focusing on “the arrangement of his surfaces, lines and planes” in his sculpture. He put the dimension of “rhythm” in *Dancer* (1913) (Fig. 55) and *Birds Erect* (1914) (Fig. 56), especially the latter which was concerned with

⁸⁵ Gaudier-Brzeska, “Vortex”, *Blast* 1, 157. See also Silber, *Gaudier-Brzeska*, 133-4.

⁸⁶ Gaudier-Brzeska, “Vortex”, 156.

⁸⁷ See Pound, “Affirmations – V”, *New Age* 16, 4 February 1915, 380. Pound found this global vision a challenge: “we have more aliment, we have not one classic tradition to revivify, we have China and Egypt, and the unknown lands lying upon the roof of the world – Khotan, Kara-star and Kan-su.” Pound, “The Renaissance”, *Poetry*, March and May 1915, in Zinnes (ed.), *Ezra Pound and the Visual Arts*, 269.

⁸⁸ Pound, “Affirmations – V”, 381.

closely related and rounded geometric forms in a rhythmic arrangement of planes.⁸⁹ While Pound found the “primary” characteristic of sculpture as “FORM OR DESIGN IN THREE PLANES”, Gaudier emphasized the power of artists to control elements and create new forms, in order to express their intellectual and conscious ideas. To express his “vortex”, i.e. will and consciousness,⁹⁰ Gaudier further claimed that: “I SHALL DERIVE MY EMOTIONS SOLELY FROM THE ARRANGEMENT OF SURFACES, I shall present my emotions by the ARRANGEMENT OF MY SURFACES, THE PLANES AND LINES BY WHICH THEY ARE DEFINED.”⁹¹ In this way, Gaudier called on the vortex in the modern world to create “the DESIGN of the future”.⁹²

While Pound projected his Oriental fantasy in literary works, Gaudier experimented with the style of ancient Chinese art in his animal drawings and early sculptures. When Gaudier was in the trenches in 1915, he continued his study of Chinese art, expecting that after his return, he would “develop a style of [his] own which, like the Chinese, will embody both a grotesque and a non-grotesque side.”⁹³ To give his bosom friend some spiritual support, Pound sent Gaudier his *Cathay* which included “Song of the Bowmen of Shu” (《采薇》) from *The Book of Odes* (《詩經·小雅》), and “Lament of the Frontier Guard” (《古風第六：胡關饒風沙》) by Li Bai 李白 (701-762), a great poet of the Tang dynasty. Gaudier liked these poems very much because they were appropriate for his situation. He kept the book in

⁸⁹ As Pound described, “Bird Erect” in the “squarish and bluntish” style was “most alive to the significance of Gaudier’s work”. Cork, *Henri Gaudier & Ezra Pound*, 5; Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska*, 78-9.

⁹⁰ Gaudier-Brzeska, “Vortex”, 158.

⁹¹ Gaudier-Brzeska, “Vortex (Written from the Trenches)”, *Blast* 2, July 1915, 34.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Gaudier to Pound, 27 January 1915, in Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska*, 60.

his pocket and used the poems to give courage to his fellow soldiers.⁹⁴ Unfortunately, Gaudier died in the war and therefore was unable to apply his ideas of Chinese aesthetics to his new form of art..

Lewis's Search for "Rhythm"

While Chinese ideas of "arrangement" and "rhythm" were exemplified in Pound's poetry and Gaudier's sculpture, Wyndham Lewis also shared these views when he formulated his ideas of Vorticist art. Pound asserted: "if any man is to bring into Western art the power of Chinese painting it will be Lewis."⁹⁵ Having been involved with the cultural habitués at the Vienna Café, Lewis would have learnt about Oriental painting from Binyon's influential writings, which introduced non-Western ideas and broadened the sympathies of artists and writers. David Peters Corbett states that Binyon's Late-Romantic aesthetics were based on his dissatisfaction with nineteenth-century Western culture that the modernists felt in 1914. However, Binyon remained distant from modernism even though his view of art, aesthetics and poetry influenced its early development in Pound and Lewis.⁹⁶ Binyon argued in his writings on Chinese painting that "rhythm" was an effective pictorial element to manifest the living spirit of things and to transform the physical reality into a spiritual expression. Similar ideas are to be found in *Blast* in Lewis's concern for "rhythm", "life" and "the transformation of the physical world of nature in the imaginative order of art".⁹⁷ Where these ideas are expressed in Lewis's drawings, for instance in *The Dancers* (1912) (Fig. 57), the integration of dynamic figures and abstract background merge to

⁹⁴ Gaudier received *Cathay* on 7 April 1915 and was "glad of having the Rihakus [Li Bai]." See Gaudier to Pound, 20 March 1915, and Gaudier to Mrs Spakespear, 11 April 1915, in *ibid*, 62-3, 68; Paul O'Keeffe, *Gaudier-Brzeska: An Absolute Case of Genius*, London 2004, 274-5, 283.

⁹⁵ Pound's assertion was probably inspired by Lewis's *Timon of Athens* which he sent to Quinn. Pound to John Quinn, 18 April 1915, in Zinnes (ed.), *Ezra Pound and the Visual Arts*, 230.

⁹⁶ Corbett, "'Make It New': Laurence Binyon, Pound and Vorticism", 184.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 190.

produce a forceful “rhythm”. The tendency to express energetic “rhythm” and abstract force became even stronger in Lewis’s *Timon of Athens* portfolio (1912) (Fig. 58) and *Red Duet* (1914) (Fig. 59). Nevertheless, Lewis conceived of the human figure as the embodiment of energy, and liked to paint images of dynamic activity in an industrialized world. His satirical humanism resulted in drawings charged with energy and violence. Instead of employing a continuous flow of tender contours, Lewis used decisive contours, architectural lines and geometric planes to create energetic “rhythm”.⁹⁸ The “rhythm” shown in his drawings manifested a sense of anger and hostility that was different from the gentle, poetic and romantic “rhythm” which Binyon found in ancient Chinese painting.

On the other hand, Lewis established, both in his drawings and writings, the image of a self-sufficient, radical super-ego individual. In the Manifesto of *Blast* 1, Lewis upheld “the Individual” in the moment that “a man feels or realizes himself as an artist, he ceases to belong to any milieu or time”.⁹⁹ He also declared the Vorticist’s hope of making in England “an art of Individuals”.¹⁰⁰ Lewis expressed his regret in “Towards an Art-less Society” that world-politics led to the outbreak of the war and the end of art, thus altering the face of European civilization. “It left the European nations impoverished, shell-shocked, discouraged and unsettled.”¹⁰¹ In this tragic atmosphere, emergent new art movements were “the heralds” of great social change: “[i]n every case the structural and philosophic rudiments of life were sought out.”¹⁰² However, “the artist did not foresee, these interminable convulsions of War,

⁹⁸ Lewis’s mechanical and geometric art was influenced by T. E. Hulme’s concept of authoritarianism and Wilhelm Worringer’s idea of abstraction. For Lewis’s early aesthetic thinking, see Charles Harrison, *English Art and Modernism 1900-1939*, London 1994, 75-113.

⁹⁹ “Great Preliminary Vortex – Manifesto I”, *Blast* 1, 20 June 1914, 11-2.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ Lewis, *Blasting and Bombardiering*, 258.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 257.

Revolution, Economic Nationalism and Slump.”¹⁰³ By 1914, Lewis regretted that the artist was of little general importance and regarded as “least valuable citizen” in any society.¹⁰⁴

Deprived of art, the healthy intellectual discipline of well-being is lost. Life instantly becomes so brutalized as to be mechanical and devoid of interest ... But *without art* – then life is utterly impossible. And there is unquestionably less and less *art* in life at the present time – and less and less in what passes as art, too.¹⁰⁵

Thus, Lewis found “Life”, which is synonymous with “Nature” and natural art, to be an important concern for re-vitalizing the cultural spirit of modern European art.

In *Blast*, the Vorticists wrote that “Life is a hospital for the weak and incompetent”; “Nature is a blessed retreat, in art, for those artists whose imagination is mean and feeble, whose vocation and instinct are unrobust”, but “Infinite Nature” “does their thinking and seeing for them”.¹⁰⁶ For Lewis, “imagination” was an aspect of activity, reflecting man’s involvement in the material world and in the circumstances of his life, as he believed that “The Artist’s OBEJCTIVE is Reality, as the Philosopher’s is Truth.”¹⁰⁷ The Artist must force his “Life” into comprehensible forms, with no impulse to imitation, in order to reveal:

The Vorticist is not the Slave of Commotion, but its Master,
The Vorticist does not suck up to life. He lets Life know its place in a Vorticist Universe!¹⁰⁸

With his emphasis on “Nature” and the “Universe”, Lewis appreciated the mentality of Chinese artists, especially those of the Song dynasty. As I mentioned in Chapter VII, Binyon found Song art to be the apogee of Chinese painting and admired Song

¹⁰³ Ibid, 259.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Wyndham Lewis, “Life is the Important Thing!”, *Blast* 1, 130.

¹⁰⁷ Lewis, “Relativism and Picasso’s Latest Work”, *Blast* 1, 139.

¹⁰⁸ Lewis, “Our Vortex”, *Blast* 1, 148.

painters as great masters who transformed “Life”, “Nature” and the “Universe” into rhythmical forms of art. Inspired by Daoism and Zen Buddhism, Song painters demonstrated a way of freeing their imagination and individuality in art. Although the philosophy of “Life” and the Song artists’ mental outlook of “Nature” and the “Universe” was not the only source of inspiration for the Vorticists, Chinese aesthetics helped to kindle Lewis’s intellect to formulate new artistic ideas.

As with Pound and Gaudier, Chinese art played a part in Lewis’s writings. Lewis’s Chinese perspective was reflected in “Orchestra of Media” of 1914: “A painter like Matisse has always been harmonious, with a scale of colour pleasantly Chinese.”¹⁰⁹ His view of “Fêng Shui and Contemporary Form” suggested that Lewis consulted Herbert Giles’s *The Civilisation of China* (1911), and paralleled the Chinese *Feng Shui* (the Wind-and-Water system of geomancy), with the artistic sense of arrangement of form:

Geomancy is the art by which the favourable influence of the shape of trees, weight of neighbouring water and its colour, height of surrounding houses, is determined.

“No Chinese street is built to form a line of uniform height” (H. A. Giles), the houses are of unequal heights to fit the destinies of the inhabitants.

I do not suppose that good Geomancers are more frequent than good artists. But their functions and intellectual equipment should be very alike.

3. Sensitiveness to volume, to the life and passion of lines, meaning of water, hurried conversation of the sky, or silence, impossible propinquity of endless clay nothing will right, a mountain that is a genius (good or evil) or a bore, makes the artist: and the volume, quality, or luminosity of a star at birth of Astrologers is also a clairvoyance within the painters gift.

In a painting certain forms MUST be SO; in the same meticulous, profound manner that your pen or a book must lie on the table at a certain angle, your clothes at night be arranged in a set personal symmetry, certain birds be avoided, a set of railings tapped with your hand as you pass, without missing

¹⁰⁹ Lewis, “Orchestra of Media”, *Blast* 1, 142.

one.

Personal tricks and ceremonies of this description are casual examples of the same senses' activity.¹¹⁰

Returning from the war, in *The Caliph's Design: Architects! Where is your Vortex?* (1919), Lewis called for a replacement of the old urban environment, which was modeled on a new visual and spiritual vocabulary, and on *Blast* Nos 1 & 2. "Life" and human consciousness were still major concerns for Lewis in his post-war manifesto.¹¹¹ Remarkably, Lewis admired the life of Song artists:

The best artists of the Sung period lived a secluded life, very luckily for them. It was considered incumbent upon them, in accordance with contemporary feeling, to inhabit the fairly distant country and live in intercourse with the objects of Nature. When this fashion passed, and a painter had to live within hailing distance of the court, the pictures produced showed an immediate decline in quality. That is *one* lesson.¹¹²

Like his contemporaries, Lewis was not only attracted to the world of the Song dynasty, but also the creative capability and feat of Southern Song painters. He praised: "Ma Yuan we can consider, roughly speaking, as the creator of the first tree; or substitute for him the best artist, who has painted the best tree, that you can call to mind."¹¹³ Nevertheless, Lewis conceived that not everyone was appreciative of the spirit of non-European art: "if an artist today should produce a painting that were a more or less successful attempt to recapture the spirit of the great Chinese, Egyptian, Rajput painters, applying their great method, however, to the subject-matter of our day,

¹¹⁰ Lewis quoted from "Religion and Superstition", the second chapter of Herbert Giles's *The Civilisation of China* (1911). See Lewis, "Fêng Shui and Contemporary Form", *Blast* 1, 138; Herbert Giles, *The Civilisation of China*, London 1911, 64-5.

¹¹¹ According to Paul Edwards, Lewis thought that architecture reflected a truly creative imagination and contributed to a new state of consciousness in people. Nevertheless, such visionary schemes could not be carried out in England after the war, and Lewis was marginalized. See Paul Edwards, "'It's Time for Another War': The Historical Unconscious and the Failure of Modernism", in David Peters Corbett (ed.), *Wyndham Lewis and the Art of Modern War*, Cambridge 1998, 125-6.

¹¹² Lewis, "The Caliph's Design", in Walter Michel and C. J. Fox (eds), *Wyndham Lewis on Art: Collected Writings 1913-1956*, London 1969, 151.

¹¹³ Lewis was aware of the techniques of both Chinese and Japanese painting, although he referred to China more than Japan in his writings on art. See Lewis, "The Credentials of the Painter - Part II" (from *English Review*, April 1922), in Michel and Fox (eds), *Wyndham Lewis on Art*, 153, 251.

he would be, or frequently is, regarded as a vulgar, harsh, revolutionary.”¹¹⁴

According to Paul Edwards, in the 1930s Lewis contrasted “the mechanical anti-human asceticism of modern international-style buildings with the apparent anti-humanism of the arts of the east”, and realized that the “non-human principle” in Asian art promises a finer standard of art upon purely human grounds.¹¹⁵ Through the spiritual engagement with Nature, the artist could reveal a fuller sense and existence of mankind. This aspect of art is what Lewis found missing in British modernism. Paul Edwards remarks that “[t]here is ... no mature civilization to give meaning to life, or to endow modern artists with the capacity of artists of the great periods of Chinese art (such as Sung – always Lewis’s touchstone for the greatest art).”¹¹⁶ The ideology of Song art showed Lewis that art could be achieved through metaphysical or religious values.¹¹⁷ Lewis realized that

It is quite a different matter where, by the methods of elimination, or of simplification, the objects of nature are themselves transformed into something like themselves, yet differing, in reality, as much as chalk from cheese. This was the great achievement of the art of the Orient, especially the Chinese.¹¹⁸

Although the Chinese mentality kindled Lewis’s spirit to become a “super-naturalist”, he retained a personal character in his art:

Nature supplies us with all we need. There are people who imitate the primitive Greeks, others the Negroes or the Chinese, which is merely because

¹¹⁴ Lewis, “Roger Fry’s Role as Continental Mediator”, *Tyro* 1, 1921, 3.

¹¹⁵ See Edwards, “It’s Time for Another War”, in Corbett (ed.), *Wyndham Lewis and the Art of Modern War*, 138.

¹¹⁶ Paul Edwards suggests that in a situation where all styles were ideological, Lewis was compelled to “construct a mythology of societies more or less outside the history that answer to his ideal of the highest type of civilization. These are earlier civilizations that are more in touch with nature, and through that, more in touch with non-human, metaphysical values.” See *ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Lewis not only looked at China of the Song dynasty but also at modern China. See for examples, Lewis, “The Values of the Doctrine behind ‘Subjective’ Art” (from *The Criterion*, July 1927), “The Skeleton in the Cupboard Speaker” (from *Wyndham Lewis the Artist* (1939)), and “Religious Expression in Contemporary Art” (1943), in Michel and Fox (eds), *Wyndham Lewis on Art*, 251, 342, 375.

¹¹⁸ Lewis, “Super-Nature versus Super-Real”, in *ibid.*, 333.

they are too snobbish to remain with nature. What a loss it would have been if Rembrandt had imagined himself an Etruscan, or a Primitive Man. My merit, whether great or small, in the portrait of MacLeod, resides in the long legs of a Scot, the fondness for books of a mature man, and the stone and steel colours of the tweeds.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ Lewis, "The 1956 Retrospective at the Tate Gallery", in *ibid*, 453.

Conclusion

This dissertation documents the formation of the collection of Chinese paintings in the British Museum between 1880 and 1920. It highlights the role of Laurence Binyon in enriching the British collections of Chinese painting and in promoting its appreciation and criticism in the West. Unpublished material from museums and archives reveal the cultural dialogue between Asian and Western scholars, curators, collectors and artists during this period. The provenance of many Chinese paintings in the British Museum remained hitherto unexamined. Nor had the growth of the Museum's collections, collectors' tastes, and the establishment of the Sub-Department of Oriental Prints and Drawings been critically studied by previous art historians. This dissertation examines these issues in the political and cultural context of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

This dissertation also demonstrates the shift of British interest in Chinese pictorial art as botanical, zoological and ethnographic curiosities, to a more informed art historical enquiry, particularly of the relationships between Japanese and Chinese art during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In Chapter I, the first major collection of non-export Chinese paintings acquired by the British Museum was examined, with special reference to William Anderson's interpretation of Chinese painting. However, the limited knowledge of Chinese art and the lack of access to authentic works led to misattributions and questionable judgments on the part of Sir Augustus Franks, Sir Sidney Colvin and Laurence Binyon. Anderson's strong interest in Japanese art and his familiarity with Western realism led to an incomplete and inaccurate interpretation of the history of Chinese pictorial art.

One major consideration of this dissertation has been the influence of Japanese expertise on shaping the British understanding of Chinese painting. The superb reproductions in the *Kokka*, the advice from Kohitsu Ryōnin and Arthur Morrison, as well as the publications of Okakura Kakuzo and Taki Seiichi, all facilitated Binyon's study of Japanese and Chinese painting during the early years of his career at the British Museum. It became common practice for Binyon and his circle of collectors and curators, such as Colvin, Morrison and Charles Freer, to seek the advice of Japanese art dealers, scholars, craftsmen, engravers and mounters for the exhibition, cataloguing, reproduction and mounting of both Japanese and Chinese painting in the West. Consequently, Chinese art before the 1930s was regularly seen through Japanese spectacles at a time when Chinese scholars were seldom involved in museum circles in Europe and America.

Due to Binyon's limited knowledge of Asian languages and lack of personal experience of Asia, European writing on Chinese art remained his primary source of reference. Binyon's appreciation of Eastern attitudes to life and nature, including Daoism and Zen Buddhism, not only resonated with his personal conception of art and life, but was influenced by Okakura's writings about man's consciousness of nature, love of freedom, and the spirit of individualism in the arts of China and Japan. Also of importance for Binyon's knowledge of Chinese painting was Herbert Giles's English translation of Chinese sources. Binyon's changing attitudes to the scholarship of Anderson and Giles were significant, especially after Morrison and Arthur Waley became involved in his research in 1902 and 1913, respectively.

The middle chapters of this dissertation concern the competition around 1910 between Western museums and private collectors for the acquisition of Chinese painting, and the desire to expand the British Museum's collections of Chinese art. This dissertation demonstrates Binyon's important role in maintaining the British Museum's leading position as a institutional collector of Chinese painting in Europe. His prolonged study resulted in a stream of catalogues, exhibition guides and indexes which became useful references for students and scholars of Chinese painting. In addition, Binyon played a crucial role in the acquisition of the Wegener collection for the British Museum, in the establishment of the Sub-Department of Oriental Prints and Drawings, as well as in the promotion and understanding of Japanese and Chinese art abroad. His relationships with German and American collectors and curators, such as Otto Kummel, Ernst Voretzsch and Freer, also highlight the different collecting practices in Britain, Germany and America.

Binyon shared the taste of early collectors for the art and ideals of the Eastern Jin, Tang and Song dynasties, but overlooked the distinctive styles of many important painters in the Five Dynasties and post-Song periods. Song painting was regarded in the West during Binyon's life time as the apogee of Chinese painting, but the literary and individual styles of Chinese painters of the post-Song periods, especially those in the Ming and Qing dynasties, received very little attention from early Western scholars.¹

Although early accounts of Chinese painting were generally incomplete, Chinese art was still regarded as an alternative source of inspiration for European

¹ See James Cahill, "Some Thoughts on the History and Post-History of Chinese Painting", *Archives of Asian Art* 55, 2005, 17-33.

modernist artists. Binyon was a leading figure who called for “a new temper, a new mental approach, a new valuation of things” and for “an art which shall be more profound, more intense, more charged with essential spirit, more direct a communication between mind and mind.”² He believed that Chinese art “never loses touch with poetry, and is saturated with allusion; and the modern European painter lives in perpetual horror of being contaminated by the least association with literature, preferring geometry to any kind of sentiment.”³ Unsympathetic to abstraction, Binyon preferred Chinese philosophical ideas which promised a return to humanity, and helped balance the materialistic and scientific conception of European art during the tragic experience of the First World War.

With his interest in literature and philosophy, Binyon explored the relations between the arts of China, Japan, India and Persia, and from an interdisciplinary Eurocentric perspective compared the imaginative ideas of William Blake and William Wordsworth with those of Song artists. The latter part of the dissertation also demonstrates that Binyon’s quest for the fusion of art and life was strongly linked to his view of art, poetry and religion. Binyon’s knowledge of Chinese aesthetics, especially the teachings of Laozi and Zen Buddhism, as well as the aesthetic ideas of “rhythmic vitality” and Song landscape, strongly influenced his writings on Chinese painting. The case studies of Ezra Pound, Henri Gaudier-Brzeska and Wyndham Lewis discussed in Chapter VIII demonstrate Binyon’s promotion of early Chinese art among the younger generation of poets and artists in London. The art and writings of the three Vorticists also reflected the Western perception of Chinese aesthetics as revealed in Pound’s “creative” translations of Chinese literature, Gaudier’s

² Binyon, “E Pur Si Muove”, *SR* 110, 31 December 1910, 840-1.

³ Binyon, *Chinese Paintings in English Collections*, 34.

calligraphic animal drawings, as well as in Lewis's association of *feng shui* with contemporary forms.

Although Binyon's experience of Asia and his later association with Chinese scholars in the 1920s and 30s lie outwith the remit of this dissertation, Binyon's earlier trips to Chinese collections in Germany, and especially America, were important experiences for broadening his vision of Chinese art, and enhancing his curatorial skills in heading the Sub-Department of Oriental Prints and Drawings at the British Museum. Given the lack of previous scholarship on Binyon's study of Chinese painting, an extended account of the first half of his career at the British Museum was essential for understanding not only his ideas about Chinese art, but also the circumstances surrounding the early collecting history of Chinese painting in Britain. The historical details and critical analysis presented in this dissertation provides a necessary foundation for further research into the British reception of Chinese painting after 1920.

This dissertation confirms Binyon's significant contribution to the study of traditional Chinese painting in Britain. His legacy continues to inform cultural exchanges between museums in Britain and China.⁴ In September 2005, the cultural agreement signed between the British Museum and the National Museum of China further encouraged Anglo-Chinese relationships through curatorial exchanges, skill sharing and joint projects.⁵ Between July 2006 and June 2009 Chinese curators and scholars from Beijing, Shanghai and Taipei were invited to assist in examining seals

⁴ See Sun Naixiu, "Preface", in Binyon, *Yazhou Yishu zhong Ren de Jingshen*, trans. Sun Naixiu, Shenyang 1988, 1-8.

⁵ For the recent curatorial exchanges and collaborative exhibitions between the British Museum and China's museums, see Neil MacGregor, "The British Museum: A Museum of the World for the World", *Orientalism* 37, June 2006, 89-90.

and inscriptions on Chinese painting and calligraphy in the British Museum, and to advise on questions of attribution, research and cataloging. Collaboration between Chinese and British scholars and curators now contributes to a new interpretation and evaluation of Britain's largest national collection of Chinese pictorial art. This dissertation is intended to complement this important project and encourage further research into the collecting, display and historiography of Chinese painting.

ILLUSTRATIONS

*** All images are unavailable in the electronic version of this dissertation due to copyright restrictions. ***

Fig. 1

Portrait of Laurence Binyon (1869-1943), c. 1900s. Printed “Elliot & Fry” at the right bottom corner. Photograph © M. Huang, image provided by Mr Edmund Gray, Binyon’s surviving grandson.

Fig. 2

“For the Fallen” in Laurence Binyon’s handwriting, 1914. Photograph © M. Huang, image provided by Mr Edmund Gray.

Fig. 3

Laurence Binyon (far right in second row) with members of the Gryphon Club debating society, Trinity College, Oxford, 1889. © The President and Fellows of Trinity College, Oxford.

Fig. 4

Chinese Exhibition of the Nathan Dunn Chinese Collection exhibited at Hyde Park Corner, London. Engraving reproduced from *The Illustrated London News*, 6 August 1842, 204.

Fig. 5

The Chinese exhibit displayed at the Great Exhibition of Industry of All Nations at the Crystal Palace in South Kensington in 1851-2. Reproduced from Jonathan Meyer, *Great Exhibitions: London – New York – Paris – Philadelphia, 1851-1900* (2006), 37.

Fig. 6

“Chinese artists – From a sketch by our special artist in China”. Engraving in *The Illustrated London News*, 1859. Reproduced from Arthur Hacker, *China Illustrated: Western Views of the Middle Kingdom* (2004), 13.

Fig. 7

Frontispiece to Henry Sutherland Edwards's *An Authentic Account of the Chinese Commission, which was sent to report on the Great Exhibition* (1852).

Fig. 8

Ding Liangxian, *Flowers and Burning Incense*. Early Qing dynasty (c. mid-seventeenth century). Chinese woodcut, printed in colours and gauffrage on paper. 35.3 x 27.6cm. The Sir Hans Sloane collection. Transferred from the Department of Manuscripts to the Department of Prints and Drawings in 1906. Museum manuscript album ID: SL.5252; 1906,1128,0.23. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 9

Anonymous, *Birds, Flowers, etc.* Late Ming to early Qing dynasty (c. seventeenth century). Ink and colours on paper. Album leaf. 29.4 x 36.9cm.

The Sir Hans Sloane collection. Transferred from the Library to the Department of Prints and Drawings in 1906.

Museum number:

Ch.Ptg.Add.11 (previous manuscript album ID: SL.5303.4). Photograph © M. Huang, image reproduction for non-commercial purposes, courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 10

Yipu (Yuan Shijing), *Fishes.* Late Ming to early Qing dynasty (c. seventeenth century). Ink on paper. Album leaf. 29.4 x 36.9cm.

The Sir Hans Sloane collection. Transferred from the Library to the Sub-Department of Oriental Prints and Drawings in 1928.

Museum number:

Ch.Ptg.Add.59 (previous manuscript album ID: SL.5503.3). Photograph © M. Huang, image reproduction for non-commercial purposes, courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 11

Anonymous, Image of *Fifty Views in China by Chinese Artists*, 2 Vols (1794). Album leaf. 40 x 52cm. The Lansdowne collection. Museum numbers: Ch.Ptg.Add.60 and Ch.Ptg.Add.61 (previous album ID: Lansdowne.1243). Photograph © M. Huang, image reproduction for non-commercial purposes, courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 12

Anonymous, *No. 24: View of Jingkou Shanghaiguan* (京口山海關) located in Hebei Province and the eastern part of Liaoning Province, in *Fifty Views in China by Chinese Artists*, Vol. I (1794). Ink and colours on paper. Album leaf. 31.5 x 45cm. The Lansdowne collection. Museum number: Ch.Ptg.Add.60 (previous album ID: Lansdowne.1243). Photograph © M. Huang, image reproduction for non-commercial purposes, courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 13

Anonymous, *A Picture of Rice Cultivation*. Qing dynasty (c. nineteenth century). Ink and colours on paper. Album leaf. Purchased from Mr Edward Boys. Museum number: Ch.Ptg.396. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 14

Anonymous, *A Scene of Woman Amusement*. Qing dynasty (c. 1801-50). Ink and colours on paper. Album leaf. Donated by Mrs Elizabeth Reeves. Museum number: Ch.Ptg.413; 1877,0714,0.1075. Photograph © M. Huang, image reproduction for non-commercial purposes, courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 15

Chen Yuan, *Two Figures in Landscape*. Early Ming dynasty (c. 1368-1398). Ink and colours on silk. Hanging scroll. Image: 120.5 x 44.9cm; scroll: 204 x 57.8cm. The William Anderson collection. Museum number: Ch.Ptg.65. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 16

Zhang Sheng, *Alchemist with Charcoal Basket* (Sage with Basket, Ch'uu Yung-tsze). Late Yuan to early Ming dynasty (c. 1351-1400). Ink and colours on silk. Hanging scroll. 78.4 x 37.6 cm. The William Anderson collection. Museum number: Ch.Ptg.262. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 17

Claimed to be by Mi Fu and painted in the style of Wen Zheng, *A Pair of Cranes*. Late Ming to early Qing dynasty (c. seventeenth to eighteenth century). Ink and colours on silk. Hanging scroll. Image: 132.5 x 61.5cm; scroll: 235 x 77.2cm. The William Anderson collection. Museum numbers: Ch.Ptg.47 and Ch.Ptg.48. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 18

Painted in the style of Lu Ji, *Pheasants and Other Birds, with Plum-tree*, and *Ducks and Various Small Birds, with Willow and Plum-trees*. Mid-Ming dynasty (c. 1488-1505). Ink and colours on silk. Hanging scroll. 193.1 x 101.3cm. The William Anderson collection. Museum numbers: Ch.Ptg.97 and Ch.Ptg.98. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 19

Anonymous, detail of *Insects, Butterflies and Flowers*. Late Ming to early Qing dynasty (c. sixteenth to seventeenth century). Ink and colours on silk. Handscroll. Image: 25.5 x 500cm; scroll: 26.5 x 561cm. The William Anderson collection. Museum number: Ch.Ptg.158. Photograph © M. Huang, image reproduction for non-commercial purposes, courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 19 (Continued)

Fig. 19 (Continued)

Fig. 20

Claimed to be by Zhao Mengfu and painted in the style of Wang Wei, detail of *Landscape: Wangquan Villa*. Qing dynasty. Ink and colours on silk. Handscroll. Image: 36 x 585.8cm; scroll: 43.5 x 990.8cm. Purchased from Mr Robert Morrison. Museum number: Ch.Ptg.51. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 21

After Gu Kaizhi, detail of *The Admonitions of the Court Instructress*. Six Dynasties (265-589 CE). It is now often considered to be a Tang dynasty copy of the original. Ink and colours on silk. Handscroll. 24.4 x 343.8cm. Purchased from Captain C. Johnson. Museum number: Ch.Ptg.1. Photograph © M. Huang, image reproduction for non-commercial purposes, courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 21 (Continued)

Fig. 22

Probably painted by Miao Jiahui, detail of *Peonies*. Late Qing dynasty (c. 1906-8). Ink and colours on silk. 274.5 x 82.2cm. Given by Frau Olga-Julia Wegener. Museum number: E.2505-1909. © The Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Fig. 23

Frau Olga-Julia Wegener's collecting stamp. Photograph © M. Huang, image reproduction for non-commercial purposes, courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

Top to the bottom: 魏薩氏 (*Wei Sa Shi*). Relief.

Fig. 24

Anonymous, *Pekingese Dogs*. Qing dynasty. Ink and colours on paper. Hanging scroll. The Frau Olga-Julia Wegener collection. Museum number: Ch.Ptg.281. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 25

Claimed to be by Han Kan, *A Little Pony*. This Qing dynasty copy is in a poor condition, while the silk is badly worn. Ink and colours on silk. Hanging scroll. The Frau Olga-Julia Wegener collection. Museum number: Ch.Ptg.2. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 26

Claimed to be by Zhao Mengfu, *Tethered Horses*. Qing dynasty. Ink and colours on silk. Hanging scroll. Signed and sealed. Colophon above. The Frau Olga-Julia Wegener collection. Museum number: Ch.Ptg.52. Photograph © M. Huang, image reproduction for non-commercial purposes, courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 27

Anonymous, *The Earthly Paradise*. Ming dynasty. Ink and colours on silk. Handscroll. The Frau Olga-Julia Wegener collection. Unknown Museum number. Reproduced from the *Burlington Magazine* 18, November 1910, 83.

Fig. 28

Claimed to be by Zhao Chang, *Geese*. Qing dynasty. Ink and colours on silk. Hanging scroll. The Frau Olga-Julia Wegener collection. Museum number: Ch.Ptg.11. Photograph © M. Huang, image reproduction for non-commercial purposes, courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 29

Painted in the style of Chen Hongshou, *Lady with Shoulao*. Late Ming dynasty (c. 1598-1652). Ink and colours on paper. Hanging scroll. The Frau Olga-Julia Wegener collection. Museum number: Ch.Ptg.190. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 30

Xu Mei, *Heavenly Lady Scattering Flowers*. Early Qing dynasty (c. eighteenth century). Ink and colours on silk. Hanging scroll. The Frau Olga-Julia Wegener collection. Museum number: Ch.Ptg.181. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 31

Xu Tingkun, *Mirror-polisher at the Door of a Manchu Family Scene in New Year's Morning*. Early Qing dynasty (c. eighteenth century). Ink and colours on silk. Hanging scroll. The Frau Olga-Julia Wegener collection. Museum number: Ch.Ptg.227. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Detail of the *Mirror-polisher at the Door of a Manchu Family Scene in New Year's Morning*. Photograph © M. Huang, image reproduction for non-commercial purposes, courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 32

Recovered from Cave 17 at Qianfodong, *Virūpākṣa, Guardian of the West*. Five Dynasties to Northern Song dynasty (c. tenth century). Ink and colours on silk. Banner. 64.5 x 17.5cm. It matches the scene and condition of the exhibits No. 15 and No. 46 shown in the 1910-2 Exhibition of Chinese and Japanese Paintings, and the 1914 Exhibition of Paintings, Manuscripts, and Other Archaeological Objects collected by Sir Aurel Stein in Chinese Turkestan, at the British Museum, respectively. The Aurel Stein collection. Museum number: Ch.0010; 1919,0101,0.108. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 33

Recovered from Cave 17 at Qianfodong, *Bodhisattva*. Tang dynasty (c. 851-900). Ink and colours on silk. Banner. 70.5 x 17.5cm. It matches the scene and condition of the exhibit No. 25 shown in the 1910-2 Exhibition of Chinese and Japanese Paintings at the British Museum. The Aurel Stein collection. Museum number: Ch.xxiv.002.a; 1919,0101,0.117. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 34

Claimed to be by Wu Wei, *The Birth of the Dragon*. Late Ming to Qing dynasty (c. sixteenth to seventeenth century). Ink and colours on silk. Hanging scroll. The Frau Olga-Julia Wegener collection. Museum number: Ch.Ptg.87. Photograph © M. Huang, image reproduction for non-commercial purposes, courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

Detail of *The Birth of the Dragon*.
Photograph © M. Huang, image reproduction for non-commercial purposes, courtesy
of the Trustees of the British Museum

Fig. 35

Lu Jiabin, *Eagle attacking a Bear*. Qing dynasty. Ink and colours on silk. Hanging scroll. Image: 161.5 x 90.8cm; scroll: 209.5 x 107.2cm. The Frau Olga-Julia Wegener collection. Museum number: Ch.Ptg.135. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 36

Recovered from Cave 17 at Qianfodong, *Pure Land of Amitābha*. Mid-Tang dynasty (c. 801-50). Ink and colours on silk. Hanging scroll. 168 x 123cm. It matches the scene of the exhibit No. 24 shown in the Exhibition of Paintings, Manuscripts, and Other Archaeological Objects collected by Sir Aurel Stein in Chinese Turkestan at the British Museum in 1914. The Aurel Stein collection. Museum number: Ch.xxxiii.003; 1919,0101,0.70. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 37

Recovered from Cave 17 at Qianfodong, *Bodhisattva as a Guide of Souls*. Late Tang dynasty (c. 851-900). Ink and colours on silk. Hanging scroll. 80.5 x 53.8cm. It matches the scene of the exhibit No. 97 shown in the Exhibition of Paintings, Manuscripts, and Other Archaeological Objects collected by Sir Aurel Stein in Chinese Turkestan at the British Museum in 1914. The Aurel Stein collection. Museum number: Ch.lvii.002; 1919,0101,0.47. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 38

Recovered from Cave 17 at Qianfodong, *Ksitigarbha as Lord of the Six Ways*. Early Northern Song dynasty (963). Ink and colours on silk. Hanging scroll. 56.1 x 51.5cm. It matches the scene of the exhibit No. 50 shown in the Exhibition of Paintings, Manuscripts, and Other Archaeological Objects collected by Sir Aurel Stein in Chinese Turkestan at the British Museum in 1914. The Aurel Stein collection. Museum number: Ch.lviii.003; 1919,0101,0.19. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 39

Recovered from Cave 17 at Qianfodong, *Thousand-armed, Thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara (Guanyin)*. Mid-Tang dynasty (c. 751-850). Ink and colours on hemp with brown silk borders. Hanging scroll. 101 x 102.5cm. It matches the scene of the exhibit No. 120 in the Exhibition of Paintings, Manuscripts, and Other Archaeological Objects collected by Sir Aurel Stein in Chinese Turkestan at the British Museum in 1914. The Aurel Stein collection. Museum number: Ch.xxi.006; 1919,0101,0.199. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 40

Arthur Morrison's collecting stamp carved in the style of Chinese seal. Photograph © M. Huang, image reproduction for non-commercial purposes, courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

Right to left: ARTHUR MO (first column) RRISON (second column). Relief.

Fig. 41

Claimed to be by Wen Zhengming, *Mountain Landscape*. Late Ming to Qing dynasty (c. sixteenth to seventeenth century). Ink and colours on silk. Hanging scroll. Image: 155.5 x 40cm; scroll: 219.5 x 54.2cm. The Arthur Morrison collection. Museum number: Ch.Ptg.95. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 42

Painted in the style of Wang Hui, selected paintings from *Landscape*. Qing dynasty. Ink and colours on paper. Album leaf. The Arthur Morrison collection. Museum number: Ch.Ptg.170. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 43

Painted in the style of Wu Wei, *Lady Lao Yu with a Phoenix*. Ming dynasty. Ink and colours on silk. Hanging scroll. The Arthur Morrison collection. Museum number: Ch.Ptg.84. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 44

The mourning ceremony of the first anniversary of Fenollosa's death in September 1909. Photograph © Charles Lang Freer Papers, Freer Gallery of Art/Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives.

Charles Lang Freer (the fifth from the left) was standing among the group.

Fig. 45

The mourning ceremony of the death of Ernest Fenollosa at Miidera, Kyoto. Photograph © Charles Lang Freer Papers, Freer Gallery of Art/Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives.

Mary Fenollosa was standing next to the mock-up of a stone memorial dedicated by “Charles L. Freer, U.S.A.; Arthur Wesley Dow, U.S.A.; Gaston Migeon, France; Laurence Binyon, Great Britain.”

Fig. 46

Group photograph taken on the first anniversary of Fenollosa's death in September 1909. Photograph © Charles Lang Freer Papers, Freer Gallery of Art/Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives.

Mary Fenollosa (seated fifth from left on the first row), Charles Lang Freer (seated extreme right), William Sturgis Bigelow (stand third from right on the second row), Hara Tomitarō (seated sixth from right), and other attendants dressed in different Western, Japanese and Buddhist costumes.

Fig. 47

The Ernest Fenollosa memorial at Miidera. Photograph © Charles Lang Freer Papers, Freer Gallery of Art/Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives.

The final memorial stone on the right.

Fig. 48

A signed copy of *Painting in the Far East* by Laurence Binyon kept in the Library of Charles Lang Freer. Photograph © M. Huang, image reproduction for non-commercial purposes, courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art/Arthur M. Sackler Gallery.

Front cover and front page of the second edition (1913)

Printed and handwritten dedication to Charles L. Freer in the second edition of
Painting in the Far East.

Fig. 49

The British Museum's copy of *Descriptions of Famous Chinese Paintings* sent by Charles Lang Freer to Laurence Binyon in 1916. Museum stamp: 18 March 1916. Photograph © M. Huang, image reproduction for non-commercial purposes, courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

Information on the front cover:

*Description of Famous Chinese
Paintings* (《中華歷代名畫記》)

from the Very Large Collection of Mr.
Lee Van Ching

Van Yuen Tsar Curios Store
416 Rue Eugene Bard, French Town,
Shanghai, China

Fig. 50

Ma Yuan, detail of *Grand View of Rivers and Mountains*. Ming dynasty (c. late fourteenth to fifteenth century). Handscroll. Ink and colours on silk. Image: 64.2 x 1276.4cm; scroll: 66.4 x 1842.7cm. Given by Charles Lang Freer. Museum number: F1911.169. Photograph © M. Huang, image reproduction for non-commercial purposes, courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art/Arthur M. Sackler Gallery.

Fig. 50 (Continued)

Fig. 50 (Continued)

Fig. 50 (Continued)

Fig. 50 (Continued)

Date and signature at the end of the scroll:

紹熙三年春二月，待詔 賜金帶臣馬遠，奉旨畫江山勝覽。

(In the second moon of the spring in the third year of the Shao Xi Emperor (r. 1190-4) [the first day of this second moon corresponds with 15 February 1192], your servant Ma Yuan, Daizhao favoured with the Golden Girdle, having been honoured by the Imperial Command, has painted a *Grand View of Rivers and Mountains*.)

Fig. 51

Attributed to Sesson Shukei, *Eight Views of the Xiao and Xiang Rivers*. Edo to Meiji period (c. 1800-80). Ink on paper. A set of eight album leaves. 25.2 x 39.8cm. The William Anderson collection. Museum number: Jap.Ptg.402. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 52

Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, *Stags (in the Chinese manner)*, 1913. Pen and Indian ink. Reproduced from Ezra Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (1960), Plate VI.

Fig. 53

Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, *Cock*. Brush and ink. Reproduced from Ezra Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (1960), Plate IX.

Fig. 54

Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, *Boy with a Coney*. Red-veined alabaster. 34 x 16.8 x 13cm. Reproduced from Ezra Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (1960), Plate XXIII.

Fig. 55

Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, *Dancer*, 1913. Bronze. 78.1 x 23 x 21.6cm. Reproduced from Ezra Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (1960), Plate XV.

Fig. 56

Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, *Birds Erect*, 1914. Limestone. 67.6 x 26 x 31.4cm. Reproduced from Ezra Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (1960), Plate XXVI.

Fig. 57

Wyndham Lewis, *The Dancers*, 1912. Pen and ink, watercolour on paper. 29.5 x 29cm. Reproduced from Paul Edwards, *Wyndham Lewis: Painter and Writer* (2000), 85.

Fig. 58

Wyndham Lewis, *The Thébaïde*, from the *Timon of Athens* portfolio, 1912. Ink on paper. 38.5 x 26cm. Reproduced from Paul Edwards, *Wyndham Lewis: Painter and Writer* (2000), 91.

Fig. 59

Wyndham Lewis, *Red Duet*, 1914. Black and coloured chalks and gouache on paper. 38.5 x 56cm. Reproduced from Paul Edwards, *Wyndham Lewis: Painter and Writer* (2000), 126.

APPENDICES

- Appendix I : The Growth of Chinese Paintings in the British Museum, 1723-1933
- Appendix II : Selected Exhibitions of Japanese and Chinese Art held in London in the Late Nineteenth Century
- Appendix III : Additional Discussion of the Dating of the *Admonitions* Scroll by Contemporary Scholars
- Appendix IV : Additional Reasons for supporting the Purchase of the Wegener Collection
- Appendix V : Analysis of the 109 Chinese Paintings exhibited at the 1910-2 Exhibition of Chinese and Japanese Paintings at the British Museum
- Appendix VI : The Itinerary of Binyon's Visit to Germany in 1910
- Appendix VII : Ernst Voretzsch's Advice on planning a Trip to the Far East
- Appendix VIII : The Itinerary of Binyon's Visit to America in 1912

Appendix I

The following charts show the growth of Chinese paintings in the British Museum collection in different periods:

- 1) 1723-1894 when Laurence Binyon had not yet worked at the Department of Prints and Drawings;
- 2) 1895-1912 when Binyon worked at the Department of Prints and Drawings, but had not yet established the new Sub-Department of Oriental Prints and Drawings;
- 3) 1913-33 when Binyon was in charge of the Oriental section until his retirement; and
- 4) 1723-1933 which shows the total acquisition and the growth of Chinese paintings in the British Museum.

Notes:

1. The following figures are the number of bequests and purchases which have been catalogued as a single item with an individual museum registration number.
2. Due to different cataloguing systems adopted by curators in different periods, some early acquisitions of album leaves might have been given individual museum registration numbers to each loose painting. But in general, only one registration number is given to the whole album painting. Thus, the following data do not represent the total number of pieces of Chinese paintings acquired by the British Museum in specific periods.

Chart 1.1 The early collections of Chinese paintings in the British Museum including the bequest of Chinese export paintings from Mrs Elizabeth Reeves in 1877 and 1878, and the purchase of traditional Chinese paintings from Dr William Anderson in 1881.

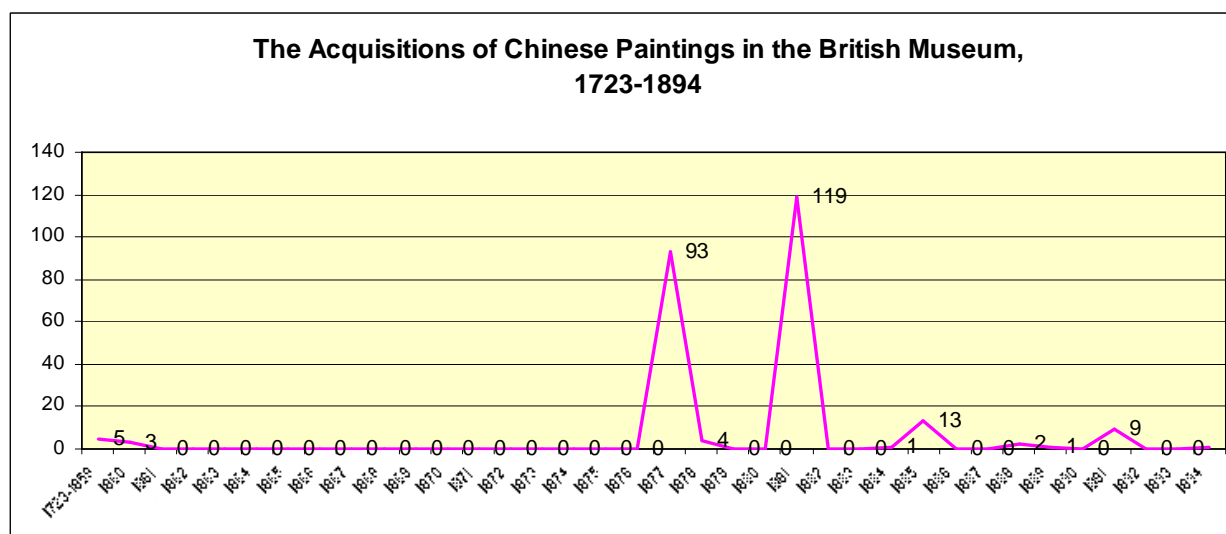


Chart 1.2 Followed the bequest of Chinese paintings from the late Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks in 1902, the British Museum enriched its collection with the second significant purchase of the Frau Olga-Julia Wegener collection of Chinese paintings in 1910.

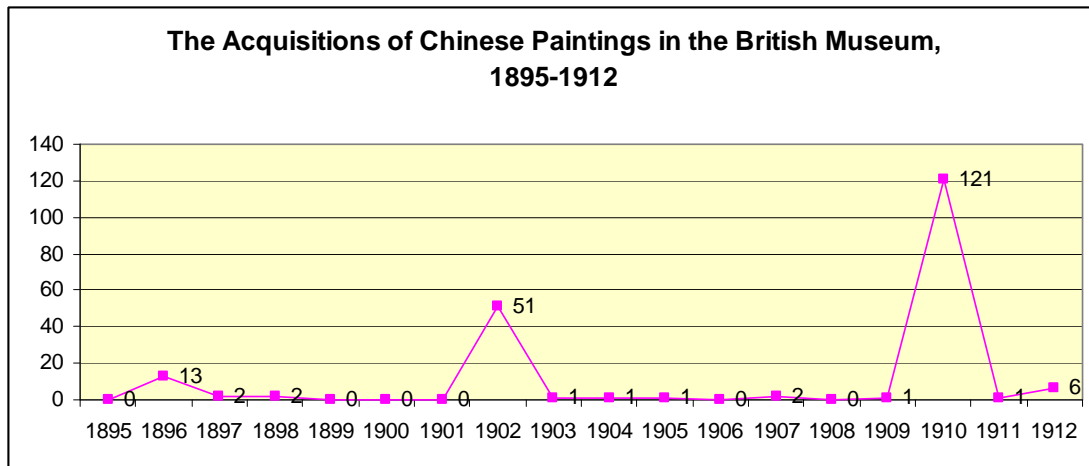


Chart 1.3 After the establishment of the new Sub-Department of Oriental Prints and Drawings, Binyon acquired Chinese paintings on a regular basis, although the size of new acquisitions was rather small.

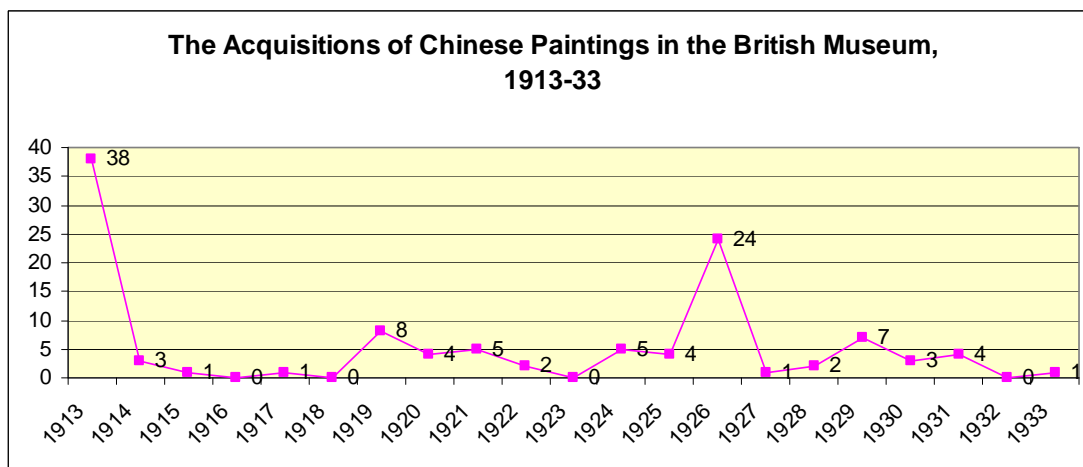


Chart 1.4

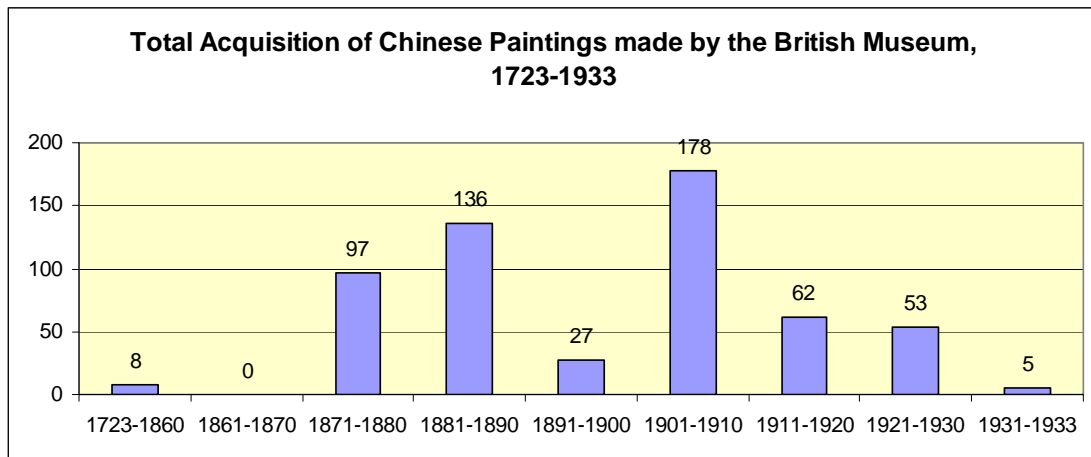
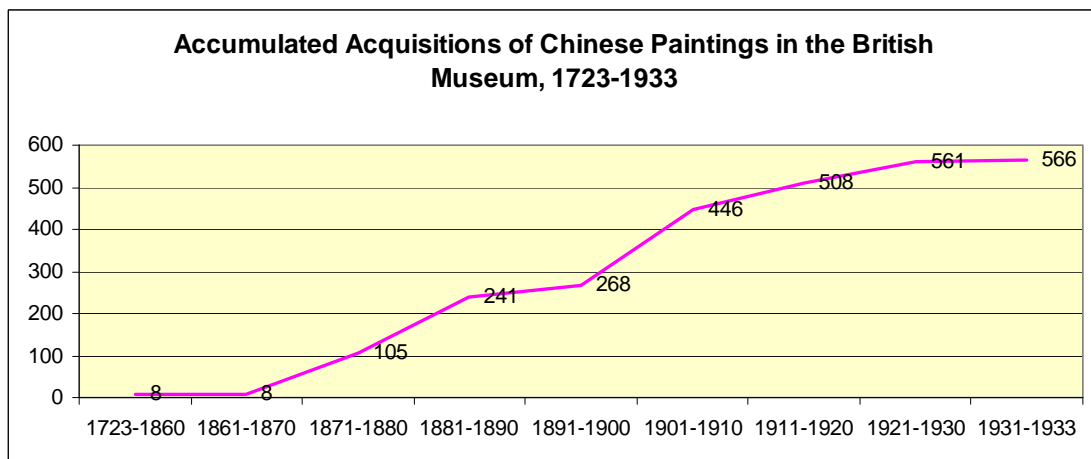


Chart 1.5



Appendix II

Following the Exhibition of Japanese and Chinese Paintings held at the British Museum in 1888, other major exhibitions of Japanese and Chinese art held in London between 1888 and the end of the nineteenth century include:

Year	Exhibition	Location	Japanese art	Chinese art
1888	A Collection of Japanese Kakémonos	Dowdeswell and Dowdeswell	√	
	A Collection of Japanese Paintings, Drawings, etc, by the Leading Artists of Japan, from the 9th to the 19 th century, by Japanese Fine Art Association	Japanese Gallery	√	
	Prints and Books Illustrating the History of Engraving in Japan	Burlington Fine Arts Club	√	
	A Collection of Specially Selected Examples of Lacquer, Ivory and Wood Carving, Bronze and Inlaid Metal Work, Pottery, Porcelain and Cloisonné, Paintings and Drawings, Embroideries and Miscellaneous Art Objects, by Japanese Fine Art Association	Japanese Gallery	√	
	The Loan Exhibition of Japanese Art	Fine Art Society	√	
	An Exhibition of Japanese and Chinese Paintings	British Museum	√	√
1889	An Exhibition of a Collection of Pictures of Japanese and Chinese Life, by Theodore Wores	Dowdeswell and Dowdeswell	√	√
1890	A Collection of Drawings and Engravings by Hokusai	Fine Art Society	√	
1891	An Exhibition of Japanese and Chinese Objects d'art	Japanese Gallery	√	√
1893	Exhibition of One Hundred and Eleven Drawings of Birds, Fish, Flowers and Views, by the Celebrated Japanese Artist Watanabe Seitei	Japanese Gallery	√	
1894	A Collection of Water-colour Drawings of Central Asia	Fine Art Society		√
	Specimens of Japanese Lacquer and Metal Work	Burlington Fine Arts Club	√	
	Utamaro Exhibition	Goupil Gallery	√	
1896	Coloured Chinese Porcelain	Burlington Fine Arts Club		√

	Japanese Watercolour Drawings by Watanabe and Kwason	Japanese Gallery	√	
	Chinese Antique Porcelain	Japanese Gallery		√
	Japanese Art and the Japanese Gallery	Japanese Gallery	√	
	Japanese Landscape Prints	Goupil Gallery	√	
1897	Exhibition of Japanese Pictures and Drawings by Mortimer Menpes	Dowdeswell and Dowdeswell	√	
1898	Japanese Prints	Goupil Gallery	√	

Reference source:

Exhibition Culture in London 1878-1908, Glasgow, 2006-7
<http://www.exhibitionculture.arts.gla.ac.uk/>

Appendix III

Issues concerning the *Admonitions* scroll's dating, authorship, provenance and its influence on the reception of Chinese painting in a later socio-historical context have long been discussed among contemporary scholars. For instance,

- 1) Michael Sullivan argued in 1954 that most of the Japanese and Western scholars who had written on the subject of the scroll had only made expressions of opinion, and had failed to bring forward specific stylistic or documentary evidence in support of their attributions. Based on preliminary comparison between the representation of leaves in the *Admonitions* scroll and those conventions in *Jieziyuan Huapu* (*The Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting* 《芥子園畫譜》) (1679), Sullivan claimed that the *Admonitions* scroll was a copy of the tenth or early eleventh century.¹
- 2) Basil Gray refuted Sullivan's argument in 1985 after careful investigation of the scroll. Gray used his knowledge of traditional Chinese painting treatises and compared the *Admonitions* scroll in the British Museum with another copy in the Palace Museum, Beijing, as well as other similar works found in different museums. Based on the comparative archaeological examination, Gray attributed the British Museum version of the *Admonitions* scroll as a work of the Northern Song dynasty, although some features may point to the pre-Tang period.²
- 3) Nearly a hundred years after the acquisition of the scroll, the British Museum and the Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art jointly organized an international colloquy on *The Admonitions Scroll: Ideas of Etiquette, Art and Empire from Early China* in June 2001.³ Based on the latest scholarship and comparative archaeological evidence, Shane McCausland ascertains in his recent scholarship that the *Admonitions* scroll, which has traditionally been attributed to Gu Kaizhi, can now be identified as a late sixth-century Southern court copy of the original, incorporating contemporary techniques and devices.⁴ The recent records of the scroll in the British Museum also show that "this painting is now often considered to be a Tang Dynasty copy of the original."⁵

¹ See Michael Sullivan, "A Further Note on the Date of the *Admonitions* Scroll", *BM* 96, 1954, 306-309.

² See Basil Gray, "'Admonitions of the Instructress of the Ladies in the Palace': A Painting Attributed to Ku K'ai-chih", *Studies in Chinese and Islamic Art* 1, 1985, 178-93, footnote 11.

³ See Wen Fong, "Preface", in Shane McCausland, *First Masterpiece of Chinese Painting: The Admonitions Scroll*, London 2003, 7. For the proceedings of the conference, see Shane McCausland (ed.), *Gu Kaizhi and the Admonitions Scroll*, Percival David Foundation Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia, No. 21, London 2003.

⁴ Although the *Admonitions* scroll is rendered archaically in the Gu Kaizhi tradition, McCausland remarks that there are more modern shading effects in the figures. The style of the inscriptions in the Scroll matches calligraphy of the late Six Dynasties, which is also contemporary. See McCausland, *First Masterpiece of Chinese Painting*, 11-3, 25-30; McCausland, "Nihonga Meets Gu Kaizhi", 690.

⁵ See the curator's comments on the British Museum online database, Ch.Ptg.1.

Appendix IV

In his report to the Trustees of the British Museum, Sir Sidney Colvin noted additional reasons for supporting the purchase of the Wegener collection:

Nearly all the Chinese paintings imported through the trade into Europe are rubbish thrust by native dealers upon untrained buyers: fine examples, showing the skill of the famous historical masters, are excessively rare and difficult to come by, being when they come to light immediately bought up for special collectors in Japan, France, and America who are ready to pay almost any price for them.

A small number of good examples were included with the collection of Japanese paintings purchased by the Trustees from Dr. Anderson in 1883 [1881 instead]. By that purchase the British Museum took the lead among Western nations in recognizing the beauty and high interest of the pictorial arts of the far East. The offer of Frau Wegener's collection now gives us the opportunity of continuing and confirming that lead.

Before attempting to collect, Frau Wegener made under Mr. Binyon and Mr. Arthur Morrison, the chief English experts in Far-Eastern art, a thorough study of the Chinese paintings already in the British Museum. During a residence of several winters in China, favoured by special introductions and opportunities, she examined many thousand paintings and has selected from them with excellent knowledge, taste, and judgment. She bought few of the conventional and ritual subjects of Buddhist religion, which in the very greatest hands, but only in the greatest, are nobly expressive. In other aspects, her collection is probably the most important and varied ever brought from the East.

The British Museum is about to be enriched by the remarkable specimens of early Buddhist painting brought by Dr. Stein from sealed deposits in Eastern Turkestan. The further acquisition of the paintings offered by Frau Wegener would place our national Collection, so far as Chinese painting is concerned, beyond the reach of rivalry in Europe and would reveal the genius of the far East as it is revealed nowhere else.

When Europe was still barbarous, by the tenth century and earlier, the Chinese had acquired a power of expressing, in their peculiar method of semi-transparent water-colour painting on a group of warm brown silk, the vital character of the subject that engaged them, whether human or animal, priest or goddess, bird, flower or landscape, with a mastery which no European has ever surpassed or perhaps equaled. Their work was the parent and model of all the pictorial arts of Japan as the Japanese are themselves the first to acknowledge.¹

¹ Colvin to the Trustees, 11 February 1910, CE4-OP, Box OP195, Vol. 107, P No. 504. A copy can also be found at the DPD.

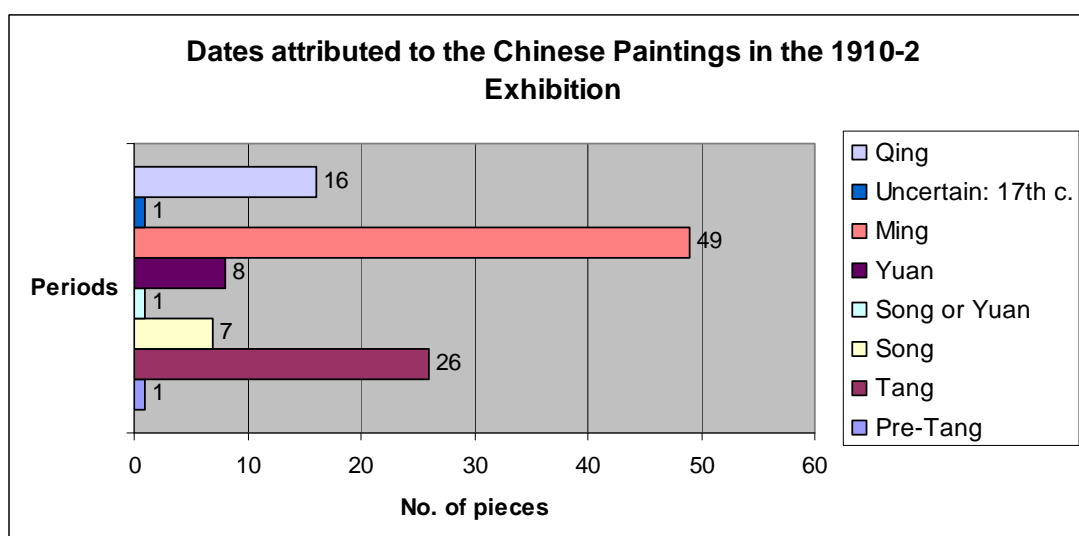
Appendix V

Based on the information in *A Guide to an Exhibition of Chinese and Japanese Paintings* (1910), the identities of the 109 Chinese paintings are shown as follows:

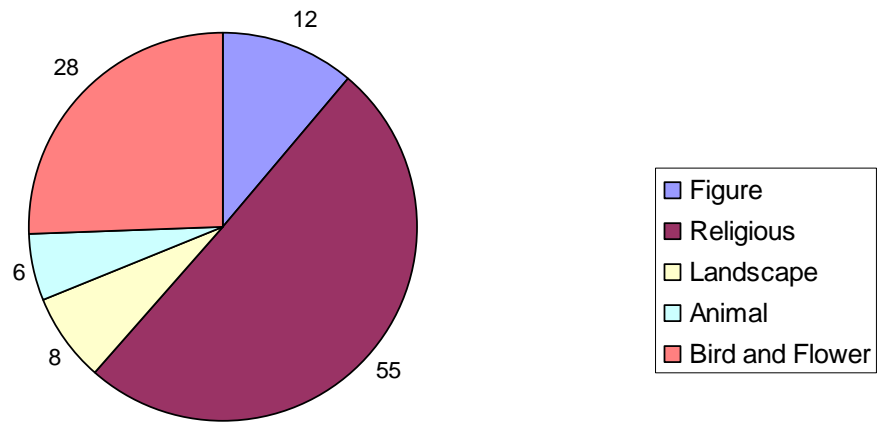
			Item no. in the Exhibition guide (1910)	No. of pieces	% (to 2 decimal place)
1	Dates attributed	Pre-Tang periods	1	1	0.92
		Tang dynasty	2-17, 19-28	26	23.85
		Song dynasty	18, 30-31, 33, 38, 42-43	7	6.42
		Song or Yuan dynasty	29	1	0.92
		Yuan dynasty	32, 35-37, 39, 44- 46	8	7.34
		Ming dynasty	34, 40-41, 47-59, 60-60*, 61-89, 91- 92	49	44.95
		Uncertain: 17th century	90	1	0.92
		Qing dynasty	93-108	16	14.68
2	Subject matter	Figure	1, 47-48, 64, 66, 70-71, 89, 98, 100, 105, 108	12	11
		Religious (mainly immortal figures)	2-26, 29, 31-32, 34, 38-39, 44-46, 50, 56, 68-69, 72-78, 80-82, 85-88, 95, 106-107	55	50.46
		Landscape	27, 36-37, 54, 63, 91-92, 102	8	7.34
		Animal	28, 35, 55, 58, 61, 83	6	5.5
		Bird and flower	30, 33, 40-43, 49, 51-53, 57, 59, 60- 60*, 62, 65, 67, 79, 84, 90, 93-94, 96- 97, 99, 101, 103- 104	28	25.69

3	Source of acquisitions	Purchased from different sellers	1, 37, 51, 53, 79	5	4.58
		Acquired from Dr William Anderson	29, 32, 34, 38, 40-45, 48, 50, 60-60*, 63, 65, 91-92, 96	19	17.43
		Bequeathed by the late Sir Augustus Franks	47, 54, 71, 73-78, 106	10	9.17
		Dr Ernest Hart	49	1	0.92
		Recovered by Sir Aurel Stein	2-26	25	22.94
		Acquired from Frau Olga-Julia Wegener	27-28, 30-31, 33, 35-36, 39, 46, 56-59, 61-62, 64, 66-70, 72, 80-90, 94-95, 97-98, 100-105, 107-108	45	41.28
		Presented by Frau Olga-Julia Wegener	52	1	0.92
		Presented by Mr George T. Veitch	55	1	0.92
		Unclassified	93	1	0.92
		Presented by Mr Arthur Morrison	99	1	0.92

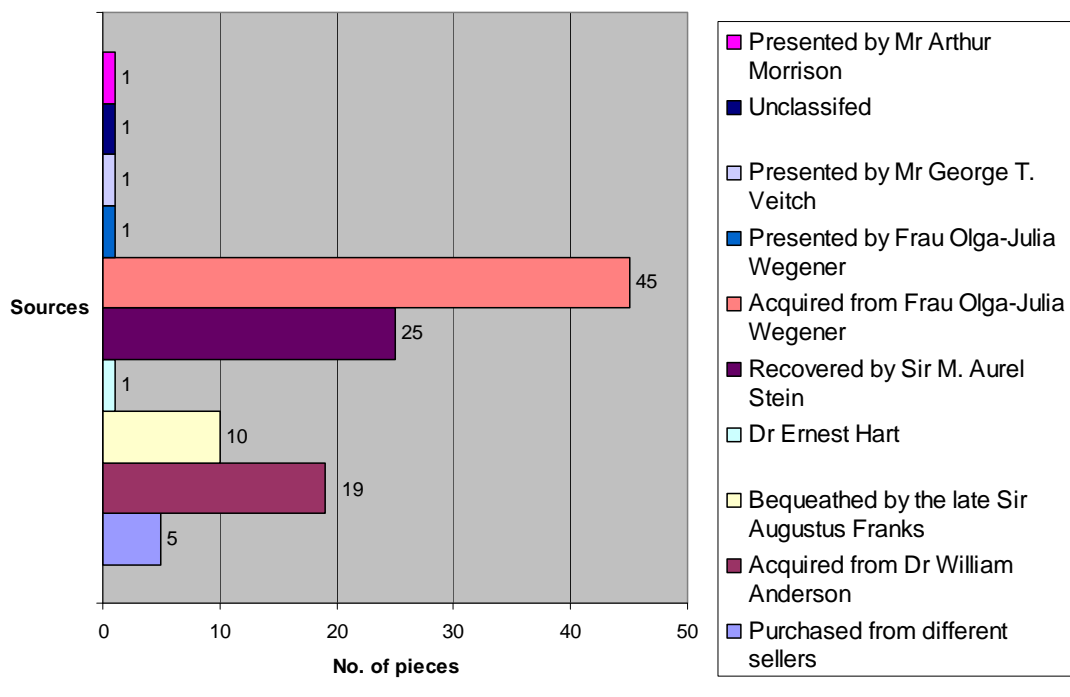
The analysis of the above data is shown in the following charts:



Subject Matter of the Chinese Paintings in the 1910-2 Exhibition



Sources of the Chinese Paintings in the 1910-2 Exhibition



Appendix VI

With reference to the correspondence in the Archive of Laurence Binyon (Loan 103) at the British Library and in the Department of Prints and Drawings, the British Museum, I reconstruct Binyon's itinerary to Germany in 1910 as follows:

Date	Location	Activities	References
Friday 21 October 1910	Hamburg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Binyon stayed at Hotel Esplanade. ▪ He had seen a few pictures but did not see the main collection until Sunday. ▪ He dined with the Voretzsches. 	Post mark 23 October 1910, ALB, Vol. 61.
Saturday 22 October	Hamburg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Binyon went to a shooting party in the country with Dr Voretzsch. ▪ He sat at the head of the table in an immense dinner – only men – with new arrivals from Hamburg – twenty-six altogether. 	
Sunday 23 October	Hamburg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Binyon saw the main collection of paintings. 	25 October 1910, ALB, Vol. 61.
Monday 24 October	Hamburg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Binyon spent the morning in the Hamburg Print Room and afterwards Lichtwash. The Director of the Gallery took him around. ▪ After lunch Binyon went to the Weber Gallery where he saw a certain number of interesting pictures. ▪ He “had a walk by the Alster – the big lake which would have been delightful but for the keen east wind & cloud.” ▪ He also visited Kunsthalle. ▪ Binyon left for Berlin with Dr Voretzsch in the evening. 	25 October 1910, ALB, Vol. 61; Binyon to Colvin, 23 October 1910, Letter Books at the DPD.
Tuesday 25 October	Berlin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Binyon stayed at Hotel Wiesbadener Hof. ▪ He saw Granville Barker (1877-1946), an English actor and playwright, in the morning. Barker wanted to introduce Binyon to Meyerfeld who was a translator. ▪ He received a letter from Cologne for his upcoming visit to the place. ▪ Voretzsch brought Binyon to see Otto 	25-26 October 1910, ALB, Vols 61, 63.

		<p>Kümmel, Director of East Asian Art at the Berlin State Museums, who showed them things which his mentor, Dr Ernst Große, the Freiburg collector and university lecturer, had bought.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Binyon went to Faust at night and enjoyed it very much, while Barker sat near him and his friends. 	
Wednesday 26 October	Berlin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ After breakfast Binyon and Voretzsch went to the Gallery and saw the Wax Bust and a number of delightful pictures, especially early German, Van Eyck and Holbein. ▪ Voretzsch had an early lunch with Binyon and then went back to Hamburg at midday. ▪ Binyon met Barker after Voretzsch had gone to his Foreign Office. ▪ Binyon probably visited the Ethnology Museum where he found Albert von Le Coq. ▪ Binyon dined with the Wegeners at night. 	26-27 October 1910, ALB, Vols 61, 63.
Thursday 27 October	Berlin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Binyon went first to the Kaiser Friedrich Museum (now the Bode Museum) “which is wonderfully arranged & contains endless fine things besides the pictures which [he] had already seen.” ▪ Then, he “went off to Kunst Gewerbe Library [(Museum für Kunst and Gewerbe)] & was cordially received & went through practically the whole of their Japanese prints – a small but quite good collection. They have a beautiful reading room, excellent catalogues, etc & no formalities.” ▪ Binyon lunched at Granville Barker’s hotel and went back to finish up the Japanese prints. ▪ After 3:00pm he walked in the Tier-Garten. ▪ He fetched Barker to dine with him. ▪ Binyon left for Cologne at 9:50pm and had booked a berth in the sleeping-car. 	27 October 1910, ALB, Vol. 61.
Friday 28 October	Cologne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Binyon arrived at 7:30am and stayed at Hotel Mittelhäuser. 	27-28 October

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ After breakfast Professor Adolf Fischer carried Binyon off to the Kunstgewerbe Museum where Fischer's cases were being unpacked. Fischer was going to have a special new Museum built for his collection. The Fischer couple showed some of their pictures to Binyon. ▪ Berthold Laufer, "a German who has become American & has been working in Asia for some years for the Chicago Museum", came to see Binyon and wanted to sell some Chinese pictures to the British Museum. So, Binyon went off to see the works at Laufer's house. However, he did not want the pictures. ▪ Binyon found that "Fischer's things are amazingly fine, in some sections far surpassing [the British Museum's]. They gave [him] great pleasure." ▪ Binyon lunched with the Fischer couple and found that they were immensely hospitable and were awfully pleased at his admiration of their pictures, "as [Fischer] has been snubbed by Kümmel & the Berlin people." 	1910, ALB, Vol. 61.
Saturday 29 October	Cologne; Brussels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Binyon went to Brussels and wanted to see Raphael Petrucci's new acquisitions on Sunday. 	26 and 28 October 1910, ALB, Vols 61, 63.
Sunday 30 October	Brussels; England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Binyon saw Petrucci. ▪ He went back to England at night. 	26 and 28 October 1910, ALB, Vols 61, 63.
Monday 31 October	England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Binyon resumed his duty at the British Museum. 	Binyon to Colvin, 27 October 1910, Letter Books at the DPD

Appendix VII

On 16 July 1911, Ernst A. Voretzsch wrote to Binyon from his Consulate Office in Hong Kong, with detailed advice on planning a trip to the Far East:

As you know we returned by Siberia and stayed 4 days in Mukden. What I found there was amazing. I thought I knew pretty well the Chinese art and anyhow better than some professors, but in Mukden I felt how very little of it I had seen. I send you enclosed an extract of a copy of a letter to my brother which will give you an idea of what we saw. But my dear Mr. Binyon, you must promise me to keep it for yourself. I can say I have discovered the treasures there, for no European or American connoisseur or professor - note the distinction - has seen them before and I want to write a book about the old Chinese bronzes there. I have written to the Foreign Office at Berlin and got the permission to do it and to go there, probably in September.

We hope to leave here early in September, go first or perhaps later to Japan and be in Mukden in the middle or the end of September for about 3 weeks. Couldn't you and Mrs. Binyon come there too? I think we would both enjoy it to study things there together. I go there without any official introduction from Berlin or Peking. Our Consul there is on very good footing with the authorities there and we can by his help see there more as if we would go with letters of introduction from the legation in Peking or the Waiwupu, which might make the Chinese suspicious. One has to be very careful with local authorities in China. If I may give you an advice take a general letter of introduction from your Foreign Office but don't let them write beforehand for any special permission in Mukden. You may use the letter in Mukden, should you there find it necessary.

To Mukden you would probably travel by Siberia, it takes you about a fortnight. But on your way home via Suez we trust, you and Mrs. Binyon will stay with us as long as ever you like.

I hope to be able to show you something here. I got some really good things. Nothing less than a Wu-Tao-Tze has been discovered in Canton and I was lucky enough to secure it before its departure for Japan. Times are very bad here since the last revolution in Canton and treasures found their way to the market which other-wise are kept by the rich Chinese collectors themselves.

I had photographed some of my recent purchases and have much pleasure in sending you photos of the same.¹

¹ Voretzsch to Binyon, 16 July 1911, ALB, Vol. 11.

Appendix VIII

According to the correspondence in the Archive of Laurence Binyon (Loan 103) at the British Library and in the Department of Prints and Drawings, the British Museum, as well as the documents in the Charles Lang Freer Papers at Freer Gallery of Art/Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Binyon's itinerary to America in 1912 is reconstructed as follows:

Date	Location	Activities	References
Friday 1 November 1912	Boston, Massachusetts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Binyon lectured at the Lowell Institute, Harvard University and elsewhere. 	Harvard University: bMS Am1096 The Mosher Papers (133)
Saturday 2-9 November	Boston	Unknown	No records
Sunday 10 November	Detroit, Michigan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Binyon couple arrived at 1:30pm. 	Freer's dairy, CLFP-FGA, Box 50 Folder 9, Vol. 22
Monday 11 November	Detroit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Freer spent his time with the Binyons. 	
Tuesday 12 November	Detroit; Ann Arbor, Chicago	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Freer went to Ann Arbor with the Binyons. Binyon lectured there. 	
Wednesday 13 November	Detroit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Binyons stayed in Freer's house. 	
Thursday 14 November	Detroit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Freer marked "The Binyons here – Collegiate". ▪ Binyon gave an evening talk on "What is Art? Ideas of Design in East and West" at the Detroit Museum of Art. 	<i>Detroit Free Press</i> , 8 November 1912, ALB, Vol. 69
Friday 15 November	Detroit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Binyons stayed in Freer's house. 	
Saturday 16 November	Detroit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Binyons stayed in Freer's house. 	
Sunday 17 November	Detroit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Binyons stayed in Freer's house. ▪ Binyon told William Rothenstein that they will go to Chicago, Buffalo, Philadelphia, and New York at the end of this week. 	Binyon to Rothenstein, 17 November [1912], ALB, Vol. 75
Monday 18 November	Detroit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Binyons stayed in Freer's house. 	
Tuesday 19 November	Detroit; Toledo, Ohio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Binyons left for Toledo at 12:00noon. 	
Wednesday	Ohio	Unknown	No records

20 November			
Thursday 21 November	Ohio	Unknown	No records
Friday 22 November	Detroit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Binyons returned from Oberlin. 	
Saturday 23 November	Detroit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Freer arranged a reception for the Binyons. 	
Sunday 24 November	Detroit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Binyons left for Chicago at 10:00pm. 	
Monday 25 November	Chicago	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Binyon studied several important collections of Japanese prints. 	
Tuesday 26 November	Chicago?; Buffalo?	Unknown	No records
Wednesday 27 November	Philadelphia?	Unknown	No records
Thursday 28 November	New York?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Binyons stayed at Hotel Clarendon. 	Binyon to Frederick Kenyon [24] November 1912, ALB, Vol. 73
Friday 29 November	New York?	Unknown	No records
Saturday 30 November	London?	Unknown	No records

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