

(MWCH32:)  
19 Hankow Road  
Shanghai  
November 16, 1928.

My dear Gertrude,

I have been in Shanghai the last two months as you will know from my letter. Immediately on the receipt of your cablegram "Purchase red" I arranged to send the beautiful piece of k'o ssu to you by a registered parcel post. It will probably have reached you before this letter.

I have also taken the liberty of sending you a box containing 12 Chinese paintings, a list of which I am herewith enclosing. We have talked over this matter frequently and I know that you have wanted to secure some paintings which would be a credit to your Museum. Since I came to Shanghai I found a collection belonging to a friend which I helped him to secure about fifteen or twenty years ago. He is now very hard up and has needed money. Knowing as I did what he paid for the pictures originally and from whom he purchased them, I felt that I was on safe ground in arranging to buy them. Out of his collection I selected twelve and by hook and crook I arranged the price so that the whole lot would amount to Mex.\$3,000 [sic]. You will see from the list the price of each one of the pictures and I am sure you will agree with me when you open the box and look at the pictures that I have secured a great bargain.

My reason for taking advantage of the liberty without first writing to you was that there seems some probability of an embargo being placed upon the shipment of Chinese pictures abroad after January 1st. I am enclosing to you a clipping from the North China Daily News stating what the Provincial Government of Hopei (the new name of Chihli province) is proposing to do at Tientsin. It is quite possible that similar steps will be taken in Shanghai on January 1st and in order that your Museum should at least have the chance of having a few good Chinese paintings I have purchased the lot, and have paid for them. You may think that I have taken great liberty in doing so and I quite agree with you, but I am sure also that you will approve of what I have done. It was a rare chance and I did not want to miss it.

Tomorrow I am going to Peking and would like to have you wire me after you receive these pictures simply say "Ferguson Peking Pleased" and I will know that you approve of what I have done. If you do not approve, please hold on to the pictures until you hear from me, for I can easily sell them to dealers and make a good profit on them.

This will reach you just at Christmas time and together with the children and grandchildren here I join in sending love to you and yours. I will write you again after reaching Peking.

As ever,  
John  
Encs.  
[omitted]

*Correspondence and Receipts for Purchases Made on Gertrude Bass Warner's Behalf, Gertrude Bass Warner papers, UA 022, Box 05, Folder 02, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries, Eugene, Oregon. Transcribed by Tom Fischer.*