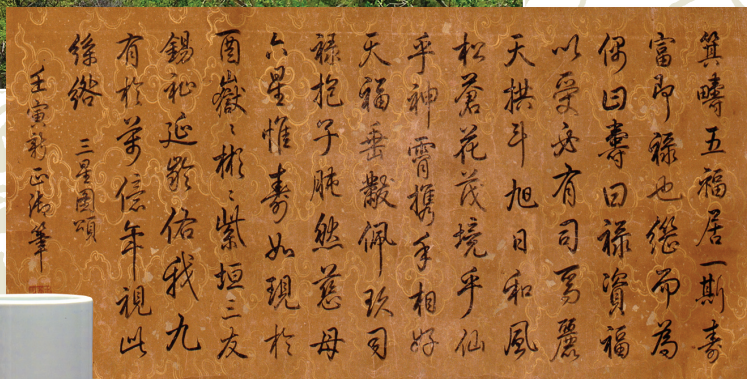


A Teacher's Sourcebook for CHINESE Art & Culture

Featuring the Chinese Art Collection
of the Peabody Essex Museum
Salem, MA



中國



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What do you think of when you hear the word “China”? Dishes? Dragons? Noodles? Cell phones? Chinatown?

China is one of the world’s largest countries and home to some of the world’s most ancient and advanced cultures. Familiarity with Chinese art and culture is essential for preparing students for the global future that we will all share. This knowledge is also important to understanding the changing characteristics of American neighborhoods. For example, the Chinese population in Boston increased 57 percent between 1990 to 2000 and has continued to increase since then.

Why Learn about Chinese Art and Culture?

For many American students, China can appear dauntingly foreign. The written and spoken languages of China have different linguistic roots than English or other European languages, and the written characters look different as well. China’s culture has traditions and practices that are very different from those found in the United States. These types of cultural barriers are often reinforced by the representations of China in popular American culture and the media, which emphasize the “mysterious” and “exotic” elements of Chinese culture without context or explanation.

At the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, we are fortunate to have Yin Yu Tang, the only freestanding Qing dynasty Chinese home on exhibition in a U.S. museum. This house and the museum’s collection of Chinese art and culture provide many opportunities to learn about China from authentic sources and highlight artistic accomplishments ranging from architecture, poetry, and philosophy to porcelain and painting. The 200-year-old house shows layers of cultural influence that range from the ancient to the modern, the local to the global. By examining this one house—from one particular region (Huizhou, in Anhui province), with the possessions and history of one particular family (the Huangs)—students can learn not just about Chinese art and culture but also that life in China is neither mysterious nor exotic after all.

Mandarin Chinese is the most commonly spoken language in the world. The population of the People’s Republic of China as of July 2005 was approximately 1.3 billion people, about a fifth of the world’s total population. Taiwan is home to an additional 23 million people, and there are approximately 34 million Chinese people living outside of China, with approximately 2 million living in the United States.



Pronunciation Guide

Chinese words and names in the following text are transliterated with the standard *pinyin* (spelled sound) system, the official phonetic notation system of the People's Republic of China that was adopted in the 1950s. The pronunciation of the majority of consonants in the *pinyin* system is similar to their pronunciation in English, with a few notable exceptions:

c is pronounced *ts*
q is pronounced *ch*
x is pronounced *sh*
zh is pronounced *j*

Some *pinyin* vowel sounds:

a *ah*
e *uh*
i *ee* or *ih* (when preceded by c, s, sh, z)
o *awe*
u *oo*
ai *eye*
ei *ay*
ao *ow*
ou *o*
ui *way*
uai *why*
ia *yah*
ian *yen*
ie *yeh*

Internationally, *pinyin* has largely supplanted the older Wade-Giles system, which was developed in the 19th century for use by Chinese specialists. Some examples of transliteration differences using the two systems include:

<i>Pinyin</i>	Wade-Giles
Qing	Ch'ing
Dao	Tao
Mao Zedong	Mao Tse-tung



Timeline of Chinese History

ca. 5000–2000 BCE	Neolithic cultures
ca. 2100–1600 BCE	Xia dynasty
ca. 1600–1050 BCE	Shang dynasty
ca. 1050–256 BCE	Zhou dynasty Western Zhou (ca. 1100–771 BCE) Eastern Zhou (770–256 BCE) Spring and Autumn period (770–476 BCE) Warring States period (475–221 BCE)
221–207 BCE	Qin dynasty
206 BCE–220 CE	Han dynasty Western Han (206 BCE–25 CE) Eastern Han (25–220)
220–589	Six Dynasties period Wei (220–265) Shu (220–265) Wu (222–280) Western Jin (265–316) Eastern Jin (317–420) Southern (420–588) and Northern (386–589) dynasties
581–618	Sui dynasty
618–907	Tang dynasty
907–960	Five Dynasties period
916–1125	Liao dynasty
960–1279	Song dynasty Northern Song (960–1127) Southern Song (1127–1279)
1038–1227	Western Xia dynasty
1115–1234	Jin dynasty
1271–1368	Yuan dynasty
1368–1644	Ming dynasty
1644–1911	Qing dynasty
1911–present	Republic of China (in Taiwan since 1949)
1949–present	People’s Republic of China

Introduction to Qing Dynasty China



China is one of the world's oldest and most advanced civilizations. It has been home to many accomplishments in the arts and sciences, and it has a highly developed economy and a sophisticated central government. At the height of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), China enjoyed achievements in many arenas, including economic prosperity, population growth, and the arts. There was a flourishing of textile art, ceramics, religious artwork, architecture, furniture, paper crafts, and basketry as well as the esteemed arts of Confucian scholars: painting and calligraphy. The Qing dynasty was also characterized by periods of political upheaval; internal conflict; and interactions and conflict with Japan, Europe, and the United States.

Most of the objects in the collections of Chinese art and culture at the Peabody Essex Museum date from the Qing dynasty, and many of them reflect the myriad international influences on China. The Qing dynasty was the last imperial dynasty before the establishment of the Republic of China in 1911. The ruling family during this period was ethnically Manchu, a seminomadic people from the northeast of China, not the Han ethnicity, of which the majority of the population was (and still is) comprised. The Manchu conquered China with their elite military forces after the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), which weakened due to internal corruption, revolts, and incursions from the Mongols and the Japanese.

In the 18th century, during the reign of the Qianlong Emperor, China underwent a period of expansion and prosperity. For the Huizhou merchants of southeastern China (the original home of Yin Yu Tang), the Ming and Qing dynasties were times of prosperity. There was significant growth of the merchant networks that dealt in salt, tea, and porcelain as well as the growth of pawn brokerages, the predecessors to modern banks. This period of economic strength was accompanied by a flourishing of the arts, spurred by increased wealth among the populace and patronage by the emperor. Huizhou merchants had long maintained businesses in areas of literati culture, and they incorporated the values and pastimes of the scholar-official class into their own lifestyles by collecting art, supporting scholarship, and building elegant homes. The construction of Yin Yu Tang began during this time (around 1800).

The reign of the Qianlong Emperor was also a time of dramatically increased contact with foreign states in the form of both trade and diplomacy. The emperor received gifts of art and technology from foreign dignitaries and was not hesitant to incorporate foreign-made goods and their designs into the collections of artwork made for him in his imperial studios.

Foreign trade became increasingly profitable as Europeans' desire for Chinese goods such as tea, silk, and porcelain increased. Foreigners were restricted to doing business with Chinese trading companies (hongs) in Hong Kong, Macau, and Guangzhou (called Canton by Europeans and

Americans). Chinese trading companies were keen to adapt their wares to the needs of foreign commissions, producing a diverse body of work now categorized as Asian Export Art.

At the end of the 18th century, foreign countries became desperate to increase their trade relations with China. In addition to trading commodities such as furs and ginseng, British and American interests turned to the illicit importation of the drug opium, which had been banned in China in 1729. The economic and social ills associated with the narcotic, the subsequent Opium Wars (1839–1842 and 1856–1860), and frequent peasant rebellions led to the weakening of the dynasty for the Qianlong Emperor's successors, the Jiaqing (1796–1820) and Daoguang (1821–1850) Emperors.

The Qing Dynasty finally ended in 1911 with the abdication of the 6-year-old Xuantong Emperor (called Puyi) and the establishment of the Republic of China.

QING EMPERORS

Shunzi	r. 1644–1661
Kangxi	r. 1662–1722
Yongzheng	r. 1723–1735
Qianlong	r. 1736–1795
Jiaqing	r. 1796–1820
Daoguang	r. 1821–1850
Xianfeng	r. 1851–1861
Tongzhi	r. 1862–1874 (Regency: Mother, Empress Dowager Cixi)
Guangxu	r. 1875–1908 (Regency: Aunt, Empress Dowager Cixi)
Xuantong	r. 1909–1911 (Regency: Father, Zaifeng, aka second Prince Chun)

Introduction to China Since 1911

In 1911, thousands of years of dynastic rule came to an end when the Republic of China was established with Dr. Sun Yat-Sen as its first president. It was unstable from its inception. Sun quickly turned the presidency over to General Yuan Shi Kai, whose death in 1916 led to a period of weakened centralized government with regional control by warlords. The next decades were times of great upheaval, as Dr. Sun's Guomintang Party vied with the Communist Party of China (CCP) to unify and govern the nation. At times, the two parties would stand together to combat warlordism and the encroaching Japanese army, but more often they were in direct, bloody competition. In 1949, the civil war between the CCP and the Guomintang Party ended. The CCP established the People's Republic of China (PRC), headed by Chairman Mao Zedong on the mainland. General Chiang Kai-shek (*pinyin*: Jiang Jieshi) and the Guomintang Party evacuated the Republic of China (ROC) government to the island of Taiwan.

During the 1960s, Chairman Mao became worried that the vitality of the communist nation was growing stale. In 1966, he initiated a radical reform movement aimed at the upper middle class and intelligentsia called the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. This movement focused on empowering the younger generations as fervent revolutionaries (Red Guards) by overthrowing senior Communist Party officials and all "bourgeois-reactionaries." Schools were closed, hundreds of thousands of people died, and millions of people from China's urban centers were "reeducated" by being relocated to rural areas where they performed manual labor alongside the farmers. Red Guards destroyed many cultural monuments and artworks associated with the previous regime to help rid the country of the "Four Olds": old ideas, old culture, old habits, and old customs. Members of the Huang family of Yin Yu Tang smashed tiles of opera scenes above the entrance to their home to indicate solidarity with the movement. The Cultural Revolution came to an end in 1976 with the death of Chairman Mao.

Since 1978, the PRC government has been reforming its economy from Soviet-style socialism to a market-oriented capitalist economy, resulting in a hybrid called "socialism with Chinese characteristics" by former president Deng Xiaoping. This period in China's history, however, has had its share of turmoil. In 1989, the government deployed the People's Liberation Army to quell civil unrest fomented by student-led pro-democracy demonstrations in Beijing's Tiananmen Square that had been going on for weeks. While official statistics are not known, it is believed that hundreds if not thousands of people were killed and thousands more were wounded as army tanks made their way through the city to the square. These extreme actions were met with international outrage, but the government defended them as necessary to combat the "counterrevolutionary rebellion" that threatened to overthrow the country's socialist system.

Despite this event, the 1990s saw the continued growth of the Chinese economy, making trade and diplomatic relations with China a top priority for many nations, even those that had denounced the Chinese government's role in the Tiananmen Square Massacre. The astounding growth of the Chinese economy in the first decade of the 21st century (9.5 percent in 2004 alone) is an indication that China will earn the title of superpower before long.

Not surprisingly, the art of China from the last quarter of the 20th century is very diverse, reflecting a wide range of influences: Chinese classical and folk art, Western architecture, Modernism, Social Realism, and international contemporary avant-garde art movements. Since the 1980s, a growing number of Chinese avant-garde artists have lived and worked outside of China.



Philosophy and Religion in China

To this day, religious practices in China are an amalgamation of folk religion practices and Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. Those latter three practices are considered the key religions, although Christianity and Islam have also been practiced in China for centuries. The presence of the three key religions is visible in the town of Huang Cun in Anhui province, the original home of Yin Yu Tang:

The religious and moral underpinnings of Huang Cun, with the Confucian ancestral halls and the temples for Taoist deities, were at one time rounded out by a Buddhist nunnery located east of the ancestral halls.

(Berliner, p. 35)

ANCESTOR VENERATION

One of the most ancient practices relating to spirits in China is ancestor veneration: the practice of honoring one's ancestors and providing for their welfare in the afterlife. The living hope that their ancestors who have passed on to the next world and have close contact with spiritual forces can help bring them good fortune, wealth, prosperity, and progeny. Conversely, if the spirits of ancestors are not taken care of, they become "hungry ghosts" who can wreak havoc on their family and the village. These beliefs, some of which had developed by the 2nd millennium BCE (early Bronze age), have evolved over time and are still practiced today. The practices of ancestor veneration today include offerings made at grave sites and ceremonies held in the home or in a town's family ancestral hall.

Traditionally in many regions of China, when a member of the family dies, ancestor veneration ceremonies are performed as part of the funeral. Personal items are placed in the coffin, and paper effigies of houses and servants are burned so that the smoke ascends and accompanies the deceased into the next world. After the funeral, a home altar is established consisting of a photograph or portrait of the deceased, dishes or cups used for offerings of food and wine, incense, and "spirit money"—symbolic paper bills. The home altar is attended with daily offerings for 49 days, the period in which the soul of the deceased is thought to be undergoing judgment. Then the altar is taken down, and the deceased is honored along with the rest of the family's ancestors in the home shrine and the town's ancestral hall. In both of these places, a wooden tablet is inscribed with the ancestor's name and dates of birth and death. It is thought that the spirits of the deceased reside in these tablets, so accordingly, they are offered incense, food, and spirit money. These customs are observed with regional specificities throughout China's many regions. In Huizhou, the offerings of incense are made daily, while food and spirit money are offered twice a month. These practices were interrupted for more than 40 years in mainland China after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 but have returned to prominence in recent times.

Elaborate ancestor veneration ceremonies are performed at the time of family weddings and funerals, as well as at holidays throughout the year. Here are some examples.

- ◆ Lunar New Year (first day of the first month through 15th day of the first month)
- ◆ *Qing Ming Jie* (Clear and Bright festival, 107 days after the winter solstice, usually April 4th or 5th; also called Grave Sweeping day)
- ◆ Ghost Festival (the 15th day of the seventh month)
- ◆ 24th day of the 12th month (preparing to welcome the spirits back for the New Year)

We didn't hang up the ancestor portraits constantly. We would hang them up only during the first month. Before we ate, we would spread out the chicken, the fish, and the meat, etc., on the table, light the candles and burn incense, and receive the ancestors as they returned home. Then we would send them off. Only after we sent them off would we eat.

[In the ancestors' portraits] the clothes were red, some were blue. The hats looked like Qing dynasty hats....There was one painting with many people, in a pyramid shape. There were two, then three....All were the sons and grandsons of the Huang family....They were hung in the upper hall, in the central hall, against the back wall.

—Huang Xiqi, a member of the Huang family,
the original owners of Yin Yu Tang.
From *Yin Yu Tang: The Architecture and Daily Life of a Chinese House*
by Nancy Berliner (Tuttle Publishing, 2003), p. 17.



Ancestral Portrait of a Couple
19th century
Huizhou, China
Ink and color on paper
Anonymous loan
990412.9

JEFFREY DYKES



NANCY BERLINER

Paper-and-bamboo mansion to be burned for deceased ancestors. Huang Cun, Xiuning County, China.



NANCY BERLINER

Paper-and-bamboo mansion being burned. Huang Cun, Xiuning County, China.

In addition to offering paper money, paper servants, and other worldly goods made of paper, Huizhou families often offer paper-and-bamboo houses to their ancestors. The designs of these houses are reminiscent of Huizhou architecture but are far more luxurious than people's actual homes. The paper-and-bamboo house shown above is decorated with traditional cut-paper art. It contains a main reception hall on the first floor, set up with an offering table for ancestor veneration, and it has a smaller hall on the second floor, for venerating deities.



JEFFREY DYKES



JEFFREY DYKES

Multigeneration Ancestor Portrait, Women
 Mid to late 19th century
 Mineral pigments on cotton cloth
 Museum purchase
 E301845.2

Multigeneration Ancestor Portrait, Men
 Mid to late 19th century
 Mineral pigments on cotton cloth
 Museum purchase
 E301845.1

This pair of paintings illustrates a regional variation in ancestor portraiture, characteristic of Shanxi province in northern China. The men and women are depicted separately in these companion pieces, and many generations of sons and their wives are portrayed in a unified composition. The painting of the men is also a genealogical record, with each of the men's names written on the lapel of their robes (the women are not named). Beneath the portraits, the names of five additional generations of men are recorded. The paintings cover a broad expanse of time, so the clothing of the descendants change according to the dynasty under which they lived. Here, the first eight generations of men are dressed in the apparel of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), while the last two are shown in clothes from the Qing dynasty (1644–1911).

Confucianism is a set of ethical values based on the studies and teachings of Kongzi (ca. 551–479 BCE), called Master Kong or Kongfuzi and romanized as Confucius. He was a philosopher and teacher who lived during the Spring and Autumn Period (770–476 BCE) of the late Zhou dynasty (1030–221 BCE), a time of great political upheaval. Kongzi did not set out to found a religion but rather to study the moral and social relationships of the Zhou dynasty and their ancient roots. In so doing, he hoped to establish a society with morality based on filial piety, loyalty, and humility. His teachings stress the importance of moral character for an individual within society, as well as the proper relationships among family members, friends, and a government and its citizens. These teachings are often practiced with fervor even today and are connected with practices such as ancestor veneration but do not address issues of gods or deities.

Sometimes called a “civil religion” or “diffused religion,” Confucianism is integrated into every aspect of Chinese culture. The practices of Confucianism include formal offerings and ceremonies as well as the social practices of courtesy and respect, which Kongzi felt were the basis of a strong civilization. Controversial during Kongzi’s lifetime and repressed during the subsequent dynasty, Confucianism became the state ideology during the reign of the Han Emperor Wu (Han Wudi, r. 140–87 BCE), who founded a school for the study of Confucian texts and instituted a policy that government administrators must be trained in these texts. This served as the basis for the imperial civil service examination system through which officials were selected for positions based on merit rather than family connections. The system evolved over the centuries and was part of imperial government processes until 1905.

After the establishment of Confucianism as the state ideology, the Chinese government supported Confucian teachings across the nation in towns and cities by having Confucian texts inscribed on stone monuments, publishing books on morality, and promoting lectures on Confucian ethics. Government awards were given to citizens who embodied these principles, including sons who were filial and widows who were chaste. Yin Yu Tang’s Huang family documents include such citations, including a banner inscribed by the newly established Nationalist government for the funeral altar of Madame Cheng (1858–1915, wife of Huang Yangxian, 32nd generation of the Huang family):

From *Yin Yu Tang: The Architecture and Daily Life of a Chinese House*, by Nancy Berliner (Tuttle Publishing, 2003), p. 63.

Authorized by Mr. Ni, sent to Anhui [by the Central Government], who, according to the regulations of the Ministry, after reporting to the President of the Republic, confers this certificate to the wife of Huang Yigu, surnamed Cheng... to express the appreciation of her chastity and filial piety with this banner.

Respectfully raised on an auspicious day of the sixth month of the fourth year of the Republic of China.



Madame Cheng's funeral altar, 1915, detail.
Huang Cun, Xiuning County, China.

The five human relationships

Ruler and subject
Parent and child
Elder brother and younger brother
Husband and wife
Friend and friend

The four Confucian social ranks

Scholars and government officials
Peasants
Artisans
Merchants

The eight Confucian virtues

Filial piety	Propriety
Benevolence	Righteousness
Loyalty	Integrity
Trust	Humility





JEFFREY DYKES

(Clockwise from lower left)

Peachbloom brush washer

Kangxi period (1662–1722)

Porcelain

Gift of Ms. Elizabeth S. Whiteside, E78269

Seal

19th century

Soapstone

Gift of Mr. Foster Stearns, E31957

Seal paste box

Qing dynasty (1644–1911)

Porcelain

Gift of Mr. Foster Stearns, E32068

Writing brushes

19th century

Ivory, bamboo, animal hair

Gift of J.L. Hammond, E8787

Brush pot

19th century

Bamboo

Gift of Philip C.F. Smith in memory of Zoie

B. Morse, E45145

Ink stick box

18th century

Lacquer, gilt

Gift of the Conger Collection, E76800

Ink stick

19th century

Pine soot, glue

Gift of Mrs. Charles E. Marsh, E20931

Ink stone

19th century

Duan stone

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Francis B. Lothrop, E29071

The “four treasures of a scholar’s studio” are: ink stone, ink well, paper, and brush pen. Using these tools and other accessories, including brush washers, brush holders, and seals, Confucian scholars would cultivate their talents in calligraphy, poetry, and painting.

At fifteen, I set my heart upon learning.
At thirty, I took my stand.
At forty, I had no doubts.
At fifty, I knew the will of heaven.
At sixty, my ear was attuned.
At seventy, I follow all the desires of my heart without breaking any rule.

Analects, 2.4

From *The Analects of Confucius* translated
by Simon Leys (W. W. Norton and Company, 1997), p. 6.

DAOISM

In Daoist philosophy, there is a unified way or path (*dao*) that is the origin of all things in the universe. All manifestations of the *dao* are represented with the union of opposites, or *yin* and *yang*. Humans have a place in the natural order of the universe, and they can best fulfill their role through inaction (*wu-wei*), or letting nature take its course. Unlike Confucianism, which occupies itself wholly with virtues of the human realm, Daoism states that the individual must negotiate his position with regard to the forces of nature rather than the artificial values of society. Followers of the *dao* are encouraged to develop the “three jewels of the *dao*” (compassion, simplicity, and patience) and to nurture the three bodily energies (*jing*, *qi*, and *shen*) through meditation and exercise such as *taijiquan* (widely known in the West as tai chi) and *qigong*.

The founder of Daoism is Laozi (ca. 604–531 BCE), who is believed to have been an older contemporary of Kongzi, although some scholars posit that he did not exist and that the writings attributed to him in the *Dao De Jing* (Wade-Giles: Tao Te Ching) were the work of multiple philosophers. The writings of Daoism include the eponymous volume *Zhuangzi* (ca. 4th century BCE) and the *Daozang* (ca. 400 CE), a compilation of thousands of Daoist texts.

Beginning in the 2nd century, religious Daoism (*dao jiao*) emerged as a separate tradition from philosophical Daoism (*dao jia*), leading to the establishment of formal Daoist temples, ceremonial practices, and the development of the Daoist pantheon. The pantheon grew to encompass not just deities that appear in the Daoist scriptures but also popular deities from Chinese folk religions, as well as some Buddhist deities and nature spirits, all of whom are considered manifestations of the *dao*.

There was something formless and perfect
before the universe was born.
It is serene. Empty.
Solitary. Unchanging.
Infinite. Eternally present.
It is the mother of the universe.
For lack of a better name,
I call it the Dao.

It flows through all things,
inside and out, and returns
to the origin of all things.

The Dao is great.
The universe is great.
Earth is great.
Man is great.
These are the four great powers.

Man follows the earth.
Earth follows the universe.
The universe follows the Dao.
The Dao follows only itself.

Dao De Jing, chapter 25
From *Tao te Ching* translated by Stephen
Mitchell (Harper and Row, 1988), p. 25.

<i>Five basic elements of the universe (Wu Xing)</i>	<i>Five cardinal directions</i>	<i>Five colors</i>	<i>Five tastes</i>	<i>Five heavenly guardian animals</i>
Wood	East	Green or blue	Sour	Green dragon
Fire	South	Red	Bitter	Red phoenix
Earth	Center	Yellow	Sweet	Yellow dragon
Metal	West	White	Hot	White tiger
Water	North	Black	Salty	Black tortoise-serpent

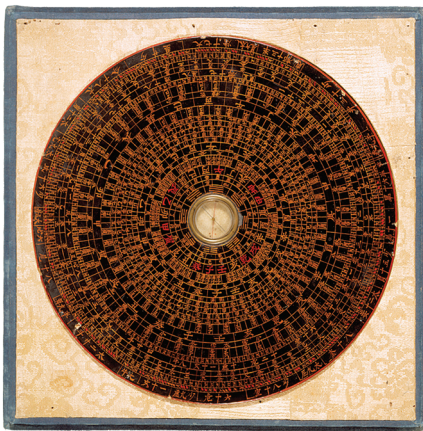


JEFFREY DYKES

The Three Stars, gods who bestow the blessings of happiness, rank, and long life, represent the most desired elements of a good life in China. The Three Stars are usually depicted together, as shown here, with the star god of happiness (*Fuxing*) in the middle, the star god of emoluments (*Luxing*) on the right, and the star god of longevity (*Shouxing*) on the left. The star god of happiness carries an infant boy in his arms, as sons are among the blessings that these gods bestow upon families. The star gods of happiness and emoluments are depicted in the dress of Confucian scholar-officials and are associated with real people who were involved with government in the Tang (618–907) and Han (206 BCE–220 CE) dynasties, respectively. The star god of emoluments brings both high rank and prosperity, as the word *lu* refers to the salary that an official receives. The star god of longevity wears yellow robes in the style of a Daoist priest and is associated with Canopus, the second brightest star in the sky. These three deities are in the Daoist pantheon, but they first evolved as popular deities, and there are no Daoist scriptures devoted to them. Artistic representations of Daoist deities and the ceremonies associated with them were probably not codified until after the arrival of Buddhism and its institutions from India. This picture was done in *kesi*, a sumptuous pictorial silk tapestry-weaving technique originally from Central Asia that was very popular at court during the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) as well as during the Song (960–1279) and Ming (1368–1644) dynasties.

San Xing tu (Three Stars), detail
18th century
Tapestry-woven silk
Museum Purchase
E81764

Daoist religious practices evolved considerably after the introduction of Buddhism in China, especially the development of scriptures, the evolution of images of Daoist deities, and the building of Daoist monasteries. Daoism also developed a pantheon of powerful deities like the Celestial Worthy of Primordial Beginning, similar to the supreme Buddhas of the Mahayana tradition. This deity, who is one of the most important and powerful Daoist gods, did not appear until the 5th century, but soon thereafter was accorded very high status as the source of all Daoist teachings, able to free the souls of all living things from suffering. He was eventually included in the highest grouping of Daoist deities, the Three Purities, as the most powerful figure.



Geomancy (Feng shui) compass
19th century
Wood, lacquer, glass
Gift of Edward D. Lovejoy
E24137

Feng shui (wind and water) is the method used by the Chinese to determine auspicious orientation for cities, homes, and graves in relation to the energies of geographical and landscape elements such as water, mountains, and celestial bodies. This *luopan* (feng shui compass) is used by feng shui masters to determine appropriate sites for homes and graves by factoring in information about a person's birth date and hour along with geographic and astronomical information. This type of *luopan* was invented in Huizhou and is still produced in the region. The practice of feng shui predates Daoism, but it is now considered a manifestation of living in harmony with natural forces. Feng shui siting to ensure a happy and prosperous home is still practiced today in many places in China and has gained worldwide popularity in recent years.



Celestial Worthy of Primordial Beginning
Early 19th century
Ink and color on paper
Gift of Mrs. F.C. Bartlett
E31306

Buddhism originated in India and is based on the teachings of the historic Sakyamuni Buddha, born Siddhartha Gautama in the 6th century BCE as a prince of the Sakya royal family. The Sakyamuni Buddha taught that life is suffering but that human beings can attain freedom from suffering by eliminating desire. Mahayana Buddhism, the branch practiced in China, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Taiwan, Tibet, and Vietnam, developed in India as a more liberal interpretation of the Buddha's teachings. In Mahayana Buddhism, the Sakyamuni Buddha is viewed as an earthly manifestation of a celestial being, one of many Buddhas in its pantheon. This school of thought emphasizes the role of bodhisattvas and posits that all beings can achieve personal enlightenment

Buddhism had arrived in China by the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) via the trade routes that connected China with India and Central Asia known today as the Silk Road. As Buddhism became popular in China over the centuries, it was also sinicized, drawing on existing Daoist and Confucian practices and emphasizing core Chinese values such as filial piety. The two types of Mahayana Buddhism most evident in China today are Chan (Japanese: Zen; Korean: Son) and Pure Land (sometimes called Amidism). Chan Buddhism includes traditions of monasticism, meditation, and a focus on the inner world in order to attain enlightenment. Pure Land Buddhism focuses on the Amitabha Buddha, also called the Buddha of Infinite Light or the Buddha of the Western Paradise. Practitioners who invoke the name of Amitabha will be granted rebirth in the Pure Land (Western Paradise), where enlightenment can be more easily achieved.

Among the pantheon of Buddhist deities, certain ones became popular with practitioners in China. The bodhisattva Guanyin (Sanskrit: Avalokitesvara), for example, known for showing compassion and granting relief from suffering, became one of the most popular deities in China. Like many deities in the Hindu and Buddhist pantheons of India, Guanyin is said to possess great power and is represented with both male and female characteristics. Chinese representations of Guanyin were originally depicted with mostly male characteristics but started to take on more female attributes during the Song dynasty (960–1279) and were usually shown as fully female by the 12th century. Guanyin was also incorporated into the Daoist pantheon as one of the immortals.



JEFFREY DYKES

Figure of Guanyin
1680–1720
Porcelain
Gift of the Estate of Elizabeth S. Whiteside,
E83411.A



JEFFREY DYKES

Budai Heshang
1725–1750
Porcelain
Museum purchase
E31306

The figure shown above, called Cloth-sack (*Budai*) Monk (*Heshang*) or Hotei, is often referred to as the Laughing Buddha, who relieved sadness as he traveled the world. He is not actually a Buddha but a monk who is believed to be an incarnation of the Maitreya Buddha before he attained enlightenment. This porcelain figurine depicts a seated Budai with his customary laughing expression, wearing a green monk's robe decorated with circular crane medallions. He is always portrayed with a cloth sack in his left hand filled with his belongings and a small cord of eighteen beads (symbolizing the 18 *luohan*) in his right. Small sculptures like this one were sometimes made as devotional objects for use in Chinese homes or for export to European collectors who had a predilection for Chinese objects.

Vase
Ca. 1795
Porcelain
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Walter W. Patten, Jr.
E79059



JEFFREY DYKES



A *luohan* (Sanskrit: *arhat*) is a disciple of the historical Sakyamuni Buddha who followed the eightfold path, achieved enlightenment and freedom from the cycle of rebirth, and was regarded as a holy being possessing great wisdom and courage. In Buddhist temples, *luohan* are usually shown as eighteen individual sculptures along the walls or on either side of a central Buddha sculpture, sometimes accompanied by hundreds of smaller *luohan* sculptures. The 18 *luohan* were also a popular subject in Song dynasty painting and Ming and Qing dynasty decorative art and appeared as an auspicious motif on many secular objects including textiles and ceramics. This porcelain vase shows the individual characteristics of the 18 *luohan*.



JEFFREY DYKES

Pair of Buddha Lions
Ca. 1850
Stone

Gift of the Trustees of Cunningham Park,
E78677.1-2

Lions are not native to China, so they are represented as semimythic creatures that combine features of lions, dogs, and other animals. They were first introduced in Buddhist stories, where they are considered the most noble of animals, guarding against danger and upholding Buddhist Law. Wenshu (Sanskrit: Manjusri), the bodhisattva of wisdom, is often depicted riding on the back of a lion. Pairs of carved stone lions are often placed outside of temples, palaces, or important official buildings as protective beings and to represent the power and prestige of the people inside. The male lion is placed on the left of the structure it protects, with a ball in its paw. The female lion is placed on the right, with a cub under her paw.

Chinese Porcelain in World Trade History



China developed the technology to make porcelain from a unique white clay called kaolin during the Tang dynasty (618–907), and by the Song dynasty (960–1279), the porcelain industry was fully developed. During the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), a period of Mongol rule, trade was encouraged, notably with Southeast Asia, India, and the Middle East. Porcelain was in high demand in part because it could be formed into large plates, bowls, and serving vessels that were especially conducive to the style of serving and eating food in India and the Middle East. As a result of this and the Middle Eastern taste for vibrant decoration, Chinese porcelain began to be decorated with blue from the mineral cobalt, imported from Persia. When cobalt was discovered in China, during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), production of blue and white porcelain reached new heights. It continues to this day.

Also during the Ming dynasty, Portuguese and Dutch merchants began trading with China and exporting Chinese porcelain to Europe and the Americas, where it was extremely popular. Porcelain became so synonymous with its country of origin that European enthusiasts began to call the valuable porcelain wares “china.” A German version of porcelain was developed in Meissen in the early 18th century, but demand for Chinese porcelain continued throughout the Qing dynasty (1644–1910). Ship captains commissioned Chinese artists to create porcelain in styles and shapes for European tastes and usage. These items became mainstays of Western homes. Improvements in kiln technology during the Qing dynasty helped the porcelain industry become more efficient.

Americans began to trade with China shortly after the American Revolution, and ships returned to American ports full of tea, spices, silks, and porcelain. Many of these ships sailed out of the port of Salem, Massachusetts. In 1799, Salem sea captains established the East India Marine Society, which was the basis for the Peabody Essex Museum and its Chinese and Asian export porcelain collections, among the earliest and largest in the world.

Dish
 1522–1566
 China; gilded in Europe ca. 1720;
 Mounts, late 17th century
 Porcelain, bronze, gold
 Museum purchase
 AE86353



This dish, made during the Ming dynasty under the reign of the Jiajing Emperor (r. 1522–1566), is an example of the cosmopolitan nature of Chinese porcelain production. The large size of the dish indicates that it might have been made for a Middle Eastern market. It is decorated in cobalt blue with a tree of life motif, which originated in India. Mounts were added in Europe in the 17th century, and gilding was added in the 18th century in keeping with the rococo taste for rich decoration.



JEFFREY DYKES

This soup tureen, cover, and stand set is an example of porcelain made in China for the Western market. It was produced using a mold and hand-modeling techniques to copy a ceramic brought to China from Europe. The ceramic itself had been copied from an example in silver. While the painted decorations on the tureen set appear in the same blue-and-white palette used for domestic wares, the designs are tailored to European tastes.

Tureen, cover, and stand
 1750–1760
 Porcelain
 Museum purchase
 AE83552.AB

Amitabha Buddha. The Buddha of Infinite Light, who presides over the Western Paradise according to the Pure Land sect of Mahayana Buddhism.

Analects. The most revered text in Confucianism, probably assembled by the disciples of Kongzi, based primarily on his sayings.

ancestor veneration. The ceremonies and practices with which a Chinese family remembers and pays homage to its ancestors. It is hoped that the ancestors will in turn help bring prosperity, good fortune, and long life to their descendants. These practices often involve grave tending and funeral practices as well as burning incense, spirit money, and effigies of worldly accoutrements made of paper.

ancestral hall. A communal building, usually one of the town's largest, that houses ancestral tablets inscribed with names, birth dates, and death dates of family members. People visit these halls to pay homage to their ancestors and make periodic offerings of food, incense, and spirit money.

Anhui. A province in southeast China, located on the Yangzi River, approximately 250 miles southwest of Shanghai. The Peabody Essex Museum's Yin Yu Tang house was originally built in the Huizhou region of Anhui province.

bodhisattva. In Mahayana Buddhism, a compassionate, enlightened being who remains in the earthly realm to help others reach enlightenment.

Buddha. An awakened being who has achieved perfect enlightenment, in accordance with the tenets of Buddhism. Also, the historical Buddha, born Prince Siddhartha Gautama (also called Sakyamuni), who lived in northern India in the 6th century BCE.

Buddhism. One of the world's major religions, founded by the Sakyamuni Buddha, born Siddhartha Gautama in the 6th century BCE in northern India.

Chan Buddhism (Japanese: Zen; Korean: Son). A major school of Mahayana Buddhism found in China that emphasizes using meditation to reach personal enlightenment. Chan is considered an adaptation of Indian *Dhyana* meditation practices, with additional influence from Daoism. The Indian monk Bodhidharma is credited with founding Chan Buddhism in the 6th century.

civil service examination system. An official examination system used to determine positions in the Chinese imperial civil service based on merit and education. It was introduced during the Han Dynasty (206 BC–220 CE) and used until just before the fall of the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911).

Confucianism. A school of thought that promotes social mores and ethical values based on hierarchy, relationships, and obligations that are integral to Chinese culture, related to the teachings of the philosopher Kongzi (Confucius, ca. 551–479 BCE).

dao (Wade-Giles: tao). In Daoism, the unnamable, underlying, eternal principle of the universe that is the source of reality. It is considered impossible to define but visible through the changes in the natural world. Literally, “the path” or “the way.”

Daoism (Wade-Giles: Taoism). An indigenous Chinese philosophy (Chinese: *dao jia*), thought to be founded by Laozi (ca. 604–531 BCE), that looks to the unnameable eternal principle of the *dao* (path, or way) to explain the universe and all of its components. Daoism emphasizes that the ideal human role in the universe is simplicity, inaction (*wu-wei*), and subordination to nature. Religious Daoism (Chinese: *dao jiao*), which emerged from philosophical Daoism in the 2nd century, involves ceremonial practices and incorporates elements of Chinese folk religion and Mahayana Buddhism.

emolument. An official’s salary.

ginseng. The aromatic root of plants in the family *Araliaceae*, highly valued in China for its medicinal properties. North American ginseng was an important commodity in early trade between China and the United States.

Guangzhou (formerly romanized Canton). The capital city of Guangdong Province in southern China, located at the mouth of the Pearl River. It was the only port city open to trade with Westerners from 1757–1842.

hong. A mercantile establishment for foreign trade in China. Hong merchants formed a guild and had exclusive privileges to trade with foreigners in Guangzhou (Canton) prior to the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842.

Huang family. Refers to the Huang family of Yin Yu Tang, from Huang Cun (Huang Village) in Huizhou. They were the original owners and occupants of Yin Yu Tang for eight generations from the time the house was built (ca. 1800) to the 1980s.

Huizhou. The traditional name, dating back to the Song dynasty (960–1279), of a prefecture in southeastern Anhui province, previously called Xin’an. Located 250 miles southwest of Shanghai, Huizhou is known for its picturesque mountains and for its population comprised mainly of traveling merchants. The regional culture was defined by the merchant lifestyle. Men were often away from home for long periods of time, but the profits from their businesses allowed them to build grand homes and imitate the pursuits of the literati class. The area was officially renamed Huangshan Municipality in the 1980s, but is still often referred to as Huizhou.

kesi. A silk tapestry weaving technique originally from Central Asia, employed for making imperial robes and rank badges as well as pictorial tapestries.

Kongzi (ca. 551–479 BCE) (Often romanized as Confucius). One of the most influential teachers, philosophers, and political theorists in world history, born in the state of Lu, in what is now Shandong province in eastern China. He lived in a time of war and political upheaval and saw morality as the key to stabilizing society and the government. Kongzi advocated for moral education and constant self-cultivation in order to promote an ethical society based on mutual respect and observance of hierarchy in social relationships. His teachings form a moral code that has been the basis of Chinese and other Asian societies for thousands of years.

Laozi (ca. 604–531 BCE) (Literally, “old master”). Sage considered to be the founder of Daoism and the alleged author of the seminal Daoist text *Dao De Jing*. In religious Daoism (*dao jiao*), he is regarded as one of the Three Purities, the most important deities in the pantheon, and a pure emanation of the *dao*.

literati. Scholar-officials who comprised the highest social rank in the Confucian hierarchy. Trained in history, poetry, and the Confucian classics, they also cultivated their talents in calligraphy, painting, poetry, and art collecting.

Lunar New Year. One of the most important Chinese holidays, celebrated from the 1st through 15th days of the 1st month, according to the lunar calendar. Each year is associated with an animal in the 12-year Chinese zodiac: a rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog, or boar. Holiday customs include having family gatherings, decorating the home with auspicious symbols and poems, performing ancestor veneration, cleaning house, paying off debts, buying new clothes, and eating special foods. Public celebrations involve lion and dragon dances, lighting firecrackers, and displaying lanterns. The origins of all these traditions relate to warding off evil spirits and bringing good fortune for the new year.

luohan. A disciple of the historical Buddha who followed the eightfold path, achieved enlightenment, and earned freedom from the cycle of rebirth. Regarded in Buddhism as a being with great wisdom and courage.

Mahayana Buddhism. The “greater vehicle” sect of Buddhism, practiced in China, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Taiwan, Tibet, and Vietnam. Founded in India in the 1st century, with a tradition of monasticism and meditation. Mahayana emphasizes personal devotion and merits, with enlightenment attainable by all. The Mahayana pantheon includes many Buddhas in addition to the historical Buddha, as well as bodhisattvas.

Manchu. A nomadic ethnic and cultural group that originated in Manchuria, in northeastern Asia that ruled China during the Jin (1115–1234) and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties and were known for their military prowess on horseback. Originally descendant from a group of people called the Tungus, they were called the Jurchen from the 10th century, and Manchu came into use in the 16th century. The Manchu language is in the Altaic language family.



Mongol. Any of several traditionally nomadic ethnic and cultural groups from east central Asia, in current day Mongolia, Russia, and China. Unified under Genghis Khan (1162–1227), the Mongols undertook a series of significant military campaigns in the 12th and 13th centuries that led to an expanded Mongol Empire that at its height reached from eastern Europe to Korea. The Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), a period of Mongol rule in China, was the result of these campaigns.

porcelain. A high-fired, semitranslucent ceramic, valued for its strength, durability, and beauty. The technology for making porcelain was developed in China during the Tang dynasty (618–907) and was highly valued as a trading commodity with the Middle East and later Europe and the United States. Porcelain is made from a special white clay called kaolin (named for the Gaoling Mountain in Jingdezhen, Zhejiang province) and “porcelain stone” (*baidunzi* or *petunze*, which contains the mineral feldspar) and is fired between 1250 and 1400 degrees Celsius.

Qianlong Emperor (1711–1799). The fourth emperor of the Qing dynasty, who ruled China during a period of expansion, prosperity, and foreign contact (1736–1795). As a great patron of the arts and a voracious collector of antiquities, the Qianlong emperor placed himself in the lineage of Chinese rulers whose possession of artwork and sponsorship of the arts legitimized their reign.

qigong (Wade-Giles: Chi K’ung). A physical practice to improve health involving the use of meditation, posture, and controlled breathing to promote and regulate the body’s vital energy.

sinicized. Changed or modified by Chinese influence.

spirit money. Paper bills designed to resemble real money, usually in excessively high denominations, offered in ancestor veneration ceremonies.

taijiquan (Wade-Giles: T’ai Chi Chuan). The “supreme ultimate fighting system” for mental and physical cultivation in harmony with *taiji*, the source and union of yin and yang, the two primary elements of the universe in Daoist philosophy.

three bodily energies. In Daoism, the energies *jing* (vital essence), *qi* (vital energy or breath), and *shen* (spirit) circulate through the body similar to the circulation of blood. Meditation and physical practices like *taijiquan* and *qigong* help cultivate and balance these energies, leading to good health and a long life.

wu-wei. In Daoism, the principle of nonaction or nonpurposeful striving that allows humans to return to a more natural state, in harmony with the dao.

yin and yang. In Chinese philosophy, two opposing yet interrelated forces that exist in all things as the union of opposites. Yin is associated with the characteristics of passivity, darkness, femininity, and weakness. Yang is associated with the characteristics of activity, brightness, masculinity, and forcefulness. The premise of yin and yang form the basis for traditional medicine, architecture, martial arts, and many other disciplines in China.

Yin Yu Tang (Literally: “the hall of plentiful shelter”). The former home of the Huang family, constructed around 1800 in the Huizhou region of Anhui province, China, in the architectural style of that region. In the mid-1990s, the house was disassembled in China and reerected at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, where it was opened to the public in 2003. It is now on permanent exhibition, preserved as it was when it was last inhabited by the Huang family, in the mid-1980s.

Qing dynasty (1644–1911). The last imperial dynasty of China, founded by the Manchu leader Dorgun (1612–1650), who acted as the regent for his nephew, the Shunzhi Emperor. This was the largest consolidated empire in Chinese history, with notable progress in the arts, sciences, economy, and population in the 17th and 18th centuries. In the 19th century, the empire was characterized by persistent instability. Natural disasters, internal rebellions, and foreign pressures led to its weakening and decline. The dynasty was eventually overthrown in 1911, replaced by the Republic of China.



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