

Asian Section

0543

Finding aid prepared by Gina Gariffo.

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University of Pennsylvania, Penn Museum Archives

08/14/12

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Penn Museum Archives
Creator	Culin, Stewart, 1858-1929
Creator	Gordon, G. B. (George Byron), 1870-1927
Title	Asian Section
Call number	0543
Date [inclusive]	1890-1969
Extent	1.6 linear feet
Language	English
Container	1
Abstract	The Asian Section collection includes correspondence and receipts all dealing with the donation or sale of artifacts to the Penn Museum from 1890 to 1969. Artifacts are mostly from China, Korea, and Japan. Notable donors include Stewart Culin, William Pepper, Phoebe Hearst, and Worch of Paris, C.T. Loo, and Yamanaka and Co.

Biography/History

The University of Pennsylvania Museum began its collection of ethnographic objects and art from Asia

almost as soon as the museum was founded in 1889. A number of Japanese, Korean and Chinese objects, including costumes, porcelains and household goods were donated to the museum as early as 1890. The Oriental section was established in 1892 with Stewart Culin as curator. In an attempt to acquire more objects from the East, Culin staged an exhibit of the museum's collection at the World's Columbian Exhibition in Chicago in 1893.

The first display of Buddhist images occurred in 1899 with an elaborate altar and colorful panels and hangings. The objects and images had been supplied by Maxwell Sommerville, the founder of the museum's Buddhist and engraved gem collections. The exhibit received mixed reviews from the press and audience. However, Buddhist images would continue to be important to the museum's representation of the cultures of Asia throughout its history.

Before 1899, the Asian collection was displayed along the staircase of the University Library tower. The objects were moved into the new Museum building upon construction and found a permanent home in the rotunda above the museum auditorium in 1916. The "Chinese rotunda" hosted the "first million dollar show" according to Board member Percy C. Madeira in 1916. Represented in the display of objects available for purchase for the museum's permanent collection were Chinese porcelains from the J.P. Morgan Collection, Chinese art from the Duveen Brothers of London, jade vessels and sculptures from Worch of Paris and paintings and reliefs from dealer C.T. Loo of New York, all on loan for the show. The news media reminded its readers that the great collection would be lost to the city "if no wealthy Philadelphian takes a notion to purchase it."

In 1915 and 1916, Carl W. Bishop, the Assistant Curator of Oriental Art, carried out a University of Pennsylvania Museum-sponsored archaeological reconnaissance in China, Korea, and Japan. Bishop again conducted a foray in 1917 and 1918 but excavation was blocked by politics, internal rebellion in China and problems with amassing a work crew and finding enough money to proceed. Eventually, Bishop did excavate at Anyang, China in 1929 while serving as Associate Curator at the Freer Galleries in Washington. C. W. Bishop's presence in China between 1915 and 1918 later led to his being implicated in the controversy surrounding the University of Pennsylvania Museum's acquisition of two stone reliefs depicting the favorite war chargers of the Emperor T'ang T'ai-Tsung, founder of the T'ang Dynasty (618-906 A.D.). The two sculptures of the horses Curly and Autumn Dew are currently on display in the Chinese rotunda of the University of Pennsylvania Museum. These sculptures were originally part of a set of six horse sculptures surrounding the Emperor's tomb in Shanxi Province where they were photographed in 1909 by Edouard Chavannes. In 1917, Bishop saw the remaining four sculptures in the Hsi-an museum where he was told that the reliefs of Curly and Autumn Dew had been taken to Beijing by the military government. The latter sculptures were purchased by the University of Pennsylvania Museum from the New York dealer C. T. Loo in 1918.

The T'ang horses continued to be surrounded by controversy after their arrival at the Museum. Disputes about the authenticity of the sculptures and whether they represented the seventh-century originals or later reproductions persisted through the 1920's and 1930's. (see "In Defence of the Horses of T'ang T'ai-Tsung", by Helen E. Fernald in the folder "Horses of T'ang T'ai-Tsung.") The legal and moral justifiability of the acquisition of the sculptures by the University of Pennsylvania Museum was also questioned particularly when it was discovered that the inscription accompanying the four sculptures remaining in Hsi-an claimed that the T'ang sculptures in the University of Pennsylvania Museum had been removed from China at the instigation of an American imperialist presumed to be Bishop. In 1978, Derk Bodde presented to Chang Yu-lang, Deputy Director of the Shanxi Provincial Bureau of Culture, documentation that the sculptures had been purchased by a New York dealer and that C. W. Bishop had played no role in their removal from China.

With the exception of early trips by William H. Furness, Alfred C. Harrison and Hiram M. Hiller in 1895 and some "archeological reconnaissance" by Carl W. Bishop, no excavations in China have been conducted by the museum. Almost all of the collections were assembled through purchase and donations. George Byron Gordon, Assistant Curator of the General Ethnology section of the museum from 1903

until his appointment as Director in 1910 devoted considerable time and energy to acquiring Asian antiquities worthy of museum display. It was Gordon who recruited Carl W. Bishop in 1914. Following the death of George Byron Gordon, Eldridge R. Johnson, founder of the Victor Talking Picture Company, presented the Gordon Memorial to the museum. This gift included magnificent carvings on semi-precious stone, eventually displayed at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the famous Crystal Ball a treasure of the Imperial Palace in Peking. George B. Gordon was succeeded as Assistant Curator by Carl W. Bishop (1914-1918). Following Bishop's tenure the Asian section has had a succession of curators with gaps between service when the section was represented by a Research Consultant or Keeper of the collection.

Scope and Contents

The textual records from the Asian Section collection series consists of 1.6 linear feet of correspondence and receipts. The records have been compiled from donors from 1890 to 1969.

The collection consists primarily of letters, correspondence, shipping information, invoices, insurance data, and receipts of artifacts bought or exhibited by the Museum, or donated to the Museum as well as background information on the artifacts. Notable donors as well as correspondents include Stewart Culin, William Pepper, Phoebe Hearst, and Worth of Paris, C.T. Loo, and Yamanaka and Co..

There is also a translation of the text "Discriptive (sic) of the Illustrations of the 47 Ronins," collection No. 639.

Other Museum Archives records related to this collection can be found in: Carl W. Bishop papers and Helen E. Fernald papers.

Administrative Information

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Controlled Access Headings

CORPORATE NAME(S)

- Worch of Paris .
- Yamanaka and Co..

PERSONAL NAME(S)

- Bishop, Carl Whiting, b. 1881-d.1942
- Fernald, Helen Elizabeth, b. 1921-d. 1937
- Getz, John, b. 1853?
- Hearst, Phoebe Apperson, 1842-1919
- Johnson, Eldridge Reeves, b. 1867-d. 1945
- Loo, C.T., b.1880-d.1957
- Lyons, Elizabeth, b. 1912-d. 1989
- McCartee, Divie Bethune, Dr., b. 1820-d.1900
- Pepper, William, 1843-1898
- Scott, Alexander
- Scott, Hugh, Senator, b. 1900-D.1994
- Stevenson, Sara Yorke, 1847-1921
- Wanamaker, John, 1838-1922

Collection Inventory

ADMINISTRATION, 1894-1927.

	Box
Stewart Culin-Sara Yorke Stevenson correspondence, 1890-1902.	1
Stewart Culin-section reports 1899-1902.	1
Stewart Culin-exhibits.	1
General, 1901-1975.	1
John Getz-correspondence, 1912-1920.	1
John Getz-Porcelain list.	1
Cammann hiring, 1947-1949.	1
Sales-object information, 1942-1969.	1
Sales controversy, 1958-1974.	1
Freer Gallery-repair/analysis, 1961-1963.	1
Chinese jade exhibit 1962-1963 (1 of 3).	1
Chinese jade exhibit 1962-1963 (2 of 3).	1
Chinese jade exhibit 1962-1963 (3 of 3).	1
Senator Hugh Scott exhibit 1967.	1

Textile deaccession 1969.	1
Elizabeth Lyons 1969.	1
Chinese porcelain sale 1970-1977.	1
Chinese objects sale 1974 (1 of 3).	1
Chinese objects sale 1974 (2 of 3).	1
Chinese objects sale 1975 (3 of 3).	1
Chinese scroll sale 1975-1976.	2
Netsuke sale 1975-1977.	2
Sales-Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1968-1976.	2
Sales-Freeman 1969-1970 (1 of 2).	2
Sales-Freeman 1970-1977 (2 of 2).	2
Sales-Christie's 1975.	2

COLLECTIONS.

	Box
Belfield, T. Broom, 1927-1976 (Bulk, 1927) .	2
Bell, Laura 1939.	2
Bowles, Gordon, 1932-1942.	2

Braddock, Charles 1906.	2
Chait, Ralph (1 of 2), 1922-1932.	2
Chait, Ralph (2 of 2), 1933-1939.	2
Cochrane, Constance 1962.	2
Commercial Museum, 1933-1940.	2
Crawford, Joseph, 1894-1897.	2
Duveen Brothers 1915-1916.	2
Duveen Brothers 1917-1918.	3
Duveen Brothers 1918-1932.	3
Duveen Brothers Misc. Undated lists..	3
Edmunds, Albert J. 1898.	3
Ehrenfels, Dr. U.R. 1950.	3
Farnum, George L. and J. Edward 1898.	3
Forman, Martin 1963.	3
Fuller, Mrs. Lawrence C. 1976.	3
Getz, Edward, 1914-1917.	3
Gresham, Lt. Col. William A. 1966.	3
Haines Jr., Robert B. 1898.	3
Harden, John H. 1892.	3

Hayakawa, R. (J.K. Matumoto).	2
Hearst, Phoebe 1896.	3
Hoffman, William G., 1953-1954.	3
Huang, T.M., 1912-1916.	3
Johnson, Eldridge 1928.	3
Kevorkian, H. 1940.	3
Knight, Dr. Albert P. 1961.	3
Kuki, R. 1895.	3
Kusakabe, K. 1915.	3
Kwan Vok Tsoo.	3
Landis, Eli Barr M.D., 1890-1898.	3
Leaming, Thomas 1900.	3
Livingston, Katherine 1898.	3
Long, Dr. Esmond R. 1955.	3
Loo, C.T. (Lai-Luan and Co.) 1915-1916.	3
Loo, C.T. 1917-1918.	3
Loo, C.T. 1919-1921.	4
Loo, C.T. 1922-1924.	4
Loo, C.T. 1925.	4

Loo, C.T. 1926.	4
Loo, C.T. 1927-1928.	4
Loo, C.T. 1929-1937.	4
Loo, C.T. 1938-1940.	4
Loo, C.T. T'ang Horses 1918-1928.	4
Loo, C.T. T'ang Horses 1970-1988.	4
Lyman, Benjamin Smith (Dr. D.B. McCartee), 1900-1902.	4
Lyne, Henry 1969.	4
Macauley, L.C., 1895-1896.	4
Mason, O. T. 1892.	4
Mayer Collection Scythian bronzes.	5
Metcalf Collection, 1930-1935.	5
Mirick, Henry D. 1966.	5
Mitchell, J. Clayton 1942.	5
Morse, Edwin J. 1895.	5
Mumford, E. N.	5
Naguchi, Hideyo.	5
Otaki, Harumasa, 1901-1902.	5
Pepper, William 1891.	5

Roberts, Graham.	5
Salada Tea Company, 1960-1962.	5
Scott, Alexander 1914-1915.	5
Scott, Alexander 1916.	5
Scott, Alexander 1917-1919.	5
Scott, Alexander 1920-1924.	5
Scott, Alexander 1925-1948.	5
Scott, Alexander Accounts 1915-1921.	5
Scott, Alexander Indian Collection (1 of 2).	5
Scott, Alexander Indian Collection (2 of 2).	5
Scott, Alexander Tibetan Collection (1 of 3).	5
Scott, Alexander Tibetan Collection (2 of 3).	5
Scott, Alexander Tibetan Collection (3 of 3).	5
Service, Robert R. Collection 1950.	5
Shufeldt, Mary 1899.	5
Sickman, Laurence, 1968-1971.	5
Spink and Son, Ltd., 1914-1915.	5
Starr, Edward 1896.	5
Stevenson, Cornelius 1900.	5

Stevenson, Sara Y. 1897.	5
Stoney, Dr. F. J. W. 1898.	5
Thomson, Harry C., 1891-1899.	5
Ton-Ying and Co., 1921-1926.	5
Turner, James H., 1970-1971.	5
Tyndale, Robinson 1897.	6
Vignier, M. Charles, 1919-1924.	6
Wanamaker, John, 1921-1927.	6
Weinstein, Dr. Philip, 1965-1966.	6
Williams, Edward H. 1890.	6
Wright, Joseph, 1901-1902.	6
Worch of Paris (1 of 3), 1908-1922.	6
Worch of Paris (2 of 3), 1923-1925.	6
Worch of Paris (3 of 3), 1925-1948.	6
Yamanaka and Co. (1 of 3), 1899-1924.	6
Yamanaka and Co. (2 of 3), 1925-1936.	6
Yamanaka and Co. (3 of 3), 1938-1942.	6
Yokoyama, K. 1916.	6
Miscellaneous.	6

Samurai notes.	6
Horseman relief of Kashmir.	6
Indian Collection receipts 1912,1925.	6
Manuscript and notes on collections.	6
	Box
Mc Cartee rubbings.	M 6-7
	Box
Loo, C.T. Johnson Collection jades 1929-1931.	4
	Box
T'ang horse drawings.	M 8-9