

Arts of Asia Lecture Series Fall 2013
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Ming Literati Culture: Artists and Collectors as Arbiters of Taste

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Study Guide

I. Literati Artists of the Early to Mid-Ming

Shen Zhou (1427–1509): Scholar, artist, and teacher who lived on the family estate in Suzhou. He is credited as the founder of the Wu school, a school of painting named after the region called Wu (known today as Suzhou), where he and his compatriots lived.

- ❖ *Landscape* (SF Asian Art Museum [AAM], B75D7)
- ❖ *Walking with a Staff*, ca. 1485 (National Palace Museum [NPM])
- ❖ *Night Vigil*, 1492 (NPM)
- ❖ *Poet on a Mountaintop* (Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art)
- ❖ *Drawing from Life*, 1494 (NPM)

Shen Zhou's Artistic Origins

- Artists and scholars from the Wu region (Suzhou) and nearby regions
- Influential teachers/artists
 - Liu Jue (1410–1472): A scholar-painter who attended the National University, passed the civil service examinations, and held government positions.
 - Du Qiong (1397–1474): A landscape painter who was an impoverished orphan.
 - ❖ *Friend of Pines* (Palace Museum)

Shen Zhou's Aesthetic Choices: The Four Great Masters of the Yuan Revivalism

- Huang Gongwang (1269–1354).
 - ❖ *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains*, 1347–50 (NPM)
- Ni Zan (1301–1374)
 - ❖ *River Pavilion, Mountain Colors*, 1368 (AAM, R1989.99)
- Wang Meng (ca. 1308–1385)
- Wu Zhen (1280–1354)

II. The Circle of Wen Zhengming

Wen Zhengming (1470–1559): Painter, calligrapher, and Shen Zhou's most illustrious student.

- ❖ *The Pavilion of a Drunken Old Man* (AAM, B71D2)
- ❖ *Discourse in Green Shade* (AAM, B68D9)
- ❖ *Yuan An Sleeping during the Great Snow*, 1531 (Private collection)
- ❖ *Seven Junipers* (Honolulu Museum of Art)
- ❖ *Garden of the Inept Administrator*, 1551 (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Wen Jia (1501–1583). Wen Zhengming's second son; and other family members/descendants

- ❖ *Yuan An Lying Down in the Snow*, 1533 (AAM, 2008.65)
- ❖ *Peach Blossom Spring*, 1577 (AAM, B60D110)

Tang Yin (1470–1524): Friend of Wen Zhengming. He was the son of a restaurateur but showed such literary and artistic promise that he became a protégé of Wen Zhengming’s father, Wen Lin. He painted for a living and navigated between scholar-amateur artists and professional painters.

- ❖ *Zhenshou Tang*, 1486 (Palace Museum)
- ❖ *The Southern Journey*, 1505 (Freer Gallery of Art, F1953.78)
- ❖ *Whispering Pines on a Mountain Path* (NPM)
- ❖ *Tao Gu Presents a Poem*, ca. 1515 (NPM)

III. “Professional” Painters and Patrons

Zhou Chen (ca. 1455–ca. 1535): “Professional” painter and teacher of Tang Yin and Qiu Ying.

- ❖ *The North Sea* (Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 58-55)

Qiu Ying (ca. 1495–1552): Known as one of the Four Masters of the Ming (with Shen Zhou, Wen Zhengming, and Tang Yin). He painted in a number of different styles and had rich patrons.

- ❖ *Scholar Sitting on a Rocky Promontory; Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove* (AAM)
- ❖ *Pavilions in the Mountains of Immortals*, 1550 (NPM)
- ❖ *Spring Dawn in the Autumn Palace* (NPM)

Xiang Yuanbian (1525–1590): Patron and collector

IV. The Literati Ideal and the Wider Visual Culture of the Ming

Dong Qichang (1555–1636): Artist, calligrapher, theorist, and statesman from Huating (modern Songjiang).

- ❖ *Qingbian Mountains* (Cleveland Museum of Art)
- ❖ *Wanluan Thatched Cottage*, dated to 1957

Chen Hongshou (1598–1652): Artist and scholar who made a living through painting, including illustrating woodblock books and playing cards. From Zhuji, Zhejiang province.

- ❖ *Hermit in Landscape* (AAM, B79D8)
- ❖ *Artist Inebriated*, 1627 (MMA, 1999.521)
- ❖ *A Literary Gathering* (Shanghai Museum)
- ❖ Woodblock Prints

- ❖ Variety of other types of paintings

Suggested Reading

Cahill, James F. *Parting at the Shore: Chinese Painting of the Early and Middle Ming Dynasty, 1368–1580*. New York: Weatherhill, 1978. [Info on specific artists]

Clapp, Anne de Coursey. *The Painting of T’ang Yin*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.

Li, Chu-tsing, and James C.Y. Watt, eds. *The Chinese Scholar’s Studio*. New York: Asia Society Galleries, in association with Thames and Hudson, 1987.

Yang Xin, “The Ming Dynasty (1368–1644).” In *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting*, by Yang Xin, Richard M. Barnhart, James Cahill, et al., 198–249. New Haven: Yale University Press; Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1997. [Excellent intro to Ming Painting]