

信仰

BELIEF



MONEY TREE WITH POTTERY STAND

漢代 (公元前206 – 公元220)
Han Dynasty (206BC – AD220)

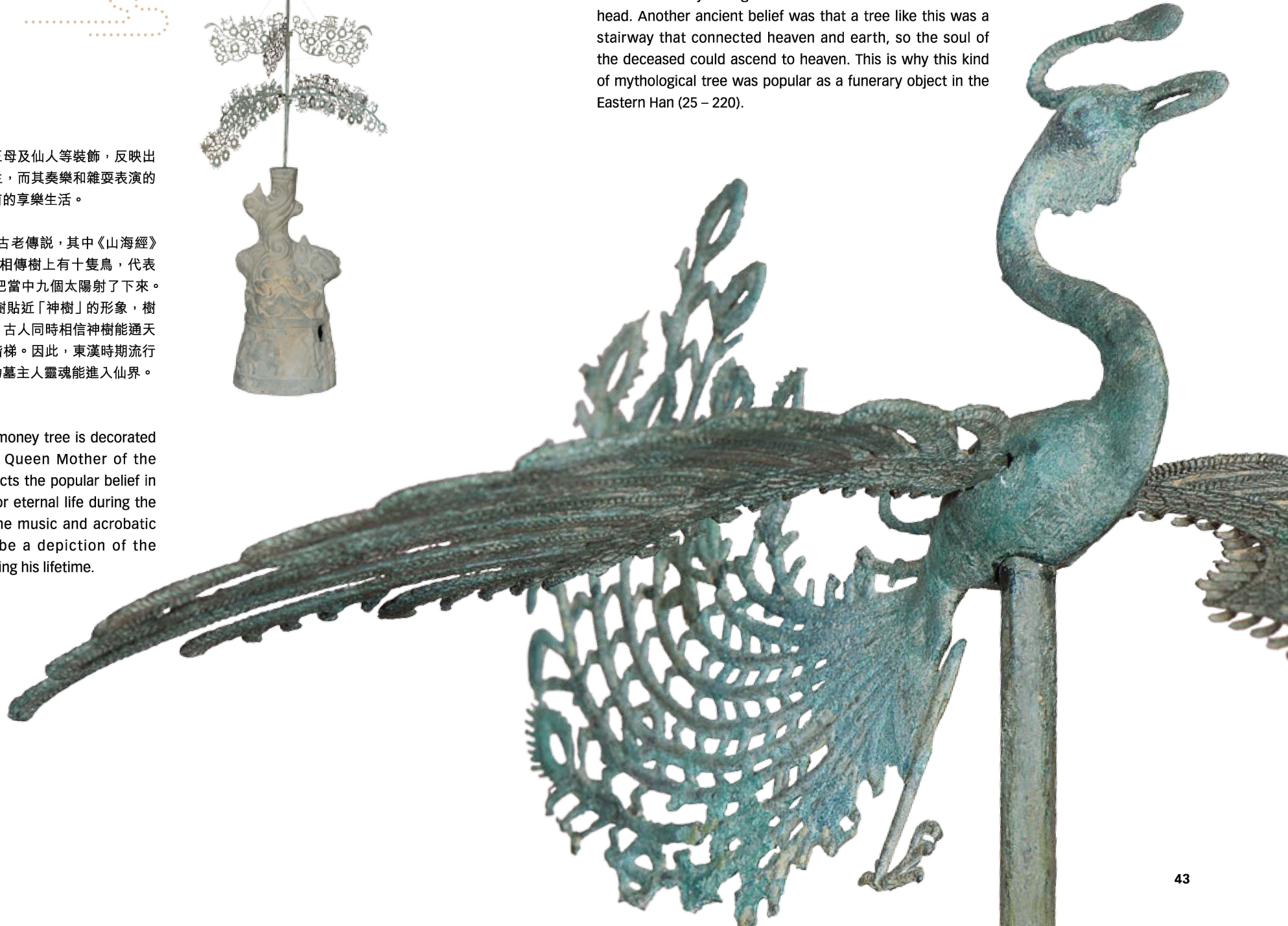
搖錢樹的每片葉上均飾有西王母及仙人等裝飾，反映出漢代流行神仙信仰和祈求長生，而其奏樂和雜耍表演的裝飾則同時呈現了墓主人生前的享樂生活。

以樹作為崇拜對象可上溯到古老傳說，其中《山海經》便曾提及太陽神樹「扶桑」。相傳樹上有十隻鳥，代表著十個太陽，後來后羿用箭把當中九個太陽射了下來。四川三星堆出土的商代青銅樹貼近「神樹」的形象，樹上有飛鳥和人首鳥身的神獸。古人同時相信神樹能通天地，是逝者靈魂達至天界的階梯。因此，東漢時期流行以這樹作為陪墓品，祈求協助墓主人靈魂能進入仙界。

Each of the leaves on the money tree is decorated with figures such as the Queen Mother of the West and celestials. It reflects the popular belief in immortals and the quest for eternal life during the Han dynasty. Figures of the music and acrobatic performances can also be a depiction of the deceased's enjoyments during his lifetime.



The use of trees as an object of worship can be traced to ancient myths. There is reference to the mythological tree of life, *Fusang*, in *Shan Hai Jing (The Classic of Mountains and Seas)*. The ten birds on the tree stand for ten suns, nine of which were shot down by Houyi with his bow and arrows. Among the bronze artefacts of the Shang dynasty excavated in Sanxingdui, Sichuan, there is a bronze tree which features birds and a mythological beast of a bird with a human head. Another ancient belief was that a tree like this was a stairway that connected heaven and earth, so the soul of the deceased could ascend to heaven. This is why this kind of mythological tree was popular as a funerary object in the Eastern Han (25 – 220).



GRANARY URN IN
CELADON GLAZE

三國至晉代 (220 – 420)

Three Kingdoms to Jin Dynasty (220 – 420)

穀倉罐，又稱「魂瓶」或「堆塑罐」，是於三國兩晉時期盛行於長江中下遊地區的葬俗明器。

它的器身為一長形平底罐，上部堆塑有亭閣樓閣、飛鳥、佛像和合手而靜坐的供養人，而下部罐體則貼有辟邪和騎馬俑等薄片貼塑，展現了多方面的社會生活。在屋簷間出現許多雀鳥，反映當時仙化得道思想的流行，以作為人們面對死亡時追求成仙的表現。屋簷上亦能發現佛像貼花，並在下方出現供養人，尤如禮佛場面，說明佛教在那個時候已透過迎合儒家的道德思想在中原傳播。

在當時的宗教環境下，儒家思想逐漸失去了領導地位，道教、玄學慢慢發展起來，加上外來佛教文化又逐漸滲入，因此堆塑的內容同時包含了多種宗教思想。

The granary urn is also known as *hunping* (soul urn, or funerary urn) or figured jar. It is a burial object commonly found in the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River during the Three Kingdoms period and the Jin dynasty (220 – 420).

This is a flat-bottomed deep urn, decorated on top with decorations of pavilions, towers, birds, the Buddha and seated donors in meditative pose with palms put together. The body of the urn is pasted with thin appliqué of pottery figures of horse riders and the auspicious animal *bixie*, etc, as a depiction of various aspects of daily life. The many birds on the eaves are symbolic of the popular aspirations for transformation into the immortal state after death. A figure of the Buddha can be found on the eaves, with donors below him as if in worship. The hybrid display of Buddhist and Confucian ethic concepts stands testimony to the spread of Buddhism into the Central Plains at the time.



In the prevalent religious atmosphere, Confucianism gradually lost its leading position to Taoism and the metaphysics. In addition, there would soon be the infiltration of Buddhism from the other places. All these are reflected in the decorations on the urn.



三彩鎮墓獸

TOMB GUARDIAN BEAST IN SANCAI GLAZE

唐代 (618 – 907)

Tang Dynasty (618 – 907)

唐三彩鎮墓俑是驅除邪魔、保護墓主魂魄的守護者。它們包括鎮墓獸、武士俑、天王俑、十二生肖像等。在唐代墓葬中，鎮墓獸稱為「魁頭」，多成對出現，鎮墓獸左右置於墓門入口兩側，兩個天王俑分別置於鎮墓獸後面，與十二生肖俑，被稱為四神十二時，起著鎮墓辟邪的作用。

鎮墓獸是想像中的神物，工匠們充滿豐富的想像力和高超的寫實技巧，參考動物和人的特點，創作成人獸鳥結合的異物。此俑尺寸較大，屬於貴族或極有權勢的人擁有的殉葬品。牠採蹲踞的姿態，為胡人面像，扇形耳，圓目怒瞪，張口露齒，獸身蹄足，肩生兩翼（另一種形象通常為雙角獸面，齜牙裂嘴、似怒吼），以猙獰的面孔，恐怖與震懾的雄姿，威嚇入侵的野鬼惡魔。

The term *sancai* refers to the tri-coloured glaze that first appeared in the Tang dynasty (618 – 907).

The tomb figures with such glaze decoration served as guardians to ward off demons and to protect the spirit of the master of a tomb. Such tomb guardians include figures of beasts, warriors, Lokapala and the twelve zodiac animals. In the Tang dynasty, tomb guardian figures were

initially called *qi tou* and mostly appeared in pairs, one on either side of the tomb entrance with a Lokapala behind each of them. Together with the twelve zodiac animals, they were known collectively as the “Four Deities and Twelve Signs”.

Such tomb figures, depicted as half-human and half-beast, are a combination of the powerful imagination and realistic crafting techniques of the artisans who created them. Sometimes they can be a combination of human, beast and bird forms. Judging by its size, this figure should be a burial object of an aristocrat or a person of high standing and authority. It is in a squatting position, has the face of a foreigner, fan-shaped ears, angry round eyes, and an open mouth with bared fangs. It has an animal body with hooved feet and two spread-out wings. (Another common look is the face of an animal with two horns, with bared teeth in a wide-open mouth, as if howling.) Its ferocious aspect and horrifying, intimidating posture are so designed to scare away any intruding demons and wandering spirits.



青白釉堆塑皈依瓶 FUNERARY JAR WITH APPLIQUÉ DESIGN IN QINGBAI GLAZE

宋代 (960 – 1279)

Song Dynasty (960 – 1279)

皈依瓶，是屬於「魂瓶」的一種陪葬明器，由東漢時期的五聯罐和三國時期的穀倉罐等演變而來，常見於南方地區的宋代墓葬，且成對使用。隨著穩定的地方經濟發展，南宋的塑貼設計又比北宋的更多，經歷一個從低矮到細長，從簡單到複雜的演變過程。

它是逝者靈魂「歸投依伏」之所，以達致收魂安魂的作用，並同時讓逝者由冥界上升到仙界。因此，它的造型和裝飾與當地流行的道教或地方信仰十分有關。

由瓶頸的底部開始，是以道術引導逝者升天儀式的道人。從玄武神獸代表的陰位，以蟠龍飛天為橋樑，經過祥雲托日的陽位，讓逝者進入仙界。蓋上的瑞鳥代表了靈魂得到升天，到達神山祥雲的神仙境界。瓶上的塑貼正好反映了當時人們對死後成仙的追求和嚮往。



The *guiyi* vase is a kind of *hunping* (soul urn, or funerary urn), a burial object that evolved from the five-linked jar of the Eastern Han dynasty (25 – 220) and the granary jar of the Three Kingdoms period (220 – 280). They are commonly found in the southern part of China, in tombs of the Song dynasty (960 – 1279), often in pairs. With the steady growth of local economy of the Southern Song dynasty (1127 – 1279), the decorative designs on the *guiyi* vases displayed a much larger variety than those of the Northern Song dynasty (960 – 1127). The shape of the vessel grew tall and thin, and the design became more intricate.

Guiyi vase is where the soul of the deceased ultimately rests and attains peace. It also helps the deceased transcend from the netherworld to the land of the immortals. So its shape and decorations are closely associated with Taoism or folk religious beliefs.

At the lower end of the neck of the urn is a Taoist priest who leads the ceremony to guide the ascension of the deceased. A flying dragon rises from the *yin* position – indicated by the mythological black tortoise *Xuanwu* – to the *yang* position where auspicious clouds embracing the sun are. It forms the bridge that takes the deceased to the land of the immortals. The auspicious bird on the lid signifies that the soul has risen to heaven and reached the immortal land on the divine mountains among clouds. The moulded decorations on the vase show the prevalent pursuit and aspiration to become immortals after death.

鎏金銅觀音坐像

明代 (1368 – 1644)

Ming Dynasty (1368 – 1644)



觀音，又稱觀世音，是大乘佛教神祇中眾多菩薩之一。菩薩是佛教修行者，其覺悟程度僅次於佛陀。由於菩薩發願要普渡眾生，所以留在世上，拯救世人免於苦難。在眾多菩薩之中，以觀世音菩薩的慈悲為懷形象最特出，廣受民間信奉和膜拜，並遂漸發展為單獨的觀音崇拜。

觀世音菩薩是阿彌陀佛的脅侍菩薩，負責帶引亡者的重生靈魂往西方極樂世界。觀世音有三十三個化身，信眾相信在危難時候口念觀世音的名號，觀世音就會以不同的化身前來為他解困。

他的形象仿效佛陀未得道前的階段，是個印度皇子，身戴瓔珞，頭戴寶冠，冠中央有阿彌陀佛像，面容祥和。這觀音結跏趺坐於蓮座上，蓮座下還有一個台座，塑成欄杆形狀，中央配以一枝蓮莖狀支柱，支撐著蓮座，令人聯想起敦煌壁畫裏面的「西方淨土變」，描寫淨土世界有蓮池，池中每個蓮蕾有一位化生童子。觀音就是負責接引往生者進入西方淨土世界，再從蓮花中生出來。

composed. In the middle of the crown is a figure of the Buddha Amitabha. This figure of *Guanyin* is sitting on a lotus throne supported by a pillar in the shape of a stem rising in the middle of a stand with railings. This reminds one of the Sutra tableau among the Dunhuang murals illustrating the Paradise of the West, which depicts a lotus pond with a Transformation Lad in each lotus bud. It is *Guanyin* who leads sentient beings to the Paradise of the West to be born in a lotus.

Guanyin or *Guanshiyin* (Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara) is one of the many bodhisattvas in Mahayana Buddhism. Bodhisattvas practise Buddhism and are just next to Buddha in their degree of enlightenment. To honour their vow to help all beings transcend to the other world, they have stayed on earth to relieve people from sufferings. Among all bodhisattvas, *Guanyin* stands out as an embodiment of compassion and is widely followed and worshipped.

Guanyin is the Acolyte bodhisattva to the Buddha Amitabha, responsible for leading the reborn soul of the deceased to the Paradise of the West. It is said that *Guanyin* has 33 incarnations. Worshippers believe that by calling *Guanyin's* name when in trouble, *Guanyin* will come to their rescue in different guises.

The image of *Guanyin* is modelled on the Buddha before he achieved complete Buddhahood. He is depicted as an Indian prince wearing a jewel crown and bejewelled ornaments over his chest, looking calm and

STONE SCULPTURE OF
A SEATED GUANDI

年份不詳
No date proffered

漢代末年，曹操領導的魏、劉備領導的蜀漢及孫權領導的吳形成三個政權，爭奪天下。關羽，又稱關雲長，是劉備的將領。他英勇善戰，征戰多場，敗退曹兵，又受命守襄陽和荊州。後來因東吳背叛盟約，使他被吳軍和曹軍兩面夾攻，最後兵敗被殺。

關羽曾經戰敗被曹操擒獲，曹對關十分禮遇，希望挽留他，但關羽拒絕而重歸劉備。關羽的忠義英勇形象備受後世推崇，在民間被尊稱為「關公」，歷代帝皇都授予封號，最高是「武聖」，與「文聖」孔子齊名，所以又稱「關聖帝」或「關帝」。

他同時亦被道教和佛教納入為神祇。道教尊為「協天大帝」，佛教則奉為「伽藍菩薩」。明代小說家羅貫中寫成的《三國演義》，為此歷史人物加入更多情節。

Towards the end of the Han dynasty, three regimes were in a tripartite scramble for power – Wei led by Cao Cao, Han of Shu led by Liu Bei, and Wu led by Sun Quan. Guan Yu, also known as Guan Yunchang, was a general under Liu. He was a consummate fighter who won many battles against Cao. He was ordered to defend the fort towns of Shangyang and Jingzhou, and was later killed in battle by the joined forces of Wei and Wu when the latter betrayed the alliance pledge with Han.

Guan was once caught by Cao in battle but the latter treated him with respect in the hope to recruit him. Guan declined the offer and went back to Liu Bei. His loyalty and valour have gone down in history, and forged a minted image for him as “the Venerable (General) Guan” among the common folks. Generations of emperors had conferred posthumous titles on him, the highest being “Martial Saint”, a counterpart to Confucius the “Literary Saint”. He is also known as “Guan the Sacred Lord” and “Lord Guan”.

He has also been deified by the Taoists and Buddhists. The Taoists revere him as “Emperor Xietian”, and the Buddhists, Sangharama Bodhisattva. Ming dynasty novelist, Luo Guanzhong (ca. 1320 – 1440), in his *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, embellished this historical figure with many fictionalised episodes and details.



JAR PAINTED WITH EIGHT IMMORTALS
IN UNDERGLAZE BLUE

明代 十六世紀

Ming Dynasty, 16th century

此罐上的人物是道教中的八位仙人：搖扇子的漢鐘離、配胡蘆的鐵拐李、倒騎毛驢的張果老、背負寶劍的呂洞賓、持玉板的曹國舅、持花籃的藍采和、手持荷花的何仙姑和吹笛子的韓湘子。

他們都曾是凡人，經過修鍊而得道成仙，形象親切，明清兩代開始在民間廣泛流行。八仙的形象不但常見於道教廟宇內，亦是瓷器和織繡等工藝品，及建築木雕上多見的紋飾，而很多時候亦會加入壽老組成「八仙賀壽」圖案。

工藝品有時也會飾以「暗八仙」紋飾，沒有人物而只採用八件法寶或法器來代表他們，即蒲扇、胡蘆、漁鼓、寶劍、玉板、花籃、荷花和笛子。

The figures on this jar are the Eight Immortals of Taoism: Han Zhongli with the fan; Tieguai Li who sports a gourd; Zhang Guolao who rides a donkey backwards; Lü Dongbin who carries a sword on his back; Cao Guojiu who holds a jade clapper; Lan Caihe who carries a flower basket; He Xianggu who holds a lotus flower in her hand; and Han Xiangzi who plays the flute.

All eight were once mortals, and were only able to transcend into the immortal state by practicing self-cultivation. They were therefore warmly regarded by the common folks and have been in popular culture since the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368 – 1911). Their images in various forms are common fixtures in Taoist temples, and are often used as decorations on porcelain and embroidered silk crafts, or appearing as themed motifs in wood carvings for building structures. The God of Longevity is often added to depict the scene of "The Eight Immortals attending a birthday banquet".

There is also a symbolic version of the Eight Immortals, with only the magical implements they hold being shown, i.e. the cattail leaf fan, the gourd, the fish drum, the sword, the jade clapper, the flower basket, the lotus flower and the flute.



DISH WITH PAINTED *BUDAI* AND CRANES IN *WUCAI* ENAMELS

明代 十六世紀末至十七世紀初

Ming Dynasty, late 16th century to early 17th century

在印度佛教信仰中，認為釋迦牟尼是現世佛，而來世佛則是彌勒佛。彌勒曾經當釋迦的弟子，逐漸精通佛法而被認為佛的「候補」菩薩。在雲岡和敦煌石窟造像中，彌勒的形象是著裙戴纓絡，交腳而坐。

由五代開始在漢傳佛教廟宇中，彌勒佛的形象常被塑造成一位袒胸露懷，笑面迎人的布袋和尚，擺放於第一個殿（天王殿），是入廟民眾首先看見的人物，給人開心包容的感覺。這位和尚相傳是五代時期的一位僧人，名叫契此，活動於江浙一帶。他一手持杖，上掛着一個布袋行乞。他常說着人們似懂非懂的話，人稱瘋癲和尚。當他圓寂（逝世）之前，向人說自己是未來佛轉世，現形以告知世人，只是無人認識。後來的人就把他看成彌勒佛顯化，並且依照契此的形象去塑造彌勒佛，民間稱為大肚佛。

In Indian Buddhism, Bodhisattva Maitreya is the future Buddha, a successor to the present Buddha, Gautama Buddha, by taking over his mentor's mantle. In the grottoes of Yungang and Dunhuang, the figure of Maitreya is depicted as wearing a skirt and jewels and sits cross-ankled.

From the Five Dynasties (907 – 960), Maitreya in Chinese Buddhist temples has been depicted as a monk with a jolly face, baring the upper body. Placed in the first hall together with the Four Heavenly Kings, it is the first figure that meets the eyes of visitors to the temple, and gives an impression of happiness and generosity. Legend has it that during the Five Dynasties, there was a monk called Qici who was active in the provinces of Jiangsu and Zhejiang. He carried a stick with a cloth sack hanging on it, begging alms hence his name *Budai*. What he said often did not make much sense, and people called him the "mad monk". Before Qici died, he disclosed that he was the future Buddha, and had only appeared before them as a sign of what was to come, only people failed to recognise him. From then on, Qici was taken to be the incarnation of Maitreya, with figures of the Bodhisattva created in his image. He is variously called "the Laughing Buddha" or "Buddha with a Big Belly".



動物

A N I M A L S



綠釉熊

BEAR IN GREEN GLAZE

漢代 (公元前206 – 公元220)
Han Dynasty (206BC – AD220)

在漢代，中原或北方游牧民族如匈奴的生活中，熊的形象常常出現。牠們生活在北方的森林，即今天接壤俄羅斯的邊界。「熊」亦為氏族部落的圖騰名稱，黃帝為「有熊氏」，南方楚國國君半姓熊氏，為黃帝之後。先民相信牠具自然生命的自我更生能量，周代時更於祭祀驅邪和喪禮中運用熊皮，故飾有熊的裝飾物，遠至廣東南越王墓中亦可發現。熊是吉祥的象徵，「夢熊有兆」為預示生男的吉兆；「飛熊入夢」象徵君主得賢。戰國時期，熊為王室馴養的寵物，至漢代則成為人們的獵食對象。

漢代自帝王至平民，坐臥起居皆用席，為了避免起身和落坐時折卷席角，會以「鎮」來壓住四席角。鎮多為青銅質，亦有鐵、石、玉、銅、鐵、琥珀等，並做成動物模樣，而熊型席鎮是常見形象。先秦的熊造型亦常見於器足，如簋、爐和鼎等，為勇猛的象征，隱喻熊頂天立地，貫通天地人三界，以這形象的席鎮亦含有辟邪的用意。

此綠釉熊為典型漢代冥器，整體造型憨態可掬，形象稚拙、質樸、渾厚和生動，是食用家畜以外較特別的隨葬器。



During the Han dynasty (206BC – AD220), images of bears often appeared in the everyday life of people on the Central Plains or of nomads like the Huns. Bears were found in the forests in northern China bordering Russia nowadays. The Chinese character for bear, *Xiong*, dates back to many millennia ago: it was a tribal totem; the legendary Yellow Emperor has another name *Youxiong*, which means "Possessor of bears"; and the King of the State of Chu in the south, who was a descendant of the Yellow Emperor, had *Xiong* as his family name. The ancients believed that bears had the natural power of rebirth. During the Zhou dynasty, bear skins were used in funerals and sacrifices for warding off demons. Objects decorated with bears were discovered in areas as remote as Guangdong. One example is a relic in the Mausoleum of the King of Nanyue in Guangzhou. Furthermore, the bear is a symbol of auspiciousness. The idiom "seeing a bear in a dream" is a sign of pregnancy with the coming of a male offspring. Another idiom, "a flying bear in a dream", is a propitious sign for a ruler suggesting that an able and virtuous person would appear to serve him well in state affairs. During the Warring States period (475 – 221BC), bears were kept as pets by the imperial household. But by the Han dynasty, they became hunters' prey for food.

Bear-shaped weights to keep mats in shape were commonly used during the Han dynasty. It was a time when everybody sat or slept on mats, emperors or commoners notwithstanding. Weights were used to prevent the mat corners from rolling. These weights were mostly made of bronze, sometimes of other materials like iron, stone, jade, copper, amber, etc. They were often in the shape of animals, in which the bear was being one of the most popular.

Images of bears were also featured on vessels in pre-Qin times, such as on the legs of the food containers, burners and tripods. Other than being a symbol of bravery and fierce energy, the bear is also considered to be able to connect the three realms of heaven, earth and mankind with its height and size. Bear-shaped mat weights therefore also implied the power to ward off evil.

This green glazed bear is a typical burial object of the Han period. The overall design and shape give it a simple, rustic charm that makes it stand out among the other burial objects shaped as domestic livestock for the deceased.

牛車 OX-CART AND FIGURES

牛車及人物俑

晉至南朝 (265 – 589)

Jin Dynasty to Southern Dynasties (265 – 589)

為使方便出行，古人已懂得乘車代步。乘車與否，以至車形和拉車動物的不同，在古時均是用來表現用車者身份的高低。牛車在初時只用作運貨，地位較馬車為低，不被貴族階層所使用。

直至東漢晚期，馬車作為主要交通工具的局面發生了變化。由於古人對乘車有一套嚴格的禮節規定，乘車者必須坐下或是站立，並保持端正的姿勢，對於貴族階層追求舒服安逸來說乘車便成了一种束縛。相反地，牛車的車箱多有遮篷，乘車者於車箱內或坐或臥，行人均無法看見，加上行走緩慢，比馬車更平穩舒適，亦較能負重。種種優點令牛車更符合用者們的要求，而在當時漸成時尚。



魏晉時期，牛車成為了南方上流社會人士的主要交通工具，使其設備和裝飾亦漸變講究，漢族人使用牛車的習慣更影響了北方少數民族。牛車的盛行，至中唐以後才逐漸被取代。

To facilitate travelling, people in ancient times already used carts as a means of transport. Whether a person had a cart to ride on, what shape it was, and what animal was used to pull it were all symbols of social status in those days. The aristocrats did not use ox-carts because they were initially used for transporting goods, so they symbolised a lower status than horse-carts.

It was not until the late Eastern Han period (25 – 220) that the use of horse-carts became common as a major means of transport. But with the strict etiquette involved when using carts, the riders had to sit down or stand up very properly, which was restrictive for the comfort-seeking aristocrats. Most ox-carts, in contrast, were equipped with canopies, so riders could sit or lie down as they wished, without being seen by those passing by. Ox-carts were slower than horse wagons, which made the ride more stable and comfortable. They could carry heavier loads, too. Such advantages recommended the ox-cart to users and soon it became a trend.

During the Wei (220 – 265) and Jin (265 – 420) dynasties, ox-carts became the major means of transport for the upper class in the South. The design was also more sophisticated to provide more comfort and appeal. The Han people's use of ox-carts also influenced ethnic minorities of the North. By the Mid-Tang period, ox-carts were gradually replaced by other means of transport.

HORSE WITH HARNESS AND
PAINTED DECORATION

北朝至隋代 (386 – 618)

Northern Dynasties to Sui Dynasty (386 – 618)

南北朝時期，戰場上多以騎兵作為核心的軍事武裝，因此各國也十分重視用以指揮軍隊和振奮軍威的軍樂隊。軍樂隊即以演奏軍樂為主的鼓吹樂隊，當中包括打擊樂器和吹奏樂器。

直至南北朝晚期，鼓吹樂隊的地位漸趨顯赫，其作用亦不再只是設於軍隊之中，而是成為皇權的象徵和社會等級的標誌。作為宣揚威儀的鹵簿，亦即儀仗隊伍，其鼓吹樂隊的人數均按身份階級來定立。在當時社會，上至皇帝皇后，下至百官，出行皆有儀仗。



During the time of the Southern and Northern Dynasties (386 – 589), cavalries formed the core of the military on the battlefield. Military bands that helped in manoeuvring the troops and boosting morale grew in importance. The instruments they used were mainly wind and percussion.

By the end of the Southern and Northern Dynasties, such wind and percussion bands were no longer just part of the military corps, but were regarded as symbols of sovereign power and high social status.

They served as guard of honour in the processions of emperors, imperial consorts and high officials.

The number of players in the bands varied, depending on the social class of the person to whom they served.

LADEN CAMEL WITH
PAINTED DECORATION

唐代 (618 – 907)

Tang Dynasty (618 – 907)



自漢代使節張騫出使西域後，貫穿歐亞的絲綢之路便慢慢發展起來。當中商旅、僧侶和傳教士等不時穿梭兩地，促進了不同文化的交流和共融。當中經商活動頻繁，商人大多透過駱駝運送貨物，把貴金屬、寶石、香料、毛製品和布匹等物品從歐亞地區帶到中原販賣，並同時購買絲綢和瓷器等物品回國轉售。

駱駝在東西相互經商交流中亦扮演著重要的角色，牠馱貨能力強大、又有耐旱和抵禦風沙的特性，成為絲綢之路上的主要交通工具，更被譽為「沙漠之舟」。



Zhang Qian (? – 114BC) was sent by the Han emperor as an envoy to the Western Regions (Central Asia today). His mission marked the beginning of the transcontinental route later known as the Silk Road. It gradually developed into an important conduit connecting Europe and Asia. The journeys made by merchants, monks and missionaries over the subsequent centuries facilitated cultural exchanges and amity among the peoples along the route. Trade flourished, and merchants used camels to transport precious metals and stones, spices, wooden products and cotton fabric from Europe and Central Asia to sell in Central China, then silk and ceramics from China to sell back home.

Camels, therefore, played an important role in trade between the East and the West. Since camels could carry heavy loads and were able to withstand the drought and sandstorms along the way, they became the major means of transport on the Silk Road, which earned them the nickname “the ship of the desert”.

黃褐釉貓形水注 WATER-POT IN SHAPE OF CAT IN AMBER GLAZE

遼代 (916 – 1125)

Liao Dynasty (916 – 1125)

水注為研墨時用以裝水和滴水的文房用具。這件水注的造型是靜立如球的貓兒，背有一入水孔，口為出水處。契丹人以黃金代表貴重美麗，並將這種觀念反映在瓷器上，故黃釉陶瓷精品時有出土。貓兒背上有一板孔，似為方便穿繩攜帶，配合遊牧民族逐草而居的特性。頸項上還繫有緞帶蝴蝶結，緞帶尾細緻迴轉攏背上，可見遼代的貓已為人馴養。

北魏農學家賈思勰所著的《齊民要術》中記載製作酒麴前先以貓除鼠患，說明這個時候我國北方已經廣泛飼養貓。農民為了保護田產和存糧，而文人則為了保護書籍免於鼠害而養貓。唐代宮廷中盛寵貓，被稱為「狸奴」，專門擔任各大殿的防鼠工作，還成為貴婦的寵物。古人常以貓、蝶諧音「耄耋」，指的是八九十歲的人，畫家亦因而喜愛以此為題繪畫「耄耋圖」，祝賀長壽，寓意吉祥。



A water dropper is a stationery item for holding and dripping water in the ink-making process. This water dropper is made in the shape of a cat quietly crouching, curling up adorably like a ball. There is a hole on its back for filling water which comes out through its mouth. The Khitan people had a high regard for gold because of its value and beautiful colour. This was reflected in the exquisitely made earthenware of yellow glaze often unearthed today, and this is a good example. There is a stringing hole in the flap on the back of the cat to make it easy to carry anywhere, an indication of the nomadic lifestyle of the Khitans. The neck of the cat is decorated with a bow ribbon, the ends of which go around and rest delicately on its back. This artefact shows that cats were already domesticated during the Liao period.

The ancient Chinese agricultural guide, *Qimin Yaoshu*, written by Jia Sixie of the Northern Wei period (386 – 534), says that before preparing the distiller's yeast to make wine, one should keep a cat to get rid of rats. Such a mention shows that cats were already widely kept in households in northern China at the time. The peasants used cats to protect the crops in the fields and grains in storage, whereas the literati used cats to protect their books from being damaged by rats. During the Tang dynasty (618-907), keeping cats became popular in the palaces not only because they could catch rats, but also because court ladies loved to keep them as pets. Since the Chinese characters of cat (*Mao*) and butterfly (*Die*) are homophonic with the term *Maodie* for people in their eighties or nineties, they are recurrent motifs in Chinese art as wishes for longevity.

青 ROOSTER IN QINGBAI GLAZE

宋代 (960 – 1279)
Song Dynasty (960 – 1279)

青
白
釉
雄
雞



宋代江西窯系以燒製青白瓷著名，由於青白瓷的釉色類似青白玉而受人喜愛。此雞造型簡樸平實，以刀刻雞冠、雙翅和尾羽的紋理，以印圈為眼睛。肚腹下疑似團雲為托，估計為陪葬之用。

作為六畜之一，雞是農業社會中重要的家禽，在中國人的生活裡佔了重要地位。牠提供肉食和雞蛋，是營養的來源，也是農戶的財產之一。雞與「吉」諧音，被人們認為是「祥禽」。雄雞司晨，一見陽光即啼叫，象徵陽氣初始，半夜作祟的鬼怪便會遁形。同時俗信雞吃「五毒」，每到端午節，天氣轉暖，毒蟲開始活動，人們會以貼帶有公雞圖案的窗花來預防五毒，即蠍、蛇、蜈蚣、壁虎和蟾蜍，故此是鎮壓辟邪之神。另外，古人稱雞為「五德之禽」，謂其集仁、義、禮、智、信於一身，而由於雄雞的五彩羽毛十分漂亮，他們亦認為鳳凰便是雞升華後的原型。

The Jiangxi kilns of the Song period are well known for their *qingbai* (greenish white) glazed ware. The glaze colour is popular because it is similar to celadon jade. The design of this rooster has a simple, rustic charm. The textural lines of the cockscomb, the wings and the tail are hand carved with knife, and a circle imprint is used for the eyes. The bird is supported by a cloud-like stand beneath the stomach, so there is reason to believe that it was used as a burial object.

The chicken is an important domestic bird in agricultural society. As one of the six domesticated animals, chickens play an important role in the everyday life of the Chinese people. They make a good nutritional source with their meat and eggs, hence a financial asset to peasants. The character of chicken in Chinese is homophonic with auspiciousness, so it is regarded as an auspicious bird. Also, because roosters crow at daybreak when the first ray of the sun comes out and when demons active during the night start to retreat, they are a symbol of the beginning of the *yang* energy. People also believe that roosters eat the five poisonous creatures - scorpions, snakes, centipedes, geckos and toads. During the Dragon Boat Festival, when these creatures start to become active, people would put paper cuttings of the rooster design on the window in a bid to keep those creatures out. As such, roosters were regarded as a deity that could ward off demons and evil spirits and an embodiment of five virtues - benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and fidelity - in ancient society. Because of their colourful feathers, ancient people also believed that the rooster is the archetype of the phoenix, and may someday transform into one.

虎形枕

PILLOW IN SHAPE OF TIGER

金代 (1115 – 1234)

Jin Dynasty (1115 – 1234)

磁州窯以平民為銷售對象，風格純樸剛健，有多樣的花紋和多種裝飾技法，白地黑花瓷為其代表產品，種類以民間日用品為主。

隋唐是瓷枕的草創時期，由陪葬的明器發展至日常寢具，至宋代十分盛行，枕面有詩、書和畫等裝飾。瓷枕製造成各式造型，獸形瓷枕便是其中之一。它宜於夏季使用，一枕清涼。古人相信將枕造成猛獸形象便有避邪驅鬼作用，史載唐中宗皇后韋氏之妹妹七姨，以豹頭為枕以辟邪，以白澤為枕以去魅，以熊為枕以宜男。道教相信虎能吃鬼驅鬼，而《本草綱目》中則提及虎頭骨作枕，能殺鬼和辟惡夢魘。人們相信惡夢是邪魔侵害，希望藉著老虎的威攝力，驅散妖魔，故從虎形枕上反映出古人對夢的理解和鬼神思想。

Cizhou ware was produced for commoners in the past. Rustic and hardwearing, it had a wide range of patterns and decorative techniques. The type with black decorations on white slip was the signature product of the Cizhou kiln, made primarily for everyday use.

Porcelain pillows first appeared during the Sui and Tang periods (581 – 907). While they were initially used as burial objects, they later became products for everyday use, and reached the height of popularity in the Song period. The decorations came in the form of inscriptions of poems, calligraphy and paintings. Porcelain pillows came in all shapes and styles, the animal shapes being one of them. They were most suitable for use in summer because they could keep the sleeper's head cool. The ancient people believed that beast-shaped pillows could chase away demons. According to historical archives, the Seventh Aunt, younger sister of Empress Wei, wife of Emperor Zhongzong (656 – 710) of the Tang dynasty, would use a pillow shaped like a leopard's head to ward off demons, another shaped like the mythical beast *Baize* to get rid of ghosts, and a bear-shaped pillow to bring her sons. The Taoist belief concurs that tigers can eat and chase off ghosts. The *Compendium of Materia Medica* mentions the use of the tiger skull as a pillow for killing ghosts and preventing nightmares. There was also the belief that nightmares were signs of an invasion by the devil, which could be chased away by the tiger. All these indicate that tiger-shaped pillows were quite common for their evil-warding function.



LION IN
DARK BROWN GLAZE

宋代至元代 (960 – 1368)

Song to Yuan Dynasties (960 – 1368)

獅子文化在中國中很受歡迎，然而中國本無獅子，老虎才是中國本土最兇猛的動物。獅子原產非洲，後來居住地伸展到中亞、西南亞以及歐洲東南部。漢武帝遣張騫出使西域，獅子才成為貢品進入中原。漢代以後獅子隨着佛教經海上及陸上絲綢之路傳入。自此，兇猛的獅子取代老虎而成為「萬獸之王」，漸漸與中國文化結合，在民俗之間成為瑞獸。獅子雕刻常見於宮殿、寺廟、橋樑、府第、陵墓和印鈕等，成為看守門戶的吉祥物。

獅子作踞蹲狀，神態不怒而威，通體黑釉光滑瑩亮。滿頭捲曲鬃毛、飄逸肩帶、頸掛鈴鐺、前爪和尾巴的弧線雕塑流麗瀟灑。眼白、爪子、嘴巴和繡球刻意不施釉來突出對比，工藝相當精細。



The lion is very popular in Chinese culture, although lions were not indigenous to China - the tiger is. Lions were originally from Africa; later on, they expanded their habitat to Central Asia, Southwest Asia and Southeast Europe. It was not until the Han dynasty when Emperor Wu sent Zhang Qian as envoy to the Western Regions (now Central Asia) that lions were brought to China as tribute gifts for the emperor. After the Han dynasty (206BC – AD220), lions, together with Buddhism, were introduced into China by land and sea via the Silk Road. Since then, the ferocious lion has replaced the tiger as the king of all beasts and has been gradually fused into Chinese culture as the mascot of the common people. Carvings of lions are most often found in palaces, temples, bridges, mansions, mausoleums and seal stone decorations etc., where they serve as guarding mascots.

This lion figure in a squatting position has a mighty, yet calm, expression. It has a shiny smooth body, a full mane of curly hair, a flowing ribbon on the shoulder, and a bell on the neck; the front paws and the tail are sculpted in beautiful flowing lines. The whites of the eyes, claws, mouth and the embroidered ball are purposefully left unglazed to accentuate the contrasts and the exquisite craftsmanship.

CHRONOLOGY OF
EXHIBITS

公元前 BC

ca.7000 – 1600	新石器時代 Neolithic period
ca.2100 – 1600	夏 Xia
ca.1600 – 1100	商 Shang
ca.1100 – 256	周 Zhou
ca.1100 – 771	西周 Western Zhou
770 – 256	東周 Eastern Zhou
770 – 475	春秋 Spring and Autumn period
475 – 221	戰國 Warring States period
221 – 207	秦 Qin
206 – 公元 AD220	漢 Han
206 – 公元 AD25	西漢 Western Han

公元 AD

25 – 220	東漢 Eastern Han
220 – 589	六朝 Six Dynasties
220 – 280	三國 Three Kingdoms
220 – 265	魏 Wei
221 – 263	蜀 Shu
222 – 280	吳 Wu
265 – 420	晉 Jin
265 – 317	西晉 Western Jin
317 – 420	東晉 Eastern Jin
386 – 589	南北朝 Southern and Northern Dynasties
386 – 581	北朝 Northern Dynasties
386 – 534	北魏 Northern Wei
534 – 550	東魏 Eastern Wei
535 – 556	西魏 Western Wei
550 – 577	北齊 Northern Qi
557 – 581	北周 Northern Zhou
420 – 589	南朝 Southern Dynasties
420 – 479	(劉)宋 (Liu) Song
479 – 502	南齊 Southern Qi
502 – 557	梁 Liang
557 – 589	陳 Chen
581 – 618	隋 Sui
618 – 907	唐 Tang
907 – 960	五代 Five Dynasties
916 – 1125	遼 Liao
960 – 1279	宋 Song
960 – 1127	北宋 Northern Song
1127 – 1279	南宋 Southern Song

1038 – 1227	西夏 Western Xia
1115 – 1234	金 Jin
1271 – 1368	元 Yuan
1368 – 1644	明 Ming
1368 – 1398	洪武 Hongwu
1399 – 1402	建文 Jianwen
1403 – 1424	永樂 Yongle
1425	洪熙 Hongxi
1426 – 1435	宣德 Xuande
1436 – 1449	正統 Zhengtong
1450 – 1456	景泰 Jingtai
1457 – 1464	天順 Tianshun
1465 – 1487	成化 Chenghua
1488 – 1505	弘治 Hongzhi
1506 – 1521	正德 Zhengde
1522 – 1566	嘉靖 Jiajing
1567 – 1572	隆慶 Longqing
1573 – 1620	萬曆 Wanli
1620	泰昌 Taichang
1621 – 1627	天啟 Tianqi
1628 – 1644	崇禎 Chongzhen
1644 – 1911	清 Qing
1644 – 1661	順治 Shunzhi
1662 – 1722	康熙 Kangxi
1723 – 1735	雍正 Yongzheng
1736 – 1795	乾隆 Qianlong
1796 – 1820	嘉慶 Jiaqing
1821 – 1850	道光 Daoguang
1851 – 1861	咸豐 Xianfeng
1862 – 1874	同治 Tongzhi
1875 – 1908	光緒 Guangxu
1909 – 1911	宣統 Xuantong

