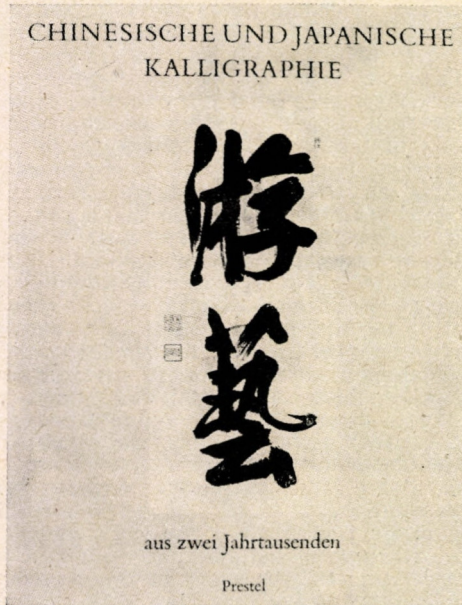


BOOK REVIEWS



Heinz Götze (ed.), *Chinesische und japanische Kalligraphie aus zwei Jahrtausenden. Die Sammlung Heinz Götze Heidelberg.* Prestel-Verlag, München 1987. 198 pp., 207 plates.

In the past decades in Europe and America interest has very quickly developed in Far Eastern calligraphy. For hundreds of years in China and Japan its traditions have been passed on by generations and it has often been termed "the queen of arts". Such a designation is well-founded, for in the Far East handwriting is considered as "a picture of the soul" and the strokes of the brush conceal much about the nature of the artist. And just as the artist's personality is mirrored in concrete calligraphic works, so the history of calligraphy reflects the rich culture of the Far East.

Although calligraphy is undoubtedly enormously significant for Far Eastern art, only a limited number of specialists are interested in it outside China and Japan and certainly it has not yet received the attention which it truly deserves. This situation has arisen chiefly because of our "European" conception of the meaning and significance of writing; for this overestimates the role of the intelligibility of the characters upon which Chinese and Japanese calligraphy is predominantly based. At the same time the number of European and American collections, in comparison to those of other types of Chinese and Japanese arts, is very small, for collecting in this field is a relatively new activity. One need only mention the calligraphic collections of Hyde, Crawford or the Powers and also that of Dr Heinz Götze, the eminent West German collector and art critic, whose collection, based at Heidelberg, developed gradually from the early 1960s. It is on the basis of Götze's many years of collecting that this book on Chinese and Japanese calligraphy

has appeared. Its aim is to map out and present to a wide section of cultured people the most valuable artistic work represented in this unusual collection.

The book is divided into two parts — text and plates. The shorter text section by Dr Götze is divided again into several chapters. In the first chapter, entitled "The status of art and writing in the Far East", Götze describes the techniques of calligraphy and the tools which the author uses in his work — ink, brush, grinding stone to disperse the ink, and paper; they are often called "the four jewels", for according to their correct choice and quality, together with the calligrapher's capability, they form the main basis for the success of the whole work. Here Götze also mentions the techniques and the types of copies of calligraphic work, and the ways in which it is signed by means of small red seals (colophons), which were made firstly by the authors themselves and subsequently by their friends, pupils or collectors as well. The rest of the chapter, in short, deals with the development of Chinese and Japanese calligraphy from its very beginning to the origins and establishment of individual calligraphic styles (seals style, scribe's style, block style, semicursive style and cursive style) and their further development up to the beginning of the 20th century. The most significant Far Eastern calligraphers and calligraphic schools are not omitted. In the last chapter the author discusses the relationship between calligraphy and painting in Japanese and Chinese thinking; their inter-connection is based on the fact that both use the same aesthetic criteria, the same techniques and tools. The larger section of the book — with the plates — contains in total 20 chronologically arranged illustrations. The high-quality colour reproductions of the individual works complement well the comprehensive expert commentary. This in turn provides not only essential basic information concerning the exact name of the work, its size, material and the techniques used for its creation, but contains also basic information about the authors, the circumstances which led to the production of the given work, and lastly an analysis of the contents of the calligraphic text. In the majority of cases (but unfortunately not in all) a transcription into the latin alphabet is given together with a translation. However, a transcription of the calligraphy into standard form of characters, which would enable one to compare the degree of stylization, would be desirable. In this connection it should be noted that the individual authors — Shigemi Komatsu, Kwang S. Wong, Fumiko Cranston, Gisela Armbruster, Helmut Brinker, Doris Croissant, Lothar Lederrose, Misako Wakabayashi-Oh, Gisela Pause-Chang and Irmaut Schaarschmidt-Richter — have prepared texts which differ from each other both in length and depth.

Among the oldest of the 21 illustrations of Chinese calligraphy is the Buddhist sutra of 657 A. D. (the early period of the Tang dynasty, 618—907). It is written in block script on a horizontal scroll measuring 26 × 597 cm. The calligraphy from the time of the Song dynasty (960—1279) is represented by a scroll of Mi Fu — the only example incidentally of his work in European collections — and by calligraphy in cursive script by Wang Yimin. Three letters by Zhao Mengfu in cursive script belong to the following period of the Yuan dynasty (1279—1368). Then there is a poem in semi-cursive script by Zhang Bi, and works in different types of cursive script by Zhu Yunming, Dong Qichang, Zhang Ruitu and Wang Duo which all belong to the celebrated calligraphy of the Ming period (1368—1644). Most of the examples of calligraphy are from the Qing period (1644—1912). On the one hand there is the hanging scroll of Chen Yixi, an example of Liang Tongshu's cursive style, a poem in cursive script by Wang Wenzhi, a sealed script by Wu Dacheng and Wu Changshi's hanging scrolls in seal and cursive style. On the other hand Kang Youwei is represented by a poem in cursive and by text in block script, Liang Qichao by block script and Pu Ru by his poem in cursive.

The illustration of Japanese calligraphy begin with The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom (Dai hannya haramitta kyō) from the end of 750 A. D., written in block script and in which the Chinese influence, typical for the cul-

ture of the Nara era (710—784), is quite evident. Three illustrations then stem from the following Heian period (794—1192) — two extracts from The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom (one of these, however, from its later 12th century version) and one from The Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law (Myōhō renga kyō). The Kamakura period (1192—1333) is represented by a scene from The Illustrated Sutra on the Cause and Effect (E-ingakyō). The succeeding Muromachi era (1392—1573) provides us with part of a scroll from the novel Genji Monogatari, recorded in the Japanese cursive script *sōgana* with added illustrations. This is an example of the native tradition of Japanese calligraphy, the so-called *wayō* style. From the Muromachi period we also have examples of oblong hanging scrolls, written in cursive script by Zen Buddhist monks, most of whom were of Chinese origin. The most notable were Tesshu Tokusai, Ikkyū Sojun or Sakugen Shūryō. In the Edo period (1603—1867) this particular style was continued by Hiin Tsūyo, Ingen Ryūki, Mokuan Shōtō, Sokuhi Nyoichi, Kokku Shōshi, Kōsen Shōton, Etsuzan Dōshū, Hakuin Ekaku, Kōben hō-shinnō, Jiun Onkū, Tandō Genjō, Shinkai Sōken, Ikeda Harumasa, Kaiten Ekō and lastly Kitano Gempō, who was active at the turn of this century. From the later Muromachi period and early Edo period date the work of Sen no Rikyū, Hon'amī Kōetsu, Kojima Sōshin and Shōkadō Shūjō, whose gentle cursive style is one of the most typical expressions of the *wayō* trend in Japanese calligraphy. A strong Chinese influence, however, is revealed amongst authors of the middle and later Edo years: Itō Tōgai, Chō Tōsai, Kan Tenju, Totoki Baigai, Gibon Sengai, Kameda Bōsai, Nukina Kaioku and Ichikawa Beian.

The authors of this publication have certainly not tried to present in detail all the periods and trends in the development of Chinese and Japanese calligraphy. But as one can see from the book's title, they have aimed especially to open up to a wider audience this kind of Far Eastern art, based on carefully selected examples of Chinese and Japanese calligraphy of a high artistic quality, and to help them to understand its deep significance. For this purpose the book is supplemented with chronological tables, a name index where all names are transcribed into characters as well, and a bibliography both at the end of the book and at the conclusion of the commentary to each plate.

Eva Havlicová
Translated by Mark Cornwall

Jack Hillier, *The Art of the Japanese Book*. 2 vols. Philip Wilson for Sotheby's Publications Ltd., London, 1987.

"The Art of the Japanese Book" by Jack Hillier has already been thoroughly discussed by various specialists¹. The importance of this opus magnum written by one of the most outstanding scholars in the field of Japanese pictorial art in general and of Japanese woodcuts in particular, necessitated its introduction also to readers not primarily interested in Japanese art.

This monumental work is the result of some forty years of collecting and careful research based on Western as well as Japanese collections. It comprises not only a summary of present-day knowledge but also the systematization and evaluation of this fascinating material. The twelve pages of bibliography given at the end of the second volume contain only one work of similar concept, namely Louise Norton Brown's *Block Printing and Book Illustration in Japan*, published in 1924.

A mere cursory glance at the two large volumes (1130 pages of folio size, 225 plates of excellent colour quality and 691 black-and-white reproductions) disclose the immense beauty and variety of the subject, namely the woodblock prints in books. The old Japanese books containing prints — "either as its main or only contents, or as illustration to a text" (p. 21), generally less known than the woodcut broadsheets of the Ukiyoe school but, to use author's own words, "uniquely expressing the national spirit" — represent one

of the most important contributions of Japanese culture to the common treasury of world art.

In the introductory chapter the definition of the subject and the delineation of the method used are discussed as well as many interesting questions relating to the Japanese book in general — e. g. its' make-up, the specific function of the publisher, the meaning of the "edition", etc.

The following 70 chapters (more precisely 69, since the first covers history of printing in Japan before 1600) span roughly 350 years, from the beginning of the 17th century, when books with woodcut prints first appeared, to the end of the American occupation in 1951, the psychological impact of which influenced the ensuing evolution of modern printing art.

The variegated character of the chapter titles basically show the chronological layout of the book as well as the way in which the vast amount of the material assembled crystallized into specific groups and points of view. Thus, apart from chapters dedicated to one or several artists, interesting themes such as Kimono Pattern Books of the Seventeenth Century, Topographical Guides, Toba-e, Manga, The Cult of Fuji or Nineteenth-century Erotica up to 1868, are outlined.

Every chapter, while perfectly inserted into the solid structure of the book, stands by itself as a literary unit. This is only one of the many documents of Jack Hillier's outstanding and lively style, making his book a pleasure not only for connoisseurs but also for laymen.

The ease with which such a specialized book is read is further enhanced by the diversity of the cultural background on which the main subject is presented. Without reader's knowledge he is being acquainted with innumerable facts of the history of Japanese culture in the broadest sense. Many points of a general and a more particular character are elucidated by ingenious parallels with various phenomena of European, especially English, cultural spheres.

The background information, however, is always kept in the periphery, regulated by author's chief aim, namely to "bring out the essential artistry of designers, block-cutters and printers". As an artist himself (Jack Hillier is an accomplished artist in water-colours and in wood-engraving) the author happily combines an unrivalled knowledge of the material and scholarly approach with a keen and loving eye of a "dedicated admirer of the Japanese book", as he calls himself.

Author's interest is, naturally, focused on pictorial art and the reader acquires a notion of the development of the Japanese painting, the styles of which were reflected in the graphic form in the books. The interrelation of the schools of painting and prints makes an "underlying theme" of Hillier's book.

From innumerable descriptions and analyses of the reproductions the reader learns to find beauty hidden in the prints and to appreciate the crucial role of the cutters and printers in attaining the final aesthetic effect of these accomplished works of art. He is acquainted not only with aesthetics of the prints but also with problems met by the bibliographer, some of them connected, for example, with the practices of the "nefarious publishers". Several anecdotes described give at least a vague notion of the immense work involved in the book.

The detective character of the bibliographer's métier as well as its perils are illustrated by the case of a book discussed in the chapter dedicated to Keisai Masayoshi, the mystery of which was solved only after the publication of Hillier's work². In that case the author was misled by Mrs. Brown's "infectious enthusiasm". Her Block Printing and Book Illustration in Japan is one of the many books and catalogues quoted and discussed throughout Hillier's work. The extensive Bibliography at its end is divided into General, Public libraries and other institutions, Exhibition catalogues, Catalogues of important auctions, and A selection of important catalogues issued by prominent dealers. The appendices further contain a Glossary, a review of Periods of Japanese History since AD 794, an Index of Japanese artists named

in the text and an Index of Japanese illustrated books referred to in the text (both last-mentioned indices complemented by Japanese characters) as well as a General Index.

The reviewer cannot but repeat the words of Roger Keyes, who evaluated J. Hillier's work as "a wonder" and "the best book on Japanese art in a Western language".

¹ Matthi Forrer, *Andon* 26, 1987, 54—57. Roger S. Keyes, *Orientalism*, February 1989, 52—59. Susumu Matsudaira, *Mainichi shinbun*, Dec. 4, 1987, 9

² Jack Hillier, *Illustrations of the Four Seasons by Maruyama Okyo in the Haikaika Miyako Manshū*. *Andon* 26, 1987, 43—46

Libuše Boháčková

Karla Bilang: *Das Gegenbild. Die Begegnung der Avantgarde mit dem Ursprünglichen*. Edition Leipzig 1989. 320 pages, 255 photographs, including 55 coloured ones.

The book under review, which is a contribution to a better understanding of the development of modern European arts, probably arose as one of the responses to the important exhibitions organized in the United States and Germany in the 1980s. Let us recall, for example, the exhibition "Primitivism in 20th century art" held in the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1986, and its large two-volume catalogue. The present interest in the roots of modern European arts is also attested by re-editions of some standard books dealing with "primitivism" (Robert Goldwater's writings, etc.).

The authoress proceeds in chronological order, in passing mentioning the first hints at exoticism in European fine arts between the 16th and 19th centuries (Dürer's engraving of Indian warrior, chinoiserie, etc.), thoroughly treating the views of the fauvists, expressionists, cubists, constructivists and surrealists concerning non-European arts and European folk art. Attention is especially paid to the relation of this "primitive" art to some pieces of work of the main representatives of European art. In the forefront of the author's interest stands the German artistic milieu and its development since the beginning of the 20th century. The book almost reaches the contemporary time, its last part including the period after 1945.

Works of European artists are confronted with specimens of painting and carving by African and Oceanic artists, but even individual pieces of art from the tribal areas of Asia and American Indian regions may be found in the book. Probably due to the place of its rise (Leipzig), slightly prevailing among the published examples of non-European arts are collections of the Ethnographic Museums in Leipzig and Dresden, supplemented with the collection of the Náprstek Museum in Prague, the MfV in Berlin and other European museums and private collections.

Besides a large number of illustrations, the book contains much information on masks and sculptures from the overseas, which European modernists kept in their private collections. The reader may find here not only the obligatory masks of the Fang from M. de Vlaminck and A. Derain's collections, which almost regularly appear in books of this type, but also reproductions of historical photographs of studios as well as pictures of authentic objects which passed through the collections of European artists. Many valuable historical data are concentrated here, important for the study of European collecting of non-European art. Moreover a number of further exotic objects are reproduced, especially from various museums, which are meant to illustrate the milieu of primitivism or exotic phenomena which the individual European artists had the opportunity to meet. I would like to concentrate on this non-European part of the book.

Detrimental to the book and the author's argumentation as well as the comparative point of view applied in it is the fact that the individual documents of non-European arts are not dated or, better to say, it is not stated

anywhere, at what time they reached Europe. We must realize that objects from beyond the sea came to European private collections and those of museums and galleries gradually and in waves, following the process of opening the individual African, Oceanic and other areas to the European market, and also depending on which colony was administered by which European country. The general dating of the carvings and paintings to "the 19th century" does not, in fact, say much, because a piece actually made in the 19th century may have reached Europe only after the Second World War. Let me give two examples from the published collections of the Náprstek Museum: the Ngere mask (plate 168), dated to the 19th century, was brought to Prague only in the 1930s, and the Basuku mask (plate 44) was sent from Zaire to the Náprstek Museum as late as towards the end of the 1940s.

This omission has resulted in the fact that at least in two cases, such art works are mutually compared which could not have met each other. E. g., Picasso could not have "seen" the Azande carvings in 1907 (cf. the comparison of the pieces reproduced in plates 96, 98 and 99), because at that time, the Azande carvers did not make such statues. The oldest known statue was obtained in Africa only in 1911 and the reproduced statue from the Náprstek Museum came to Europe only in the 1920s. Rather problematic is also the comparison of the same Azande sculpture with a statue made by C. Brancusi between 1916 and 1921 (plates 165 and 166).

Mention must also be made of some inaccuracies to be found in the description of the photographs. Thus in its style, the stool identified as made by the Kuba (plate 25) rather belongs to the carvings made by the Luba (cf. the next plate 26); the wooden female statue alleged to be a work of the Mossi (plate 40) is in its style much closer to the carvings of the Senufo; "Mutter mit Kind" (plate 57) is in fact a figuratively treated bowl for divination stones; the harp preserved in J. Hessel's collection in Paris (plate 105) did not originate in West Africa, but at the northern border of Central Africa, i. e. among some of the Azande groups; the ceramic vessels (plates 214 and 226) may have been found in Nazca, but the first of them belongs to the "Coastal Tiahuanaco" culture and the second may be classed with the Recuay culture; the "magische Fische" from Loango (plate 242) similarly as the statue reproduced in the plate 241, may be characterized as "Nagel-fetisch".

It would be undoubtedly interesting as well as useful to try to reconstruct the set of carvings and paintings of non-European arts, which may have filled with enthusiasm, or even inspired, European artists in the initial decades of the present century. This would require to collect data on not only private collections accessible at that time, but also expositions of the Trocadero Museum in Paris and the Ethnographic Museums in Munich and Berlin. A solid basis would thus be obtained for a further study of the phenomenon called "primitivism" in modern European art history. The book by Karla Bilang, however, has remained far behind this ideal.

Josef Kandert

Patrick Tierney, *The Highest Altar. The Story of Human Sacrifice*. Viking Penguin 1989. 480 pages. Notes, Bibliography and Index. 16 coloured photographs, 3 drawings, 4 maps.

In his book, the author concentrates on the phenomenon of human sacrifice, testimonies to which he has found in both the Old and New World. He opens the problem with contemporary reports from the vicinity of the Titicaca Lake, then returning to Europe in order to historically elucidate the problem on the ground of the data found in various works by ancient Greek and Roman authors, archaeological finds, sacred books, and epics. At the same time he uses contemporary writing treating this theme and, along with them, looks for an answer to the question of the motivation of human sacrifice which is always conceived as the sacrifice, irrespective of whether it was performed actually or symbolically.

The author starts his historical excursion to America with an analysis of the problems which cropped up around the discovery of a child's mummy in Cerro el Plomo. The mummy was found in the southern part of the former Inca Empire, in the mountainous area around Santiago, the present-day capital of Chile, in 1954, but it was only in 1983 that an entirely new investigation was made by means of modern devices, and many new details concerning this particular sacrifice were discovered, unknown till then. Since 1954, many a new testimony to the Inca sacrifices has been found in various places in high mountains, resulting from the progress achieved by Andinism after the Second World War. It is the circumstances of these finds and their comparison with contemporary reports on human sacrifice as well as historical records by Peruvian chroniclers which are the basis of the author's conclusion that human sacrifice is a continuous phenomenon in the whole area of the Andes. The very existence of human sacrifice in South America was a matter of doubt for long, but as may be seen now, this resulted from the character of the ritual. Whereas in Central American cultures, human sacrifice is connected with festivals organized at large temples, under the participation of a vast number of people, South-American rituals of this kind were performed entirely in private, outside ritual centres, in places particularly inaccessible even nowadays to those equipped with relatively perfect mountaineering outfit.

The continuity of human sacrifice in South America is also documented by archaeological materials from the sofar oldest South-American Chavin Culture, then Nazca, Moche and other civilizations up to the Incas. As a mountaineer, the author climbed to the places where Inca sacrifices had been discovered and visited other ones where, according to newspaper reports, unexplained deaths had occurred or ritual murders had been hinted at.

One of such places is situated on the Chilean coast near the town of Puerto Saavedra, in a region inhabited by the Mapuche Indians who had been direct southern neighbours of the Inca till the advent of the Spanish. The author tried to find information on a human sacrifice performed during the earthquake of 1966, when the area was moreover flooded by a gigantic tidal wave. At that time, it was reported by Chilean papers that in Piedro Alto, a shaman sorcerer had sacrificed a child, in order to appease the elements, thus saving "the mankind", or her community, from destruction. Neither any circumstances nor the way how the information may have penetrated from the obviously closed circle of the participants to the reporters were known. A couple of people were arrested, but no direct proof has ever been obtained. At last the author was able to gain a relatively comprehensive picture of the event from various hints and mutually contradictory statements, but he did not get any final answer from the very sorcerer, the machi. However, he learned to know the Mapuche creed and conception of the world, the role played by the machi in the Mapuche community, and various social relations arising around her in the Mapuche community of today.

Another trip brought the author to the vicinity of the Titicaca Lake in Peru and Bolivia, where he found both relatives of the victims, and persons performing the sacrifice. The author formulates the difference between the "northern and southern" concept of human sacrifice in the following way: A Mapuche machi sacrifices a man for the sake of the endangered community as the highest possible tax in order to appease gods (elements). On the other hand, in Peru and Bolivia, human sacrifice is aimed at gaining some profit for the individual who pays for it, even though, as a secondary result, the near surrounding may benefit by it in some way (e.g., villagers were not willing to allow the dead body to be buried in the native village, insisting that the burial must take place where the sacrifice had been performed, so that a protective deity might arise in this way, to protect the village and bring it good luck).

Nowadays sacrifices are mostly ordered by rich smugglers of coca. It does not matter who is sacrificed (although in one particular case, the sacrificer

insisted on a woman to be selected as the victim), but the purpose of the sacrifice is usually the gain of some actual property, money, a motorcar, or houses. He who has ordered the sacrifice must be personally present. The author is interested in the personality of the sacrificer called yatiri, his position in the community and his social ties, similarly as in the case of the Mapuche machi. He also investigates the way in which the Christian doctrine, or some parts of it, are linked up with the very ritual (e.g., a prayer for the souls suffering in the purgatory, establishing a relation between the Christian God and the gods of the mountains). Some practices have directly resulted from the Christian doctrine understood in a peculiar way. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ is taken in such a way that the life of some (ill) person can be saved by sacrificing another living human being.

The author looks for connections with the principles leading to human sacrifice in old mythologies — those of ancient Greeks, Mayas, African Dogons, but also in the Old Testament and the Koran. He has collected many similarities in a vast number of books, in detail treating the Old Testament and its sacrifice of Isaac and interpreting the murder of Abel by Cain in accordance with the author of the book *The Sacred Executioner*. Human sacrifices did not stop in Europe and it was the Jews who were the scapegoat for centuries, their role of the condemned community resulting from the saying that "they killed Christ". Even in the present century, they were more than once accused of ritual murders, and the Nazi ideology viewed them as a stain of the "pure race".

The author has dealt with the subject in a thorough and moreover attractive way. The reporter-wise treatment of the chapters as well as the new interpretation of generally known quotations from the Bible make the book interesting for a large number of readers.

Olga Kandertová

Annals of the Náprstek Museum 16

Náprstek Museum of Asian, African and American Cultures

110 00 Praha 1, Betlémské nám. 1

Secretary: Libuše Boháčková. Design: Ludvík Schindler 59 — 422 — 84 MK ČSR

Printed by Tiskařské závody, n. p., provoz 21

Praha 1, Karmelitická 6

ISBN 80-7036-008-9