

Zeitschrift:	Asiatische Studien : Zeitschrift der Schweizerischen Asiengesellschaft = Études asiatiques : revue de la Société Suisse-Asie
Herausgeber:	Schweizerische Asiengesellschaft
Band:	2 (1948)
Heft:	1-2
Rubrik:	Art news 1984

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ART NEWS 1948

January to June

EXCAVATIONS

Baghdad. The second season of excavations at Abu Shahraun, the site of the ancient Eridu, had very important results. The finds include the remains of sacred buildings beneath the ziggurat, appertaining to sixteen different layers, as well as a large cemetery. Among the single finds are the male version of the "lizard" goddess of Ur and perhaps the oldest model of a sailing boat. The discoveries have contributed greatly in confirming the claim made for Eridu as the most ancient city of the Sumerians, and have effectively refuted one of the most universally accepted assumptions regarding the prehistory of Iraq, namely that the earliest settlers in the Mesopotamian delta were the people associated with the name of the village settlement of Al'Ubaid.

Colombo. The remains of the Mandalagiri Vihara, which flourished in the ninth and tenth centuries, and was then forgotten, went to ruin and became overgrown by the jungle, have been cleared, excavated and conserved by the Archaeological Department during the last five years. The original shrine goes back to the second century B. C., and the most notable monument now laid bare, to the seventh century A. D. The centre of the circular shrine is occupied by a stupa, about $6\frac{1}{4}$ m.s. in diameter at its base. It is encompassed by three concentric circles of 78 monolithic pillars, octagonal in section, which almost certainly supported a domed roof of wooden construction. Architecturally most interesting is the stone screen wall linking the outermost circle of pillars; it is reminiscent of the stone railings which surrounded the Buddhist stupas of Old India, e.g. at Sanchi. Minor finds include small bronze images of deities, copper objects, a thin gold sheet incised with a Pali passage, and, at another place, five standing Buddha images of limestone, three of them of colossal size.

MUSEUMS

Boston. The Museum of Fine Arts has exhibited for the summer part of the collection of European and American paintings and Japanese prints bequeathed by the late John T. Spaulding. The collection of Japanese prints and drawings, comprising some 6000 items and one of the greatest in existence, had already been presented to the Museum.

Bristol. The Schiller collection of Chinese works of art bequeathed to the City of Bristol in 1946 has been catalogued and arranged for exhibition. The show was

opened in the City Art Gallery on March 3rd. The collection covers the time from the Chou Dynasty until the Manchus and is specially rich in specimens of the T'ang Dynasty. The bequest includes also some small but important paintings, Oriental carpets and rugs, and a number of pieces of furniture. An illustrated catalogue has been issued of the Chinese ceramics, jades, and bronzes. Other sections of the collection will be catalogued later.

Chicago. A Chinese landscape painting, entitled "A Quiet Life in a Wooded Glen" and attributed to Wang Mêng of the Yüan Dynasty, has been acquired by the Art Institute for its Buckingham Collection.

Cleveland. The Museum of Art has acquired a gilt-copper image of the goddess Vasudhara, made in the twelfth century in the Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal.

A large Chinese tapestry, given to the Museum in 1916, and at that time attributed to the nineteenth century, has now been discovered to be one of the most important documents of Ming tapestry-weaving so far come to light.

Dayton, Ohio. The Art Institute has purchased a carved head from the School of Gandhara.

Hartford, Conn. Porcelain of the early Chinese Dynasties has been lent to the Wadsworth Atheneum by Henry Jewett Greene for approximately one year.

Karachi. A detailed plan has been drawn up for the institution of a Pakistan Museum of Art and Archæology.

London. Six rooms of the Department of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities in the British Museum, which had been closed since the war, were reopened on January 1st. In a Babylonian room there are some of Sir Leonard Woolley's most remarkable finds from Ur.

New York. The Metropolitan Museum exhibited the Chang Tsê-tuan's "Ch'ing Ming Shang Ho" scroll, which is 10 m long and a Ming copy of a Sung painting. The scroll represents the Spring Festival on the Yellow River and unfolds a whole panorama of Chinese twelfth-century life. It forms part of the A. W. Bahr collection, recently purchased by the Museum.

St. Louis. The City Art Museum has acquired a very well-preserved polychromed wood statue of Kuan-yin in life-size of the Sung period.

EXHIBITIONS

Boston. The Museum of Fine Arts organized a special exhibition of Japanese art selected from its rich collections. The nucleus of the show was formed by large screen paintings; there were further Buddhist sculptures, prints, narrative scrolls, textiles, pottery, lacquer, swords, and armour.

Chicago. A Chicago Collectors' Exhibition held at the Art Institute from December 2nd to February 1st contained Fukien white porcelain from the collection of Mrs. Clayton Miller, the finest of this kind outside China; ancient Chinese jade from the well-known collection of Mrs. Edward Sonnenschein, which will be given to the Institute one day; rare Chinese ceramics from the Stephen Junkunc, Jr. collection, and recent acquisitions made for the Oriental Collections of Russell Tyson.

Cleveland. An exhibition of Chinese textiles from the Museum of Art's collection designed to give a survey of the history of textile arts in China during the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties was organized in the Textile Study Room.

London. Art of Siam including modern work was shown in the Siamese Embassy.

Seventy-five copies made by a Buddhist monk artist, Mangusri Thero, from ancient frescoes in temples in Ceylon, were on view at the Horniman Museum, Forest Hill. The earliest of the original frescoes dates from 200 B. C., but most of them were painted in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by Buddhist monks.

Bluett & Sons had on view the Rutherford collection of early Chinese works of art.

Newark. Old and new jewelry was on view at the Newark Museum. The old examples included especially work made in Asia and Africa.

New York. The first comprehensive exhibition of Tibetan art held in America was organized at the Asia Institute. Rare items came from the important collection of the Newark Museum, and others from private individuals and museums throughout the country. They included Buddhist paintings, temple bronzes, ritual vessels, jewelry, ceremonial vestments, embroideries, etc.

"Casablanca to Calcutta", an exhibition of the arts of North Africa and the Near and Middle East, was on view at the Metropolitan Museum. The exhibition comprised costumes and accessories from the Costume Institute, selected material from the Department of Near Eastern Art, and loans from outside sources.

Forty examples of antique Chinese silver from the Han, T'ang, Sung and other periods, arranged by the Chinese Art Society of America, were shown in the China House.

The C. T. Loo Gallery showed the former Chang Ts'ung Yu (Shanghai) collection of Chinese paintings from the T'ang to the Ming dynasties, the first one of its kind gathered by a Chinese collector which has come to America. It includes an eighth-century hanging scroll by Chang Hsüan, a Sung Dynasty scroll of "The Two Taoist Dignitaries", a rare painting by Ch'ien Hsüan, "Doves and Pear Blossoms", and a painting in ink of a bamboo by Ku An of about 1333.

An exhibition in memory of Sarkis Katchadourian held at the Grand Central Art Galleries contained still lifes, landscapes and interiors by the late artist as well as a number of his copies of early Indian wall frescoes.

Paris. The Musée Cernuschi has an exhibition of Iranian art.

Peshawar. An exhibition of the arts and crafts of the North Western Frontier Province of the Pakistan Dominion was held here in March. Besides numerous examples of industrial and agricultural craftsmanship, many ancient and modern paintings, drawings and sketches, Arabic, Persian and Puchtu manuscripts and specimens of modern embroidery and needlework were included.

Stockholm. Martin Mansson lent to the National Museum a selection of his outstanding collection of Japanese woodcuts for exhibition. The catalogue contains the list of 188 items, numerous illustrations and an introduction by Bo Gyllensvärd.

Zurich. An exhibition of Indian miniatures including Moghul paintings was shown at the Graphic Collection of the Technische Hochschule. They came from two private collections hitherto not accessible to the public, those of Miss Alice Boner, Benares and Zurich, and Dr. Werner Reinhart, Winterthur.

SALES

London. At Sotheby's, on May 4th, the P. Steiner collection of early Chinese ceramics, which was for many years on loan at the Museum of Asiatic Art in Amsterdam, brought a total of £8,382. The top price of £860 was reached by a Pai Ting ware conical bowl of the Sung Dynasty, which was purchased by Bluett.

At Christie's, on June 3rd, high prices were paid for jade translucent carvings.

Lucerne. At the Galerie Fischer, a Seating Buddha, 1,53 m high, Ming, was sold for Fr. 2000.—.

PERSONALIA

K. de B. Codrington, Keeper of the Indian Section of the Victoria and Albert Museum, has been appointed to the chair of Indian Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology and at the School of Oriental and African Studies at London University.

Dr. R. E. M. Wheeler, formerly Director General of Archaeology in India, has been appointed to the Chair of the Archaeology of the Roman Provinces at the Institute of Archaeology at London University.

The Chinese Government has awarded the Order of the Resplendent Star to Baron Eduard von der Heydt, the collector and art patron, for his services to Chinese Civilization.

OBITUARY

On January 22nd, at Basle, the Orientalist Professor Ernst Herzfeld, Princeton University, formerly in Berlin, aged 68; on February 15th, in New York, Mme Jacques

Marchais, collector of Tibetan art and founder of the Tibetan Library and Museum; on February 28th, in New York, Louis Vernon Ledoux, the poet, collector and authority on Japanese art, aged 67.

MISCELLANEA

Ankara. A British Institute of Archaeology has been established here to further British contribution to Anglo-Turkish co-operation in the archaeology of Turkey and kindred subjects such as anthropology, folklore, and ethnology. Professor John Garstang is acting as director for 1947/48.

New York. Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., has bequeathed to her husband her Oriental miniatures, 26 items in all, for use during his life; on his death, they will pass to the Fogg Art Museum. Nelson A. Rockefeller, a son of the deceased, has received the large marble statue of a Bodhisattva, formerly in the Ling Yen Temple.

Tokyo. The fine arts section of the Allied Headquarters reports that only 38 of the 5703 greatest national art objects of Japan were damaged or destroyed by air raids during the war. Of 1721 treasured structures, such as temples and shrines, 255 have suffered war damage. Efficient Japanese storage methods and the U.S. decision to spare Kyoto and Nara, which contain more than half of the registered art objects, are said to account for the small loss.

Extracts from *Pallas, International Art and Archaeology News Bulletin*, Geneva.