

Editor's Note

The idea of a Special Art Issue for *Renditions* was first proposed by George Kao, who has created the journal and now serves as its Editor-at-Large. The task of executing the idea has fallen upon this writer; but without the enthusiastic support of others on the editorial staff and the generous response from contributors near and far, this volume would not have come into existence. The result of this joint effort is the present collection of essays and pictures covering most periods of Chinese art and interpreting its every aspect, particularly in relation to poetry.

We are fortunate in securing original and important contributions to the study of Chinese art by some of the most distinguished scholars and translators in the field. Some topics have much to do with translation, such as Hin-cheung Lovell's comments on titles given to Chinese paintings in the West. Hsio-yen Shih's article on Ku K'ai-chih includes new translations of Chang Hua's "Admonitions of the Imperial Preceptress", Ts'ao Chih's famous and several-times translated "Lo-shen Fu", and Ku K'ai-chih's own untranslatable prose-poem on "Thunder and Lightning". Wang Fang-yu's translation and commentaries on Chu Ta's riddle-like poems will help some readers to gain an insight into one aspect of painterly art in China in recent centuries. The relationship between painting and poetry is discussed by Jonathan Chaves and Laurence Tam, who provide their own translations of poems of the Sung and Ch'ing periods respectively.

In a way, to write about the art of one country in the language of another is an act of translation. Certainly Richard Edwards' exposition on landscape painting is a perfect example of translating Chinese thought and artistic ideals into a Western mode of expression as well as into a Western language, thus making the unfamiliar more immediately understandable to our Western readers.

The contributions by Ellen Laing, Chu-ting Li and Thomas Lawton reflect one of the most important trends in recent scholarship in the study of Chinese art, that is the direct use of Chinese sources rather than translated or related material. Writing of this nature must also include original translations, and these articles will be of interest to both the specialist and the general reader.

Hsiang Ta's well-known essay on Western influences on Chinese art, written in the 'Thirties, is presented in this volume in a translation with annotations by Wang Teh-chao, himself a scholar in this field. As to art historical writing in China and Hong Kong today, Kao Mayching's translation of Chih Kung's article in *Wen Wu* 1972 is complete, while Jao Tsung-i's paper presented to the Paintings Symposium held at the Art Gallery of this University last year has been only given an abridged rendering, mainly because of the translator's inability to put into English the esoteric language, especially the poetic language, of the literati of the late Ming.

Readers who are concerned about contemporary Chinese art, and its immediate past and future, may wish to read the last article first. It is both a personal and scholarly statement by Nelson Wu in his dual role as creative writer and art historian.

Grateful acknowledgement is due to Penelope Jordan, Rebecca Mok and John Gannon, who read and suggested improvement to some of the translations; to the Director of the Palace Museum in Taipei, to the Director of the Freer Gallery, to the Trustees of the British Museum, and to Mr. Jean-Pierre Dubosc, who have all given permission to reproduce paintings in this issue. Individual acknowledgement of ownership follows the caption to each painting.

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