

Journal of the British Association for Chinese Studies, Vol. 6 December 2016

ISSN 2048-0601

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Williams, Ifan, translated and edited by Ching May Bo (2014), *Created in Canton: Chinese Export Watercolours on Pith*. Guangzhou: Lingnan Art Publishing House, 376 pp., ISBN: 978-7-5362-5549-4, £75.

This new bilingual work (with Chinese translation by Ching May Bo) explores in depth the phenomenon of pith painting (*tongzhi hua*) in 19th century China, drawing extensively upon major international collections to shine a light upon a Guangzhou-based art form that has until recently been little appreciated either within or outside China.

The spongy pith of *Tetrapanax Papyrifer*, a small tree, has long been valued in China as a medicine, coffin-liner and as a material for stuffing cushions. As early as the Jin Dynasty it was being used to make decorative artificial flowers, but it was not until the nineteenth century that enterprising artists in Canton began to use wafer-thin sheets of pith as a medium for painting, producing a wide range of images, for sale primarily to visiting westerners.

Pith was ideally suited for this purpose, as its cellular structure was impermeable to the gouache watercolours favoured by the Cantonese artists. In consequence, pith painters could produce works of great delicacy and vibrancy which - when mounted in albums and protected from light - have often retained their brilliant colours to the present day.

This monumental work is the culmination of international research undertaken by Ifan Williams which has led him to explore collections in Austria, Britain, China, Egypt, Estonia, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden and the USA. This global project has resulted in the production of a massive volume which, ably supported by an extensive biography that will doubtless prove of immense value to future students, at last provides a focus for the appreciation of this hitherto underrated art-form.

The work commences with an extended introductory chapter, which not only sets pith painting within its historical and cultural context, but also provides an overview of the production process. This is followed by a chapter which examines the lives and works of four named nineteenth century painters: Lamqua; Tingqua; Sunqua; and Youqua. The following chapters address specific recurrent themes, including: “Ships, ports and rivers”; “Agriculture fish and manufactures”; “Flora and fauna”; “Dress”; “Street trades”; “Religion, old tales, Processions and performances”; and “Crime and punishment”. These richly illustrated chapters provide insights not only into the work of the Chinese creators of the works, but also into the preoccupations and interests of the western buyers who sought to bring home a small remembrance of their time in Canton.

Whilst the book is generously illustrated in colour throughout, the 183 full-colour plates that comprise the latter part of the volume are revelatory. Drawing on the finest works in the medium, these not only celebrate the creative virtuosity of their painters but also - through a startling series of works by Sunqua reproducing images of Spanish American and Peruvian costumes - provide a potent reminder that they were not operating in isolation but were rather fully aware of other artistic traditions. Nor was their work unappreciated in the West. As the author reminds us, Lamqua’s ‘Head of an Old Man’ was displayed at the Royal Academy in 1835.

Ifan Williams is to be heartily congratulated for his tenacity and thoroughness of his research. In his preface to this volume, Chen Yuhan observes that “Before the pictures collected by Mr Ifan Williams and his study of them were made known to us, few people in China recognised that Guangzhou used to produce a huge number of watercolours on pith for export and even fewer paid any attention to them.” In no small part as a result of his efforts, this art form is enjoying a revival in its city of its origin. This work well deserves a place on the bookshelves not only of students of Chinese art, but also of historians with an interest in relations between China and the West in the nineteenth century.

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Yang Chia-Ling and Roderick Whitfield. *Lost Generation: Luo Zhenyu, Qing Loyalists and the Formation of Modern Chinese Culture*. London: Saffron Books, 2012, 312pp. ISBN-10: 1872843379, £35.

This intriguing collection of essays takes as its inspiration Luo Zhenyu's enduring reputation as a founding scholar of modern Chinese art scholarship, and is therefore of clear interest to scholars with interests in the history of art, art scholarship and art commerce as it locates that intellectual reputation and contribution in the wider context of his life (should we say lives?) as a Qing loyalist, Manzhouguo official, connoisseur and art dealer. It is also of much wider interest for the questions that it raises (even though it does not answer or even directly address all of these) about lives such as Luo's that were lived between the competing visions and communities of China's twentieth century.

Yang Chia-ling's thoughtful introduction points both to Luo's scholarly reputation and to his status as an ambiguous, border-crossing figure: an imperial loyalist whose work, Yang proposes, was nonetheless constitutive of an East Asian modernity; an anxious commentator on China's problems who, in later life, sought solutions in the difficult external collaborations of Manzhouguo and for many years lived, one way or another, between China and Japan; an antiquarian who sought to preserve written and material heritage, and produced studies of lasting influence on that heritage while authenticating forgeries and dispersing documents, paintings and artefacts overseas and using the proceeds of those sales to fund further scholarly work. Yang wrestles with the challenges that Luo's career presents to the later reader as it unfolded across China, Japan and Manzhouguo from the meanings of post-May-Fourth cultural preservation to understandings of loyalty, and points to some intriguing contradictions in Luo's approach to these: if loyalty to some concept of China is enacted through appreciation and preservation of art and artefacts, what are the meanings of trade, especially overseas trade, in those artefacts? How do we read "Qing loyalism", and how did the "loyalists" themselves understand it? Was this simply a comforting trope, another conceptual artefact to be traded? Yang offers no easy answers to these questions; and if Luo had his own answers he would not be the only former Qing official who declined to reveal them.

While these are the questions that may first draw our attention to Luo, however, one of the great strengths of the collection is that the individual chapters reveal a wider complex of cultural and social practices, emphasising that the Qing loyalists—who can so easily appear as yesterday's men in the grand narratives of post May Fourth China—found footholds in that uncertain world and worked in diverse ways to reinvent and repurpose the traditional. Wang Cheng-hua emphasises Luo's central role in the formation of studies of material culture (*qi wuxue*) and in the development of studies of antiquity in the period before the emergence of a Chinese archaeology. Shana Brown's treatment of Luo as collector charts the complex motives—scholarly, sentimental, anxious and frivolous—that drove collecting and thereby shaped the market in antiquities, and the shifting status of the private collector at a time when new museums were laying claim to documents and artefacts as the stuff of public, national scholarship on their terms and recasting the connoisseurship of Luo's generation as essentially selfish as well as archaic. Pai Shih-ming maps Luo's thinking on tradition and national essence and his efforts to translate historical scholarship into an intellectual case against the spirit of May Fourth. Luo's failure in this is saddening, not simply because he could not make an unfashionable argument stick but because his achievements in 'transmitting antiquity' seemed in themselves to offer so little of substance to modern challenges.

The following chapters, though, warn us not to assume that Luo was simply shipwrecked by history. Tamaki Maeda's meticulous study of Luo in Japan reveals how very prolific he was as a dealer, and how well connected, and offers intriguing insights into debates over the authenticity of works verified by Luo and processes and consequences of authentication and de-authentication. Robert Culp explores the role that literati such as Luo had in shaping the new publishing sector in Shanghai, using commercial publishing to secure an income and access to texts, re-embedding native-place and kinship networks and promoting classical works in modern publishing houses and preserving those works for Chinese readerships as Jiangnan libraries were shipped one by one to Japan. Hong Zaixin's intriguing analysis of Luo's place in scholarship and the art business in Kyoto points to the contradictions that marked his career and his reputation even before his wartime engagement with the Japanese in Manzhouguo. As well as influencing Japanese tastes in

Chinese art by trading in both authentic and forged works, Luo survived in the complex and unstable art markets (indeed at times appears to have made those markets), continued to declare his loyalty to the Qing and inspire biographies that portrayed him as a dedicated, impractical and impoverished scholar, despite having arranged the transfer of 200,000 works of epigraphy to Kyoto University and amassed a personal collection of over 1,200 *guhua* artworks.

Yang Chia-ling and Shao Dan examine Luo's Manzhouguo years. Having moved to Tianjin (which he found unprofitable, compared to Kyoto) Luo landed in Lushun in 1928, where he was active in discussions on Qing restoration and continued to deal in art and antiques and—most lucratively—national archives. Yang notes the challenges of tracking Luo's dealings, though these remained central to his interests and status. Luo seems to have found political relations with the Japanese stressful and unrewarding (as did others in similar positions), and an important message of Yang's analysis is that while cultural capital might easily be monetised, it translated less effectively into political influence. Shao Dan compares Luo Zhenyu and his choices to other Qing loyalists, valuable context that appears to underline the hollowness of their post-Xinhai lives and thereby points us back to the animating puzzle of Luo's life in the intermediate zone between scholarship and practical economic and political interests.

This is a beautifully-produced volume with copious illustrations that include reproductions of the works that Luo dealt in and archive photographs of Luo and his world. The main text, unusually and very helpfully, includes characters for personal and institutional names and titles of important works and is supplemented with an extensive list of Luo's associates (I found myself wondering how that list might be turned into a map of networks and connections), details of exhibitions and events that he organised in his later years in the north-east, a full bibliography of his publications and a detailed chronological biography. The scholarship of the collection merits intensive, study, while the stories of Luo's life offer compelling and enjoyable reading.

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Kitson Peter and Robert Markley (eds) (2016), *Writing China Essays on the Amherst Embassy (1816) and Sino-British Cultural Relations*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, ix+193 pp, ISBN: 978-1-84384-445-7, £30.

Writing China, consists of eight excellent essays on the Amherst embassy (1816) and Sino-British cultural relations. Thematically speaking, these can be roughly divided into three categories: comparative studies on Sino-British interactions in scholarly works, discourse analysis on accounts of the Amherst embassy and opium trade and spotlights on characteristic Chinese issues.

This final section is made up of two essays, namely, *Binding and Unbinding Chinese Feet in the Mid-Century Victorian Press* (Elizabeth Chang) and *'Lost Horizon': Orientalism and the Question of Tibet* (Q.S. Tong). In discussing the foot-binding issue in China, Chang adopts a fresh angle. Regarded as a mental as well as a physical disability, binding feet, she claims, also offers a platform for 'a confrontation with imported and assimilated ideas of movement, freedom and the power of narrative invention' (p.133). Chang uses several Victorian periodicals, along with some old travel narratives as her data, including *Westminster Review*, *The Penny Magazine*, *The Chinese Repository* etc.

First, Chang argues binding women's feet is more distressing and memorable than other Chinese customs, and it also stood as a troubling imposition of immobility on helpless and dependent Chinese women (p.137). Chang further adds that 'heads of Indians' or the corseted waists of European ladies' also 'occupied some similar space of overlapping conceptual and physical constraint' (p.138). She finally concludes that opposing footbinding for Chinese women is a declaration that 'disability can be denied and mobility can be reinstated through the tenets of reform' (p.150). This 'reform' alludes to both domestic reform possibilities and ideas about Chinese subjectivity and sovereignty. Thus, British activists 'allowed the dual process of unbinding Chinese women's feet and unfettering Chinese international development to be inextricably linked throughout reformist rhetoric, and helped to make claims of free and easy movement' (p.150).

Tong offers a panorama for Tibet's history and its cultural connotations. He mainly focuses on three groups of historic figures or works: George Bogle and Warren Hastings; Thomas Manning and idealisation and the mythologisation of Tibet; James Hilton and his well-known work, *Lost Horizon*. Tong says that between 1774 and 1775, Bogle led the first official mission to Tibet, i.e. earlier than Macartney's embassy. The Bogle mission was a 'fact-finding' mission for 'gathering geographical and ethnographical information about Tibet and the neighbouring nations' (p.171). The success of the Bogle mission encouraged Hastings, the first Governor-General of British India, to contemplate a second diplomatic mission—Samuel Turner led this mission to Tibet in 1783 (p.174). The nineteenth century witnessed an increase in British interest in Tibet, with Younghusband entering the city of Lhasa in 1904. Tong argues that it was in that period 'the question of Tibet as an independent and sovereign state emerged, and its relation with the central government in Peking has remained a controversial issue' (p.176). Tong then turns to Manning, the first and only Englishman who visited Lhasa and met with the ninth Dalai Lama. Manning's trip to Lhasa and description of the Dalai Lama lend 'support to the idealization and mythologization of Tibet' (p.178). Interestingly, Tong also links the spiritualisation of Tibet with the German National Socialist or Nazi Movement (p.181). In the third part of the essay, Tong introduces Hilton and his work *Lost Horizon*, which is a 'crystallization of a utopian Tibet in the creation of Shangri-la' (p.182). Hilton's utopian version of Tibet sees a land of purity, and it is related to his fictional statements on capitalism, modernity and the modern West (p.184). In his concluding part, Tong argues two issues. Firstly, the Dalai Lama in exile has turned Tibet into an international issue, but, an orientalist idiom adopted and promulgated by those Tibetans in exile cannot represent the Tibetans inside Tibet. Secondly, he notes internal racism among Han Chinese towards the Tibetans, which many Han Chinese would not recognise or acknowledge. He sees these two issues as two forms of orientalism.

The comparative studies section consists of three essays: *Elective Affinities? Two Moments of Encounter with Oscar Wilde's Writings* (Longxi Zhang), *Master Zhuang's Wife: Translating the Ephesian Matron in Thomas Percy's The Matrons* (1762) (Eun Kyung Min) and *Urbanisation, Generic Forms, and Early*

Modernity: A Correlative Comparison of Wu Cheng'en and Spenser's Rural-Pastoral Poem (Mingjun Lu).

Zhang bases his essay on his own reading experience and extends it to his readers in a brisk story-telling style. He raises two encounters with Zhuangzi's philosophy in Wilde's writing. One appears in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) and the other in a review Wilde wrote on a translation of Zhuangzi. He states that 'in fact, reading Wilde's review and his presentation of Zhuangzi, one may feel confused whether Wilde is quoting Zhuangzi or he is speaking on his own' (p.161), and he finally reveals that 'there are obviously Wilde's own ideas disguised as the Chinese philosopher's, but surprisingly they show a remarkably accurate grasp of the core ideas of the Daoist philosophy, its argument against the kind of human intervention, as much represented by modern social institutions as by Confucian teachings, in the natural course of things' (p.163). It can be seen that Wilde's protest against British materialism and utilitarianism in the nineteenth century finds echoes in Zhuangzi's rejection of Confucian ethics. As Zhang argues at the end of his essay, 'when we put the different readings and interpretations in perspective, we may realize that the intellectual connections of western modernism with the East are serious and deep' (p.166).

Min's essay also sheds light on Zhuangzi. The focus of her research is Thomas Percy, the first European 'translator' of a full-length Chinese novel, *Hau Kiou Choaan* (好逑传). Min draws on Percy's book *The Matrons* (1762), a collection of six short tales about widows drawn from various historical periods and civilisations around the world. Min compares the piece 'Zhuang Zhou Drums on a Bowl and Attains the Great Dao' (庄子休鼓盆成大道), comparatively with a Roman tale on the Ephesian matron. Min argues that Percy made the resemblance between 'The Chinese Matron' and 'The Ephesian Matron' obvious and accessible in print for a popular readership (p.55).

The final essay of this section is Mingjun Lu's *Urbanisation, Generic Forms, and Early Modernity: A Correlative Comparison of Wu Cheng'en and Spenser's Rural-Pastoral Poem*. At the beginning of the essay, Lu demonstrates her originality by conceptualising early modern Sino-English relations in a

'correlative comparative model' where historically unrelated texts bypass the limitations of comparisons premised upon 'influence, coincidence and causality' (p.11). In comparing Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender* and Wu Cheng'en's pastoral writing, Lu argues the literary register of urbanisation in both Elizabethan England and late Ming China 'correlates' rather than is casually connected. For Lu, the lack of direct contact between the poets of Ming China and Elizabethan England does not mean that the two works are not comparable. Using the work of David Porter, Lu argues that a 'basic commensurability' in these 'two seemingly disparate contexts' (p.16) rests on the alignment of their political histories and on parallels in the realms of social and economic history.

"The Dark Gift: Opium, John Francis Davis, Thomas De Quincey, and the Amherst Embassy to China of 1816" (Peter J. Kitson), along with *The Amherst Embassy in the Shadow of Tambora: Climate and Culture, 1816* (Robert Markley) make up the third part and argue for the importance of the Amherst embassy as well as its crucial significance for British understanding of China and the accounts to which it gave rise. Kitson argues that the narratives of the embassy, in their concerns about the 'kowitz' ritual and the rituals involved in the exchange of gifts, 'mask the material realities of the then vastly expanding and illegal trade in East Indian Opium' (p.8). In analysing the accounts written in 1840 by Thomas De Quincey and John Francis Davis, Kitson shows how the opium trade was crucial that time and how the embassy failed.

Markley's essay discusses the narratives of the embassy in the context of 'eco-criticism' (p.8). Mount Tambora erupted in 1815, and its climatological consequences led to the following year being known as 'the year without a summer'. Few people on the embassy was aware of the eruption and misread the signs of its impact on China as evidence of China's economic and political stagnation. He correlates the interpretation of these signs' with Christian 'typology', for the typology of Noah's flood is usually interpreted as a catastrophic event which marks the displeasure of God with sinful populations and corrupt regimes (p.86). Markley suggests it was the eruption that was responsible for 'colouring in often subtle ways those influential British understandings of China that came to view the Qing polity as corrupt, backward, and insufferably proud' (pp.8-9).

Eugenia Zuroski Jenkins, in her essay “Tea and the Limits of Orientalism in De Quincey’s *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*” discusses the opium trade in the aftermath of the Amherst embassy. Jenkins first traces how tea became a crucial commodity in the formulation of the British national self, and argues that De Quincey’s *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* deploys tea as a frequent topos designed to represent a form of domestic normality, which is similar to opium in China. Jenkins argues these two commodities mirror their ‘convolution in the vexed political economy between Britain and China in the era of the Opium Wars’ (p. 108), and ‘De Quincey’s writing about opium refers us, compulsively, to the figure of tea, which refuses to uphold the abstract opposition of England and China, instead revealing their involved intimacy in the everyday practice of English selfhood’ (p.131).

Colin Mackerras, in his book *Western Images of China*, interpreted Foucault’s ‘Power and Knowledge’ as being in a ‘circular relation’ (p.9). It can be seen that ‘power’ influences ‘opinions’ and ‘opinions’ heavily rely on the goal which ‘power’ wants to achieve. That foot-binding was chosen as a rallying cry to promote reforms for women the UK, that environmental conditions following a natural disaster were used to characterise Chinese stagnation, that Wilde took advantage of Zhuangzi’s ideas to criticise contemporary British society and that the Amherst embassy presented a negative China to cover up its diplomatic failure and justify the trade in opium can all be seen as ‘discourse means’ paving the road for the ‘ends’. These accounts strongly reflect the policies to be adopted towards China at that time. The ‘chemical reactions’ these articles could undergo when ‘mixed’ together seem to be unnoticed. If there were an overall theoretical framework, serving as a catalyst, such as the ‘Power and Knowledge’ concept, these eight articles could be more cohesively presented. The cohesion between essays could also be increased by linking them more thematically: as both Min’s and Zhang’s connect Zhuangzi with a British scholar, they could be put under one theme. However, all in all, this book extends our existing understanding of late Qing studies in new and exciting directions, and repays reading.

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