

John C. Ferguson**1866–1945****Sinologue, Dealer, and Collector of Chinese Art**

John Calvin Ferguson was born in Ontario, Canada, and attended Albert College, a secondary school and seminary where he was ordained as a pastor. He continued his formal education at Boston University in Massachusetts. At the age of twenty-one, Ferguson received a mission in China. Shortly after he moved overseas with his wife, Mary, Ferguson started a college that was eventually inaugurated as Nanking University. A Qing official, Sheng Xuanhuai, impressed with Ferguson's command of Chinese language and culture, offered him a position as president of a new school in Shanghai. The Nanyang Public School eventually became Jiaotong University. Sheng also smoothed the way for

Ferguson to become an advisor to the Ministry of Commerce, the Imperial Chinese Railway Administration, and the Ministry of Posts and Communications, as well as a member of the Chinese Commission to the United States. In 1899 Ferguson purchased *Xinwenbao*, a small Chinese-language newspaper that he grew into a successful daily publication, the largest in Shanghai.

Naturalized as an American citizen in 1892, Ferguson returned to Boston in 1902 to complete his doctoral dissertation on "Confucian Renaissance in the Sung Dynasty." During his time as a government advisor, Ferguson worked for Duanfang, the viceroy of Liangjian and a collector of Chinese antiquities. From Duanfang, Ferguson learned the Chinese tradition of bronze connoisseurship. With the downfall of the Qing dynasty in 1912, Ferguson was appointed to the committee that catalogued the vast art collection at the imperial palace. Capitalizing on his international connections and his knowledge of Chinese language and antiquities, Ferguson became a buyer for the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

In 1915 Ferguson became an advisor to the Chinese Republican government, and he moved to Beijing until his forced departure from China in 1943. During these decades Ferguson wrote extensively on Chinese art in both English and Chinese. His works include reference books on Chinese paintings and bronzes, numerous translations, lectures, and book reviews. His 1918 lectures at the Art Institute of Chicago were published as *Outlines of Chinese Art*. Following Ferguson's death, part of his collection was donated to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. He bequeathed the majority of his paintings, bronzes, and jades to Nanjing University.

Literature

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February 29, 2016