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The Rich Variety of Han Dynasty Burial Objects

Do you know what I am?



I am a kind of *mingqi*, an object that, Chinese people used to bury with the dead in ancient times. It is a traditional Chinese belief that you continue your life in the next world after you die. In ancient China it was common for, daily necessities such as clothing and food or items connected to the home, transport and entertainment were to be buried with the dead so that they could enjoy the afterlife. **Burial objects like us can give you** a good picture of how people used to live a long time ago.

Now,
let me show you different
kinds of *mingqi* that
reflect the prosperous life
of the Han people.



First of all, let's take a look at the fashions and accessories that were popular in Han times.

Clothing: shenyi

During the Han dynasty, both high-ranking officials and commoners wore *shenyi*, multilayered robes that covered the whole body.

Try to draw a *shenyi* with all its beautiful features.
(Hint: Look for a pair of pottery maids wearing *shenyi* in the display case "Painted Pottery")

Three-fold front

Decoration of swirling clouds

Bell-shaped bottom

A long waistband is used to tighten the layers of clothes!

Now let's look at the back of the shenyi



Do you think pottery sculptures of maids and servants were placed in the tomb so they could serve the master buried there?

Food: Cooking Stove

A great variety of everyday objects have been discovered and excavated from Han tombs. Examples include miniature pavilions, storehouses, cooking stoves, models of pigs, dogs and chickens, and many others.



The picture on the right shows a utensil that was used every day in the Han dynasty. Do you know what it is? (Hint: Go to the display case "Han Pottery"!)

1. This is a _____

2. The surface of this object is covered with tableware and food, and it is also inscribed with Chinese words of blessing. Write down what you think the inscription says in the space provided.

Answers
1. This is a stove.
2. The inscription reads: "This stove will allow the descendants of the dead to enjoy generations of wealth and happiness."

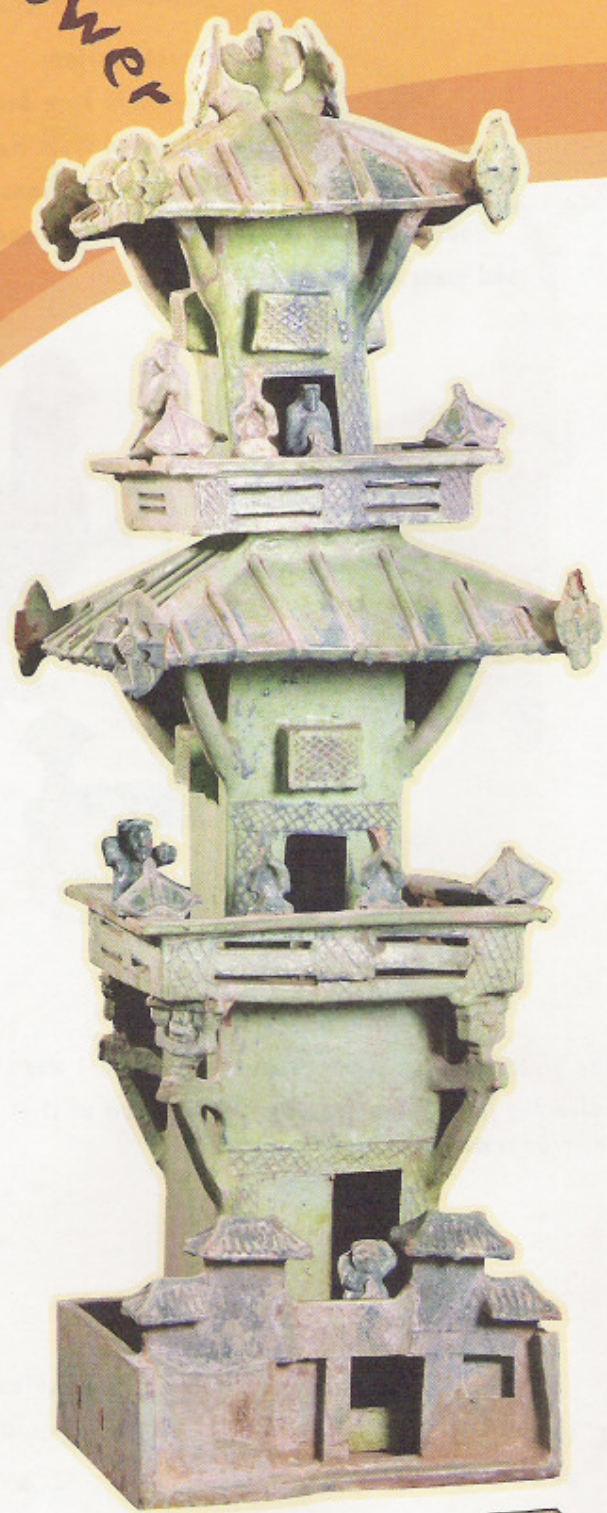


Burying so many daily necessities with the dead, the Han people must have been very extravagant. Do you think their homes were also very stylish?

Houses: Watchtower

In the Han dynasty, aristocrats lived on large estates that were surrounded by high walls — like a fortress — to indicate their authority and status. Watchtowers were built for protection and security. Can you find the pottery watchtower with green glaze in the gallery?

(Hint: Go to the display case "Watchtower"!)



The watchtower on the right is different from the one you can see in the exhibition gallery. See if you can spot 10 differences and circle them!

1. How many storeys does this watchtower have?

2. Do you know what kind of people were stationed in the watchtower?

Guards

Musicians

Dancers

Other _____

3. Keeping an eye on the surrounding countryside, what would they do when they saw enemies coming?



Answers
1. 3 storeys
2. Guards

3. They would blow their horns to warn their masters.



How would the people who lived on these big estates get around? Did they walk or did they use other means of transport?

Land Transport

Carts pulled by horses or oxen were the favourite means of transport among Han aristocrats. These carts were symbols of identity and status just like the Ferraris and Rolls-Royces of rich people today!

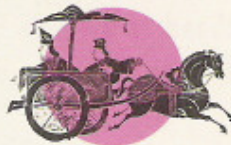
The oxcart on the right was the most comfortable means of transport in ancient times. Would you like to take a ride?

The canopy on the cart provides shelter from the sun and the rain. As oxen walk at a **slow and steady** pace, oxcarts were generally more comfortable and safer than horse carts.



If you were a Han aristocrat, which type of transport would you prefer? Go to the display case "Provincial Styles" and choose your favourite means of transport.

Have you chosen your transport yet? Compete with your friends and see who can get back to the palace first!



Watchtower

Palace

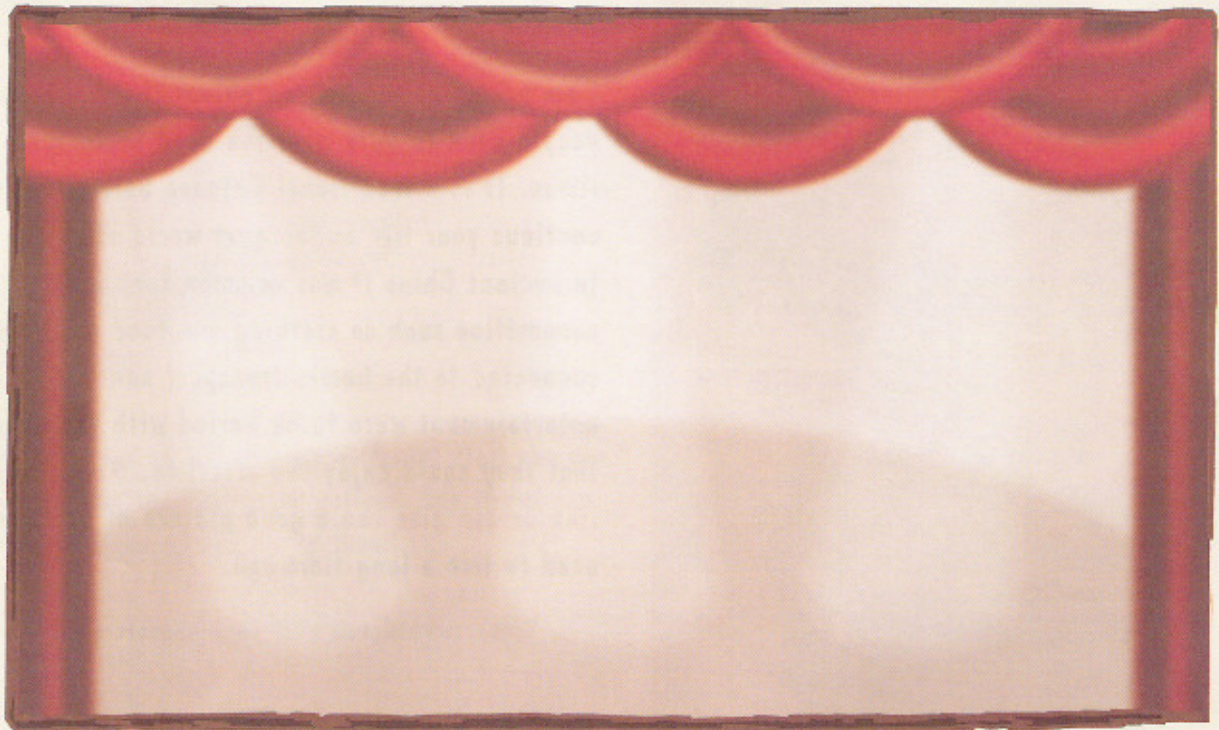
Granary



Were models of carts buried in tombs to bring the dead to places of entertainment in the afterlife?

Musical Entertainment

This place is
buzzing with excitement — a music
and dance performance is about to begin!
Imagine that you are the principal conductor of this
troupe of singers, musicians and dancers and you have
to decide where they are going to sit or stand or dance.
Try to put the performers in the right position on stage!
(Hint: Go to the display case "Entertainment" to get some ideas!)



Members of the music and dance
troupe:



You can find a rich variety of mingqi like us, and we provide
useful information about the daily life of the Han people!

**Members of the music and
dance troupe:**



Singer

Pan-piper



Dancer

Pan-piper



Zither player



Singer



Dance Partner