

Key Ideas

- The literati tradition continues to develop and flourish in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, caused by alienation from the imperial court (which began in the Yuan Dynasty).
- Chinese society during this time is patriarchal and gender-segregated, with men and women living in separate quarters in a household.
- Both Confucian and Daoist practices and principles remain strong in China during this period of time, influencing the artwork, architecture, and decorative arts.

Timeline of Chinese Dynasties

Yuan Dynasty: 1279-1368

Ming Dynasty: 1368-1644

Qing Dynasty: 1644-1912

Note on Chinese pronunciations and romanizations:

“Pinyin, or Hanyu Pinyin, is the official romanization system for Standard Chinese in mainland China, Singapore and Taiwan.”*

“Wade Giles is a romanization system for Mandarin Chinese. It developed from a system produced by Thomas Wade, during the mid-19th century.”*

In Pinyin system, it is the **Qing** dynasty, while in the old Wade Giles system, it is the **Ch'ing** dynasty. All labels are being moved to the Pinyin system, but you may run across information yet to be updated.

* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki>

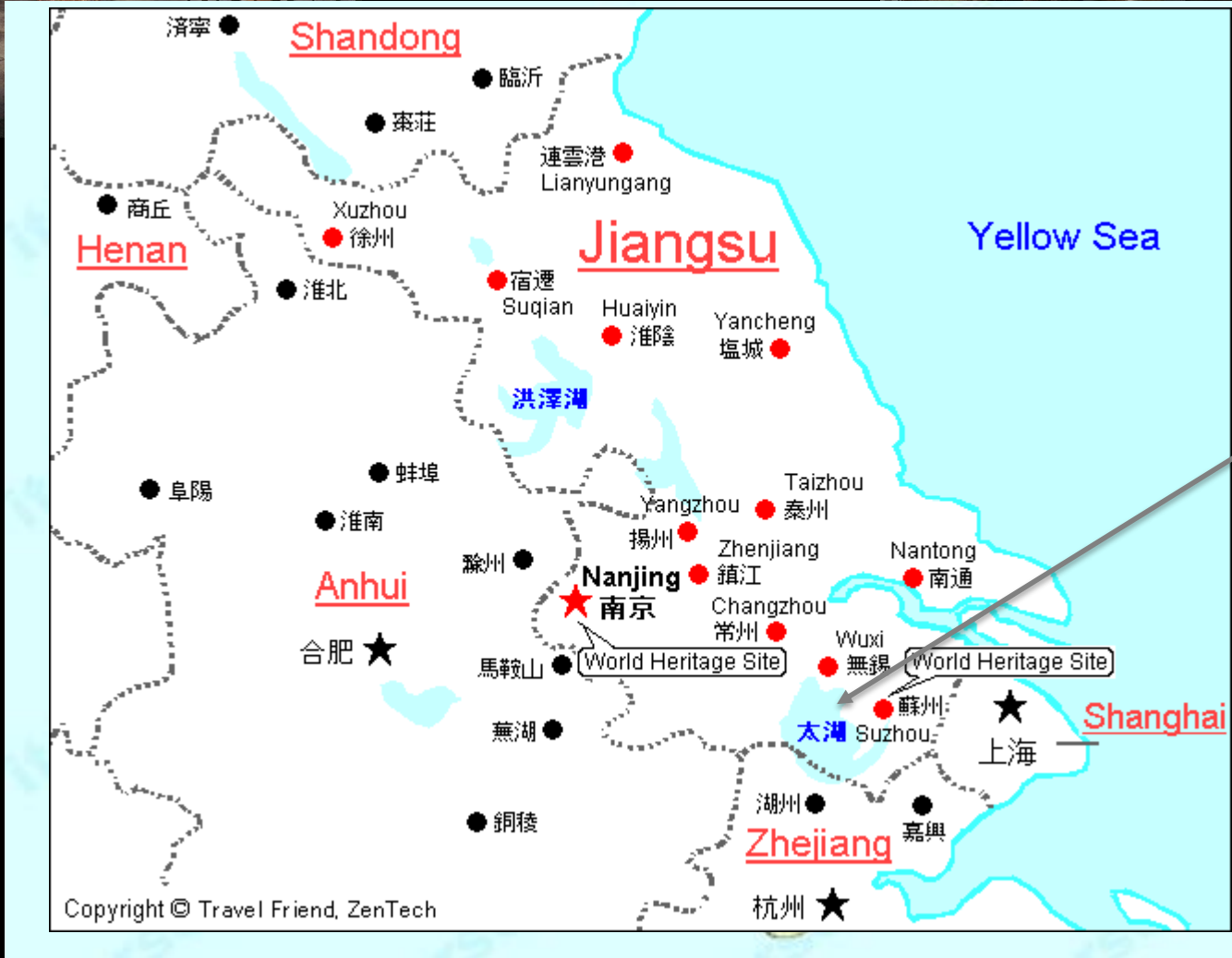
Asian Art of the 17th
through 19th centuries
(Ming and Qing
Dynasties)



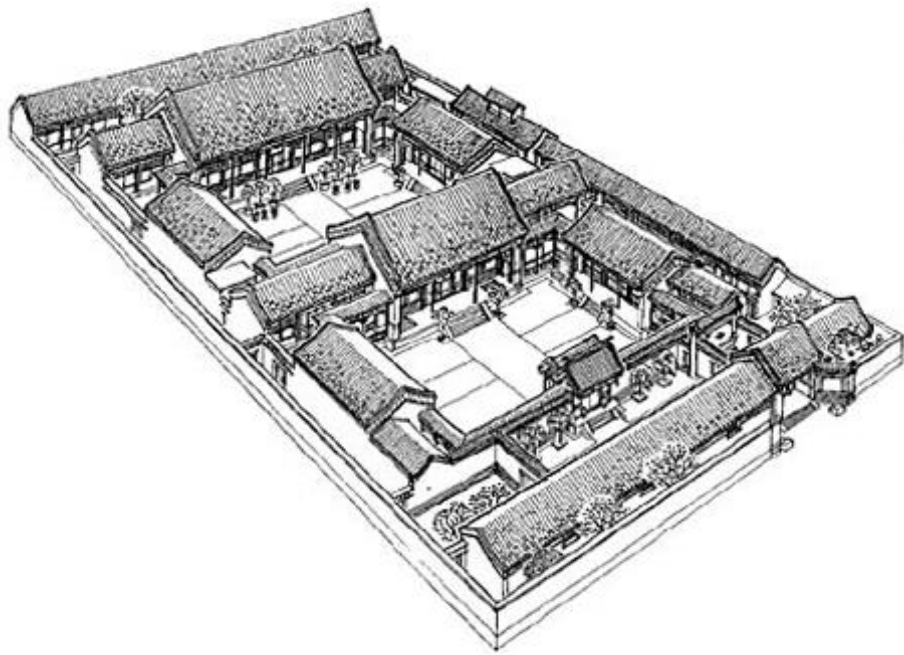
Why would you want
to include a period
room on a tour?



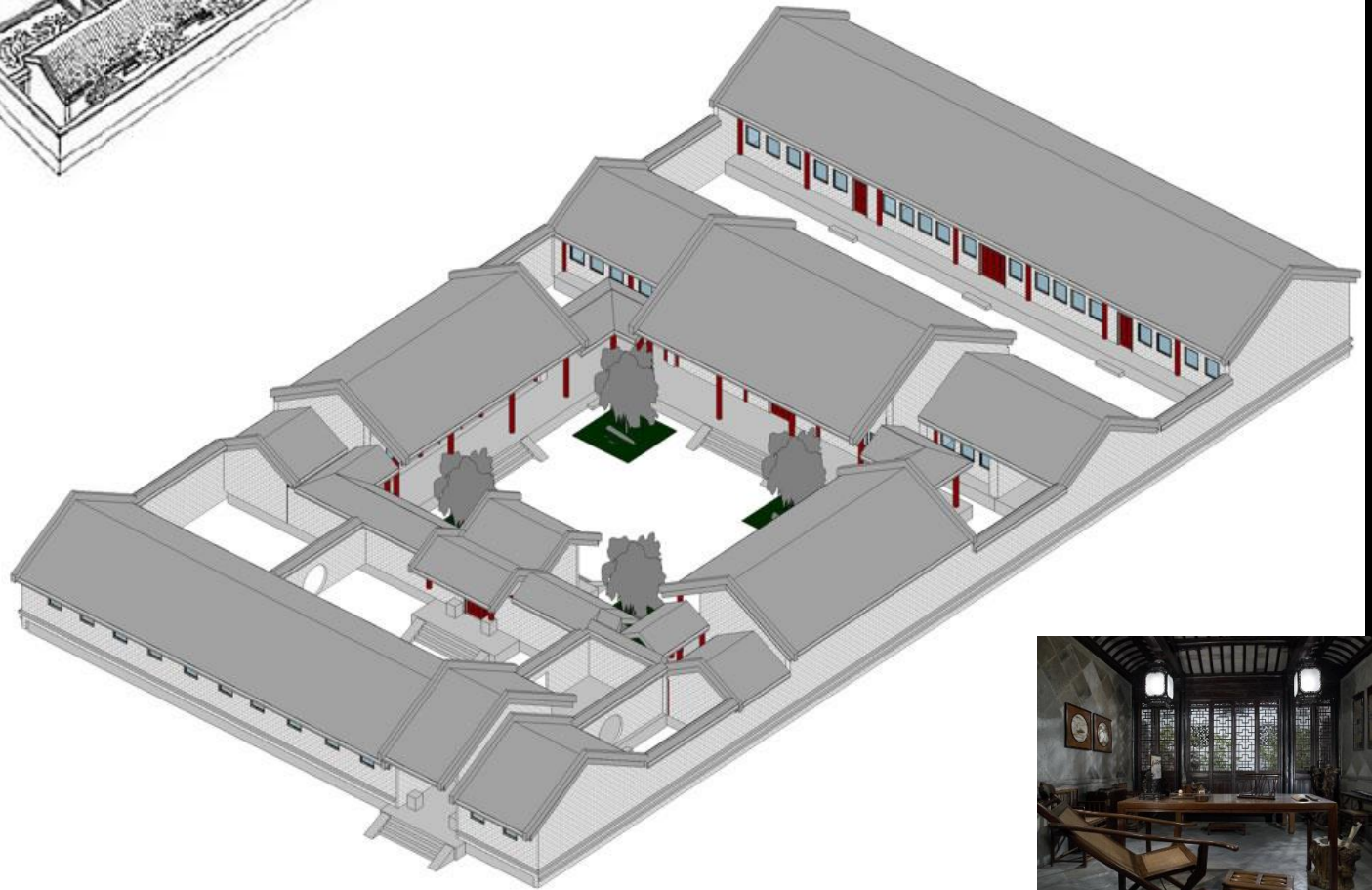
Chinese Period Rooms



Lake Tai
or Lake
Taihu



Courtyard-style house

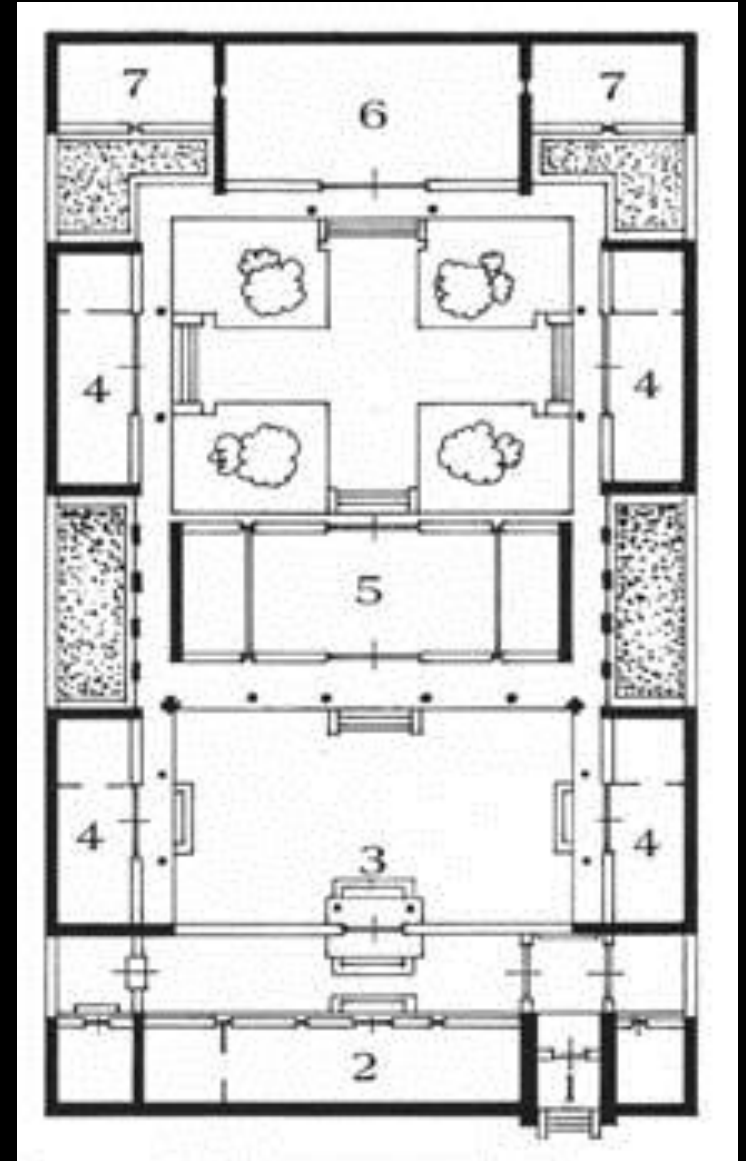


Chinese courtyard-style house



Uses of rooms in a typical two-courtyard house plan

1. Main entrance
2. Rooms facing the rear. The rooms facing the back, those near the entrance to the courtyard were reserved for the servants if the family was well-off.
3. First courtyard. Cooking was carried out here, and the second courtyard was a living space.
4. East and west-side rooms, for the sons and daughters, or the sons' families.
5. Inner Hall. Where the members of the family greeted guests or where family ceremonies were held.
6. Main building. Living space for parents.
7. Small side rooms. These used for children and extended family members.



Structure and materials in the hall and library

Our reception hall is three bays. The library is one bay. The hall is built on a north/south axis, with the room facing south, following established beliefs in *feng shui*, or the flow of good energy through the compound.

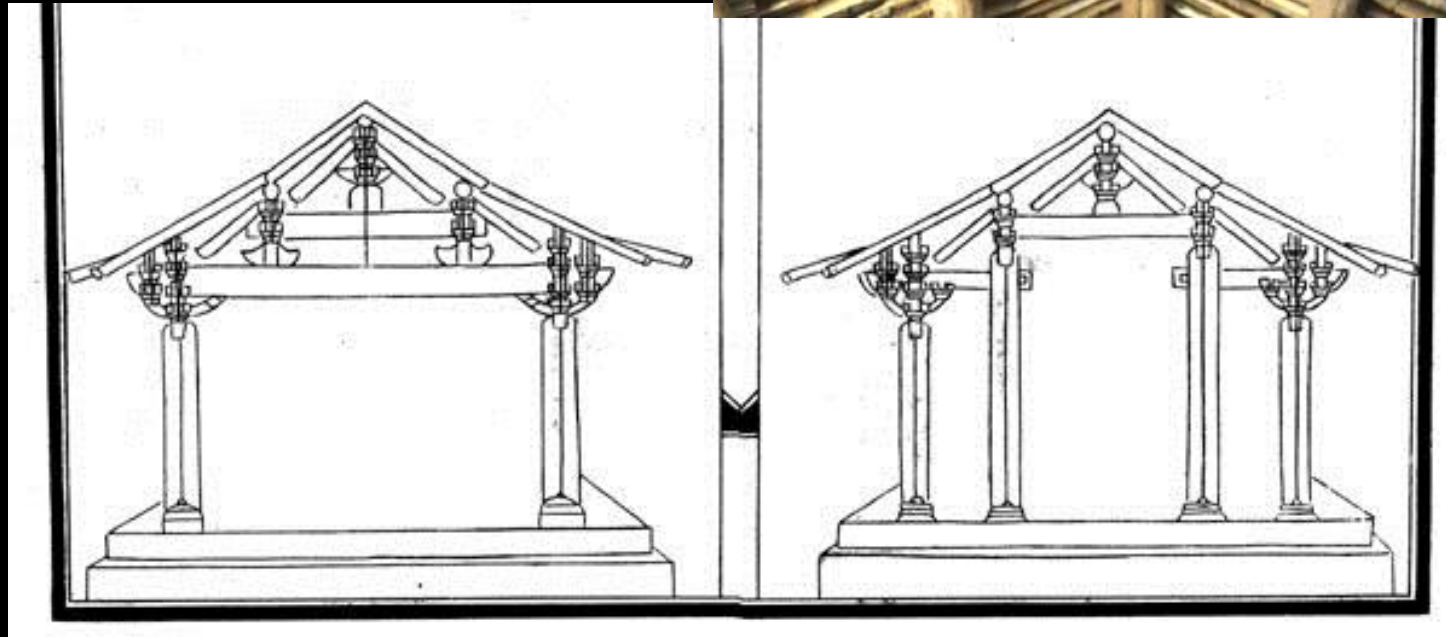
“The basic building block of Chinese architecture is the bay or “the space between,” which is the space defined by roof supports. Chinese houses almost always consist of an odd number of bays; an even number of bays is considered unlucky.”

<https://depts.washington.edu/chinaciv/3artile.htm>



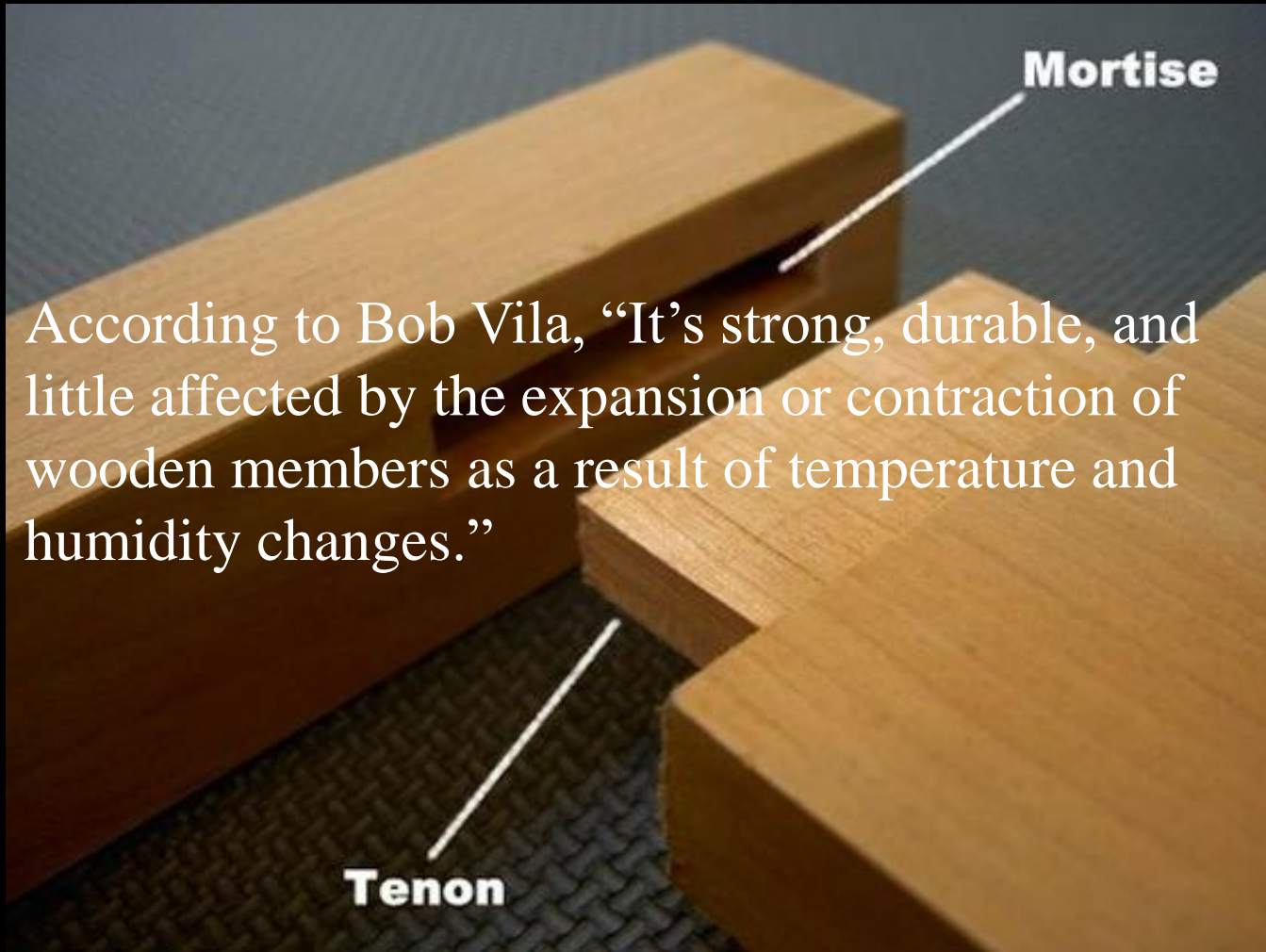
Structure and materials in the hall and library

Diagrams of framing systems from a Song dynasty building manual. The rooms at Mia were dismantled in China, shipped here, then put together by a team of Chinese builders. The weight of the buildings rests on the timber framing, not on the walls.



Structure and materials in the hall and library

The Chinese use mortise and tenon joints in the timber framing, with the use of some nails in the rafters. This technique is also used to make the furniture in the room. What might be the benefits of this system?



Structure and materials in the hall and library

This woodblock print below from the Ming Dynasty shows how clay roof tiles were made in a mold. A similar process is used today. Once dried, they are cut into 4 pieces and fired, seen in the modern photo.

<https://depts.washington.edu/chinaciv/3artile.htm>



Small group discussion: Based on your observations, what do you think the reception room expresses about Chinese practices and values?



Objects that express Confucian family values...

These two calligraphic panels translate to:

“Solemnly we develop this hall as a place for courteous interaction and harmonious family relationships.

From generation to generation we wholeheartedly practice the traditional virtues of this village.”



Translates to “Hall of Salutory Humility”

Objects that express Confucian
(family) values...



Objects that
express Confucian
values...

House Shrine
(resembling a
miniature 3-bay
hall), 18th-19th
century, 99.130 a-h

This shrine housed
the spirit tablets of
the ancestors.

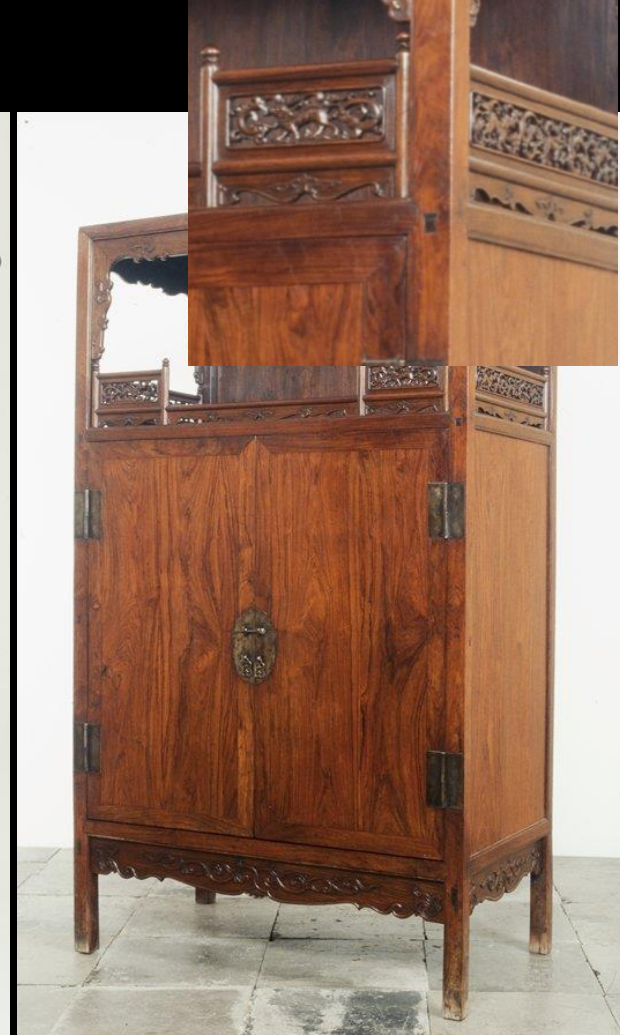


Objects or elements that express wealth and status...



*Plate, Kangxi Period (1662-1722), 15.38, an example of *famille verte* (enameled porcelain), popular in 17th-18th centuries.*

*Yokeback Armchair, c. 1550, 95.93.1; Pair of Display Cabinets, 18th century, 2001.32.1.1a-e, 2a-e. These are made of *Huanghuali*, a fine hardwood.*

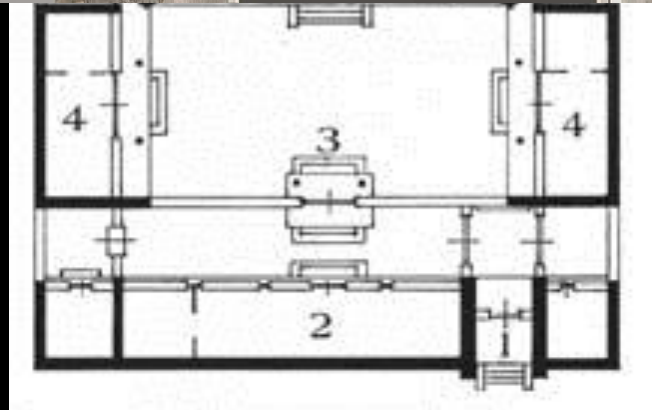


Objects or elements that express wealth and status...

Floor with diagonal tiles; *Pair of Imperial Altar Banners*, Yongzhong Period, 42.8.229.1,2



The Ceremonial Gate is made of handcarved tile.



Ceremonial Gate

The first register shows the four noble professions, with the scholar landowner pictured to the right. Below the farmer, the woodcutter, and the fisherman.



Ceremonial Gate

The second register shows an inscription, translated to “In celebration of Bestowed Glory.” Also included is a Daoist symbol of longevity (spotted deer).



Other furnishings on display

Folding Roundback Armchair, late 16th-early 17th century, 98.80.3 and *Large Standing Screen with Marble Panel*, late 17th century, 96.120.7 a-d. Here we see an example of a dali marble insert and the use of two hardwoods.



China after 1280...

In 1279, the last Chinese emperor of the Southern Song Dynasty fell to Kublai Khan, leader of the Mongols.

This was the time of Marco Polo's visit to China.



Kublai Khan founded the Yuan Dynasty.

Yuan Dynasty

The literati were Chinese scholars who produced painting, calligraphy, and poetry—sometimes all on one work. True literati only produced works for personal pleasure, never for money!

Many literati works have aspects of Yin and Yang, to create a balance central to the practice of Daoism.

Wu Zhen, *Stalks of Bamboo by a Rock*, Yuan Dynasty, 1347. Inset, Dai Mingyue, *Bamboo*, c. 1650 (not on view), 96.97.36.

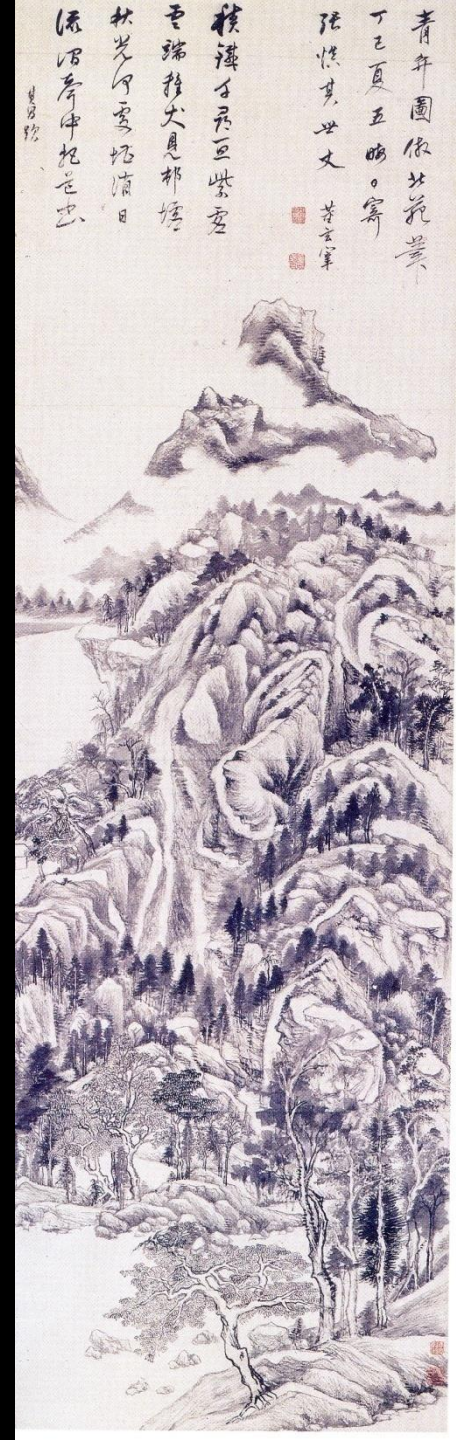
陰	陽
YIN	YANG
negative	positive
passive	active
female	male
receptive	creative
dark	light
night	day
cold	heat
soft	hard
wet	dry
winter	summer



Ming Dynasty

Literati painting is typically monochromatic, with subject matter of the natural world. Many literati, though trained as Confucian scholars, practiced a Daoist philosophy.

Dong Qichang, *Dwelling in the Qingbian Mountains*, 1617. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 7'4" x 2'3".



Ming Dynasty

This is a painting that comes from the Suzhou area, original home to our reception hall and scholar's library. It was completed as a gift, in honor of the 80th birthday of artist's teacher.

Yuan Qiu, *Suchou Temple Garden*, c. 1549, Ink and colors on paper, 99.172.2 (not on view)



Small group discussion:
Based on your observations, what do you think
the scholar's studio expresses about Chinese
practice and values?



Literati Life...

Scholarly Pursuits, late 17th-mid 18th century, ink and colors on silk, 2005.54.4 (not on view)



Literati life

Objects meant to impress and inspire...



Literati life

Objects meant to impress and inspire...



*Scholar's
rocks:*
98.81.2 and
2003.171.2

Literati life

Objects meant for relaxation...



Zither (Qin),
1634 (dated by
inscription),
96.121



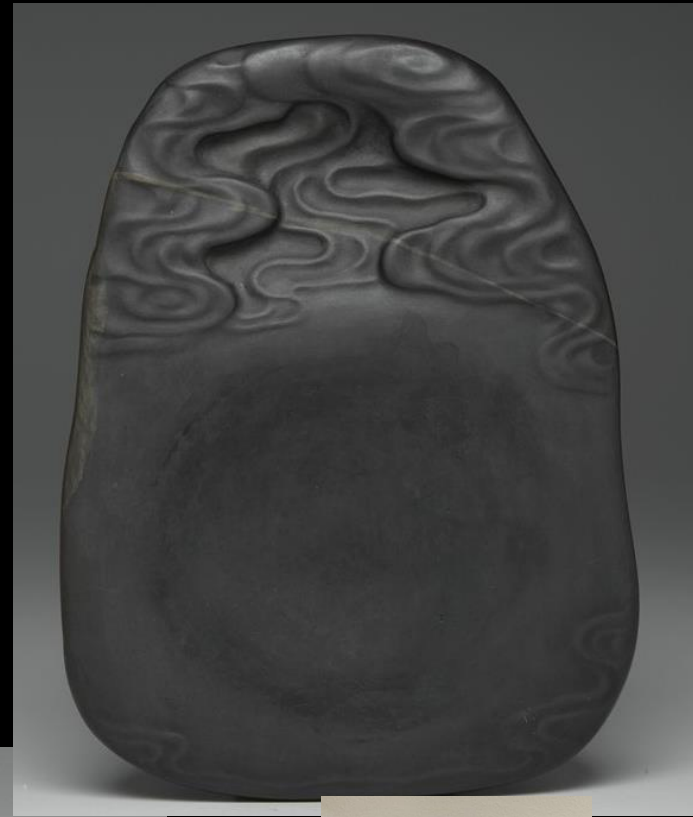
Daybed, late 16th-
early 17th century,
99.175; Mao Hui,
Bird cage, 1860
(dated by
inscription),
96.97.22a-j

Literati life

Objects to connect scholar to nature...

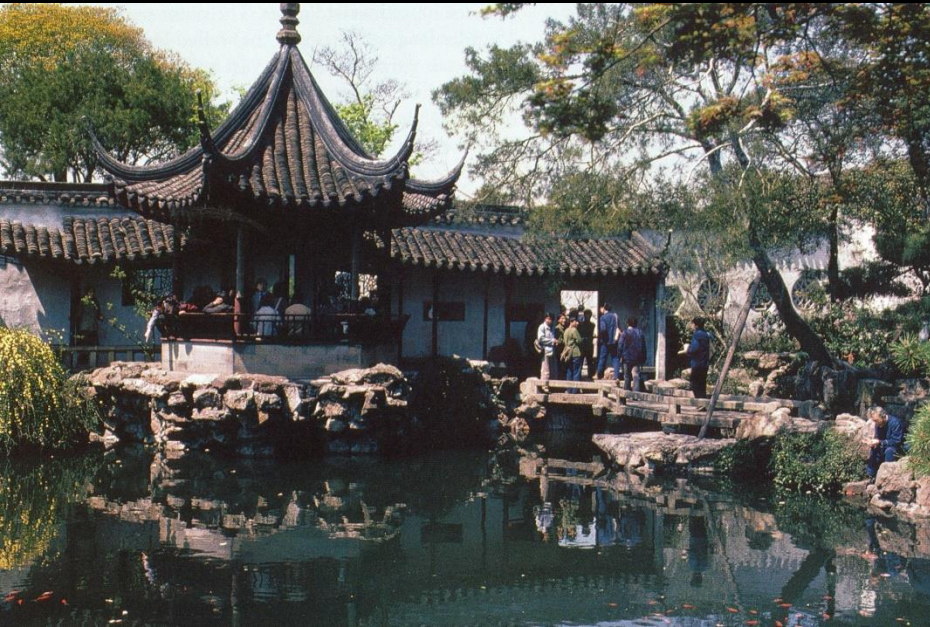
Clockwise from
right: Inkstone,
Ruyi scepter,
Cricket cage, Hand
exercisers, and
Brush pot

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mm
nMBthTzqs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mm
nMBthTzqs)

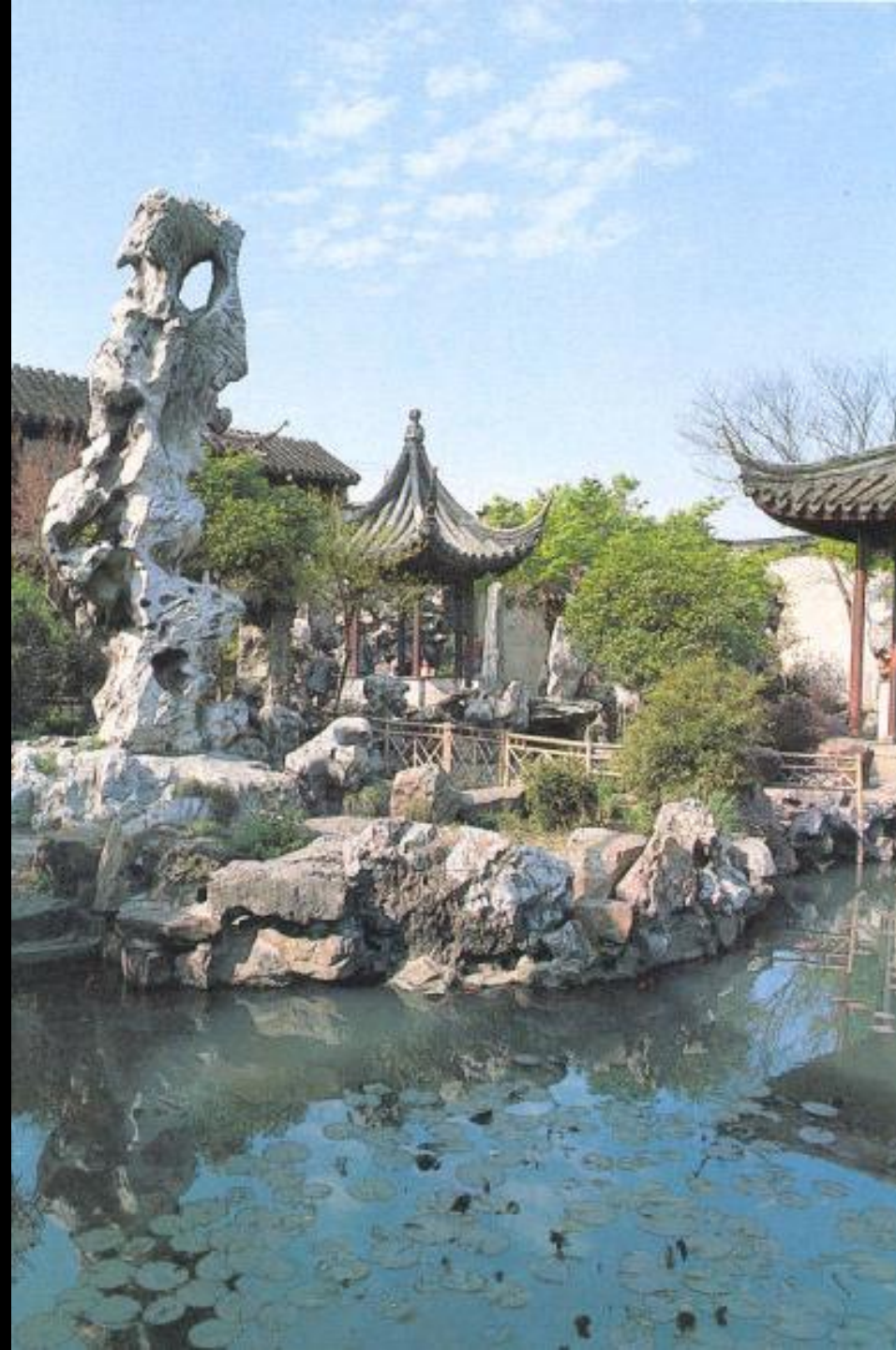


Ming Dynasty

During the Ming Dynasty, the literati built gardens that reflected their contemplative lifestyles.



Above, Garden of the Master of Fishing Nets, and right, Lingering Garden, Suzhou. Ming Dynasty.



Garden design in the Ming and Qing Dynasties

Suzhou (UNESCO site): “Classical Chinese garden design, which seeks to recreate natural landscapes in miniature, is nowhere better illustrated than in the nine gardens in the historic city of Suzhou....Dating from the 11th-19th century, the gardens reflect the profound metaphysical importance of natural beauty in Chinese culture in their meticulous design.”

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/813/video>



Wuyi Mountains, Fujian
Province, Green or Fairy
Damsel Peak at the Head of
Erqu Creek



“Another character thought to express longevity is wan which means "ten thousand." This character is often represented stylistically as a backwards swastika....”

<https://depts.washington.edu/chinaciv/3decor.htm>



Garden Design



Garden Design:
Exploring in the
galleries...



Moon Gate, 1728,
98.70.1a-e

Moon gates were common architectural elements in gardens in the Suzhou area. The form of three star gods at the top represent health, wealth, and longevity. (Inset, Classical Chinese garden in Vancouver.)



Imperial Arts

Ancestral Portrait of a Prince,
late 18th century, 2002.12.2.1

What proclaims his status?

“He is shown formally seated on a lacquer throne in full court attire wearing a blue-ground audience robe, a winter hat surmounted by a ruby, a formal detachable collar and a surcoat emblazoned with dragon roundels. The hat sports a three-eyed peacock feather, a court award for meritorious service.”
(artsmia.org)



Imperial Arts

*Manchu Woman's Semiformal
Court Vest (hsia-pei), 1662-1722,
42.8.6*

This was the
type of robe
that could be
worn by the
wife of a first
or second
degree prince.



Imperial Arts

*Manchu Prince's Semiformal
Twelve-Symbol Court Robe,
1796-1820, 42.8.52*

This was the
type of robe
that could be
worn by a
prince.



Imperial Arts

Imperial Throne, 18th century, 93.32a-d (not on view)



Imperial Arts of the Qing

Literati painting is collected and becomes an academic imperial style in the Qing Dynasty. *Plum, Narcissus and Rock*, 1679 by Wang Wu, 2001.138.3.

“The plants and rock [symbolize] the harmony of nature and the tenacious character of the scholar-official.”

Of interest are the poetic colophons attached to the painting from the Qing Dynasty (1775), “evidently written as a poem competition upon viewing the painting.” (artsmia.org)

