'Ink and Gold: Art of the Kano'
'Collecting Kashmir'
A Jotaka Painting from Pagan
Ceramics by Nakaigawa Yuki
The Art of Nusra Latif Qureshi
Anne de Coursey Clapp (1928–2013)

In a 1987 state-of-the-field article, Jerome Silbergeld devotes a section of his analysis to the approach of stylistic studies, in which he identifies a list of the twelve artists from the Five Dynasties to the Ming-Qing period who have been most thoroughly studied by eighteen prominent modern scholars ('Chinese Painting Studies in the West', *Journal of Asian Studies* 46, no. 4 [November 1987]: 856). The name of Anne de Coursey Clapp, one of the first American woman historians of Asian art, was on the list for her first groundbreaking monograph *Wen Cheng-ming: The Ming Artist and Antiquity* (Ascona, 1975). The work instantly established her as a serious specialist of the Wu School master, and the following year Richard Edwards invited her to contribute a major essay, 'The Sources of Wen Cheng-ming's Style', to his exhibition catalogue, *The Art of Wen Cheng-ming* (1470–1559) (Michigan, 1976).

Between the 1950s and the 1980s, it was common practice for students of Chinese painting to focus on individual artists, often seminal figures with surviving works that were both sufficient and accessible, for their dissertations. Anne did exactly that. It remains a mystery, however, why in autumn 1960 Anne, aged 32 and already married with a 1953 MFA in design from Yale School of Drama, suddenly decided to become a PhD student at Harvard under the guidance of distinguished historian of Chinese art Max Loehr (see James Cahill, 'Max Loehr at Seventy', *Ars Orientalis* 10, 1976: 1–10 and Robert Bagley, 'Max Loehr, 1903–1988', *Archives of Asian Art* 42, 1989: 86–89). Today we can only imagine what a free, independent spirit she must have been to go beyond her comfort zone and to take on this challenge. Anne learned well from Loehr what may be called the three noble truths for art historians: that artistic forms can speak, that style holds meaning, and that art history is history. On the publication of her Wen Cheng-ming book, she writes: 'Professor Max Loehr, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Professor of Far Eastern Arts at Harvard University, I thank wholeheartedly for his years of teaching. Much of what follows here was given direction by his work on the history and theory of Chinese painting' (Clapp, 1975, xi). Just five years later, in his four-page discussion of Wen Cheng-ming as one of the great painters of China, Loehr makes only three references, all of which come from Anne's book (Loehr, *The Great Painters of China*, Oxford, 1980, pp. 280–83, nos 31–33).

If Anne's second book, *The Painting of T'ang Yin* (Chicago, 1991), was, as Richard Edwards notes in his 1992 review in *Ars Orientalis* 'a natural outgrowth of earlier studies of Wen Cheng-ming', it was in fact a 16-year-long process of research and investigation for the author, with the support of two National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) awards on her two sabbaticals in 1974 and 1981. In 1977 Anne was a member of the Chinese Painting Delegation to the People's Republic of China (PRC).
(sponsored by the Committee on Scholarly Communication with the PRC of the National Academy of Sciences), among the first American scholars to visit the country after the Cultural Revolution. She revisited China several times and research field trips, a visiting professorship, and an adventurous spirit also took her to Taiwan, India, Java and Japan.

The Painting of Tang Yin has been commended for its research and scholarship and, particularly, for the illuminating quality of Anne's writing about the artist, with terms like 'elliptical realism' (in her own words, 'more succinct and less logically complete than the Sung, more evocative of human feeling and less matter-of-fact than the Che School' [p. 100]) and 'the Ming ideal of conspicuous seclusion', which describes a characteristic literati landscape design as seen in Pine Trees by a Stream (fig. 74, Saito Collection) with Tang Yin's signature (but probably a work by Tang's teacher Zhou Chen):

Pine Trees illustrates the age-old theme of scholars taking refuge from the dusty world in the mountains. A sort of quarry has been excavated in the middle of the picture, to which access is barely afforded by a circuitous path leading over a log bridge. Within this cul-de-sac the host converses with a guest while his servant draws water for tea from a stream, and a second guest approaches the bridge attended by a boy with books. Half concealed behind the left rock is a stone table laden with a tea service.

(Clapp, 1991, p. 187)


Another key term from the Tang Yin book is 'commemorative painting', a term so important that it forms part of the title of Anne's third and final book, Commemorative Landscape Painting in China (Princeton, 2012), based on her three lectures at Princeton Tang Center in 2007. Admirably, Anne completed the book in her 80s, showing an intellect and indomitable spirit that has placed her on equal footing with notable male counterparts, including two who have shared her lifelong love of Ming literati painting: Richard Edwards (The Heart of Ma Yuan: The Search for a Southern Song Aesthetic, Hong Kong, 2010) and James Cahill (Pictures for Use and Pleasure: Vernacular Painting in High Qing China, Berkeley, CA, 2010). In all three of her books Anne seems to have consistently followed Loehr's own practice of art history, combining 'intellectual rigor, concern for general issues, and insistence on intense, faithful, responsible study of individual works of art' (Bagley, 1989: 87).


Members of the 1977 Chinese Painting Delegation to the PRC accompanied by Chinese colleagues at the Liang dynasty tomb of Xiao Jing in Nanjing. (Front row from right) James Cahill, Anne de Courcy Clapp, Ellen Johnston Laing, Fu Shen; (back row from right) Jack Dull, Marc F. Wilson, Susan Bush, [Chinese colleague], Wen Fong, Nelson Wu, [Chinese colleague], Wai-kam Ho, and Robert Rorex (Photograph courtesy of Katie Clapp)
Chipp, Linda Nochlin, Jules Prown, Linda Seidel, Annemarie Weyl Carr and others. Her career, as Harvard classmate and historian of Chinese art Susan Bush puts it, ‘helped pioneer new possibilities for later generation of women scholars in the developing field of Chinese art history’. Her honesty, modesty, keen intellectual curiosity, and love of Chinese painting and poetry and Asian art and culture will continue to inspire all those who knew her.

Anne began teaching part time at Wellesley College in 1966, and on the completion of her Harvard dissertation in 1971 was appointed Wellesley’s first tenure-track assistant professor of Asian art. She was tenured in 1976, promoted to full professor in 1983, served as Chair of the Art Department in 1980–81 and again in 1982–84, and retired in 1999. She died unexpectedly but peacefully in her Cambridge, Massachusetts home on Christmas Day 2013.

Anne’s family, colleagues and friends celebrated her extraordinary life in a memorial service by Lake Waban on the Wellesley campus on 5 April 2014. I had the privilege of reading a poem that appeared in Anne’s 2012 book (p. 34). The poem was originally written in 1048 by the then 90-year-old scholar and poet Zhang Wei at an elegant literary gathering in the garden of the Wuxing prefect mansion, and was inscribed in 1064 by his son and scholar-official Zhang Xian on a painting of Shiyoungtu, or Illustrations to Ten Poems, commemorating his late father, and lyrically translated by Anne:

When the midwinter ice first breaks and the Tao River clears, I chant as I wander past misty villages, by distant towns. On a sandbar the sun sets where wildfowl flock together. From my pillow the west wind sounds like drums and horns. A lone scull and a winter lantern follow me fishing through the night, I seize the moment of timely rain to plow the spring fields. Why say wealth is first among the five happinesses? I have lived more than ninety years in perfect peace.

Anne was only five years short...

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