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FREER GALLERY OF ART

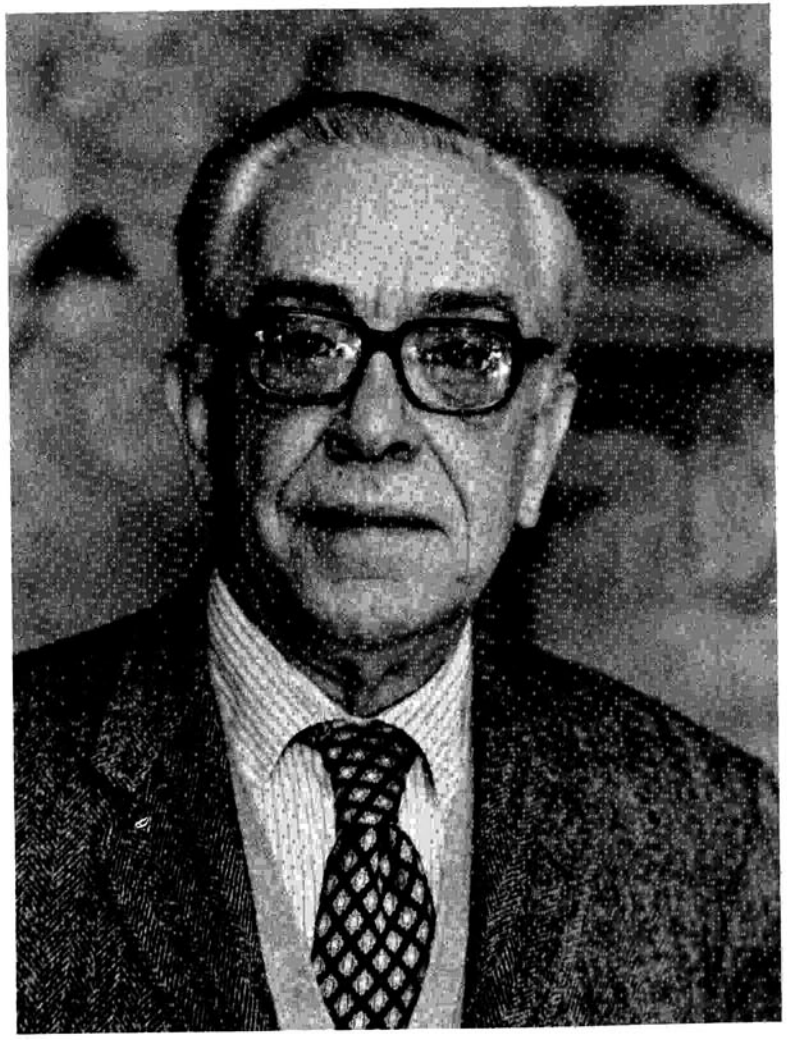
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

FIFTH PRESENTATION

OF THE

CHARLES LANG FREER MEDAL

WASHINGTON, D. C.
SEPTEMBER 11, 1973



LAURENCE SICKMAN

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FOREWORD

In May of this year the Freer Gallery of Art inaugurated the Fiftieth Anniversary celebration of the opening of the Gallery to the public. Three times during the year a different cultural area represented by the collections will be honored. The first was Japan, and today we salute China.

On February 25, 1956, the one-hundredth anniversary of the birth of the late Charles Lang Freer, a medal was established in his memory to be presented from time to time to scholars throughout the world "For distinguished contribution to the knowledge and understanding of Oriental civilizations as reflected in their arts."

On February 25, 1956, the first presentation was made to Professor Osvald Sirén of Stockholm, Sweden, the eminent scholar of Chinese art. The second presentation was made on May 3, 1960, to the Islamic scholar, Professor Ernst Kühnel of Berlin, Germany. The third and fourth presentations were made on September 15, 1965 and May 2, 1973 respectively to the distinguished Japanese scholars Professor Yukio Yashiro and Professor Tanaka Ichimatsu. This evening the fifth presentation is being made to Mr. Laurence Sickman of Kansas City, Missouri for his outstanding contribution and achievements in the field of Chinese art.

The bronze medal was designed by a leading American sculptor, Paul Manship.

HAROLD P. STERN
Director
Freer Gallery of Art

Washington, D. C.
September 11, 1973

Fifth Presentation

of the

CHARLES LANG FREER MEDAL

September 11, 1973

Opening Remarks

HUGH SCOTT
UNITED STATES SENATOR

The Career of Laurence Sickman

HAROLD P. STERN
DIRECTOR, FREER GALLERY OF ART

Presentation by

SENATOR HUGH SCOTT

Address of Acceptance

LAURENCE SICKMAN

A Reception will follow the Address of Acceptance

OPENING REMARKS

HUGH SCOTT
UNITED STATES SENATOR

Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests:

This convocation, which I now call to order, marks the fifth presentation of the Charles Lang Freer Medal. Established in 1956 on the one-hundredth anniversary of the birth of the founder of the Freer Gallery of Art, this award was created for the purpose of honoring a scholar of world renown "For distinguished contribution to the knowledge and understanding of Oriental civilizations as reflected in their arts."

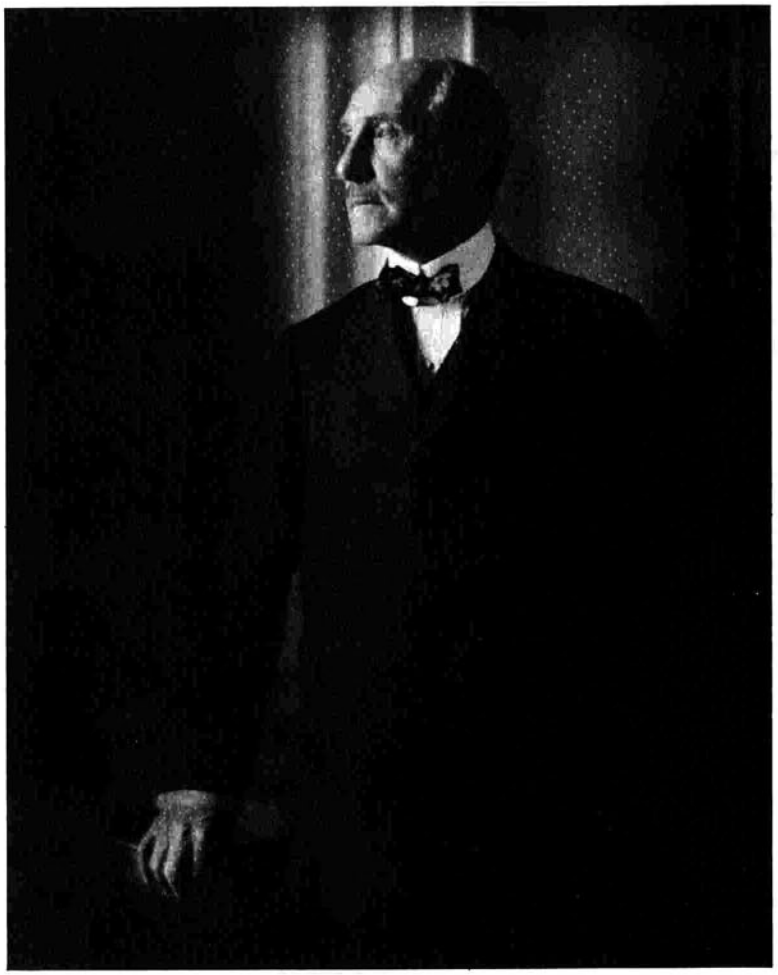
When Charles Lang Freer made his generous gift to the people of the United States in 1906, the extraordinary collections he had brought together, the handsome building he designed to house them, and the fortune he provided to endow them, became a part of the Smithsonian Institution. The Smithsonian Institution, itself a gift to the United States of a generous Englishman and great scientist, James Smithson, is directed by its basic legislation to maintain a Gallery of Art; and today no less than five museums of art come under the Smithsonian's aegis. The Gallery founded by Mr. Freer is unique among these in that, in keeping with the founder's wish, its emphasis is on the art of the Orient, and the principal activity of the Gallery staff is devoted to research on the civilizations which produced those works of art.

In seeking to honor outstanding scholars in the field, the Gallery has already conferred the medal on four distinguished men. The first recipient in 1956 was our friend, Professor Osvald Sirén of Stockholm, who was one of the pioneers who first devoted a long and fruitful career to the study of Chinese

art. Four years later, reaching into an entirely different field of Asian art, the Freer turned to the area of scholarship concerned with the Near East and especially the arts of Islam. The obvious choice for the second award was Professor Ernst Kühnel of Berlin, the dean of his field and a pioneer in the study of interpretation to the Western World of the arts of Islam. In 1965, the third Freer medal was presented to Professor Yukio Yashiro, the doyen of Japanese art historians.

To mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Freer Gallery, a special exhibition is being planned for each of the major areas of the collection. The Freer Medal is being presented to a scholar for his achievement in each of those areas. The first exhibition, Japanese Ukiyoe Painting, began on May 2, 1973 and the Freer Medal was presented to the celebrated Japanese scholar, Professor Tanaka Ichimatsu. This evening, the second of the special exhibitions, Chinese Figure Painting, will open, and we are assembled here to honor Mr. Laurence Sickman for his outstanding accomplishments in the study of Chinese art. It is fitting that as interest in Chinese art and culture continues to grow throughout the world, that the award should be made to an American who had devoted so many years to the study of that country and its people.

It is a great honor for me to make this presentation on behalf of the Regents of the Smithsonian Institution. Before doing so, however, I want to call upon Dr. Harold P. Stern, the Director of the Freer Gallery, to say a few words about the career of our distinguished guest and medalist, Mr. Sickman. Dr. Stern:



CHARLES LANG FREER

PHOTO BY EDWARD STEICHEN, 1916

THE CAREER OF LAURENCE SICKMAN

HAROLD P. STERN
DIRECTOR, FREER GALLERY OF ART

Senator Scott, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests:

This evening we are gathered together to honor a scholar, museologist and gentleman who is held in great esteem by all in his profession. Four months ago the Freer Medal was awarded to Professor Tanaka Ichimatsu of Tokyo for his distinguished contributions to Japanese art. Today we salute the art, culture and creativity of the people of China, and for the first time an American, Laurence Sickman, will receive the Freer Medal.

The study of Chinese art history in the West has undergone several rather dramatic changes during the twentieth century. Those changes reflect the growth of Western awareness and understanding of Chinese art, and serve as guideposts in charting Western attitudes and areas of emphasis.

At the turn of the century, a group of brilliant philologists that included Édouard Chavannes and Paul Pelliot succeeded in making many of the most famous Chinese historical sites available to Western scholars in a series of monumental publications. The emphasis those scholars placed on inscriptions and textual references was in keeping with traditional Chinese attitudes toward their own cultural and historical monuments and their efforts can only be described as brilliant and astonishing.

As the century progressed, intrepid explorers like Sir Aurel Stein, Albert von Le Coq and Petr Kozlov investigated the links between China and the West as they were preserved in the vast areas of Central Asia and northwestern China. The comprehensive reports prepared by those men helped to identify the

various influences that from remote antiquity had joined China with the civilizations of the West.

During these same years, some of the greatest private collections of Chinese art were being formed in the West. In retrospect, one must marvel at the collections assembled by men like George Eumorfopoulos, Charles Lang Freer and Adolphe Stoclet. At the time they were bringing together their legendary collections, they had none of the benefits of comprehensive photographic archives, encyclopedias or standard reference works that are now considered so essential. Their approach was much more subjective than that used today. Modern Western scholars who specialize in Chinese art generally have greater linguistic training and have complete access to Chinese and Western reference materials.

Certainly one of the major milestones in Western awareness of Chinese culture was the International Exhibition of Chinese Art held at Burlington House, London, in 1935-36. That exhibition included objects drawn from collections all over the world and marked the first time that a significant group of objects from the Palace Museum had been shown outside China. Understandably, the exhibition generated even greater interest in Chinese art, and was instrumental in guiding a whole generation of Western scholars and collectors toward specialization in what was still a relatively unexplored area of human achievement.

The impact of the 1935-36 exhibition on Chinese studies was equalled only by that resulting from the exhibition of Chinese Art Treasures which toured five American cities during 1961-62, which concentrated on painting. In that exhibition, all of the objects were selected from the collection of the National Palace Museum in Taiwan. The unusually large number of Chinese paintings included in the exhibition reflected the preoccupation of American scholars with that particular aspect of Chinese art. We are fortunate today to witness the third major exhibition, this time sent abroad by the People's Republic of China.

Laurence Sickman was one of the few scholars responsible for increasing Western understanding of Chinese culture during the critical years between the mid 30's and early 60's. He was particularly well qualified to do so. His formal training was taken at Harvard University, where he studied during the final years of the 1920's, and graduated *cum laude* in 1930. Mr. Sickman was fortunate for the first course in Chinese art in which he registered was taught by the great French sinologist, Paul Pelliot. He also had the advantage of studying with the well-known American scholar, Langdon Warner, who in turn had been assisted in his research by Charles Lang Freer.

On graduating from Harvard, Mr. Sickman was awarded a Harvard-Yenching Fellowship for study in China. Consequently during the period from 1930-35 he lived in the cosmopolitan city of Peking where he was able to meet most of the outstanding scholars and collectors who had been drawn there by their interest in Chinese culture and civilization.

The threat of war was already growing during the early 1930's, but it was still possible to travel throughout the country, and Mr. Sickman utilized opportunities to visit the great ancient capital cities of K'ai-feng, Lo-yang and Ch'ang-an. In addition, he was able to travel to many of the well-known Buddhist temples and cave sites.

Mr. Sickman's long relationship with the Nelson-Atkins Gallery in Kansas City, Missouri, began in 1932 when he assisted Langdon Warner, who was then in China as an advisor on Oriental art for the Gallery. In 1935 when Mr. Sickman returned to the United States, he was appointed Curator of Oriental Art at the Nelson Gallery. Thus, his return to the United States to take up this post coincided with the London Exhibition, which was so crucial to Western studies of Chinese art history.

During the war years, Mr. Sickman served as a major in the Combat Intelligence of the Air Corps in England and India, and with the 14th Air Force in China. In the winter of 1945-46, he was a member of the Arts and Monuments Division of the General Headquarters of the Allied Forces in Tokyo.

With the exception of his war service, Mr. Sickman has remained with the Nelson Gallery. He was appointed Vice-Director in 1945 and assumed the duties of the Director in 1954.

In spite of the demanding duties of museum administration, Mr. Sickman still has found time to continue his own research and to acquire superb examples of both Western and Far Eastern art for the Nelson Gallery. His uncanny knack for being in the right place at the right time has repeatedly enabled him to purchase objects of unusual quality. It is no exaggeration to say that the extraordinary level of quality of the Far Eastern

collection in the Nelson Gallery, certainly one of the finest in the world, as well as the growth and magnificence of its Western, Oriental, African and Primitive holdings, testifies to Laurence Sickman's discriminating catholic taste and unerring judgment.

Though burdened with administrative duties, Mr. Sickman has continued to publish scholarly articles and to serve as editor of the *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America*, one of the most influential periodicals devoted to Far Eastern art. Perhaps his best known publication, which he co-authored with Alexander Soper, who is also present with us this evening, is the book entitled, *Art and Architecture of China*. This volume is already regarded as a classic and is probably the best single volume in a Western language devoted to the study of Chinese art available today.

In addition to his many tangible accomplishments, some of which have already been enumerated, Laurence Sickman has also influenced the lives and careers of innumerable students, scholars and collectors. No one who has ever discussed art historical problems or museology with him, or who has asked for advice regarding some research project, can forget his sympathetic consideration or his willingness to share his vast experience. His frank and direct responses are the mark of great learning lightly worn.

Today the study of Chinese art history stands on another threshold. Reports of new finds are continually expanding our awareness of China's long and illustrious past. There is every indication that in the next few years these finds and reports will multiply rather than diminish. A new generation of scholars and collectors has appeared and they have already benefited from the accomplishments of earlier investigations. With the advice and guidance of men like Laurence Sickman, this new generation should be better able to study and to understand Chinese cultural history and tradition.

If I may now ask Senator Scott to make the presentation . . .

THE CHARLES LANG FREER MEDAL

PRESENTATION OF THE CHARLES LANG FREER MEDAL

BY SENATOR HUGH SCOTT

Mr. Sickman:

On behalf of the Chancellor and the Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, I hereby present to you the Freer Medal. The citation reads as follows:

> "For Distinguished Contribution to the Knowledge and Understanding of Oriental Civilizations as Reflected in their Arts."

Sir, we would all be most grateful if you will address us at this time. Mr. Sickman:

ADDRESS OF ACCEPTANCE

LAURENCE SICKMAN

Senator Scott, Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests:

The Charles Lang Freer Medal has always held for me a place of high esteem, admiration and respect. At no time had it entered my thoughts that it should be offered to me. My surprise was profound and my emotions a mixture of justified reluctance and of gratitude to the Smithsonian Institution and the Freer Gallery for choosing me as a recipient.

On the one hand I sincerely share the sentiment of a Yüan dynasty official who tried to excuse himself when requested to compose a stele inscription, saying, "As an official I have done nothing extraordinary nor brought to conclusion the slightest matter, and so I am constantly disconcerted in the presence of my colleagues." On the other hand my admiration of all the Freer Gallery stands for in quality and in scholarship impells me to accept this honor as a tangible link with an institution I have held to be the ideal of its kind.

I have had the good fortune to know the four directors, John Lodge, Archibald Wenley, John Pope, and the present incumbent, Harold Stern, as well as most members of its gifted staff. Over the years I have watched the collections expanded through the acquisition of works of the highest quality in every category of Asian art—a growth worthily complemented by a long series of scholarly publications.

On this Fiftieth Anniversary of the Freer Gallery, I wish to talk briefly of the progress in Far Eastern studies that has come about in the past half century and to which the Freer has contributed so much. I must beg your forgiveness and your indulgence for the personal and autobiographical nature of much

I say. I have tried, but could find no other way than to use some past circumstances of my own career for contrast with the present.

It was, I believe, when I was 17 years old I came to the conviction that, since I must find an occupation in life, the most gratifying would be that of a Curator of Oriental Art. Perhaps the prospect was all the more Utopian because I knew absolutely nothing about such an occupation and there was no one—family, friend or mentor—who could advise me. My motivation was enthusiasm for rather than any knowledge about the arts of China. Nevertheless I approached the matter in a direct manner and wrote to every curator of Oriental art in the country, asking advice and explaining my ambitions in a necessarily vague and amateur way. Now there were not, you must surely know, many such people in the art museum field at that time, but I wrote them all. I had one reply, one gracious and helpful reply concluding with an invitation to call on the writer and discuss my interest with him. You will understand better, perhaps, the significance of this evening to me when I say that my one letter came from John Ellerton Lodge, Director of the Freer Gallery of Art. In this way began the chain of events that led to a curatorial post.

Many experiences and events must be telescoped. I had my interview with John Lodge, a rather formidable occasion for me in spite of his kindliness. I followed his advice to the extent of my abilities. He told me to go to Harvard and to learn Chinese. I accomplished the former, after an interval, but the latter skill still eludes me. I must add with a sense of the deepest gratitude, that throughout my student days and later, John Lodge remained a helpful guide and friendly advisor.

I may well be mistaken, but I believe that in the mid-20's Harvard was the only university offering courses in Chinese and Japanese art. By a curious turn of events and because Langdon Warner was on sabbatical, my first instructor in the art of the Far East was the celebrated French sinologist, Paul Pelliot, visiting lecturer at Harvard that year. This was a remarkable opportunity only partially exploited by reason of my lack of training. Much of the instruction was quite beyond me. The course was entitled "Survey of Chinese Art" and I do recall that by the end of the semester we had reached the opening years of the Former Han Dynasty. I will later touch on the progress of Far Eastern studies, but it is worth remarking here

that as late as 1927-28, the year of my first course and in pre-Anyang days, the existence of bronze vessels cast in the Shang dynasty was vigorously denied.

The study of Chinese art at Harvard in the late 20's had about it a distinct Japanese aura. Okakura Kakuzo had left a powerful heritage of thought in Boston; my life-long friend, Kojiro Tomita was curator of Oriental art at the Museum of Fine Arts, and Langdon Warner, my preceptor, had had his early training in Japan. It is understandable, then, that Buddhist sculpture and painting enjoyed the strongest favor. Other categories of painting were not neglected, especially the landscape of Southern Sung, but the art of painting seemed to end rather abruptly with the fourteenth century. Archaic Chinese art of the bronze age was only then coming into focus. Ceramics were certainly given their due, at least up to the end of Southern Sung, what might be called the pre-Ching-te Chen art of the potter. I recall that among visiting professors at one time and another were Professor Yukio Yashiro, Sosetsu Yanagi, the famous Japanese folk-art specialist, and the unforgettable Sir Aurel Stein.

In mentioning some of the influences of my student days, it would be impossible to neglect that of Dr. Denman Ross who, although retired, consented to give me a special course on a subject of which he was the established master—that of qualitative judgment, or connoisseurship. What modicum of eye I may have is thanks in large part to his tutelage and, at a later time and in Peking, that of Dr. Otto Burchard.

In 1930 began my years of residence in Peking on a Harvard-Yenching Fellowship, an experience remarkable in every way and one that lasted until the early winter of 1935.

I will refrain from talking at length about my years in Peking, but a few aspects may be of some interest. With my undergraduate conditioning I continued to follow my interest in Buddhist sculpture and traveled extensively throughout North China visiting Buddhist cave sites and temples, especially those of Shansi Province that remained from the twelfth through the fourteenth centuries. This is, I believe, the area richest in surviving Buddhist architecture, sculpture and wall-paintings, and one that will justify much concentrated study.

In 1931 Langdon Warner accepted an appointment as advisor in Oriental art to the yet unbuilt Nelson Gallery of Art in Kansas City. That same year he came to Peking and in his

company I had my first opportunity to visit some of the dealers in antiquities in the famous shops of T'a-erh Hutung and Liu-li Ch'ang. This latter street, outside the Ch'ien-men Gate, had long been celebrated for the shops that lined both sides of its winding length—shops dealing in books, rubbings, equipment for the scholar's desk, paintings and antiquities of all kinds.

On his return to the United States, Langdon Warner suggested to the Nelson Gallery trustees, none of whom I had met, that I might, as the chances arose, recommend acquisitions for the as yet unformed collection of Chinese art. In this way and at that time was established my association with the Nelson Gallery that preserves to the present. It was an opportunity heavily charged with responsibility, requiring more nerve and confidence than I really had at the time. As a beginner one can safely admire a painting or bronze exhibited in a museum and labeled, presumably, by an expert. The same work of art unlabeled, without provenance and in the market place can be another thing altogether. And speaking of the market place, all our acquisitions were made just there, for the most part in Peking and a few from the less renowned dealers of Shanghai. With a few notable exceptions, the larger part of the Nelson collection of Chinese paintings was actually assembled from Japanese and American sources.

In those halcyon days for collectors, the dealers of Peking offered artifacts and works of art reflecting every aspect of Chinese material culture from neolithic pottery to the obsolete paraphernalia of the former Manchu court. The better dealers were scholarly men, knowledgeable about rare books, old rubbings, ceramics and antiquities. For example there was Huang Po-ch'uan, a really distinguished specialist in ancient bronzes and jades who, moreover, was always willing to share his knowledge with a neophyte.

In the autumn of 1935 I returned to the United States, via India and the Near East. That same year I became, at last, the curator of Oriental Art in a museum that had opened but two years before. I was scarcely installed in my new post when I traveled to London, in the early winter of 1936, to attend the epoch-making Burlington House exhibition of Chinese art, the largest ever assembled. There I met that unique coterie of collectors and experts who had organized the exhibition and lent to it—Sir Percival David, George Eumorfopoulos, R. L. Hobson, Oscar Raphael, H. J. Oppenheim and many others.

Among the scholars were Arthur Waley, Percival Yetts, Osvald Sirén, an old friend, and also my first teacher, Paul Pelliot.

Today I look back on the Burlington House Exhibition and its attendant events as my official inauguration or commencement, the year was 1936.

In that year I had a scarce handful of colleagues. There was Kojiro Tomita at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Alan Priest at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; John Lodge at the Freer Gallery; and Charles Kelley, Curator at the Art Institute, Chicago. But the years that followed saw a growth of American collections of Chinese art that can only be described as phenomenal. Boston, under the patronage of Denman Ross among others, was acquiring such important figure paintings as Lady Wen-chi's Captivity in Mongolia, The Scholars of Ch'i and the Emperor scroll attributed to Yen Li-pen. At the Freer Gallery John Lodge and after him Archibald Wenley and John Pope, were assembling an incomparable collection of ancient bronzes, archaic jades and ceramics, while Alan Priest, in the older tradition I have mentioned, was building up an important collection of Chinese sculpture. At the same time, thanks to the impetus of Horace Jayne, remarkable examples of Chinese sculpture and Buddhist art were being acquired by the University of Pennsylvania Museum at Philadelphia. Great ceramics and bronzes were being assembled at Chicago, largely under the patronage of Lucy Maud Buckingham and Russell Tyson. At Cleveland the Chinese collection was expanding rapidly with such acquisitions as the unique lacquered wood sculpture of cranes and serpents from Ch'ang-sha, and today, under the guidance of Sherman Lee, it takes its place among the leading collections.

Meanwhile, Robert Griffing at Honolulu and Richard Fuller in Seattle, were augmenting their Far Eastern sections with acquisitions of great merit. Nor had the Nelson Gallery remained static, but continued to pursue a vigorous acquisition program.

Parallel with this rapid expansion of public holdings came the great private collections. I mention only three because I am speaking of times just preceding and following the Second World War and because I knew these men and shared with them their enthusiasm over a new acquisition. There was Charles Bain Hoyt with an unfailing eye for the best in Chinese and Korean ceramics, and whose collections were bequeathed

to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Alfred Pillsbury assembled in a relatively short period a large and superb collection of ancient Chinese bronzes which may be seen today in the Minneapolis Institute of Art. Certainly ranking among the greatest of private collectors was Grenville Winthrop. Scholars and students were always welcome at his house on 81st Street where, in an almost overpowering wealth of art objects, one might study, among so much, the finest collection of archaic jades ever assembled anywhere. The bequest of the Winthrop collection to Harvard raised the Fogg Museum to a place in the very first rank in Chinese art.

In the half century past, American collections of Chinese art have expanded from the original three, Boston, the Metropolitan and the Freer, to include now at least ten really major ones, while in almost every art museum in the country, the arts of China are represented often with objects of prime importance. In aggregate, the collections in America offer broader opportunities for the study and enjoyment of Chinese art than do those of any other country in the Western world.

So much for my own career.

In reviewing the progress of Far Eastern studies, since my first course under Paul Pelliot, it seems to me they really came of age in the decade following the Second World War. Much had been accomplished before, of course, as for example, the building up of such great Chinese language libraries as that of the Harvard-Yenching Institute and the Far Eastern section of the Library of Congress under the direction of Arthur Hummel. However, it was the introduction of Chinese studies into our colleges and universities that was given important emphasis in that period. Much of the credit must go to Mortimer Graves, then executive secretary of the American Council of Learned Societies, who established the Committee of Far Eastern Studies of the ACLS. During the late 40's Mortimer Graves and the Committee, which varied in its make-up from time to time, were the catalyst, the information clearing-house and the project center for all aspects of Far Eastern studies. Thus the role of the ACLS was paramount, by reason of its deep concern, and from the practical side through securing grants from foundations, notably at the time the Rockefeller Foundation, to finance the committee and its proposals.

To illustrate one of the basic Committee goals, I quote from a policy report, "At its meeting in December 1949, the

Committee agreed that the next great task in Far Eastern studies is on the undergraduate level and that Far Eastern studies can come of age only when they are firmly imbedded in higher educational institutions at all levels." A program so broad in scope involved a multiplicity of factors: competent, well trained teachers, every kind of teaching aid such as textbooks, maps, and slides, translations of basic Chinese works, and assembling working, and, when possible, research libraries in Far Eastern languages.

It became evident that no small group, however dedicated, could begin to accomplish all that should be done, and so out of the Committee was born, on April first, 1948, the Far Eastern Association with approximately 600 members. Now, under the revised name "The Association of Asian Studies," there are some 6000 members. It is a constituant member of the American Council of Learned Societies and publishes the prestigious *Journal of Asian Studies.*

In December 1949, Hugh Borton, the then chairman, in a policy statement to the ACLS Committee wrote, apropos of the fledgling Far Eastern Association: "Far Eastern Studies in the United States fortunately have developed to a point where the Committee on Far Eastern Studies of the ACLS is no longer the only body primarily interested in the expansion of these studies." It was decided, nonetheless, to continue the committee for a time because of the many problems yet unsolved, not least among them that of securing adequate scholarships and research funds.

Far Eastern studies had come of age and the horizon was rapidly expanding. A remarkable and precedential document with six appendices was circulated to the Committee early in 1951 by John Fairbank. It was entitled "Frontiers in Far Eastern Studies." This paper dealt with such subjects as an intensified drive to introduce Far Eastern studies into independent colleges, *Summer Institutes, Research on Chinese Thought, Dynastic Biographical Dictionaries, Instructional Material,* and *Publication of Research.* One of the paragraphs is of special interest, that on *Personnel,* which emphasized the importance of utilizing the talents of Chinese scholars displaced by the upheavals and political dislocations in eastern Asia.

Beginning in the mid-30's and increasingly so as the Japanese invasion pushed deeper into the mainland, Chinese

scholars had been coming to America and welcomed on the faculties of our universities.

Today Chinese language programs, on both the graduate and undergraduate levels, have been established on a nationwide scale, while instruction in Chinese history, philosophy, economics, literature and the arts have reached a level of notable sophistication. To these factors must be added the presence of a number of distinguished Chinese scholars in our academic life.

These men have introduced the high standards of Chinese scholarship and what might be described as the orthodox Chinese point of view toward their own civilization and material culture. The inevitable corollary to linguistic abilities, well stocked research libraries and contact with Chinese scholars, has been in the West a new and far more profound attitude toward the study of Chinese art than obtained in the pre-war years. There has come about a shift in vision from that of the outsider looking in, exemplified by the beautiful and sensitive prose of Laurence Binyon, to a conscious attempt to approach Chinese art from the point of view of those who made it and those who evaluated it in their own cultural terms. Here Arthur Waley pointed the way long ago.

Among the more notable results has been an increased concentration on the study of Chinese painting and, I might add, it is only in the most recent times that the art of calligraphy, long held in the highest esteem by the Chinese, has begun to receive its due. Also, within the large field of Chinese painting there has been singled out for special attention a branch described under the broad heading of "paintings by the literati." Originating in the concept of a small and select group during the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, the precepts and aesthetic ideal of the school were finally codified in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. One result of the dominant position this school held in the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties bears on the subject of the symposium to be held here on the days following—that of figure painting. Speaking in a broad and general way, the literati painters and critics of the Ming and Ch'ing periods fostered an indifference toward figure painting and relegated it to a relatively humble status. I feel certain that since most collectors followed the tides of taste, many old and important figure paintings were lost during these centuries because of neglect. Fortunately not

all collectors were limited in their aesthetic evaluations, and it is thanks to a mere handful, like An Ch'i and notably the prince of seventeenth century collectors, Liang Ch'ing-piao, that as many old Chinese figure paintings as there are have survived into our own time.

But in spite of the enormous and irreplaceable losses, there is more historical material on figure painting available today in works to be seen in the originals or in reproductions than for many past centuries. The serious student has available the vast former imperial collections housed in the National Palace Museum in Taiwan, and, thanks to the officials concerned, there are the photographic archives at the University of Michigan. Other important material comes from what, for a lack of a better designation, one might call the Hsüan-t'ung collection, those scrolls selected from the former imperial collections by the last Manchu Emperor. This group, now dispersed, with a few in America but by far the larger part in mainland China, contained, remarkably enough, a number of highly important figure paintings now available for study through reproductions made under the People's Republic of China.

But it is the finds of the archeological teams of the People's Republic of China in, say, the past ten years, that have supplied phenomenal and revealing material illustrating the historical evolution of Chinese figure painting. A painting on silk of about 200 B.C. and a plethora of figure compositions pressed on pottery tiles, some engraved on stone and one painted in lacquer, ranging from the second and third centuries through the sixth century, broaden the whole field with material of high aesthetic merit and unquestionable authenticity.

Shortly before the Cultural Revolution the world was informed about the excavation of a tomb belonging to a member of the imperial house of the T'ang dynasty, the Princess Yung-t'ai, rich in wall paintings. Then, only in 1971, two more such imperial tombs were discovered with paintings of figures in attendance, mounted horsemen, a polo game, camels and even landscapes, both tombs, like the earlier find, dating from the first decade of the eighth century, the golden age of T'ang China. These paintings as well as drawings of great quality engraved on the stone sarcophagi and tomb furnishings, really give us our first suggestion of what metropolitan figure painting must have been in the opening years of the eighth century.

It is impressive that more authentic T'ang figure paintings are known today than have been seen in China for many centuries past.

Hopefully, all this new and stimulating material will generate a wider interest in figure painting and I, for one, am especially grateful that this area has been chosen as a subject for the second symposium in celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Freer Gallery.

I have tried to outline, if ever so briefly, some of the factors that have manifestly advanced the cause of Far Eastern scholarship in America. The symposiums held here in the Jubilee year of the Freer Gallery are clear evidence of our progress toward a more meaningful understanding of the arts of Asia. At this point I must confess my own chagrin at having contributed so little to our knowledge about the arts of China. But I have derived some consolation from a casual remark made by John Lodge. On one of the last occasions when I saw him, he said, "I have in my life published very little, but look about the Freer Gallery because that is my publication."

By what to me, is a truly remarkable coincidence, it was just fifty years ago I had my first meeting with John Lodge in the newly opened Gallery in a room very near this auditorium. It is, then, with the mixed feelings of humility and the enjoyment of a climax that I accept the honor of the Charles Lang Freer Medal.

A Selected Bibliography of the Writings of
LAURENCE SICKMAN

1936

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