

Kuo Hsi Landscape

MWCh32:K9

Peking, 11 April, 1931.

My dear Friend,

Thank you ever so much for your welcome and interesting letter of March 8<sup>th</sup>, for your telegram with money for the roll, and for your kind and thoughtful telegram about class-instruction. All right, dear Friend, I note all you say, and quite agree with you. I had a good laugh to myself and smiled to you, when I read aout the kind donors who sent rubbish—a not unusual thing in America, I have been told. Your idea of getting rid of these gifts by declaring they must given to you is an excellent one. When I wrote to your President, I told him in my letter that my gifts were not prescribed to the University of Museum, as I knew no-one there, but that they should thank you and not one, as my gifts were there on a/c of you. In selection of gifts, it will not always be possible for you to avoid offending somebody's susceptibilities—that, of course, may be awkward, but cannot be helped. You say it takes time and work to get things in order—my good Friend, think of what I have had to do in the first instance, in finding out all and everything I can about each object and then proceed to put it down and get the things ready—and off! When I now think of it, I feel mighty thankful that I have got off what I have. The Chinese Government has prohibited the export of art books and manuscripts, all sculptures, and bronzes. It is but a time when paintings and porcelains also will be forbidden. All imperial things are forbidden, if they can catch you.

I am welshing here with a newspaper-cutting in French, from which you will see the spirit of the Chinese on this subject: I am sorry that your bronze has not been forwarded to you. It was clearly [] out to Mr. Furman, and the container was marked for M>W. and he was requested to forward it at once to you. There may be some red tape at the bottom, but I shall attend to it surely, when I get out.

Your telegram for Mex1600 paid for the roll. In looking up you're a/c I foud that there were Mex1098 to your credit, for which I have bought a Chien Lung Jasper Jade Vase and a very good crystal, both originally from the palace. Mr. Abert requests me to tell you that your port of entry is no longer Portland but Seattle, and that you will have to attend accordingly. I have forwarded you the 3 things, and enclose herewith the Consular Invoice. We hear that the shipment, []drum orders from Washington have been issued as regards antiques that pay no import duty. For useless red-tape recommend me to your free America. The old saying about: "God's own country and the devil's own Custom House," is evidently but only too true.

The details of the roll are as follows:

Sung: Kuo-Hsi—Landscape Roll

On opening the roll: [names less than clear]

1 seal of Wan Pin Chiang

1 "" Prince You (Shan Chih)

1 seal of Wang Tao-heng (Sung)

1 "" Chao Kuai Pan (Yuan)

2 seals of Teng Chi-chang (Ming)

The roll comes from the Imperial collection, as also shown by its brocade-wrapper. You can be mighty glad that you got the things you did when you were here before—there have been no more forthcoming.

I have had my hands more than full these last 3 month—and am not through just yet—trying to have my big imperial things by getting them out of the country before it is too late. It has takena tremendous lot of work, and cost a lot of money in dues and transport.

I sent another collection of sculptures to Los Angeles last September, but they were stopped in Tientsin and have been confiscated, without any previous articification to the effect that export was forbidden. They do just as the please, and duties are about 6 times as much as they need to be. But all this, we can [] when we must.

I am trying my best to get away about the end of this month, April. Yes, it is time, as soon as I know, I shall write write to the C. P. Sanatorium of San Francisco. O.K. I note all you say about [] and teachers. Re the 9 collections of Chinese Art on exhibition in Los Angeles; I have heard about them, but there is nothing either singly or combined in the [] to emperors in any way with some many things. Sure, I shall look into Mrs. Richardson when I get here. I have always heard her well spoken of.

My wife is busy on her continuous [] of the history of China, from the end of Chien Lung to the Revolution and it suits her to stay on here. Godfrey is doing very well indeed, and had his first exhibition not long ago; he has certainly got talent, and zeal and application. I shall let you know first of all, as soon as I know myself when I shall be there. My—won't we have a talk, no, talks together! I am just writing to you as I write this, and saying: another fortnight and I [] to be out of this and bound for better conditions and surroundings in every way.

All loving and kind thoughts and wishes to you, my dear Friend,

Your true friend,  
Normann Munthe

*Correspondence, Notes, Expense List, and Invoice for Objects Obtained by Gen. Munthe and Shipped to Gertrude Bass Warner in Eugene, Gertrude Bass Warner papers, UA 022, Box 05, Folder 06, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries, Eugene, Oregon. Transcribed by Tom Fischer.*