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philippe horovitz G

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In an age when the acquisition of art is seen in terms no less different than the buying and selling of stock, 'Through Six Generations: The Weng Collection of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy' which opened on 10 March at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, reminds us that in traditional China it was much more. Classical connoisseurship included the appreciation of beauty and artistic prowess, the gathering of knowledge, the upholding of ethical values and a communion of the like-minded.

Basing their studies on works from the Weng Collection, our contributors this month demonstrate that many of these practices are alive and well. Hao Sheng, through a discussion of artworks and primary sources, traces the collecting history of the Weng family. The collection's present owner, Wan-go Weng, discusses cherished works by Shen Zhou and Wang Hui. Qianshen Bai sheds light on how the evidential approach to scholarship in the 19th century affected connoisseurship and in turn pictorial depiction. Xiang Gao highlights the significance of model-letters in the study of calligraphy, while Sheng-chih Lin and Anning Jing present their own interpretations of a well-known Daoist illustration traditionally attributed to Liang Kai. This issue is also a tribute to Wan-go Weng, who for more than sixty years has served as a bridge for East-West cultural understanding. In our version of a Proust questionnaire, Weng reflects on the act of connoisseurship. Some twenty years after her first interview with Weng for Orientations, Anita Christy reprises her role, this time offering even richer insights into a life lived in interesting times.

### CONTENTS.

More and pictures at: [www.orientations.com.hk/thisiss.htm](http://www.orientations.com.hk/thisiss.htm)

Through Six Generations: An Exhibition of the Weng Collection of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Hao Sheng

Suzhou Sceneries by Shen Zhou: Authenticating a Much-Copied Work

Wan-go Weng

Ten Thousand Li up the Yangzi: A 17th Century Chinese Masterpiece

Wan-go Weng

From Composite Rubbing to Pictures of Antiques and Flowers (Bogu huahui):  
The Case of Wu Yun  
Qianshen Bai

Model-letter Calligraphy and Weng Tonghe  
Xiang Gao

The Iconography of Daoist Salvation from Hell: A Thematic Re-Identification  
of Illustration of the Classic of the Yellow Court (Huangting jing)  
Sheng-chih Lin

Descent of the Holy Ancestor: A Re-reading of Illustration of the Classic  
of the Yellow Court  
Anning Jing

The Veneration of Ink: An Interview with Wan-go Weng

Calmness of the Heart: Music in the Air - The Flavour of Wan-go Weng  
Anita Christy

Book Reviews  
Robert L. Brown / Sylvia Fraser-Lu

Commentary: The Secret Lives of Antiques  
Carol Conover

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