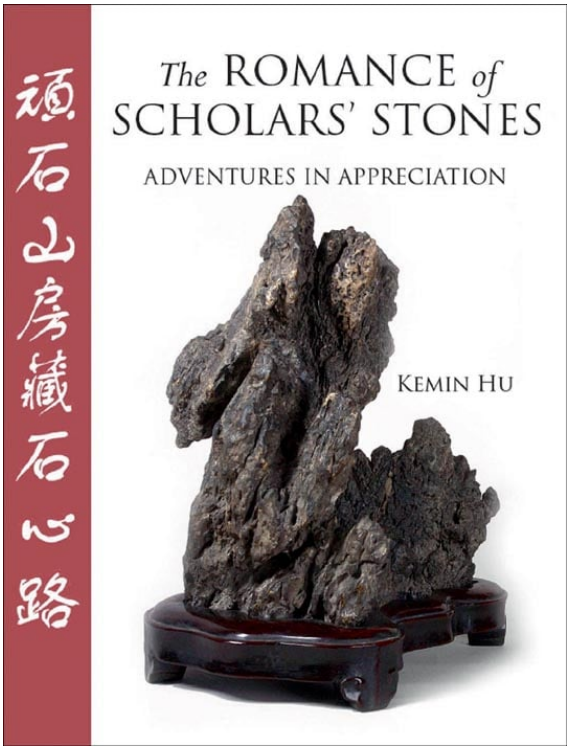
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The Romance of Scholar's Stones

Adventures in Appreciation

Kemin Hu

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- In six essays, the author relates important lessons learned over a lifetime of collecting and researching Chinese stones

Although Chinese scholars' stones fascinate, they do not speak; they reveal their mysteries only grudgingly to those who take the time to observe and to investigate. In seven essays the author relates important lessons learned over a lifetime of collecting and researching these intriguing creations of nature. What did Chinese connoisseurs of a thousand years ago mean by the enigmatic terms*shou*, *zhou*, *lou*, and *tou*? Were 'ink mountain stones' the earliest collected stone form, and were they valued primarily for their utilitarian function? What are the 'Qingzhou stones' mentioned in one early text, but ignored in subsequent writings? What should we be looking for when we evaluate an ancient stone? How can we tell if it is ancient without written records and how much weight can be given to any documentation? Finally, using the tools of connoisseurship and textual evidence, is it possible to verify that a stone first collected in the former Han dynasty is the stone we are looking at today? In exploring these and other issues, Kemin Hu illuminates a depth and complexity of stone appreciation not touched upon in other publications, yet understood and appreciated by serious modern collectors as well as Chinese stone lovers of old.

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