

FALL SEMESTER 2010

■ ARHS 530: Chinese Pictorial Narrative

Elizabeth Kindall

Mondays, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Just ask the storytellers to demonstrate in public their art of description: they will gladden you, astonish you, move you to sad tears, rouse you to song and dance; they will prompt you to draw a sword, bow in reverence, cut off a head, or donate money. The faint-hearted will be made brave, the debauched chaste, the unkind compassionate, the obtuse ashamed....

Master of the Green Sky Studio, Stories Old and New

This seminar will examine pictorial subject matter associated with Chinese narratives: mythological tales, secular and religious themes, and historicized and fictional stories created between the fourth and twentieth centuries. Stories about utopian communities and historical tales associated with landscapes, such as the *Peach Blossom Spring* and *Red Cliff*, will be analyzed. The savior stories and multiple manifestations of Guanyin as well as the perils of the monk Dizang in hell will be considered in examinations of Buddhist and Daoist imagery. In figure painting and portraiture we will investigate the licentious and shocking *Night Revels of Han Xizai*, the imperial 'Plowing and Weaving Ceremonies,' and the nostalgic *Return of Lady Wenji* from the barbaric northern plateau to her homeland in 'central' China. Readings will introduce and then move beyond the subject matter of these artworks to examine how creators 'narrated' their chosen political, socio-economic, historical, and religious themes. Readings will introduce the subject matter; examine its art historical implications; consider its 'narrative' allusions and constraints; and examine how it 'narrates' the contemporary political, socio-economic, historical, and/or religious circumstances.

Topics will include the development and methodologies of narrative studies in the West; Asian and Western scholars' definitions and initial examinations of Chinese pictorial narrative; the stylistic development and subdivisions of Chinese pictorial narrative; the relationship of 'narrative' images and their respective texts; traditional Chinese conceptions of history versus narrative; the functions of Chinese pictorial narrative; and the reception of pictorial narrative. In addition to those mentioned above, themes to be examined will include: *The Qin Emperor Attempts to Retrieve the Tripod*; *The Attempted Assassination of the King of Qin*; *Two Peaches Kill Three Warriors*; *Admonitions of the Instructress*; *Nymph of the Luo River*; *The Orchid Pavilion Gathering*; *The Homecoming of Tao Qian*; *The Book of Odes*; *The Classic of Filial Piety*; *jataka* tales; The Ten Kings of Hell; Life of Sakyamuni; Demon Mother Hariti; and *Luohan* stories.

Students are not expected to have a background in Chinese studies. All readings will be in English.

This course fulfills the Non-Western/Non-European requirement for those beginning in fall 2009 and beyond.

This course fulfills the Non-Western Art core requirement for those who began the program prior to fall 2009.

Background reading:

Barnhart, Richard M., et al, *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press; Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1997.