



Smithsonian
Freer Gallery of Art and
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery

Freer Gallery of Art
Completed: 21 December 2007
Last updated: 06 May 2010

F1930.36

Artist: Anonymous
Title: *Bodhisattva Guanyin of the Water Moon*
《水月觀音菩薩像》
Shuiyue Guanyin Pusa xiang
Dynasty/Date: Northern Song, 968
Format: Hanging scroll mounted on panel
Medium: Ink and color on silk
Dimensions: 106.8 x 58.9 cm (42-1/16 x 23-3/16 in)
Credit line: Purchase
Accession no.: F1930.36
Provenance: Yamanaka and Company, New York

Object description:

Outside label: Anonymous. Mounted on back of panel.
Ink on paper.

Twelve characters, clerical script.

唐畫水月觀音菩薩。無上神品。

Tang dynasty painting of Bodhisattva Guanyin of the Water Moon. Divine work without better.

Painting Captions: (7) – Three on main painting, and four on lower votive panel. Each text in its own cartouche, written in one column.



1. Main painting, upper left. Twelve characters (first two characters damaged), standard script.

南无大悲救苦水月觀音菩薩

Homage to the Compassionate Deliverer from Suffering, Bodhisattva Guanyin of the Water Moon

2. Main painting, mid-right. Six characters, standard script.

持花供養菩薩

Bodhisattva bearing flowers in offering

3. Main painting, mid-left. Six characters (some damage), standard script.

持花供養菩薩

Bodhisattva bearing flowers in offering

4. Lower register, right. Twenty-nine characters (severely damaged, illegible), standard script.

節度行軍司馬、[金紫光祿大夫、檢校司空、兼御史大夫、上柱國曹延清供養]

[Offered by] the Adjutant to the Military Commissioner, [Grand Master of the Palace with Golden Seal and Purple Ribbon, Acting Minister of Works, and concurrently Censor-in-chief, Supreme Pillar of the State, Cao Yanqing]¹

5. Lower register, second from right. Ten characters (some damage), standard script.



女小娘[子宗花]一心供養

Offered with her whole heart by the young lady daughter, [Zonghua]

6. Lower register, third from right. Ten characters (some damage), standard script. 慈母娘子[李]氏一心供養

Offered with her whole heart by the loving lady mother, née [Li]

7. Lower register, left. Nine characters (last character worn), standard script.

小娘子陰氏一心供養

Offered with her whole heart by the young lady, née Yin

Votive text: Considerable wear and damage.²

Ink on silk. Lower register, center.

9 columns (written left to right), standard script.

《繪觀音菩薩功德記》竊以彌陀上足号觀音[焉]，願力難思，慈□普極，分形種類，救苦[毒]於三[塗]，現化[多]門，[祇?]幽趣於六道，是施无畏者急難消除，有[識]虔誠盡繪者矣。即有我娘子以男司空，為新婦小娘子難月之謂也。伏以司空，星辰降瑞，江海呈祥，侵紫毫而八體宛然，彎素月而六鈎有異，遂乃發一心願，敬畫真容，具相嚴[成]，丹彩已就。伏願娘子以司空承斯緣善，福祚壽松柏之年；小娘子共男郎君賴此勝因，祿寵[等]龜鶴之載；然後金枝九族，玉[葉]一宗，咸[外][良]緣，齊登覺路。于時乾德六年歲次戊辰五月癸未朔十五日丁酉題紀。

(SDA- draft translation)³

Record of Merits and Achievements for a Painting of the Bodhisattva Guanyin

As Amitabha's supreme disciple is called Guanyin, the power of whose vow [to save all sentient beings] lies beyond [human] thought, whose compassion extends universally to the utmost limits, who rescues all the separate categories [of sentient beings] from suffering and harm on the Three Paths, and removes the dark proclivities of the many incarnations on the Six Ways, this is the One Who Shows No Fear, who dissolves and dispels urgent dangers, whom I, the unworthy one, have had painted with complete pious sincerity. Thus I, the lady [mother], and my son the Minister of Works speak in regard to the difficult labor of the young lady [his] new wife. As the stars and constellations have sent down auspicious omens to the Minister of Works, and the rivers and seas disclosed propitious signs, he employs his brush of rabbit fur and writes the eight styles [of calligraphy] distinctly, and bends his [bow like the] shining [crescent] moon with the extraordinary strength of a two-hundred pound pull; therefore, did I humbly conceive the heartfelt desire to respectfully paint a true portrait [of Guanyin], and having strictly completed drawing the features, the colors have been applied. [By virtue of which] I humbly desire that I, the lady [mother], and the Minister of Works may receive a good destiny, and with rich blessings enjoy the longevity of pine and cypress; and the young lady and my son her lord husband may depend on victorious(?) karma, and with emoluments and favor live the long life of a tortoise or crane; and lastly, that the golden branches and jade leaves of the whole imperial clan to the ninth generation shall put aside(?) karma and together as one climb the road to enlightenment. Inscribed and recorded on *dingyou*, fifteenth day in the fifth lunar month, which began on the day of *guiwei*, with the year-star in *wuchen*, sixth year of the Qiande reign period [June 13, 968].

Signature: none

Date: 時乾德六年歲次戊辰五月癸未朔十五日丁酉

Inscribed and recorded on the date of *dingyou*, fifteenth day in the fifth lunar month, which began on the day of *guiwei*, with the year-star in *wuchen*, sixth year of the Qiande reign period [June 13, 968]

Seals: none

Colophons: none

Collector seals: none

Mounting and materials

1. (Undated note: Freer file folder) Remounted by Y. Kinoshita [Kinoshita Yokichi] in 1931.
2. (R.J. Gettens, 01 January 1957) The following color areas were examined and the pigments identified:
 - a. White: face of lower right female figure. The white pigment is white lead. See X-ray diffraction pattern F-344.
 - b. Yellow: large vase, center of painting. Yellow pigment is orpiment.
 - c. Dark Green: bead in necklace on second female figure, lower panel, left. The green tests strongly for copper and appears to be chiefly malachite.
 - d. Bright red: below necklace, female figure, lower panel, right. Red pigment was identified as vermillion.

- e. Orange-red: cartouche, background left of center. Pigment identified as red lead.
- f. Blue-green: ribbon of Kuan-yin [Guanyin], proper right. Blue identified as ultramarine from lapis lazuli.
- g. Black: garment of figure lower left. Identified as lamp black.
- h. Dark red: flower near upper edge. It was observed microscopically that the red is an organic dyestuff, but exact composition of the dyestuff was not determined.
- i. Flesh tone (pink): face of donor, male figure, lower right. Identified as a mixture of white lead and vermilion.
- j. Medium green: base of lamp, center. Identified as malachite.

The Fabric: The fine fabric on which the painting is made appears to be silk. The fibers are partially rotted and break up easily under the sampling needle. The weave of the fabric is quite uneven, which indicates that it was hand-woven.

The composition and particle character of the pigments and the nature of the fabric all indicate that the painting is authentic and that it could have been made in the Sung dynasty, as indicated by the inscription.

3. (J.A. Pope, 1969) Miss Pauline Simmons found this painting to be close in style to the [Musée]



Guimet painting no. 1135, and, like the latter, painted on “the less popular evenly balanced tabby-weave silk.” She cannot account for this, but does not find it significant. (See her comments on the companion painting from Dunhuang F1935.11, elsewhere in the website.)

Traditional Chinese catalogues: none

Selected Bibliography (see also F1935.11, selected bibliogrpahy)

Ye Changchi 葉昌熾 (1849–1917). *Yu shi* 語石 (1909). Rpt.: Yangzhou: Jiangsu Guangling guji keyinshe, 1991. P. 29b.

_____. *Yuandulu riji chao* 緣督廬日記鈔. Selections comp. Wang Jilie 王季烈 et al. Shanghai: 1933.

_____. *Yuandulu riji* 緣督廬日記. 11:70b. Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1964. P. 393 (bottom).

Wang Guowei 王國維 (1877–1927). “Cao furen hui Guanyin pusa xiang ba” 曹夫人繪觀音菩薩象跋. In Wang Guowei. *Guantang jilin* 觀堂集林. Wucheng: Jiang shi Miyunlou 蔣氏密韻樓, 1923. 16:26b–27b.

Anonymous. *Illustrated Catalogue of Famous Paintings from the Great Collection of the Celebrated Connoisseur of Art, Liang Chang-chü of Foochow*. China: Privately published, 1919?. Plate 3B.⁴



Tadakuma Toyooki 多田隈豊秋 (1896–?). “Zuhan kaisetsu” 圖版解説. In *Bukkyo bijutsu* 佛教美術 12 (March 1929): 95–98 and plates 3–4.

Omura Seigai 大村西崖 (1868–1927). *Chūgoku meiga shū* 中國名畫集. Tokyo: Ryubundo, 1935. Vol. 1, plate 21.

Matsumoto Eiichi 松本榮一 (1877–1961). *Tonkoga no kenkyū* 敦煌畫の研究. 2 vols. Tokyo: Tōhō Bunka Gakuin 東方文化學院, 1937. Vol. 2, plate 222b.

Seckel, Dietrich (1910–2007). *Buddhistische kunst ostasiens*. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1957. Fig. 111.

Freer Gallery of Art. *Freer Gallery of Art, China I*. Tokyo: Kodansha, 1972. Plate 34 and p. 156.

_____. *Masterpieces of Chinese and Japanese Art: Freer Gallery of Art Handbook*. Washington, DC: Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1976. P. 45.

Lawton, Thomas. *Chinese Figure Painting*. Washington, DC: David R. Godine, in association with Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1973. Pp. 88–90.

Suzuki Kei 鈴木敬 (1920–2007), ed. *Chūgoku kaiga sōgō zuroku* 中國繪畫總合圖錄 (Comprehensive Illustrated Catalogue of Chinese Paintings). 5 vols. Tokyo: University of Tokyo, 1982–83. Vol. 1, 247 (A21–177).

Liu Mingshu 劉銘恕 (1911–2000). “Dunhuang yishu zaji sipian” 敦煌遺書雜記四篇. In Gansu sheng shehui kexueyuan wenxue yanjiusuo 甘肅省社會科學院文學研究所, eds. *Dunhuang xuelun ji* 敦煌學論集. Lanzhou: Gansu renmin chubanshe, 1985. Pp. 60–61.

Guoli gugong bowuyuan 國立故宮博物院, eds. *Haiwai yizhen: huihua* 海外遺珍：繪畫 (Chinese Art in Overseas Collections: Paintings). Taipei: Gugong bowuyuan, 1985. P. 36.

Jiang Liangfu 姜亮夫 (1902–1995). “Du Wang Jing’an xiansheng „Cao furen hui Guanyin pusa xiang ba”” 讀王靜安先生《曹夫人繪觀音菩薩像跋》. In Jiang Liangfu. *Dunhuang xuelun wenji* 敦煌學論文集. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987. Pp. 763–66.

Wang Huimin 王惠民. “Dunhuang Shuiyue Guanyin xiang” 敦煌水月觀音像. In *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 10 (1987.1): 31–38, esp. 33.

Rong Xinjiang 榮新江. “Ye Changchi: Dunhuangxue de xianxingzhe” 葉昌熾：敦煌學的先行者 (Ye Changchi, Pioneer of Dunhuang Studies). In *IDP News, Newsletter of the International Dunhuang Project* 7 (Spring 1997): 1–5. (English and Chinese)

Haiwai cang Zhongguo lidai minghua bianji weiyuanhui 海外藏中國歷代名畫編輯委員會, eds. *Haiwai cang Zhongguo lidai minghua* 海外藏中國歷代名畫. 8 vols. Changsha: Hunan meishu chubanshe, 1998. Vol. 2, 257–58 (no. 161).

Ma De 馬德. “Sancang Meiguo de wujian Dunhuang juanhua” 散藏美國的五件敦煌絹畫. In *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 60 (1999.2): 171–72.

Yü, Chün-fang. *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001. Pp. 233–47, esp. 239–41 and fig. 6.5.

Notes

¹ Severe damage to this cartouche has rendered the text virtually illegible. The reading presented here is taken from the diary record of Ye Changchi 葉昌熾 (1849–1917), who served as education commissioner of Gansu Province from 1902 to 1906. In this capacity he frequently communicated with the magistrate (*xianling* 縣令) of Dunhuang 敦煌, Wang Zonghan 汪宗瀚 (*zi*, Li'an 栗庵), who sent several gifts to Ye of rubbings, manuscripts, and paintings from the newly opened “library cave” at the Thousand-Buddha Caves under his jurisdiction. Ye Changchi recorded his receipt of the Freer painting *Bodhisattva Guanyin of the Water Moon* under a diary entry for Guangxu 30 (*jiachen* 甲辰), eighth lunar month, twentieth day (September 29, 1904). Fortunately, Ye transcribed not only the title and date of the votive text on the painting, but also the caption texts associated with each of the four donors, much of which was already difficult or impossible to read when he commented on the scroll again in 1915 and shortly later when Wang Guowei 王國維 (1877–1927) examined and wrote about the painting in 1919. See Ye Changchi, *Yuandulu riji* 緣督廬日記, 11:70b (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1964), 393 (bottom); Liu Mingshu 劉銘恕, “Dunhuang yishu zaji sipian” 敦煌遺書雜記四篇, in Gansu sheng shehui kexueyuan wenxue yanjiusuo 甘肅省社會科學院文學研究所, eds., *Dunhuang xuelun ji* 敦煌學論集 (Lanzhou: Gansu renmin chubanshe, 1985), 60–61; and Wang Guowei, “Cao furen hui



Guanyin pusa xiang ba” 曹夫人繪觀音菩薩象跋, in Wang Guowei, *Guantang jilin* 觀堂集林 (Wucheng: Jiang shi Miyunlou 蔣氏密韻樓, 1923), 16:26b–27b.

² Combined with careful analysis, high-resolution digital photography has made possible the most accurate existing transcription of this damaged votive text. For a previous, mostly accurate, transcription, see Ma De 馬德, “Sancang Meiguo de wujian Dunhuang juanhua” 散藏美國的五件敦煌絹畫, in *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 60 (1999.2): 171–72.

³ Many particulars of this translation remain tentative and it is presented here only to capture the general idea and flavor of the original.

⁴ Despite misrepresenting the Freer painting as a Tang dynasty work, this English-language publication contains the earliest known photo-reproductions of the painting. The original Chinese text was purportedly written in 1837 by the eminent Qing dynasty collector and connoisseur Liang Zhangju 梁章鉅 (1775–1849). The sinologist Paul Pelliot (1878–1945), who had previously led a French expedition to Dunhuang where he acquired numerous manuscripts and paintings, used the two Freer paintings among other proofs to demonstrate conclusively that none of the works published in this volume had actually belonged to Liang and that the translated text is a modern fabrication. See Paul Pelliot, “Review of „Arthur Waley, *An Index of Chinese artists represented in the sub-department of Oriental prints and drawings in the British Museum*’,” in *T'oung Pao* 21 (1922): 324–30.