TALES OF THE BRUSH

LITERARY MASTERPIECES IN CHINESE PAINTING

THROUGH JANUARY 13, 2008

POSTER INSIDE!
THE FREER GALLERY OF ART AND ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY at the Smithsonian Institution together form the national museum of Asian art for the United States. The Freer Gallery also houses a collection of American art from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including the world’s most important collection of works by James McNeill Whistler.

FREER CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

Parades: Freer Ceramics Installed by Gwyn Hanssen Pigott
THROUGH NOVEMBER 4, 2007

Japanese Arts of the Edo Period 1615–1868
THROUGH FEBRUARY 10, 2008

The Potter’s Mark: Tea Ceramics and Their Makers
THROUGH FEBRUARY 10, 2008

Ongoing Freer Exhibitions
Ancient Chinese Pottery and Bronze Art for Art’s Sake (American)
Arts of the Indian Subcontinent and the Himalayas
Arts of the Islamic World
Black & White: Chinese Ceramics from the 10th–14th Centuries
Buddhist Art
Charles Lang Freer and Egypt
Japanese Screens
Korean Ceramics
The Peacock Room
The Religious Art of Japan
Small Masterpieces: Whistler Painting from the 1880s
Vietnamese Ceramics from the Red River Delta

SACKLER CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

Closing Soon!
Encompassing the Globe: Portugal and the World in the 16th and 17th Centuries
THROUGH SEPTEMBER 16, 2007

Patterned Feathers, Piercing Eyes: Edo Masters from the Price Collection

Taking Shape: Ceramics in Southeast Asia
THROUGH 2010

Ongoing Sackler Exhibitions
The Arts of China
Contemporary Japanese Porcelain
Sculpture of South and Southeast Asia

TOURS

We offer a variety of tours related to the museum’s ongoing and temporary exhibitions. For detailed information about offerings for school groups, please visit our website at www.asia.si.edu/education/ToursForStudents.htm.

To arrange a tour, please submit a tour request form online at www.asia.si.edu/education/TourRequestForm.htm. For more information, call 202.633.1012 or write to asiatours@si.edu.
Free Semiannual Newsletter
Asian Art Connections: Resources for Educators
To subscribe, please write to fsgasiaeducation@si.edu

Online Resources: General
E-Gallery
Create your own exhibition using objects from the Freer and Sackler online collection. www.asia.si.edu

Online Educational Resources
www.asia.si.edu/education/onlineguides.htm

Freer and Sackler Collections
www.asia.si.edu/collections/default.htm

Online Exhibitions
www.asia.si.edu/exhibitions/online.htm

Tour Information
www.asia.si.edu/education/ToursForStudents.htm

Online Resources: Publications
Asian Art Connections: A Resource for Educators
w w w . a s i a . s i . e d u / e d u c a t o r s / a s i a _ r e s o u r c e . h t m
Previous newsletters available in PDF format.

The Art and Archaeology of Ancient China: A Teacher's Guide
www.asia.si.edu/education/onlineguides.htm

The Art of Buddhism: A Teacher's Guide
www.asia.si.edu/education/ArtofBuddhism.pdf

Arts of the Islamic World: A Teacher's Guide
www.asia.si.edu/education/islam.pdf

The Arts of Japan: A Teacher's Guide
www.asia.si.edu/education/onlineguides.htm

Devi: The Great Goddess (Hinduism)
www.asia.si.edu/education/devi/index.htm

Japan: Images of a People
smithsonianeducation.org/educators/lesson_plans/japan_images_people/index.html

Puja: Expressions of Hindu Devotion
www.asia.si.edu/education/pujaonline/puja/start.htm

Teacher Resources for Sale
Sackler Gallery Shops
All teacher resources listed below are for sale in the Sackler shops. Order these materials online at www.freersacklershop.com, by phone at 202.633.0535, or by fax at 202.633.9838. In addition to Freer and Sackler publications, the shops also stock children's books on Asia that our education department has recommended.

Intersections: Japanese Art and the West
A Teacher's Guide
Appropriate for grades 9–12, $20
Explore the ways that Japanese art and Western art have intersected, beginning in the late nineteenth century.

The Arts of Japan: A Teacher's Guide
Appropriate for grades 4–12, $20

The Art and Archaeology of Ancient China: A Teacher's Guide
Appropriate for grades 3–12, $20

The Art of Buddhism: A Teacher's Guide
Appropriate for grades 4–12, $20

The Arts of the Islamic World: A Teacher's Guide
Appropriate for grades 4–12, $20

Silk Road Resource Packet
Appropriate for grades 4–12, $12

Video
Puja: Expressions of Hindu Devotion
Appropriate for grades 6–12, $10
This award-winning video introduces Hindu worship through moving images and interviews. 1996. 20 min. (close captioned)

CD-ROM
Chi's Adventure in Ancient China
Appropriate for grades 3–6, $10
Join Chi the chimera as he introduces viewers to ancient Chinese civilization through objects from the Freer and Sackler collections.

CD
Silk Road Stories
An audio CD of stories told by Freer and Sackler volunteers who have cultural ties to countries along the ancient Silk Road. Features stories from China, Japan, Turkey, and Bangladesh. $10

Slides and Digital Images
Slides and digital images are available from our rights and reproductions department. To preview the sets or to order online, go to www.asia.si.edu/visitor/rnr.htm and click on Slide Sets Now Available! Order sets by fax at 202.633.9770. $100 for a set of 40 images; individual slides or digital images available for $5 each.
What role does tradition play in the art of China? What is the relationship among literature, calligraphy, and painting in the Chinese artistic tradition? How are important works of Chinese literature depicted in art over time and in different media?

As early as the first century C.E. to the present day, Chinese artists have turned to literature for inspiration for their paintings, works on silk and paper, and other objects. By creating a close relationship between text and image, artists over the centuries have depicted famous mythical scenes, interpreted beloved poems and stories, and illustrated significant events in Chinese history. Tales of the Brush explores important literary themes, from the story of the Queen Mother of the West, the supreme goddess who grows the peaches of immortality that are ripe once every three thousand years—to the novelistic Story of the West Chamber, a popular tale of romance and female rebellion against tradition. When considered together, these works provide insight into the deep connection between visual art and literary text in the Chinese tradition.

* Of the works of art featured on the poster and in the classroom activity, only the lacquer box and calligraphy are on view in the exhibition.
PART I

FEATURED OBJECTS

Second Prose Poem on the Red Cliff
Wen Zhengming (1470–1559)
China, Ming dynasty, 1552
Handscroll; ink and color on paper
141.5 x 30.5 cm
Freer Gallery of Art, Purchase F1939.1

Wen Zhengming, a painter who lived during the Ming dynasty (1388–1644), was inspired by a poem written by Su Shi (1037–1101) during the Song dynasty (960–1279). In Second Prose Poem on the Red Cliff, the poet Su Shi describes how he and two of his friends took a leisurely boat trip to the Red Cliff, site of an ancient battlefield. As they enjoy their surroundings, the three friends discuss the transient nature of life. The calligraphy version of the poem also appears on this handscroll—a scroll format that allows the artwork and writing to be viewed and read from right to left. (See the image at left and the poster on the other side.)

Su Shi was an accomplished writer, painter, and calligrapher who also worked for the government. As a scholar-official, Su was an educated man who held a government position while he cultivated his talents in poetry, calligraphy, painting, and music. (See scholar-official.)

A priest robe (kesa) container with lid
China, late Ming–early Qing period, 17th century
Lacquer
12.8 x 38.9 x 56.2 cm
Freer Gallery of Art, Purchase F1956.4a–b

Decorated with an image based on Su Shi’s Second Prose Poem on the Red Cliff, this box (above) shows how Chinese artists use different media or materials to depict scenes from well-known literature. Created more than a century after the handscroll by Wen Zhengming, this lacquer box once served as a storage container for a Japanese robe.

PART II

Look carefully at the painting on the poster. Describe it in detail.

A) Looking
What colors and shapes do you see?
How are those colors and shapes arranged on the painting?
What kinds of human and natural elements do you see?
How are they positioned in the painting?
What other details do you notice?
Does it look like anything you have seen before?
What does it NOT look like to you?

B) Interpreting
What do you think is going on in this painting?
What do you see that makes you think that?
What feeling do you get from this painting? Why?

C) Exploring
What questions do you have about this painting?
PART III

What does it mean to be a good citizen? What makes someone a respected member of a community or qualified to serve in a government role? Which activities, skills, and values do you associate with the phrase “good citizen”? Use the chart below to clarify your ideas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>SKILLS</th>
<th>VALUES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: Volunteering; offering services to the community without pay, such as assisting in disaster relief efforts</td>
<td>Ability to work hard, communicate well with people, or use special skills, such as using medical knowledge to assist the sick and injured after a natural disaster</td>
<td>Compassion for people and desire to help those in need; sense of duty to contribute positively to the community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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SCHOLAR-OFFICIALS AND THEIR ART

What is a scholar-official?
From the Han dynasty (206 B.C.E.–220 C.E.) through the end of the Qing dynasty (1644–1912), the scholar-official represented a Chinese ideal of power, education, and culture. Scholar-officials were an elite group of men who qualified for imperial government positions by passing difficult examinations on Confucian classics, composition, and poetry.

What did Confucian values have to do with scholar-officials?
The system of thought developed by Confucius (Kong Qiu, 551–471 B.C.E.) became a significant cultural force in Chinese history. Confucian values stress the importance of a person’s correct placement in society, the role of the family, and the need for a good and just government. Confucius also promoted two values that defined the scholar-official: looking back to tradition in an effort to find models of proper moral behavior, and self-improvement through educational and artistic pursuits.

What does this painting suggest about scholar-officials’ thoughts on art?
Creating and appreciating poetry, calligraphy, painting, and music were important parts of the world of the scholar-official. The painting Second Prose Poem on the Red Cliff promotes four important elements:
1) Tradition: This work, created by Wen Zhengming in 1552, is based on a poem and a painting style that date from the Song dynasty, almost five hundred years earlier.
2) Style: Since calligraphy was a highly regarded form of visual art (even above painting), artists sometimes emphasized the linear qualities of objects, such as the boat and cliffs seen here. This focus on line is similar in calligraphy and painting.
3) Connection: Literature, calligraphy, and painting are all related in the arts of China. Painting a scene based on a poem and including the poem itself in calligraphy are common practices in Chinese art.
4) Creativity: Instead of imitating nature, the artist tried to express the emotion of the poem and his own personal feeling about the event.
PART IV

Based on your understanding of the scholar-official during the Song dynasty of China, compare and contrast what makes a good citizen (refer to the chart in Part III) and what scholar-officials thought were important activities, skills, and values. Use this Venn diagram to identify common characteristics.

Think specifically about the role of art in the life of the scholar-official. Why was art valued so highly? Did you list knowledge or the practice of art as a quality of a good citizen? Why or why not? What might be the advantages of practicing and/or appreciating art as part of the life of a good citizen?

Web Resources
To learn more about the Song dynasty in China, visit afe.easia.columbia.edu/song/

SONG DYNASTY (960–1279)

Northern Song dynasty (960–1127)
Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279)

The foundations of Chinese cultural and economic life were established during the Song dynasty, an important turning point in the history of China. Those centuries are divided into two periods: the Northern Song dynasty (960–1127) and the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279). The Northern Song was a stable period of unity following more than fifty years of division in China. In 1127, when the Jurchen people invaded from the north, the capital was moved south from Kaifeng to Hangzhou, marking the beginning of the Southern Song period. Decades later, in 1279, the Southern Song dynasty fell to the Mongols, who established the Yuan dynasty.

Important facts about the Song dynasty
- Following the invasion that brought down the Northern Song dynasty, the Chinese developed a strong interest in promoting and strengthening their shared identity through culture and politics.
- Scrolls, prints, and books became more available, which lead to a rise in literacy and a growing focus on education and self-cultivation.
- The revival of Confucian thought (Neo-Confucianism) stressed good government, stable family relationships, and moral development.
- Taking civil service exams to enter government service (rather than being appointed to a job by the emperor) led to greater interest in education and studying Confucian classics, composition, and poetry.
- Scholar-officials were held in great esteem during this period, and these centuries are considered a golden age in the history of scholar-officials.
- During the Song dynasty, technological and agricultural advances were made, trade and industry increased, and urban areas grew. Rice became a staple in the Chinese diet.
- More and more women learned to read and write, but they were also expected to conform to ideals of proper female behavior and appearance.
ImaginAsia

In our popular family program, children ages six to fourteen accompanied by an adult use an activity book to explore an exhibition and then create a related art project to take home. Family programs take place on the dates and times listed at www.asia.si.edu and do not require a reservation. This fall ImaginAsia offers programs related to the arts of the Islamic world and the exhibition Patterned Feathers, Piercing Eyes: Edo Masters from the Price Collection, on view at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery from November 10, 2007, through April 13, 2008.