

## Lecture Notes, by James Cahill

Note: The image numbers in these lecture notes do not exactly coincide with the images onscreen but are meant to be reference points in the lectures' progression.

### Addendum 1B: *Riverbank*: The Controversy

CLP 155: "Wen Fong and Me," <http://jamescahill.info/the-writings-of-james-cahill/cahill-lectures-and-papers/77-clp-155-2006>

December 11, 1999: Symposium on the authenticity of *Riverbank* held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in conjunction with their exhibition *The Artist as Collector: Masterpieces of Chinese Painting from the C.C. Wang Family Collection* (September 3, 1999–January 9, 2000). Papers given at the symposium published as:

Smith, Judith G. and Wen C. Fong, ed. *Issues of Authenticity in Chinese Painting*. New York:

Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999.

Add1B.1.1: Attributed to Dong Yuan 董源 or 董元 (d. 962), *Riverbank*, hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 220 x 109 cm. Metropolitan Museum, L1997.24.1.

I argue that this is *not* a Dong Yuan, but a forgery by Zhang Daqian 張大千(1899–1983).

On my side: Sherman Lee and Hironobu Kohara

Neutral: Wai-kam Ho

Against: Wen C. Fong, Maxwell Hearn, Qi Gong, and Shih Shou-chien, Ding Xiyuan

Referees: Jerome Silbergeld and Robert Harrist, Jr.

Opening remarks: Richard Barnhart

Also brought against me: Wan-go Weng and Stephen Little

AddIB.2.1: Chen Hongshou 陳洪綬/ 陈洪綬 (1598–1652), *Tall Pine and Daoist Immortal* 喬松仙壽圖/ 乔松仙寿图 (1635), hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 202 x 98 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.

Wan-go Weng argued against this work being by Chen Hongshou. I believed in it and had included as the centerpiece in my book, *The Compelling Image* (1982).

Add1B.3.1: Du Jin 杜堃 (act. ca. 1465–1509), *Enjoying Antiquities* 玩古圖/ 玩古图, hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 126 x 187 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.

Stephen Little, Richard Barnhart, and Maxwell Hearn accept this as a genuine Du Jin, but

I do not. For more, see: "The Tu Chin [Du Jin] Correspondence, 1994–95," in *Kaikodo Journal*, vol. 5, (Autumn 1997): 8–62.

As you can see, the symposium was stacked against me, and I mentioned as much in a letter (August 2, 1999) to Wen Fong, pointing out the disproportionate representation by Chinese and Princeton/Yale scholars. He responded in an August 6<sup>th</sup> letter, where he rambled on about the planning of the symposium and how innocent it was and asked me to not be paranoid about the presence of a Princeton/Yale cabal. (By the way, these letters will all be made available in the Freer archives about me.) But who holds Chinese art history jobs in Taiwan and the East Coast? All former Princeton students, such as Shih Shou-chien, who was the director of the National Palace Museum and hung *Riverbank* besides the three great Song landscapes by Fan Kuan, Guo Xi, and Li Tang. In Great Britain, with the exception of Craig Clunas, more Princeton grads: Roger Whitfield and Shane McCausland.

My own students, therefore, suffered on the job market. Howard Rogers gave his job talk at Harvard, was practically guaranteed that the job was his, but it went to John Hays, a Princeton graduate. Howard was so devastated he left academia and now runs an art gallery, Kaikodo, with his wife, Mary Ann.

Add1B. 4.1, 2: Bada Shanren 八大山人/Zhu Da 朱耷 (1626–1705),

I asked Richard Barnhart why Princeton students never cited my writings, such as "The 'Madness' in Bada Shanren's Paintings" (CLP 12: <http://jamescahill.info/the-writings-of-james-cahill/cahill-lectures-and-papers/32-clp-12-1989-qthe-madness-in-bada-shanrens-paintingsq-published-in-asian-cultural-studies-hard-to-find-journal-no-17-march-1989>), and he responded that it was because my writings included such "wrong-headed ideas."

On a reading list for a course at a British university on readings in Chinese painting studies, no Cahill writings can be found. This course was taught by a former Princeton student (Shane McCausland), the same one who organized a symposium on Gu Kaizhi 顧愷之 that I was also not invited to, but I showed up anyway.

Among my younger colleagues who agreed with my *Riverbank* stance, few were willing to take the public stand, and risk their chances on the job market. John Rosenfield, professor of Japanese art at Harvard, later reported to me that based on what he heard milling about the audience, the general public was with Wen Fong, but the specialists were on my side.

Add1B.1.2: Zhang Daqian, landscape painting

A former student of mine led a graduate class on Zhang Daqian, and the students

concluded, independently of me, that *Riverbank* was a forgery. My student sent me a note along with this slide of a Zhang Daqian landscape, apologizing for not speaking out publicly.

In 1976, I included *Riverbank* as an unknown work on the doctoral exam for my student, Richard Vinograd. He concluded that the painting could not be an early landscape, but probably a recent pastiche.

Harrie Vanderstappen (1921–2007) at the University of Chicago also wrote me in support on August 8, 1997, after reading *The New York Times* piece on the Met's "Mona Lisa."

December 31, 1997: Steve Gaskin wrote a letter in support. In later correspondence with him, he noted the artificial aging of the silk.

Add1B.1.3: Zhang Daqian forgery in the style of Han Gan 韓干/ 韩干 (ca. 720–780), *Horses and Groom*

Add1B.1.4: Zhang Daqian, *Three Worthies of Wu* (20<sup>th</sup> c.), ink and color on silk, 50.3 x 284.8 cm. Freer, F1957.15a-b.

Both paintings exhibit the same artificial ripping of the silk as seen in *Riverbank*.

Add1B.1.5: Zhang Daqian forgery of Juran 巨然 (act. ca. 960–985), *Dense Forests and Layered Peaks* 茂林疊嶂圖/ 茂林疊嶂图 (ca. 1951), hanging scroll, ink and colors on silk, 186 x 73 cm. The British Museum, 1961,1209,0.1.

See also note 46 in: Wen Fong, "The Problem of Forgeries in Chinese Painting," *Artibus Asiae* 25, no. 2/3 (1962): 95–119, 121–140. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3249249>

Add1B.1.6: Zhang Daqian forgery of Dunhuang bodhisattva

March 2, 1998: letter from Robert Mowry, former curator of the Fogg Museum: "[E]ven if the silk turns out to be old, I don't think the painting is the same age."

April 1, 1998: earlier letter from Sherman Lee, where he describes the pictorial representation in *Riverbank* as "confusion everywhere."

If the same situation were to arise in the field of European painting—a would-be signed work of a master with a limited oeuvre suddenly appearing in the hands of a known forger, looking like nothing anyone had ever seen before, and lacking provenance—it would quickly be dismissed. That *Riverbank* is taken seriously by so many in our field, says something about the state of the field.

Sketchy provenance: Acquired in 1938 by Xu Beihong 徐悲鴻/ 徐悲鸿 (1895–1953), who showed it to no one, then traded with Zhang Daqian for a Jin Nong 金農/ 金农 (1687–1764). Zhang also showed it to no one until...

For pictorial evidence of how *Riverbank* is a forgery, please see Addendum 2A and 2B.