

Arts of Asia Lecture Series Fall 2016  
Women, Real and Imagined, In Asian Art  
*Sponsored by The Society for Asian Art*

**The Way of Water – Female Agency & Art Making in China**

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Key notions:

Female Agency

- Women as patrons, tastemakers, interpreters
- Arbiter/mediator: patron, collector, collaborator, creator
- Uncovering the subversive power of women – case of China

The Way of Water & Behind the Screen

Outline:

Promoting Palindromes: Su Hui (4<sup>th</sup> C.) & Empress Wu [Wu Zetian (r. 690-705)]

Empress Liu (969-1033) and Sage Mother Worship

Imperial Women and the Art of Writing

Empress Wu (1115-1197) and the Aesthetics of Worthiness Didactic Art

Empress Yang (1162/1172-1233) and the Art of Expression

Major Art Works:

Funerary objects from the Royal Consort Fuhao of the Shang, Anyang, c. 1200 BCE

Empress Dowager Wenmin (442-90) & the twin-caves at Yungang, c. 480

Empress Ling (d. 528) and the grandest Yoning Temple of imperial capital, 517

*Empress' Procession*, Bingyang Central Cave, Longmen, c. 520

Empress Wu Zetian & the Vairocana Buddha at Fengxian Temple, Longmen, c. 675

Su Hui's Huiwen palindrome

Empress Liu (969-1033), Sage Mother Hall & Sculpture Program at Jin Shrine, c 1020's

*Official Portrait of Empress Cao* (1016-79), collector of Li Cheng landscape

Empress Wu of Gaozong (r. 1127-62) as calligrapher, the emperor's lady ghostwriter, art collector, & patron of didactic art

Ma Yuan (ca. 1190-1230), *Apricot Blossoms*, with Empress Yang poetic inscription reads:

Receiving the wind, she presents her unsurpassing beauty;

Moistened with dew, she reveals her red charms.

Ma Yuan, *Attending the Banquet by Lantern Light*, National Palace Museum, Taipei

Ma Yuan, *Twelve Scenes of Water*, Palace Museum, Beijing;

Readings:

Allen, Sarah, *The Way of Water and Sprouts of Virtue* (Albany: State University of New York, 1997).

Hui-shu Lee, "The Emperor's Lady Ghostwriters in Song-dynasty China," *Artibus Asiae*, XIV, 1 (2004), 61-101.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Empresses, Art, & Agency in Song Dynasty China*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2010.