

Painted Jar

China, Neolithic Majiayao culture, Banshan phase,

c. 2600 - 2300 BCE

Buff earthenware painted with black and red pigments

Gift of Carroll and Susanne Barrymore, 1990.50.1

This painted jar exemplifies the distinctive pottery found in the Majiayao Neolithic culture at Banshan in Gansu province, in the upper Yellow River valley in North China. It was hand coiled and then paddled for strength into thin walls. The spontaneous and rhythmic painted patterns show sophisticated use of the brush, which later became the primary tool for

writing and for artistic expression in China. Painted pottery of this type is usually found in burial sites, suggesting possible ritualistic functions. The significance of the designs is now lost to us.

Jade Disks

China, Neolithic period, Liangzhu culture,
southeast region

c. 3000 - 2000 BCE

Whitish-gray jade with veined surface and
brownish speckles;

Opaque, creamy white jade with orange areas

Gift of Alex Liao, 2011.49.2-3

Jade working is among the oldest and most
enduring artistic traditions in China. Prized for its
nearly indestructible hardness, the jade disks (*bi*)
here are likely among the earliest objects made
specifically for rituals associated with burials during

the Neolithic period. In later recorded history, *bi* disks came to signify the realm of heaven and were associated with power and status.

Hollow Brick with Tigers and *Bi* Disk,

Architectural Element

China, Qin dynasty (221–206 B.C.), Xianyang,

Shaanxi Province

Gray earthenware, molded design

Museum purchase with Peggy and John Maximus Fund,

2009.9.1

This hollow brick resembles the excavated architectural remains that were once part of the walls, floors, and steps of the imperial complex at Xianyang, the capital of China's First Dynasty's Emperor, Qin Shihuang. Qin is pronounced *chin*, and is the source of the Western name China.

Decorated on four sides, it features a molded design of animated tigers amid scrolling clouds with *bi* disks and geometric patterns, expressive of the cosmic significance of the palace grounds. The tiger, representing the cardinal direction of the West in early Chinese mythology, may have been part of a larger decorative scheme bearing the creatures of the other four directions also found on site: dragon for the East, bird for the South, and tortoise entwined with a snake known as *Xuanwu* for the North. The presence of the *bi* disk signifies the heavenly realm.

The dynamic linear movement of the images gives evidence of the use of the brush, a drafting tool that was to become the single most important implement

for Chinese scholars and artists for the next two thousand years.

Tomb Tile with Scene of a Feast and Landscape with Animals

China, Eastern Han dynasty (25-220 CE),

Shaanxi region

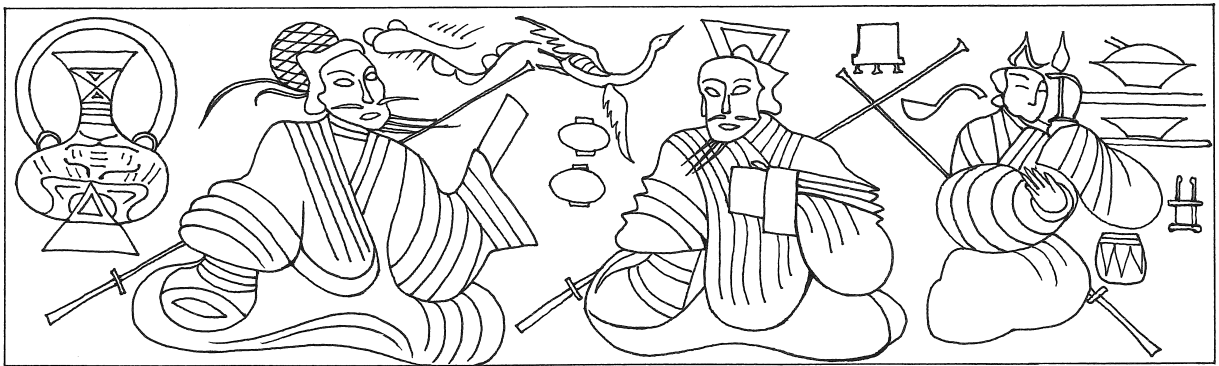
Gray earthenware with molded design

Gift Purchase with funds provided by the Peggy and John

Maximus Fund, 2009.9.2

This tile combines two major types of imagery that coexisted in Han tombs: scenes of daily life and vision of immortality in landscape. There are six registers of narrative scenes in shallow relief. The top five registers show a repeating interior scene, possibly a banquet, with two conversing sword-carrying men and a dancer, surrounded by

cooking vessels and a bird. The bottom register features a landscape of rolling mountains with roaming animals and immortal figures. This stylized yet rhythmic scene belongs to a narrative tradition in Chinese pictorial art that is also found in the rarely preserved paintings of the period.



Repeating register



Bottom register

Cylindrical Jar (*Lian*) with Mountain-shaped Cover and Bear-shaped Feet

China, Western Han dynasty (206 BCE -8 CE),

Henan-Shaanxi region

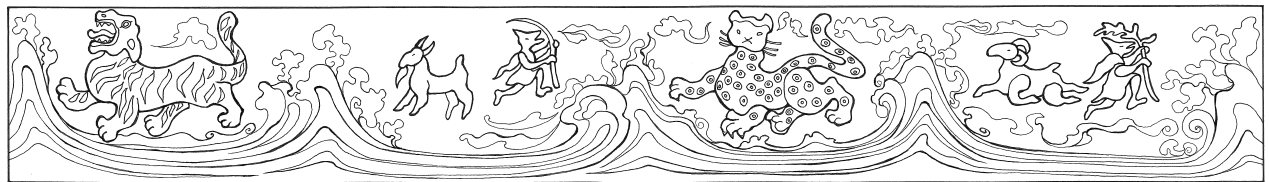
Reddish earthenware with olive-green lead glaze and molded relief decoration.

Gift of Wright S. Ludington in memory of Charles Henry

Ludington, 1983.27.24

This vessel is often called a "Hill Jar," due to its mountain-shaped cover, a Han invention also found in bronze and ceramic censers. Beliefs in immortality and exotic lands during the Han dynasty inspired these earliest three-dimensional landscapes. In the lower register, mountain peaks undulate with scenes

of running animals— a tiger, a spotted beast, a goat and a ram—and two human-like figures, representing immortals, each grasping a long stick. The vigor and animation of the linear design are not only indicative of the vitality of Han society, but also offer early examples of brush paintings which would have served as models for the molded designs.



Design around body of jar.



Overhead view of mountain-shaped cover.

Vessel in Form of Crouching Lion

China, Six dynasties, Western Jin period (265 - 316), Zhejiang province

Yue ware, gray stoneware with olive-green glaze and molded decoration

Gift of Wright S. Ludington in memory of Charles Henry

Ludington, 1983.27.22

Standing Female Entertainers

China, Henan province, Sui - Tang dynasty, 7th
century

Buff white earthenware with translucent pale
green glaze

Gift of Wright S. Ludington in memory of Charles Henry

Ludington, 1983.27.72-73

Lady with Bird

China, Central plains, Tang dynasty (618-906)

Earthenware with traces of pigment

Museum purchase with funds provided by the Atkins family
in memory of Elizabeth "Tammy" Tanner Atkins, 2000.20

Women of imposing physical stature represent the ideal of feminine beauty in the Tang court. Figures like this one are among the best and most expressive funerary sculptures of the time, reflecting the prosperity and confidence of the Tang period.

Jar with Cover

China, Tang dynasty (618 - 906)

Buff earthenware with "three color" glaze

Anonymous Loan, L.2021.1.1

Seated *Luohan*

China, Song-Yuan dynasty, 13th century

Wood, gesso, and polychrome

Gift of Ina T. Campbell, 1944.1

Luohan are followers of the historical Buddha who have attained some degree of enlightenment. In China, they were revered as semi-deified, mountain-dwelling ascetics. Unlike bodhisattvas, divine beings dedicated to the salvation of all mankind, *luohan* are concerned with their personal salvation. For this reason, *luohan* are usually depicted as humans with unusual characteristics rather than idealized deities.

The dramatic characterization of this *luohan* with his high-ridged nose, protruding forehead, and long eyebrows and earlobes is a Chinese interpretation of his semi-divine qualities and Indian origin. His downcast eyes and open mouth suggest that he is speaking. His right hand is lowered, possibly to stroke a now missing animal, perhaps a tiger, and his left hand may have held an object such as a staff. It is likely that this *luohan* was originally part of a set created for the main hall of a Buddhist monastery.

Bodhisattva of Compassion, Guanyin

China, Jin dynasty (1115-1234)

Wood with polychrome

Gift of Wright S. Ludington in memory of Charles Henry

Ludington, 1983.27.11

Guanyin, literally "He Who Observes the Sounds of the World", or Avalokitesvara in Sanskrit, is the Bodhisattva of Compassion who answers all prayers and protects the faithful from calamities. He is identified by the small figure of Amitabha Buddha in his headdress. He was originally one of the two attending Bodhisattvas flanking a central seated Buddha in a temple. This figure and the Seated Guanyin in this gallery are two of the few surviving

wooden sculptures from the 12th-and 13th centuries, a time when the growing popularity of Buddhism led to more humanized portrayals of deities.

Bodhisattva of Compassion, Guanyin, Seated in "Royal Ease"

China, Jin dynasty (1115-1234)

Wood

Gift of Ina T. Campbell and Wright S. Ludington, 1947.1

Guanyin, or Avalokitesvara in Sanskrit, which literally means “He Who Observes the Sounds of the World”, is the Buddhist Bodhisattva of Compassion who answers all prayers and protects the faithful from calamities. This sculpture would have been placed high in a temple, referencing Guanyin’s mountainous grotto residence from which he gazes down on mankind. This figure and the *Standing Guanyin* in this gallery are two of the few surviving wooden sculptures

from the 12th and 13th centuries, a time when the growing popularity of Buddhism led to more humanized portrayals of deities.

Objects from Scholar-official's Study

One group of objects highly valued by Chinese scholar-officials consists of items commonly found in the study, a private place for reading books, composing writings, practicing calligraphy or painting, or simply for contemplation. Foremost among these items are the “four treasures of the study”—paper, ink, brushes, and the inkstone and related paraphernalia. These personal objects reflect the aesthetic of their owner who, traditionally, cultivated a taste for simplicity, elegance, and refinement as well as an appreciation for objects made of rare materials and with fine craftsmanship.

1) Rock with Peaks and Overhangs

China, 19th-20th century

Gray *ying* limestone and wooden stand

Anonymous Loan, L.2021.1.2

2) Inkstone in the Shape of a Leaf with Dragons-in-Clouds Design

China, Ming dynasty (1368-1644)

Stone

Gift of F. Bailey Vanderhoef, Jr., 1991.148.48

3) Inkstick with Characters

China, early 20th century

Pine soot and animal glue with molded designs

Gift of F. Bailey Vanderhoef, Jr., 1991.148.50

4) Brushes

China, 20th century

Animal hair, bamboo, and wood

Gift of F. Bailey Vanderhoef, Jr., 1991.148.53

Gift of Leon and Karen Wender, 2005.17

5) Wrist Rest

China, 20th century

Bamboo

Gift of F. Bailey Vanderhoef, Jr., 1991.148.54

6) Vessel Decorated with *Lingzhi* Mushroom and Poem

China, Qing dynasty, Kangxi period (1662 -
1722)

Porcelain with gold decoration on blue glaze

Gift of Mark Lansburgh, 1991.11

7) Mountain-Shaped Brush Rest

China, Qing dynasty, 17th - 18th century

Porcelain with turquoise glaze and wooden stand

Gift of F. Bailey Vanderhoef, Jr., 1991.148.56

8) Incense Holder

China, Ming dynasty (1368 - 1644)

Ivory

Gift of F. Bailey Vanderhoef, Jr., 1991.148.55

9) Water Pot with Dragon Medallions

China, Qing dynasty, Kangxi period (1662 - 1722)

Porcelain with mottled reddish-purple glaze over incised design

Gift of F. Bailey Vanderhoef, Jr., 1991.148.40

10) Small Boxes

China or Japan, 18th century

Wood with carved red lacquer with peony on ground of chrysanthemum design

Wood with *tixi* carved red and black lacquer

Gift of F. Bailey Vanderhoef, Jr., 1991.148.59-.60

11) Peach-form Tantalus Wine Cup

China, Qing dynasty, 17th century

Yixing ware, rust-brown stoneware

Gift of F. Bailey Vanderhoef, Jr., 1991.148.57

CHEN Jiru 陳繼儒

Chinese, 1558-1639

Thatched Hut by Tall Pines

Ink on paper, hanging scroll

Gift of N. P. Wong Family, 1995.63.4

In his own words, Chen Jiru “wrote” this bare-bones image of a recluse seated in a rustic hut. This calls attention to Chen’s primary status as a man of letters, a literary man, not a painter. The image’s rustic simplicity accords perfectly with Chen’s efforts to promote himself as a man of the hills, the “lofty” ideal of one who has withdrawn from worldly affairs.

WANG Yu 王昱

Chinese, active ca. 1680 - 1729

***The Countenance of Hills and Rivers* 1729**

Ink and colors on paper, hanging scroll

Museum purchase with funds provided by gifts from

Frederick B. Kellam, Mrs. Lockwood de Forest, O.S.

Southworth, Mrs. Sidebotham, and Mrs. Robert Woods

Bliss, 1984.17

The artist's inscription on the upper right states that this painting was painted for a venerable Master Ding "following the color style of Dachi (Huang Gongwang 1269-1354)." Wang Yu is the fourth generation of an orthodox literati painting lineage that dominated the later history of Chinese paintings. The painters of this

school emphasized disciplined brushwork and expressive compositions. Most importantly, they are learning from earlier masters whose artistic achievements are models for finding one's own individual expression.

Jian and Jizhou Stonewares, or *Temmoku*

Tea Bowls

A special type of black ware, popularly known by the Japanese name “*temmoku*”, was produced in various centers in the Fujian (Jian ware), Jiangxi (Jizhou ware), and Henan provinces. The name *Temmoku* came from the *Tianmu* 天目 mountain near the city of Hangzhou, where iron-glazed Jian bowls were used for tea in *Chan* (or Zen) Buddhist temples. The Japanese monks who traveled to monasteries in China during the Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279) brought the bowls back home. They became highly valued for tea ceremonies. By the fifteenth century, more pieces were imported from China, eventually inspiring domestic production.

Globular Jar with Blossoms

China, Southern Song-Yuan dynasty, 12th-14th
century, Jiangxi province

Jizhou ware, buff stoneware, dark brown glaze
with amber blossoms painted with an iron oxide
overglaze

Gift of Mary Lou Sherwin in memory of Donald Sherwin,
2004.55.3

Jar with Ribbed Design

Northern China, Northern Song-Jin dynasty, 12th
century

Cizhou-type ware, light gray stoneware with dark
brown glaze over white-slip ribs and appliqué
handles

Museum purchase with funds provided by John and Peggy

Maximus Fund, 2009.2.1

Tea Bowl with "Tortoise-Shell" Glaze

China, Southern Song –Yuan dynasty, 12th -14th
century, Jiangxi province

Jizhou ware, buff stoneware

Gift of Wright S. Ludington in memory of Charles Henry

Ludington, 1983.27.47

Tea Bowl with Calligraphic Designs

China, Southern Song–Yuan dynasty, 12th-14th
century, Jiangxi province

Jizhou ware, buff stoneware with painted
decoration on brown-black glaze

Gift of Wright S. Ludington in memory of Charles Henry
Ludington, 1983.27.36

Tea Bowl with Blossom and Phoenixes in Flight

China, Southern Song –Yuan dynasty, 12th -13th century, Jiangxi province

Jizhou ware, buff stoneware with brown reversed design on lighter variegated glaze, stenciled decorations

Gift of Wright S. Ludington in memory of Charles Henry Ludington, 1983.27.37

Tea Bowl with “Hare’s Fur” Glaze

China, Southern Song dynasty (1127 - 1279),

Fujian province

Jian ware, dark gray stoneware

Gift of F. Bailey Vanderhoef, Jr., 1991.148.30.1

Conical Bowl with Molded Floral Decoration

China, Northern Song dynasty (960-1127),

Shaanxi province

Yaozhou porcelain with olive green glaze

Gift of Wright S. Ludington in memory of Charles Henry

Ludington, 1983.27.28

This 11th-12th century tea bowl exemplifies “classic Song ware” that attained a new level of sophistication and refinement with a distinct visual and tactile quality in its floral decoration, simple shape, and monochrome glaze. It exemplifies the culmination of Chinese fascination with green-glazed, high-fired wares that began as early as the Eastern Zhou period (1045 BCE – 256 BCE). This

green color, later known as “celadon” in the West, is produced by a small amount of iron oxide in the glaze that is fired in a controlled, reduced oxygen atmosphere. The color evokes jade and the patina on archaic bronzes, two of the most revered materials in China.

Dish with Floral Design

China, late Ming dynasty, 17th century

Swatow ware, porcelain with cobalt blue glaze
and slip-decorated floral design

Museum purchase with Peggy and John Maximus Fund,
2008.28

This large dish exemplifies the best of a diverse group of provincial ceramics created in the late Ming to early Qing period in southern China. They are collectively known as 'Swatow' wares, a name derived from the southern seaport Shantou in Guangdong province. These ceramics were exported to Japan, Southeast Asia and Indonesia. Eventually, many Swatow wares made their way to Europe. Today the

largest collection of Swatow wares is in the Netherlands.

Unlike the more typical polychrome Swatow porcelains, this dish employs only two colors, creamy-white on blue. The explosive floral patterns are applied in slip (clay paste) with great speed and spontaneity, reflecting the vigor of mass-produced popular aesthetics.

Man's Dragon Robe with Twelve Imperial Symbols

China, mid-19th century

Yellow silk slit-tapestry weave with painted details; yellow fabric in sleeves is a later addition; central hem slits sewn at a later date

Gift of Mrs. Philip B. Stewart, 1941.23.3

The dragon robe or *jifu* (literally “auspicious garment”) was the official robe of the Manchu-ruled Qing dynasty. They were adapted from the voluminously draped Chinese court robes of the previous Ming dynasty to a more fitted dress with narrow sleeves and slits befitting a nomadic horse-riding lifestyle. They were worn by men (and

sometimes by their wives and daughters) holding official bureaucratic positions throughout the empire, from the emperor and his courtiers in the capital Beijing down to local magistrates and their staff.

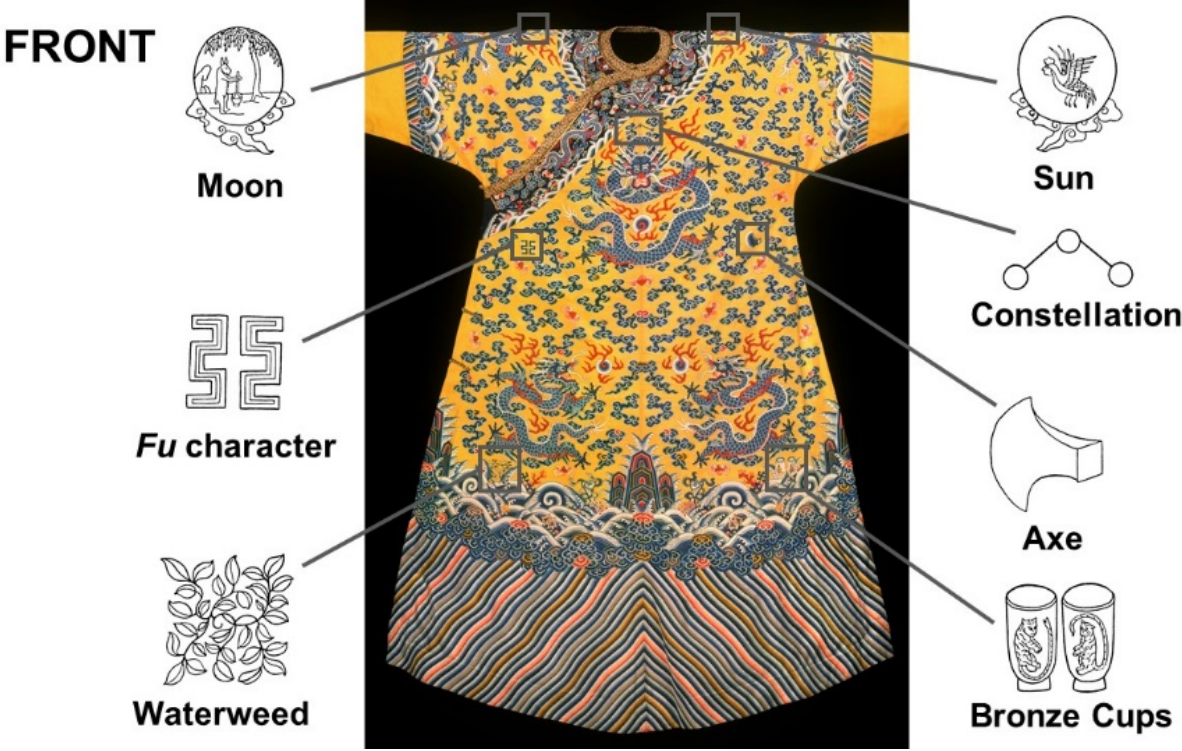
Golden-yellow robes such as this one, woven with the “Twelve Imperial Symbols”, were restricted in both color and decoration and were worn only by the emperor and his immediate family. The Twelve Symbols, as well as the dragons and cosmic landscape depicted on the robe, have roots in ancient China and were adopted by Manchu rulers to project their authority and power and to proclaim the status of the wearer as the ruler of the universe. The

symbols are small and are symmetrically arranged in three rings: below the neckline, above the waist, and above the waves.



Slit-tapestry Weave (*kési*) — usually a plain weave technique in which thread color changes in the horizontal weft resulting in small slits. This time-

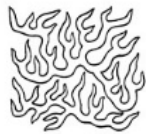
consuming technique facilitates the creation of complex, colorful patterns on a simple loom.



BACK



Dragons



Fire



Mountain



Pheasant



Grains

Mirror Stand

China, Qing dynasty, late 17th-18th century

Rosewood (*Huanghuali*), metal

Gift of Clay Tedeschi in memory of Robert H. Ellsworth,
2014.76

At one time, this elaborately carved wooden stand held a bronze mirror and would have most likely been found in the inner chamber of a married woman in a wealthy Qing-dynasty household. The stand is decorated with auspicious imagery. The carved birds interlaced amid leaves and flowers, the dragon finials, and the flaming jewel are symbols of procreation, conveying a wish for the arrival of a baby boy. Depicted at the lower center reticulated

panel is a *qilin*, a mythical beast whose appearance was thought to presage the arrival of a sage or illustrious ruler.

Chinese Jades

Jade, or *yü*, has captured the imagination of the Chinese since Neolithic times. More than gold, silver or any other precious stone, jade has been revered for its intrinsic beauty as well as the multiple symbolic meanings it has gradually acquired over China's long history. Carved jade objects have been used in religious rituals, ceremonies of state, personal adornment, and interior decoration; and the very word *yü* has come to represent the essential qualities of beauty, purity, and authority.

Reclining Phoenix with Peach Branch

China, Qing dynasty, 19th century

Pale green nephrite

Gift of George and Kathryn Argabrite, 1979.66.39

Cloisonné Disk with Design of Bamboo

China, Qing dynasty (1644-1911)

Cloisonné enamel on gilt bronze with jade, carnelian, and coral design of peaches, bats, and rocks in verso

Gift of Mrs. Ruth Burns, 1978.45.2abc

Vase with Dragon Design

Korea, 19th century

Porcelain painted with underglaze cobalt blue

Gift of Robert W. and Meedin Moore, 2018.4

Porcelain jars painted with cobalt-blue dragons were popular in Korea from the seventeenth through nineteenth century. Many were used as flower vases or wine jars in official court ceremonies. Originally regarded as powerful bringers of rain, dragons also became imperial emblems throughout East Asia. The two four-clawed dragons chasing flaming jewels on this vase display the dynamic strength of the mythical beasts, though their rather amusing faces and gestures suggest they were auspicious,

welcoming creatures not to be feared. Dragon jars became widely used during the late-nineteenth century, following an increase in the use of official kilns by the growing upper-middle class.



Dragon jars were often used as flower vases or wine jars in official court ceremonies. Detail from *Court Banquet Honoring High-ranking Officials over Seventy-years Old*, 1720, colors on silk, album leaf, National Museum of Korea.