



Friends of East Asia

Newsletter of the Bishop White Committee

Spring 2024

Message from the Co-Chairs

Liz Mitchell

The Bishop White Committee is in the second year of its new procedure for granting annual financial support of up to \$25,000 to curators working with the East Asian collections of Japan, China and Korea. Five exciting and wide-ranging applications have been received, requesting assistance with the conservation of objects in the collection, the cataloguing of a long-neglected collection and the assessment of a newly acquired collection by an external expert. The Committee will evaluate the applications and make grants at the Executive meeting in March. They are in addition to the Committee's annual support of the Bishop White Committee Library of East Asia and the annual Doris Dohrenwend Summer Internship.

Also in its second year is our event to celebrate Asian month and to raise money to support our activities. On May 6, we will continue the successful model of last year with two speakers followed by a wine reception and viewing of artifacts. The topic is the Imperial collection of the Forbidden City and Chen Shen, Co-deputy Director, will refresh our memories of the spectacular ROM exhibition he curated in 2014. The second speaker is Adam Brookes, author of *Fragile Cargo*, who will illuminate the courage and dedication of the collection's curators as they scramble to save it from the invading Japanese army in the 1930s. This will be a fascinating evening, so watch for ticket sales.

On a sombre note, I want to acknowledge the exceptional contributions to the Committee by Chris Twigge-Molecey who passed away suddenly earlier this year. Almost to the end, Chris was very active, leading Run for the ROM, which raised thousands of dollars, and the Adopt-a-Journal program. As well he was instrumental in

developing a positive relationship with the Korean community. We will miss his energy and ideas as well as his warm and engaging personality.

Event: Fragile Cargo: An evening of art, drama and valour

The treasures of China's Forbidden City are the focus of this special event. Dr. Chen Shen, ROM's Co-Chief Curator of Art and Culture, will refresh our memories of his spectacular 2014 exhibition. Then Adam Brookes, best selling author of *Fragile Cargo*, will tell the 1930s story of the courage and determination of its curators as they scrambled to safeguard it ahead of the invading Japanese army. A wine reception will follow.



Figure 1: Yellow glazed Ming Imperial Bowl with Wan-Li mark and period 1573-1620, 2013.43.1 © ROM.



Figure 2: Jingdezhen ware bowl Qing dynasty Tongzhi period 995.146.7 © ROM.

Speakers:

Dr. Chen Shen, Co-Chief Curator, Art and Culture; Senior Curator, China ROM

Adam Brookes, author of "*Fragile Cargo: The World War II Race to Save the Treasures of China's Forbidden City.*" (Simon & Schuster)



Figure 3: Dr. Chen Shen, Co-Chief Curator, Art and Culture, Senior Curator China © ROM.



Figure 4: Adam Brookes, author of *Fragile Cargo: The World War II Race to Save the Treasures of China's Forbidden City* © Sam Kittner.

Date: Monday, May 6, 2024

Time: 6:30 – 9:30 pm

Royal Ontario Museum, Entrance: Queen's Park, Crescent doors

Cost: \$30 ROM members, \$35 public

The Lectures will be followed by a wine reception with Asian-inspired refreshments. Click here to book your [tickets to this event](#) on the ROM website.

A Memo to all our Readers:

Subject: Change in editorship of Friends of East Asia Newsletter.

Hello!

This is an open letter to all members of the Bishop White Committee to announce some changes in the editorship and format of our newsletter. Having made the decision to cease printing the newsletter, this is in fact our second issue to be available in digitized format. Your new team of co-editors will be executive members James Thompson and Jane Liu. The final paper edition was the work of our dynamic duo Ilze Skuja as editor and Marina Fedak as designer. Fifteen years ago, Ilze and Marina raised the Friends of East Asia newsletter to a very high standard, to feature great articles of informative and educational value. Ilze is on the executive and Marina came to us while working at a downtown law firm to help build the Friends of East Asia newsletter. We want to take this opportunity to thank them for the many hours they put into this newsletter ensuring it is informative, scintillating and reflects the Bishop White Committee and the efforts of the Friends of East Asia.

Building on the success of the newsletter, we have made some changes. You can expect to see articles arranged in distinguishing columns of contributions. The new titles include names such as Curator's Corner, and From the Committee. You can also expect to see book reviews under a new column, Book Corner. These titles will help to distinguish articles written by ROM staff from Bishop White Committee members sharing their knowledge.

In this issue, we open with the Bishop White co-chair's executive report and executive member Mary Boyd's announcement of the exciting social and lecture evening planned for May. What follows are two articles in the Curator's Corner column. Japan collection curator Akiko Takesue has contributed an article on the Japanese netsuke collection at ROM while our Korean collection curator Vicky Kwon has updated us on the conserved Jade Emperor painting which will soon be on display. Appearing under the column From

the Committee, co-editor Jane Liu has submitted two interesting articles: an article on dolls of the Song Dynasty and also an interview with contemporary artist Wu Lan-Chiann on her works currently on display, Heaven and Earth. Also appearing is an article by Marion Ho on her experience viewing pieces from ROM's Japan collection on her recent trip to China. There is a Book Corner special article submitted by Rebecca Robinson telling us about global antiquities. We have also included an appreciation on the great work of Dixie Anne Montgomery, a long-time volunteer at ROM and former Chair of the Bishop White Committee Executive.

Stay tuned for our next issue. We welcome submissions.

Respectfully submitted, James Thompson and Jane Liu.

Curator's Corner

ROM's netsuke collection and the history of netsuke

Akiko Takesue, Bishop White Committee Associate Curator of Japanese Art & Culture

The total number of netsuke in ROM's Japanese collection counts 140, made of various materials including wood, ivory, ebony, walnut shell, rhinoceros horn, bamboo, walrus ivory, coral, and gourd. They were acquired from 1909 to 2002, with 77% of them entering the ROM collection before 1945. They were either donated or purchased, the first 108 netsuke were purchased from S. M. Franck, Co. in 1909.



Figure 5: Recumbent camel, Nakamura Masatoshi. Rhinoceros horn 1975, 3.2x5x2.7cm, 996.49.1 © ROM.

This is the only contemporary netsuke in the collection, made of rare material of rhinoceros horn. Nakamura Masatoshi (1915-2001) was called the last netsuke maker in the Edo period style, known for his traditional methods of making netsuke.



Figure 6: Twelve calendrical animals, Kaigyokusai Masatsugu. Carved ivory Edo/Meiji period ca. 1840-1892. 2.1x8x6.1cm 989.24.3 © ROM.



Figure 7: Bottom of 989.24.3 with Masatsugu artisan's first name © ROM.

Kaigyokusai Masatsugu (1813-1892) was better known outside Japan, because he was active during the transitional time from the Edo to the Meiji period, when netsuke makers began relying on foreign markets. A great proportion of Kaigyokusai's netsuke were collected outside Japan, rather than in Japan. Here, his exceptional carving skills can be seen in this complex piece.



Figure 8: Netsuke of shishi lion head with moveable jaw, wood, early 17th-mid 19th century. 3.3x3.7x4.8cm. 909.21.16 © ROM.

While this shishi lion head with a movable jaw is not uncommon, you can see the incredible skill of the makers to put a movable part within a tiny netsuke. In the appreciation of wood netsuke, patina from long-time touching is an essential element.

Netsuke can be appreciated individually, as well as within the entirety of a set of netsuke, ojime, and intro. The coordination of the three components would show off the wearer's good taste, and the intro set was the essential fashion item for men in the Edo period.

ROM has 70 inro, some of which are preserved as original sets. As seen in the following examples, some inro and netsuke are unified with one subject.



Figure 9: Inro from set with ojime and netsuke of a stallion, made by Tomotada (act 18th century). Maki-e lacquer on a silk chord with bronze ojime and netsuke. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Gustin through the Ontario Heritage Foundation. 989.24.26.1-3 © ROM.



Figure 10: Inro and netsuke of tiger, Ivory, Late Edo period, 1.8x7.3x7.2cm. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Gustin through the Ontario Heritage Foundation. 989.24.27.1-3 © ROM.

Interestingly, netsuke is better known outside of Japan. It is partly because netsuke have not been included in the narrative of Japanese art history, developed and taught in Japan since the Meiji period (1868-1912). As well, the Western influence on the production and circulation of netsuke has yet to be examined from a critical point of view.

In the Meiji period, the production of netsuke significantly declined as the Japanese way of dressing changed from kimono to the Western style. While netsuke continued to be produced, it was no longer for use in Japan but mainly for export. Thus, the style of netsuke shifted to meet foreigners' tastes. And among the Japanese, this shift was seen negatively as "good netsuke no longer exists."

The description of netsuke gradually disappeared from Japanese art history during the course of the Meiji period for 4 reasons: I) the definitions of "art" and "sculpture" shifted, and sculpture started focusing only on large, Buddhist statues; II) bijutsu, or art became increasingly associated with exhibitions, but netsuke were considered too small for exhibitions; III) kogeï, or craftworks, were categorized by material, but netsuke that used diverse materials could not be categorized within one genre of kogeï; and IV) the long-

established foreign market since the mid-19th century fixed the idea of netsuke as “commercial art.”

The emergence of okimono or ornamental object d’art, which became a popular export item in the Meiji period, had an impact on netsuke. Japanese ivory carvers found okimono a new source of creative expression, and netsuke was placed as the origin of okimono—a thing of the past. From around the 1910s-20s, however, export of okimono gradually declined, as did the status of netsuke as the predecessor of ivory carving.

Then, what happened to netsuke outside Japan? Netsuke was known in the West from around 1860s. The Paris Exposition in 1867 first triggered the popularity of netsuke in Europe, which can be seen in Louis Gonse’s *L’art japonais*, vol. 2 published in 1883, as “for all their tiny dimensions, some wooden netsuke belong to the ‘great arts’.” (translation is mine) The established ideas about netsuke in the West around 1900 were: they are quintessentially “Japanese”; old ones are good but rare, while new ones are bad; and the status of netsuke was considered higher in value than okimono.

After the 1920s, the popularity of netsuke as collectable increased in the West. As a result, many publications were written in non-Japanese, often by dealer-scholars. Many netsuke sold in the Western market rarely returned to Japan. That means they were circulating within the West. This resulted in establishing the value standard for netsuke within the Western market.

The Western impact on netsuke was felt on the production side too. Netsuke makers had to rely on foreign market after the Meiji period, as well as after WWII. This does not necessarily mean the impact was negative—for the makers, the foreign market saved them with increasing price and patrons. Furthermore, the idea of “contemporary netsuke” was triggered by Mr. and Mrs. Kinsey in 1975.

This resulted in the transformation of the netsuke industry: netsuke makers began considering themselves as “artists”; the entire production process is undertaken by a single person, rather than in a studio setting. The apprenticeship system or secret teachings (*hi-den*) declined; a more diverse background of makers including non-Japanese began making netsuke, using more diverse materials.

The new genre of contemporary netsuke has gained international recognition thanks to the involvement of foreign patrons, collectors, and markets. And just like ukiyo-e prints, the recognition and appreciation of netsuke in Japan have increased thanks to the attention from abroad. The traveling exhibition of contemporary netsuke at the Japan Foundation, Toronto, in 2023 attests Japan’s changing attitude towards this form of art.

Still, if I am allowed to be critical about this situation, I would like to pose the following questions:

First, the prevailing taste and evaluation criteria are heavily influenced by non-Japanese, while netsuke are popular as “quintessentially Japanese.” I wonder what exactly does “Japanese-ness” mean in this context?

Secondly, can netsuke be considered “true netsuke” if they were never intended for use? Contemporary netsuke are expected to follow the conventional conditions for usage, but they will likely never be used or touched as “works of art.” Interestingly today, museums are collecting old netsuke but sometimes hesitate to collect contemporary netsuke as they are not considered as “true netsuke.” While Meiji ivory carvers deprived functionality of netsuke to make it as “works of art,” today those without functionality are not considered “true netsuke” or “works of art” to be acquired by museums. Quite paradoxical!

But according to the catalogue of the Japan Foundation Toronto exhibition, netsuke are described as “contradictory objects” (JF booklet for Contemporary Netsuke Exhibition, p.63). Furthermore, they are “easy to understand yet profound,” “old and new at the same time,” and “free because it has restrictions.” Perhaps this sense of contradiction may be one of the characteristics and charm of netsuke, and why we are all fascinated by the world of these miniature carvings.

Great Jade Emperor and Conservation Effort at ROM

Vicki Kwon, Associate Curator of Korean Art and Culture

Please note: References used in this article are available on page 23.



Figure 11 & 12: Great Jade Emperor 옥황상제도, about 1910s, Ink and colour on silk, Artist once know. 999.33.17. Donated by George J. M. Gale in memory of his father, the Reverend James S. Gale, Canadian Presbyterian missionary in Korean 1888-1927. Certified by the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board under the terms of the Cultural Property Export and Import Act. (Left): Before conservation, (Right) After conservation. Images by the Jungjae Conservation Centre © ROM.

The Jade Emperor (Okhwang Sangje in Korean) is believed in Korea to be the god of supreme authority who controls the birth, death, lifespan, and fortune of all human and nonhuman beings. Originating from the Chinese Daoist god, the Jade Emperor originated in Korea from the time of the Goryeo Dynasty (918-1392). Koreans believed that if you do good deeds then you live a long life, but if you behave badly, you will suffer a shorter lifespan. This belief lasted throughout the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910).

Folklore and literature relating to the Jade Emperor inspired people to lead a righteous life under his watchful eyes. A Korean folk tradition related to the Jade Emperor is samsi and sukyeongshin. The tradition is based on the belief that every 60th night (six times a year), a bug living in one's body called samsi escapes from the body and reports one's bad deeds to the Jade Emperor to cut one's lifespan. Sukyeongshin is a custom of staying up all night preventing the bug from appearing before the Jade Emperor, so that

one can live a long life. Literature relating to the Jade Emperor circulated in the 17th and 18th centuries encouraged people to conduct good deeds in their daily activities.

In this painting, the Jade Emperor is depicted in a saffron robe and flat-topped ceremonial hat indicating high social status. Sitting in a firm frontal pose, his eyes are directly gazing at us, reminding us of our destiny determined by daily behaviors.

This painting was obtained by Reverend James S. Gale, Canadian Presbyterian missionary who stayed in Korea from 1886 to 1927. It was donated to ROM by his son George J. M. Gale in 1999, along with two Korean god paintings, Byeolsang (a military god) and Yongshin (a dragon god). The three paintings are presumed to be hung at a shamanist shrine for rituals in Korea during the early period of the Japanese occupation of Korea (1910-1945). Called mushindo (Korean shamanist god paintings), these paintings came to ROM heavily damaged. This Jade Emperor painting was divided into two pieces. Hugh Wylie, the then curator who oversaw ROM's Korean collection, recognized the importance of these paintings in Korean art and cultural heritage and decided to take them in to keep them safe.

In 2016, the three mushindo paintings, including this Great Jade Emperor, and a Tiger painting travelled to Korea for conservation. They received preservation treatment at the Jungjae Conservation Centre in Seoul, Republic of Korea, under supervision of Dr. Chi-sun Park, the conservation specialist of traditional Korean screen and scroll paintings. The paintings were carefully unrolled, cleaned, repaired, and remounted, using traditional Korean techniques and materials. This conservation was made possible by the support of the Overseas Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation.

The Great Jade Emperor painting will be displayed in the Gallery of Korea from April to September 2024, along with objects relating to Joseon art and fashion.

From the Committee

Clay Dolls in the Song Dynasty (960-1279 CE) and Beyond

Jane Liu, BWC executive member



Figure 13: Display case in the China galleries at the ROM © Jane Liu.

While browsing the ROM China gallery I was attracted to a display case titled Song Daily Life. A number of clay dolls were on display ranging from inches to a foot tall; some holding toys in their hands (#8, #9), while some were shown to be swaddling babies (#11, #12). I was immediately curious. What functions did they serve, other than as toys?

July 7 (“Double seven”) on the lunar calendar is called Qixi, also called Chinese Valentine’s Day, which celebrates the reunion of Zhinu the weaver and Niulang the cowherd in Chinese mythology. Young ladies celebrated the day to improve their domestic skills and prayed for fulfilling marriages. A week before Qixi, these women would prepare objects for the celebration, with clay dolls being the staple. The most popular style depicts a boy holding a lotus leaf in his hand and was given the unusual name of Mohele. The sample at ROM (921.21.325.1) is typical of the Mohele dolls of the Song Dynasty, depicting a boy with stylized hair sitting on a drum pier.



Figure 14: Boy with a lotus leaf seated on a drum
Jin dynasty, 6.9x4.9x3.8 cm 921.21.325.1 © ROM.

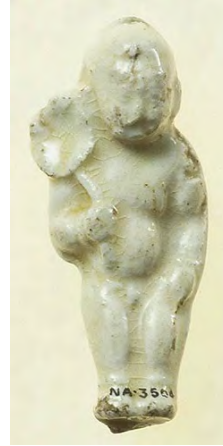


Figure 15: Figure of a boy with a lotus leaf,
Northern Song-Jin Dynasty, 6.4x2.7x1.7 cm.
918.21.822 © ROM.

The genderizing of dolls was not common until the Northern and Southern Dynasties (220-420 CE) and it was not until the Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE), that a doll showing a child holding lotus appeared, which could relate to Songzi Guanyin (the fertility Guanyin). A baby holding a lotus leaf was soon used around Qixi festival and symbolized liangzi, signifying “having children one after another.”

The term Mohele could have been adapted from the Hindu protector deity, Mahakala or Rahula, the earthly son of Buddha.



Figure 16: Tibetan painting of Mahakala © Mike Chen.



Figure 17: Sakyamuni and Rahula, cave 133 Maiji
Mount Grottoes Gansu China, © Maijishan
Institut.

This Tibetan painting of Mahakala shows him as a black-skinned, four-armed, three-eyed god, with a furious expression, wearing a headdress composed of five skulls. Quite a contrast to the playful Mohele dolls.

Conversely, Rahula's statue in cave 133 of the Maiji Mount Grottoes in Gansu, China, depicts a child with joined palms standing on a lotus flower while Sakyamuni watches over him.

The popularity of Mohele dolls at Qixi is closely linked with the desire for more children. After the unification of the fractious clans of China, the Song Dynasty experienced unparalleled growth, which put it in contact with multiple ambitious nations like the Liao, Western Xia, Jin and, ultimately, the Yuan Dynasty of Genghis Khan fame. A hundred years of wars depleted the young men of the nation and farmland laid fallow without enough workers.

In the end, when the Song regime finally fell to the Mongols in 1271, most folk cultures, including the practice of Mohele worship at Qixi festivals were banned. It was at that point that the clay figures we see were relegated to mere playthings.

The Splendour of The Changing Seasons

Marion Ho, BWC executive member

When I first mentioned to Dr. Chen Shen that I was going to Chengdu, China in the fall of 2023, he encouraged me to visit the Chengdu Museum New Hall because it has significant pieces from our ROM Japanese collections on display. Objects sent to Chengdu were selected by Akiko Takesue for "The Splendour of The Changing Seasons" exhibition



Figure 18: Exhibition title panel © Marion Ho.



Figure 19: (L-R) Doris, Marion and exhibition docent © Marion Ho.

I was awed by the serenity and peacefulness upon entering the dimly lit path that descends into the exhibition hall. These highlights from our Japan collection, once clustered in our display cabinets, were now arranged aesthetically into three distinct categories: the captivating, spiritual world of Taoism through tea ceremony wares; a brilliant display of maki-e lacquer craftsmanship; and finally, the worldly life in ukiyo-e. The beauty of the craftsmanship that went into their making during the Edo Period was enthralling. It truly evoked a strong emotional response.



Figure 20: Noh masks © Marion Ho.

At this time, Japan was under the rule of the Tokugawa shogunate. The stability of the feudal system allowed the Japanese economy and commerce to develop steadily. National and regional literary and artistic forms gradually evolved and were perfected during this period, laying the cultural foundation for later generations in Kabuki, ukiyo-e art, lacquerware, joruri, the tea ceremony, the incense ceremony and haiku.



Figure 21: Koto with 13 strings © Marion Ho.



Figure 22: Chawan tea bowl © Marion Ho.

At the same time, a series of bans were proclaimed, restricting foreign exchanges, isolating the country for 260 years, and conducting limited trade mainly with the Netherlands and China.

Heaven and Earth: In Conversation with Artist Wu Lan-Chiann

Jane Liu, BWC executive member



Figure 23: A visitor scrutinizes the dragon © Jane Liu.



Figure 24: A visitor scrutinizes the dragon © Jane Liu.

Heaven and Earth is comprised of a large pair of ink paintings by artist Wu Lan-Chiann which are currently on display in the China galleries at ROM.

Ms. Wu was born in Taiwan and now lives in Los Angeles, California. It was my honor and pleasure to be able to speak with her after the ROM's Curator Conversation webinar which unveiled the paintings on February 13, 2024.

Q 1: In your [press] statement you mentioned "to paint a dragon, there should be three sections and nine likenesses. How did you prepare the images of your dragons in Heaven and Earth, did you do some preparatory studies, how and where?"

A: When I began exploring the idea for the paintings, I was particularly intrigued by a stunning red lacquer box (Qing dynasty, Qianlong period) in ROM's collection decorated with dragon motifs. I also researched paintings at the National Palace Museum in Taipei and traveled to Beigang in the southern part of Taiwan to see the dragon columns of the famous Chaotian Temple. And I studied the paintings by the famous southern Song Dynasty painter Chen Rong in the collection of the Museum of Fine Art in Boston.

There was another Song Dynasty painter, Dong Yu, who wrote an analysis about painting dragons. He said” “To paint a dragon, there should be three sections and nine likenesses.” The three sections of a dragon are:1) head to neck, 2) neck to belly and, 3) belly to tail. The nine likenesses combined form traditional dragon images. He also said that “Dragons have antlers like a deer, a head like a cow, eyes like a shrimp, a mouth like a donkey, a belly like a snake, scales like a fish, feet like a phoenix, whiskers (vibrissae) like a human, and ears like an elephant.”

With Dong Yu’s analysis of dragons, together with what I had seen in museum collections and with the Temple carvings in mind, I began sketching ‘dragon parts ’at zoos in reptile houses, aviaries, and in aquaria. As a next step, I expanded on my research notes and sketches and began composing Heaven and Earth.

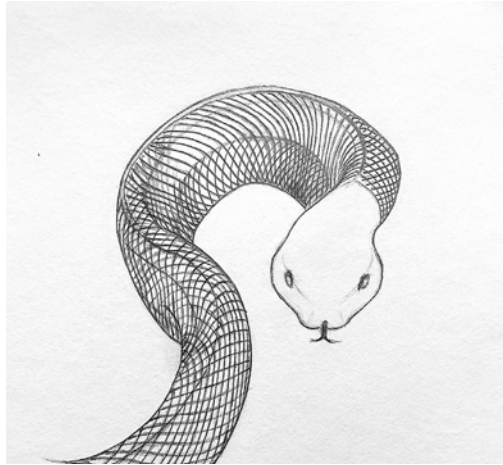


Figure 25: Snake pencil sketch © Wu Lan-Chiann.

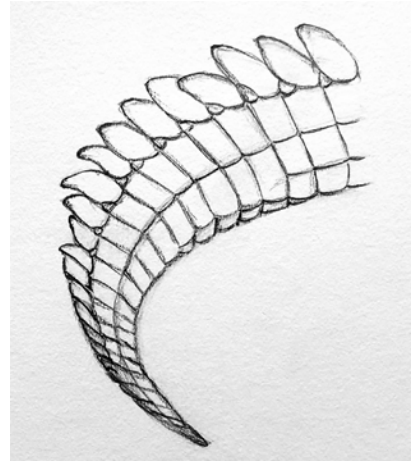


Figure 26: Scales pencil sketch © Wu Lan-Chiann.

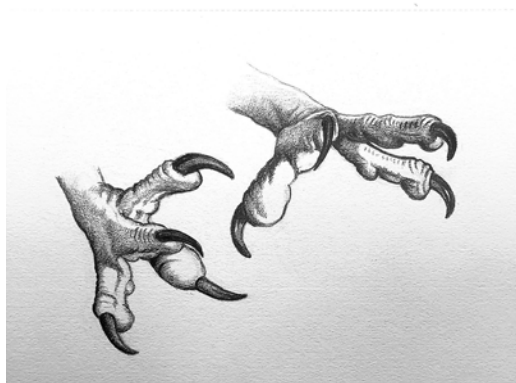


Figure 27: Claws pencil sketch © Wu Lan-Chiann.



Figure 28: Claws pencil sketch © Wu Lan-Chiann.



Figure 29: Dragon head study © Wu Lan-Chiann.



Figure 30: Dragon horn study © Wu Lan-Chiann.

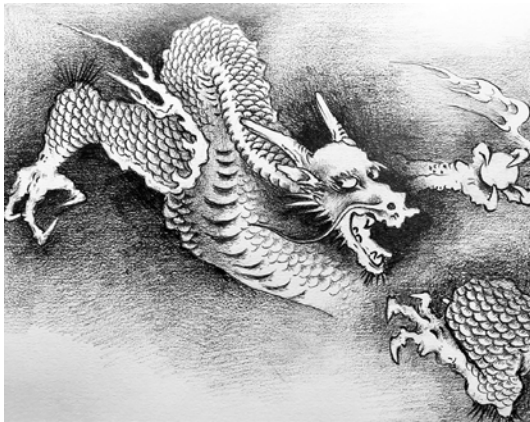


Figure 31: Chen Rong study © Wu Lan-Chiann.

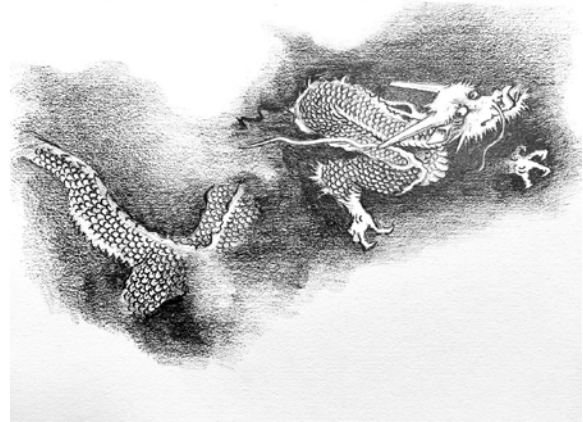


Figure 32: Chen Rong study © Wu Lan-Chiann.

Q 2: You identify as a contemporary ink artist, having your own unique style by combining traditional Chinese ink style with contemporary materials and techniques. Can you explain some of the brush techniques you used to create different textures?

A: I value Chinese painting's two main techniques, which are 1) fast, freehand brushwork and 2) slow, meticulous brushwork. Each style or technique allows me to express what I seek to convey in my work. I combine both styles throughout most of my paintings, and I use traditional Chinese paper, ink, and colours.

The quality of brushwork is one of the defining elements in Chinese ink painting. Therefore, good hand-made brushes are necessary for ink painters. These brushes can be made from a wide variety of animal hair. They fall into three basic categories: soft-hair brushes (such as goat or sheep hair) used for colouring and washes; hard-hair brushes (such as horsehair) used for creating strong strokes; and a mixture of the two, with a hard core and a softer outside, used for creating fluent strokes. I used these three types of brushes in Heaven and Earth.

The expression of white clouds in the traditional Chinese painting is often achieved by leaving parts of the paper unpainted. In Heaven and Earth, I left the white parts in the

clouds as blank paper and used horsehair brushes for creating the darker passages in the sky.

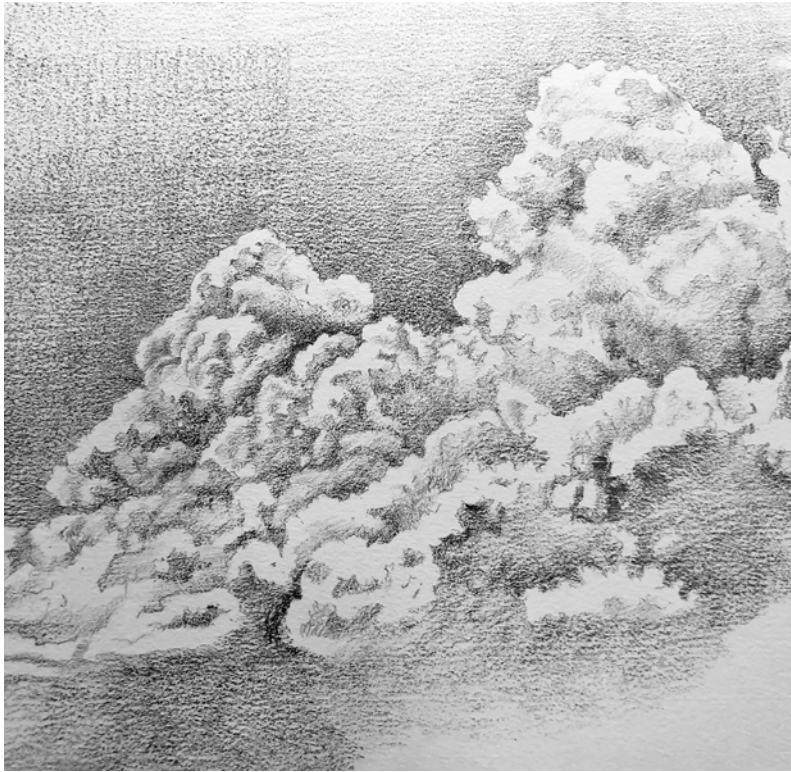


Figure 33: Cloud study © Wu Lan-Chiann.

Q 3: Other than black ink, shades of red colours are also visible in Heaven and Earth. Can you tell us what kind of colours you are using? How did you paint the different tones of red colours?

A: The traditional colours used in Chinese ink painting are made from mineral and plant-based pigments. The main mineral pigments are cinnabar, red ochre, carmine, azurite blue, malachite green and clamshell white. I use these colors in my paintings, together with the insect-based color carmine and the plant-based pigments gamboge and indigo.

However, I used very little colours in Heaven and Earth such as in the flames around the dragons's bodies. I created the different tonalities of red by only using cinnabar. When I mix deer glue (a binding medium used in ink painting) with cinnabar, it naturally separates into two shades; a lighter color with an orange tint, and a darker full-bodied red. I applied these colours in very thin layers around the dragon bodies.

The materials I select, and the techniques that I use are critical for establishing the right atmosphere in my work.



Figure 34: Brushes in ebony brush pot © Wu Lan-Chiann.



Figure 35: Colors in small ceramic containers © Wu Lan-Chiann.

Book Corner

Author Rebecca Robinson explains the study of Global Antiquities



Figure 35: Rebecca Robinson © Rebecca Robinson.

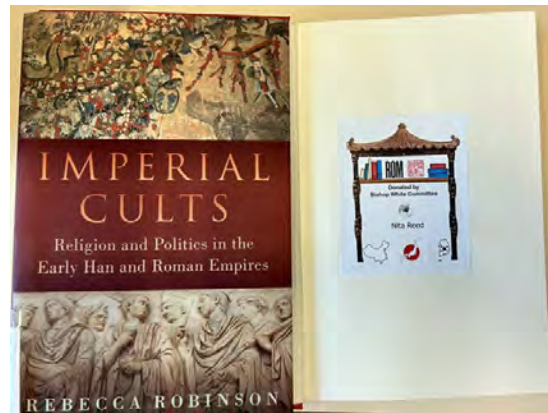


Figure 36: Book cover and bookplate © Jane Liu.

Imperial Cults: Religion and Politics in the early Han and Roman Empires is my first monograph, based on my doctoral dissertation, which I completed at McGill University in 2017. The book has recently been included in the ROM library, thanks to a donation from Nita Reed, and I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce both the book and the field of global antiquities.

Global Antiquities has recently become a popular field of academic study. So far, the field generally compares the major ancient civilizations of East and West: China, Greece, and Rome, though I expect that in the coming years the geographical scope will expand. In studying ancient civilizations together, scholars seek to understand larger themes and processes in the development of these early societies that have been so foundational to our own. In so doing, we hope to bring the ancient societies into conversation with each other, and to appreciate the richness of the global ancient past.

Imperial Cults looks at the role of religion, or, more specifically, religious institutions, in shaping imperial identity in early China and Rome. The book compares the reigns of Emperor Wu (r. 141-87 BCE) of the Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) and Augustus (r. 27 BCE–14 CE) of Rome; the period during which imperial authority was consolidated and articulated, shaping both the Han and Roman empires to come. Through a comparison of the reforms each ruler made to his state's religious institutions, I show how these religious reforms were an important part of the consolidation of imperial authority. Both rulers incorporated new men into the ranks of religious experts, created or revived important sacrifices of state, and placed themselves at the centre of all religious activity. The book shows that in both early China and Rome, much as today, religion was always political.

During this process, both rulers initiated spectacular celebrations, that would usher in a golden age for their state and cement their place in history for their ability to preside over it. These, the *ludi saeculares* (secular games) in Rome and the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices in the Han, were once in a lifetime events. In Rome, the population was invited to days of feasting, sacrifices, and games. In the Han, the sacrifices were a much more private affair, but they were still celebrated by VIPs with music, performances, and the display of exotic animals. These celebrations proclaimed the glory of the rulers to man and gods alike, demonstrating their personal authority and the era of peace and prosperity that they had created.

Rebecca Robinson is an Assistant Professor with the Department of History at Hong Kong Baptist University. Her research is in the field of global antiquities, comparing early China with the ancient Mediterranean states. Her first book *Imperial Cults: Religion and Politics in the early Han and Roman Empires* was published by Oxford University Press in 2023.

Appreciation: Dixie Anne Montgomery

James Thompson, BWC executive member



Figure 37: Dixie Anne Montgomery © Beth Montgomery.

Dixie Anne Montgomery: Affable. Gracious. A mentor. In her many years as a professional volunteer, Dixie Anne Montgomery has been a great contributor to ROM and the Bishop White Committee. There are many other causes as well, culminating in her role as Chair of the Board at Women's College Hospital. With a career spanning 52 years at ROM, the Bishop White Committee has benefited from her organization skills and leadership.

The Bishop White Committee was already 11 years old when Dixie Anne arrived to start her voluntary contribution. She was drawn to the museum for, as she described it, the "constant learning." Arriving in 1971, through the Members' Volunteer Committee, she became fascinated with ROM. Dixie Anne has contributed to many areas starting as a docent in Canadiana, then on to the European galleries. It was finally the East Asian Galleries and collection that she wanted to concentrate on most. In late summer, 1974, the Chinese Exhibition of archaeological finds of the People's Republic of China arrived, and Dixie Anne was one of the docents involved. Such "fascinating days" as Dixie Anne remembers vividly running from the dining room table of her house, leaving her family to finish dessert, to get to the museum for a 7:30 evening tour.

One year later Dixie Anne was in Kyoto at a cocktail party given for the 18 ROM volunteers to China who were en route home. Along with Jane Jeffrey and others, she was in Japan when the famous telegram from Toronto arrived from Louise Stone, with the invitation to join the Bishop White Committee. Dixie Anne did so much and learned so much from the experience of being on Bishop White. She was very good at assuming great levels of responsibility if not simultaneously but in succession. Dixie Anne was chair of the Members' Volunteer Committee in 1979-80. With the benefit of that chairing experience, good things happened when Dixie Anne became Chair of Bishop White from 1997-1999. She remembered what a thrill it was when Mrs. Stone was planning her

donation that would amaze everyone. The gift Mrs. Stone made was through the Bishop White Committee.

Dixie Anne went on to be Collections Committee Chair and later first Chair of the Institute of Contemporary Culture while serving on the Board of Trustees from 1989 to 1995. There was no greater honour than in May 2017 when Dixie Anne received the Lieutenant Governor's Distinguished Service Award. With that, she is proud to be an Honorary Governor, celebrating 52 years at ROM. The museum and the Bishop White Committee is all the better for her time and years of service. Thank you, Dixie Anne!

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Please consider joining our committee!

[Bishop White Committee: Friends of East Asia](#) website.

Friends of East Asia

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Figure 38: Seal of the FEA.



Figure 39: Seal of the BWC.