

**PAPERS OF THE SCHOOL OF
ANTIQUITY UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION SERIES, EARLY
CHINESE PAINTING, NUMBER
FIVE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649232567

Papers of the School of Antiquity University Extension series, Early Chinese Painting, number five by William E. Gates

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

WILLIAM E. GATES

**PAPERS OF THE SCHOOL OF
ANTIQUITY UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION SERIES, EARLY
CHINESE
PAINTING, NUMBER FIVE**

PAMPHLET

RECEIVED

OCT 2 5 1917

LIBRARY OF THE
PEABODY MUSEUM

PAPERS
OF THE
SCHOOL OF ANTIQUITY

UNIVERSITY EXTENSION SERIES

NUMBER FIVE

■ ■ ■

EARLY CHINESE PAINTING

BY

WILLIAM E. GATES

PROFESSOR OF AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY AND LINGUISTICS
SCHOOL OF ANTIQUITY, POINT LOMA, CALIFORNIA

■ ■ ■

POINT LOMA
THE ARYAN THEOSOPHICAL PRESS
JANUARY 1916

L. Soc. 120. CF. 9.3.1
Gift of Charles P. Rownditch.
Dec. 25, 1917

THE SCHOOL OF ANTIQUITY shall be an Institution where the laws of universal nature and equity governing the physical, mental, moral and spiritual education will be taught on the broadest lines. Through this teaching the material and intellectual life of the age will be spiritualised and raised to its true dignity; thought will be liberated from the slavery of the senses; the waning energy in every heart will be reanimated in the search for truth; and the fast dying hope in the promise of life will be renewed to all peoples.

—From the *School of Antiquity Constitution*.
New York, 1897

EARLY CHINESE PAINTING



IN approaching any subject lying close to the heart of a race far removed from us in history, conventions and philosophy, and yet deeply conscious and creative within itself, all of which is more true of China than any other people we can name, we undertake to encounter and then to enter into fundamental differences of technique and purpose. These differences of externals and of methods are so very marked that we shall surely fail unless we begin with all the sympathetic and catholic spirit we can command; we must set out to look first for the *likenesses*, and not permit our attention or vision to be distracted by the curiosity of the differences.

Of no human subject is all this more true than of Art, that subject of a myriad definitions, all true from some point of view, none complete — that most intimate work of man whereby he ever seeks to create and translate his inner spiritual vision, at its highest formless and soundless, and almost timeless, into some visible material and speaking picture on earth.

From a dozen points of view, Art becomes an equilibrium of contending dualities. And in this subject above all we must seek the point of unity. However various the aspects of its expression, there is ever a something constant in human thought that keeps it one with itself in all climes. Nature, Art, Civilization are, each one, a unity always. Under many vestments, imposed by historic periods or by

different civilizations, the heart of man, the intimate home of his spirit, ever works out the same issues; the differences are all but accidents. Arts, civilizations, languages, natures, grow old; forms change, are outgrown, re-created, and re-born; but Nature, Civilization, Language, Art, are dowered with eternal youth, as they externalize and eternalize themselves in this equilibrium of contending or blending and co-operating dualities. When Art holds its true course and purpose, it awakes in the soul those higher emotions which neither time nor culture has ever greatly transformed.

The essence of Chinese art and technique is above all to be found in its early landscape paintings; there did the Chinese philosophers and artists, who have through all her periods of greatness been the real teachers and leaders of the people, put their understanding of the great Nature in whose heart and company they lived and kept their inspiration. And it is directly here that all the differences of externals and of methods, by the side of ours, are most marked. But their cause lies so much in the deeper differences of purpose and of inner vision, that they cannot be appreciated, much less judged, apart from an understanding of these latter.

It is natural that very marked differences of technique will exist as a result of the use of different materials and tools: the ground, whether stone, wood, plaster, paper, linen, canvas, or silk; the colors, mineral, vegetable, oil, fresco, pastel, water-color, ink and monochrome; the Western or the Oriental brush, the pencil, the pen. These and many others will inevitably develop great variance of handling and method, and will even, by their special adaptability to this or that, stimulate or subordinate entire schools of artistic expression. To enter into a study of Chinese painting by taking up these technical elements through which it is brought into being, would go far beyond an evening's talk; it would require whole volumes to do the matter any fair justice. The slightest possible reference to these subjects can therefore be permitted us; we must only remember that their influence is ever-present; they control the syntax of the expression. That they certainly do; but at the same time they do not hamper the expression itself, or restrict the thought and ideas behind, in the very least. Good English grammar is not good Greek; but the Greek sentence and the English are each the vehicle of the master's thought.

Two differences of technique must however be studied and *understood* before we can even begin to look with true appreciation at



THE INSTRUCTRESS OF THE PALACE — FOURTH CENTURY. PART OF
THE KU K'AI-CHIH ROLL IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Lomaland Photo. & Engraving Dept.

THE EMPEROR MING HUANG INSTRUCTING HIS SON — PAINTED BY
THE EMPEROR HUEI TSONG, ELEVENTH CENTURY



Limited Photo. & Engraving Dept.

TWO SECTIONS OF A LANDSCAPE ROLL BY CHAO MENG-FU — THIRTEENTH CENTURY

Chinese painting. One is the much mentioned and little understood matter of the perspective, and the other that of the composition. These two points are closely interwoven, both find the origin and explanation partly in historical questions of the utensils and tools, the origins of art (so far as our present data go back), and also in the position in society of the philosopher-artist-statesman (rearrange those in any order), as well as very much indeed in the philosophy of nature and the relation in which men saw and thought of themselves, in and to the great whole. One very important and influential element in the development both of the perspective and the composition was the final *shape* of the painting, done on a roll of silk or strip of paper, and so giving rise to two forms in this regard — the hanging strip, called by the Japanese *kakemono*, and the unrolling scroll, the *makimono*. But we should make a great mistake here again if we should regard these two standard shapes as either a restriction to the artist, or a merely blindly conventional habit. Together and separately they had a conscious and intentional relation to the fundamental purposes of the art and the underlying philosophy and concepts of nature. Philosophy, the technique of perspective and of composition, and these two unrolling shapes were definitely interblended. Paintings in the West tend to a nearly square rectangle, in either direction; but this form would have been wholly inadequate to develop what had to be expressed in Chinese art and, in somewhat less degree, in Japanese. We shall see this clearly later.

But into the matter of perspective technique we must go definitely and critically; it is at the heart of the whole question. The common judgment, only just these past few years beginning to be counter-vailed, is that Chinese and Japanese painters, even the masters, were ignorant of any such thing as perspective. That is wholly false; we are not here dealing with an absence of perspective in paintings, but with two distinct and well-developed systems of perspective, the Western and the Eastern. And the Eastern is immeasurably the deeper, fuller, more developed and expressive. To see this we must analyse the growth of Western perspective, historically and philosophically — for it comes of both; and then study the rise of the Eastern in like fashion.

The purpose of painting is to represent or suggest something seen or conceived as being in space — in three dimensions, on a flat sur-