

THE BARAKAT GALLERY

Chinese Art

Ming Dynasty
1368 AD - 1644 AD



Ming Dynasty

Upon leading a victorious rebellion against the foreign Mongul rulers of the Yuan Dynasty, a peasant named Zhu Yuanzhang seized control of China and founded the Ming Dynasty in 1368. As emperor, he founded his capital at Nanjing and adopted the name Hongwu as his reign title. Hongwu, literally meaning “vast military,” reflects the increased prestige of the army during the Ming Dynasty. Due to the very realistic threat still posed by the Mongols, Hongwu realized that a strong military was essential to Chinese prosperity. Thus, the orthodox Confucian view that the military was an inferior class to be ruled over by an elite class of scholars was reconsidered. During the Ming Dynasty, China proper was reunited after centuries of foreign incursion and occupation. Ming troops controlled Manchuria, and the Korean Joseon Dynasty respected the authority of the Ming rulers, at least nominally.

Like the founders of the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.- 220 A.D.), Hongwu was extremely suspicious of the educated courtiers that advised him and, fearful that they might attempt to overthrow him, he successfully consolidated control of all aspect of government. The strict authoritarian control Hongwu wielded over the affairs of the country was due in part to the centralized system of government he inherited from the Monguls and largely kept intact. However, Hongwu replaced the Mongul bureaucrats who had ruled the country for nearly a century with native Chinese administrators. He also reinstated the Confucian examination system that tested would-be civic officials on their knowledge of literature and philosophy. Unlike the Song Dynasty (960-1279 A.D.), which received most of its taxes from mercantile commerce, the Ming economy was based primarily on agriculture, reflecting both the peasant roots of its founder as well as the Confucian belief that trade was ignoble and parasitic.

Culturally, the greatest innovation of the Ming Dynasty was the introduction of the novel. Developed from the folk tales of traditional storytellers, these works were transcribed in the everyday vernacular language of the people. Advances in printmaking and the increasing population of urban dwellers largely contributed to the success of these books. Architecturally, the most famous monument of the Ming Dynasty is surely the complex of temples and palaces known as the Forbidden City that was constructed in Beijing after the third ruler of the Ming Dynasty, Emperor Yongle, moved the capital there. Today, the Forbidden Palace remains one of the hallmarks of traditional Chinese architecture and is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the vast nation.

Ming Bronze Sculpture of a Buddhist Disciple



FZ.344

Origin: China

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 9.25" (23.5cm) high x
3.75" (9.5cm) wide

Collection: Chinese

Medium: Bronze

Location: United States

This bronze figure standing on a decorated base surely indicates by the position of his hands that he is in the midst of acknowledging an audience or presenting an offering. A long scarf wraps around his arm and shoulder on both sides. His attire, coiffure, and sturdy built reveal his duties as a protector and religious figure. A slightly inward footing indicates humbleness as if standing before the presence of royalty or nobility. His vivid facial expressions and head movement animate the heavy medium, rendering it a sense of vitality and charm as if the person being depicted is ready to walk out of a hardened trance. In accordance with Chinese physiognomy, elongated ear lobes tell of a person's benevolence and a wide forehead is a sign of a person's generosity. Regarded as an ideal, these characteristics are believed to be those of great figures such as Buddha and Confucius, and are the most desired and depicted in Chinese art. - (FZ. 344)

Pair of Ming Glazed Terracotta Attendants Holding Bowls



H.001
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: United States

These two lead-glazed female attendants exemplify Ming advances made in the ceramic industry with regards to glaze technique and color. The colorful green, amber, blue and red flowing robes and skirts contain highlights and speckles of complimentary colors, as their folds and creases emphasizes the fluidity of the silk garments and gracefulness of the women. Each standing on a hexagonal stepped pedestal colored in the same color scheme, the women balance bowls on their concealed hands. They don an elaborate red headdress with an incised band across the forehead tapering their parted hair while the rest of their tresses is knotted and weaved into an ornate central headpiece. Their plump cheeks, delicate features, and small rosy lips reflect the ideal beauty of women in court life.

Ming statuette art reflects the attempt to restore purely 'Chinese' artistic genres with a healthy injection of Confucian aesthetic, political, and moral standards. Realistic depictions of daily life became popular themes among artists who were often patronized by the court. Under Xuande's reign (1426-35), the art industry flourished, producing many exquisite porcelain and ceramic pieces. This glazed set is a product of the artistic revival that occurred throughout the Ming Era. - (H.001)

Ming Gilt Wooden Sculpture of a Folk Deity



H.014

Origin: China

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 18.5" (47.0cm) high x

8.5" (21.6cm) wide

Collection: Chinese

Medium: Gilt Wood

Location: United States

Seated with legs slightly apart and arms bent at the elbows with the hands emerging from the voluminous sleeves of this priest robe, the god sits on a throne decorated in swirl and feather motif in red and black pigment. The crown, robe and face are in gilt, rubbed-off on the lower portion of the robe which bears traces of black and red pigment. The collar of the robe is incised in a cloud pattern covering the edge of an incised lapel which crosses over the bodice. Tightened with a red belt, the outer robe reveals the decorative border of an inner robe which drapes to the floor exposing the tips of upward curved shoes. A puffed, pleated cap with a black border rests on top of the head, just above the pendulant earlobes--a physiognomic character that attests to one's benign being, as in the Buddha. The full face and delicately molded eyes, nose, and mouth also convey the characteristics of a divine figure. Throughout China, local gods and Taoist deities were worshipped in the private and public domains. It was custom to make offerings to these figures to ensure the well-being of the household and smooth handling of affairs. Since the introduction of Buddhism and invention of Confucianism, the images of divine figures synthesized, borrowing elements from all religious and philosophical beliefs, as evidenced in this Ming representation. - (H.014)

Ming Glazed Terracotta Sculptures of a Horse and a Civic Official



H.016
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: United States

With his arm outstretched holding an imaginary rein, a civil official stands patiently beside his horse. He wears a long, flowing turquoise robe with wide sleeve openings folded loosely across the body with a high, crossover white collar and a belt drawn through a circular belt buckle. A flattened, tall cylindrical hat rests snugly on his head, accentuating his pendulant earlobes and delicately featured white face. The horse is caught in a natural pose with its right leg cocked and mouth agape. Its sturdy, graceful body is decorated with colorful layers of fittings and insignia. The mane is combed and parted between the ears, and the long tresses of the tail are cast in a singular mold. It has a playful, childish quality that comes forth through its gestures and expressions.

After the T'ang Dynasty (AD 618-907), figurines no longer formed standard part of tomb furnishings but the tradition lingered on. The use of burial objects varied according to individual choice or local habit. The Ming consciously revived the art of tomb figurines, adding to the range of colored glazes used since the T'ang--light to dark blue, green, yellow and turquoise. Although the belief behind their use faded, the Ming still produced marvelous pieces, perhaps for their aesthetic and symbolic value. - (H. 016)

Ming Stone Sculpture of a Chariot Rider, Horse and Attendants



H.026
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 11" (27.9cm) high x
20" (50.8cm) wide

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Stone
Location: United States

This stone sculpture depicts the arrival of an esteemed patron on chariot. Symbolically, it conveys the Buddhist belief in the attainment of nirvana arrived at through the vehicle of devout faith. Seated on an ornate chariot which signifies enthronement, the rider holds a lotus flower on his knee. This figure's delicately modelled face is surmounted by an elaborate crown with a rising center piece. Two smaller sized figures accompany the rider, displaying great movement and energy in their stylized gestures. The smaller attendant yanks the reins of the vigorous horse as the other figure waves his arm high, enhancing the movement of his body and clothing. Both men wear three-quarter robes and bear the Buddhist marking of wisdom-- the ushnisa. - (H.026)

Set of Six Ming Glazed Terracotta Figures and a Horse and Rider



H.003

Origin: China

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 13.5" (34.3cm) high x

3.75" (9.5cm) wide

Collection: Chinese

Medium: Glazed Terracotta

Location: United States

This group of lead-glazed statuettes is both unique and comical, perhaps depicting a band of travelling entertainers, hermit scholars, or strange mystical servants. Although the exact occupation of these figures is evasive, their farcical features and captivating expressions reveal the artist's skill at creating figures that come to life and delight audiences. Consisting of six standing figures and one seated on horseback, this odd grouping seems to be partaking in a procession. The six standing figures wear emerald green flowing robes with wide sleeves and an amber colored belt with an ornate buckle. The robe reveals their white collars and black boots, and on some figures, a fin-shaped pad seemingly part of the robe is fitted on one shoulder. Perhaps, it served as a prop rest for a shaft or banner pole given that those fitted with it have one arm raised and hand clenched as if shouldering a long slender object. Another figure, with extremely different facial features from the others, stands in a bold stance revealing his clenched fist and bare arm. Behind these men, another man carries a wooden rack on his back. The man on horseback assumes an erect posture, right arm folded in front of his button down jacket. Not only is his clothing significantly different, but his short, incised pointed cap contrasts with the tall conical black caps worn by the men on foot. His horse is short and stocky, but adorned with once colorful trappings that bespeak of its important service to man. Ming statuette art reflects the attempt to restore purely 'Chinese' artistic genres with a healthy injection of Confucian aesthetic, political, and moral standards. Realistic depictions of daily life became popular themes among artists who were often patronized by the court. Under Xuande's reign (1426-35), the art industry flourished, producing many exquisite porcelain and ceramic pieces. This glazed set is a product of the Ming artistic revival and the imagination of artists who prospered as a result. - (H.003)

Pair of Ming Glazed Terracotta Military Figures



H.032

Origin: China

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 19.25" (48.9cm) high x

5.5" (14.0cm) wide

Collection: Chinese

Medium: Glazed Terracotta

Location: United States

Modelled on a curved surface, a military official decorates the side of these two circular objects. A square-shaped hole cut out between the feet indicates that the objects could have been used as incense burners or lamps. The military official is glazed in sancai colors, yellow ochre, amber and green reminiscent of T'ang style, while the raised base is left unglazed. The features of these stocky figure are delicately molded, depicting the serious expression and bold nature commonly associated with military men. Their tense eyebrows and piercing eyes exhibit a sense of stamina and determination and while sternly clasping hands in the position of attention, their elaborately decorated battle gear hint at their respected ranking in society. Careful attention has been given to the modelling of the headdress which drapes to the shoulders and the outer armor which is incised with horizontal diamond patterns. During the Ming Dynasty, irredentist sentiment spawned a cultural movement that sought to celebrate China's glorious past. Reproductions of cultural artifacts of the Han and T'ang dynasties flooded the art market, increasing patrons appreciation and awareness of their sophisticated past. It is possible that this piece was produced amidst this flurry of enthusiasm and celebration. - (H.032)

Set of Five Ming Glazed Terracotta Attendants,
a Horse, and a Pagoda



H.004
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 16.125" (41.0cm) high x
6" (15.2cm) wide

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Additional Information: Dimensions
are for the Tallest Figure
Location: United States

This miniature procession consists of five attendants, a horse, and palanquin glazed in sancai--a type of glazing that originated in the T'ang Dynasty (618-906). The attendants are dressed in layers of robes that expose their footwear. The outer emerald colored robe is shortened at the cuff of the wide sleeves to reveal an inner yellow ochre robe. They wear tall rounded, short brimmed caps and lean forward as a gesture of humility. As Chinese statuette art prescribes, the faces are created individually, owing to their distinctive expressions and features. With the exception of the palanquin, the attendants and horse stand atop a stepped pedestal of green or amber colors. The horse charms us with its playful expression conveyed through its wide eyes, smiling grin, and blockish built. Reminiscent of a childhood merry-go-round, the white horse is well-groomed with its black mane combed and parted in the center around its ears, its tail hair brushed and curled upward, and its body lavishly adorned with emerald green and amber trappings. Glazed in the same color scheme as the other figures, the palanquin is elegantly constructed with a small diamond pattern designed screen on both sides, an double-arched, arabesque open entry, and curved hip roof.

This Ming set of sancai glazed figurines depicts an aspect of Chinese political and social life. Tributary processions were common protocol at this time, the emperor requiring provincial lords to pay tribute and tax on a regular basis. Processions were also held for funerals, marriages, and rituals differing in grandeur depending on the status of the individuals involved and nature of the ceremony. The palanquin served as the primary form of transportation for the elite who often travelled with several attendants. Ming statuette art reflects the attempt to restore purely "Chinese" artistic genres with a healthy injection of Confucian aesthetic, political, and moral standards. Realistic depictions of daily life became popular themes among artists who were often patronized by the court. Under Xuande's reign (1426-35), the art industry flourished, producing many exquisite porcelain and ceramic pieces. This glazed set is a product of the artistic revival that occurred throughout the Ming. - (H.004)

Set of Five Ming Glazed Terracotta Attendants,
a Horse, and a Palanquin



H.005
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: United States

This miniature procession consists of five attendants, a horse, and palanquin. The attendants are dressed in layers of robes that expose their footwear. The outer emerald colored robe is shortened at the cuff of the wide sleeves to reveal an inner yellow ochre robe. They wear tall rounded, short brimmed caps and lean forward as a gesture of humility. As Chinese statuette art prescribes, the faces are created individually, owing to their distinctive expressions and features. With the exception of the palanquin, the attendants and horse stand atop a stepped pedestal of yellow, green or amber colors. The horse charms us with its playful expression conveyed through its long eyelashes, wide eyes, smiling grin, and blockish built. Reminiscent of a childhood merry-go-round, the white horse is well-groomed with its black mane combed and parted in the center around its ears, its tail hair brushed and curled upward, and its body lavishly adorned with emerald green and amber trappings. Glazed in the same color scheme as the other figures, the palanquin is elegantly constructed with a diamond pattern designed screen on both sides, an arched, arabesque open entry, and curved hip roof.

This Ming set of glazed figurines depicts an aspect of Chinese political and social life. Tributary processions were common protocol at this time, the emperor requiring provincial lords to pay tribute and tax on a regular basis. Processions were also held for funerals, marriages, and rituals differing in grandeur depending on the status of the individuals involved and nature of the ceremony. The palanquin served as the primary form of transportation for the elite who often traveled with several attendants. Ming statuette art reflects the attempt to restore purely “Chinese” artistic genres with a healthy injection of Confucian aesthetic, political, and moral standards. Realistic depictions of daily life became popular themes among artists who were often patronized by the court. Under Xuande's reign (1426-35), the art industry flourished, producing many exquisite porcelain and ceramic pieces. This glazed set is a product of the artistic revival that occurred throughout the Ming. - (H.005)

Ming Glazed Terracotta Sculptures of a Horse and Rider and an Attendant



H.506
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 15.5" (39.4cm) high

Catalogue: V17
Collection: Chinese
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: United States

After years of suffering from Yuan domination-- a domination realized through the mastery of cavalry warfare--the Ming Dynasty emerged to reclaim its culturally superior status. In the statuette art of the Ming, horses are favored subjects. Ming horses typically have a robust and rather massive appearance. This modification is apparent in this set of horse, rider and attendant. The rider sits high on a saddled horse with an attendant at his side holding the reins. The figurines are painted in blue, red, and white glaze. Apparently of high social status, the rider is dressed in plain military attire. His hands grasp something we can no longer see, but can only imagine to be a weapon. His rank and position in society enable him to travel on horse accompanied by a male attendant. It was also common for men of his background to engage in equestrian activities such as polo. Through realistic facial detail, the Ming artist gives life to the medium. An individual emerges out of these lifeless objects; the depiction of real-life expressions enhances the vitality of these characters who have existed throughout China's long history. Imbuing the object with life was the goal of craftsmen since their work, as representations of real people, were to accompany the deceased along a perilous journey into the other world. Whether or not these ceramic pieces made during the Ming carried the same significance for its owner still remains a mystery; however such burial practices did not disappear with such speed or entirety. - (H.506)

Set of Seven Ming Glazed Terracotta Attendants and a Horse



H.006

Origin: China

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 16.5" (41.9cm) high x
5" (12.7cm) wide

Collection: Chinese

Medium: Glazed Terracotta

Additional Information: The

Dimensions are for the Tallest Figure

Location: United States

Seven attendants wear emerald green robes attached on one side and tied at the waist with a sash. Their whitened faces accentuate their finely shaped eyes and small reddened mouths as well as their black hair that appears beneath the tall, rounded red caps. Although dressed in nearly identical attire, each attendant bears a mark that distinguishes one from the other-- this method was used by Chinese statuette artists for centuries to imbue each figure with spirit. One figure holds a red and black object in his arm and bears a crest on his robe. The others are distinguished by their pose, the appearance of their robes, or their facial features. The procession is complete with a white horse decked out in exquisite trappings--the bridle and rein are adorned with decorative studs and the amber glazed saddle is complimented with red and green saddle blankets. Wide-eyed and grinning, the horse displays its elegance and strength.

This Ming set of sancai glazed figurines depicts an aspect of Chinese political and social life. Tributary processions were common protocol at this time, the emperor requiring provincial lords to pay tribute and tax on a regular basis. Processions were also held for funerals, marriages, and rituals differing in grandeur depending on the status of the individuals involved and nature of the ceremony. Ming statuette art reflects the attempt to restore purely "Chinese" artistic genres with a healthy injection of Confucian aesthetic, political, and moral standards. Realistic depictions of daily life became popular themes among artists who were often patronized by the court. Under Xuande's reign (1426-35), the art industry flourished, producing many exquisite porcelain and ceramic pieces. This glazed set is a product of the artistic revival that occurred throughout the Ming Dynasty. - (H.006)

Set of Ming Dynasty Glazed Terracotta
Sculptures Featuring a Dignitary and Seven
Attendants



H.007

Origin: China

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 18.5" (47.0cm) high x
4.75" (12.1cm) wide

Collection: Chinese

Medium: Glazed Terracotta

Additional Information: The
dimensions are for the dignitary.

Location: United States

Modelled standing on a rectangular plinth, seven attendants accompany a dignitary holding a box resting on a draped scarf over the folds of his sleeves. The dignitary is modelled twice the size of the attendants, perhaps indicative of his high social ranking or importance in the procession. The dignitary wears a tall back cap flattened on top and an emerald green colored robe with yellow ochre showing on the sides. The lapel is white with fading in some areas. With a countenance of veneration, the dignitary's whitened fleshy face, elongated ear lobes, and refined facial features bespeaks of his exemplary moral character and high social status. The seven attendants assume various positions--some with one arm raised to the shoulder as if holding the pole that supports a palanquin, others with their arms held forward carrying ceremonial objects or musical instruments. All seven attendants wear unglazed half-robles with black collars over emerald green undergarments and rounded caps of various shapes. Whereas the dignitary stands erect and center-lined, the attendants stand slightly bent with their heads lowered--a sign of their humble demeanor.

This Ming set of sancai glazed figurines depicts an aspect of Chinese political and social life. Tributary processions were common protocol at this time, the emperor requiring provincial lords to pay tribute and tax on a regular basis. Processions were also held for funerals, marriages, and rituals differing in grandeur depending on the status of the individuals involved and nature of the ceremony. The palanquin served as the primary form of transportation for the elite who often travelled with several attendants. Ming statuette art reflects the attempt to restore purely 'Chinese' artistic genres with a healthy injection of Confucian aesthetic, political, and moral standards. Realistic depictions of daily life became popular themes among artists who were often patronized by the court. Under Xuande's reign (1426-35), the art industry flourished, producing many exquisite porcelain and ceramic pieces. This glazed set is a product of the artistic revival that occurred throughout the Ming. - (H.007)

Ming Wooden Polychrome Sculpture of Guanyin



PF.2359

Origin: China

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 37" (94.0cm) high x
9" (22.9cm) wide

Catalogue: V7

Collection: Chinese

Medium: Wood And Paint

Location: United States

Noted for her kindness, Guanyin is an ancient Bodhisattva. In Buddhism, Bodhisattvas are beings who have attained enlightenment, but renounce the goal of Nirvana, a state characterized by freedom from pain, suffering and the external world. Instead, these benevolent Bodhisattvas minister eternally to relieve the sufferings of all creatures, like Archangels, passing from the remote heaven to the world of men. Indeed, this carved wood depiction of the Bodhisattva Guanyin emanates an other-worldliness that bespeaks of spirited compassion and kindness. The artist who created this sculpture captures through skillful carving a beautiful image, her serene face radiating devotion and tenderness. Masterful chiseling of her garments results in an ethereal quality that flows like the ancient tides. In her raised right hand she holds a portion of her garment that magically becomes a cobra, the ancient Dravidian symbol for a water spirit; evidencing Guanyin's close bond with all the natural world. Whispers of her once colorful image are seen in the soft, subtle colors that still cling to her beautiful form, now serving to accentuate her mystical qualities. When we behold this work of art we are at once elevated to a height of aesthetic and spiritual awareness that transcends both time and culture. - (PF.2359)

Ming Glazed Terracotta Temple Roof Tile
Depicting a Horse and Rider



H.719
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 18" (45.7cm) high

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: United States

Chinese architecture is one of the more distinct styles of building. Perhaps the most characteristic element is the pagoda roofs that end in dramatic curves. This sculptural tile would have been situated on that curved edge of a Ming Dynasty temple. Depicting a horse and rider, this work was placed on the roof in order to frighten away any evil spirits that might attempt to infiltrate the sacred space. The goateed and mustached rider, apparently a soldier, is decorated in ochre-glazed armor that covers his body. Both his hands are positioned as if they once held something. Most probably weapons, perhaps swords, rendered in wood, that have deteriorated over the centuries. Although this detail has disappeared, the vibrant hues of the blue and ochre glaze remain as brilliantly colorful as ever. The horse's saddle, mane and tail are all a beautiful deep blue glaze, some of which has dripped over the other elements of the work, creating a marvelous pattern. Blue-glazed ribbons decorating the riders swirl in the breeze, just like the wavy winds that blow at the horse's feet. When one considers that this remarkable architectural sculpture is just the tip of the temple, the beauty of the completed temple must be truly astounding. - (H.719)

Ming Glazed Terracotta Temple Roof Tile
Depicting a Horse and Rider



H.718
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 18.25" (46.4cm) high

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: United States

Chinese architecture is one of the more distinct styles of building. Perhaps the most characteristic element is the pagoda roofs that end in dramatic curves. This sculptural tile would have been situated on that curved edge of a Ming Dynasty temple. Depicting a horse and rider, this work was placed on the roof in order to frighten away any evil spirits that might attempt to infiltrate the sacred space. The rider, apparently a soldier, is decorated in ochre- glazed armor that covers his body. Both his hands are positioned as if they once held something. Most probably weapons, perhaps swords, rendered in wood, that have deteriorated over the centuries. Although this detail has disappeared, the vibrant hues of the blue and ochre glaze remain as brilliantly colorful as ever. The horse's saddle, mane and tail are all a beautiful deep blue glaze, some of which has dripped over the other elements of the work, creating a marvelous pattern. Blue-glazed ribbons decorating the riders swirl in the breeze, just like the wavy winds that blow at the horse's feet. When one considers that this remarkable architectural sculpture is just the tip of the temple, the beauty of the completed temple must be truly astounding. - (H.718)

Set of Nine Ming Glazed Terracotta Attendants and a Palanquin



H.866
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 8.5" (21.6cm) high

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Terracotta
Location: United States

This miniature procession consists of nine attendants and a palanquin. The attendants wear green-glazed robes with long flowing sleeves and shoes that have been painted black. Their tall rounded black caps accentuate their dignified appearance. As Chinese statuette art prescribes, the faces are created individually with uniquely painted features, owing to their distinctive expressions. One of the attendants carries a black stool around his back, perhaps providing a seat for the emperor once they arrived at their destination. Glazed in the same rich forest green as the figures, the palanquin is elegantly constructed with molded screens on both sides and curved hip roof crowned with a diamond ornament. Here, the emperor would have once sat. However, he is not depicted, since this processional set was intended to usher the soul of the deceased emperor into the afterlife. - (H.866)

Set of Ten Ming Glazed Terracotta Attendants
and a Palanquin



H.867
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 8.5" (21.6cm) high

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Terracotta
Location: United States

Ming statuette art reflects the attempt to restore purely "Chinese" artistic genres with a healthy injection of Confucian aesthetic, political, and moral standards. Realistic depictions of daily life became popular themes among artists who were often patronized by the court. Under Xuande's reign (1426-35), the art industry flourished, producing many exquisite porcelain and ceramic pieces. This glazed set is a product of the artistic revival that occurred throughout the Ming. This Ming set of glazed figurines depicts an aspect of Chinese political and social life. Tributary processions were common protocol at this time, the emperor requiring provincial lords to pay tribute and tax on a regular basis. Processions were also held for funerals, marriages, and rituals differing in grandeur depending on the status of the individuals involved and nature of the ceremony. The palanquin served as the primary form of transportation for the elite who often traveled with several attendants.

This miniature procession consists of nine attendants and a palanquin. The attendants wear green-glazed robes with long flowing sleeves and shoes that have been painted black. Their tall rounded black caps accentuate their dignified appearance. As Chinese statuette art prescribes, the faces are created individually with uniquely painted features, owing to their distinctive expressions. One of the attendants carries a black stool around his back, perhaps providing a seat for the emperor once they arrived at their destination. Glazed in the same rich forest green as the figures, the palanquin is elegantly constructed with molded screens on both sides and curved hip roof crowned with a diamond ornament. Here, the emperor would have once sat. However, he is not depicted, since this processional set was intended to usher the soul of the deceased emperor into the afterlife. - (H.867)

Set of Twelve Ming Glazed Terracotta
Attendants and a Palanquin



H.868
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 9.25" (23.5cm) high

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Terracotta
Location: United States

Ming statuette art reflects the attempt to restore purely "Chinese" artistic genres with a healthy injection of Confucian aesthetic, political, and moral standards. Realistic depictions of daily life became popular themes among artists who were often patronized by the court. Under Xuande's reign (1426-35), the art industry flourished, producing many exquisite porcelain and ceramic pieces. This glazed set is a product of the artistic revival that occurred throughout the Ming. This Ming set of glazed figurines depicts an aspect of Chinese political and social life. Tributary processions were common protocol at this time, the emperor requiring provincial lords to pay tribute and tax on a regular basis. Processions were also held for funerals, marriages, and rituals differing in grandeur depending on the status of the individuals involved and nature of the ceremony. The palanquin served as the primary form of transportation for the elite who often traveled with several attendants.

This miniature procession consists of twelve attendants and a palanquin. The attendants wear green-glazed robes with long flowing sleeves. Their tall rounded black caps accentuate their dignified appearance. As Chinese statuette art prescribes, the faces are created individually with uniquely painted features, owing to their distinctive expressions. One of the attendants carries a fan against his chest. We can imagine him periodically fanning down the emperor during their voyage. Glazed in the same rich forest green as the figures, the palanquin is elegantly constructed with molded screens on both sides and curved hip roof crowned with a diamond ornament. Here, the emperor would have once sat. However, he is not depicted, since this processional set was intended to usher the soul of the deceased emperor into the afterlife. - (H.868)

Ming Terracotta Polychrome Sculpture of an Attendant



H.960
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 8.875" (22.5cm) high

Collection: Chinese
Style: Ming Dynasty
Medium: Painted Terracotta
Location: United States

Ming Terracotta Polychrome Sculpture of an Attendant



H.961
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 8.875" (22.5cm) high

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Painted Terracotta
Location: United States

This statue represents a courtly attendant who is patiently awaiting the commands of his noble master in the afterlife. He stands with his right arm raised as if he was once holding the reins of a horse, implying that he might represent a groom. The original pigment that once covered this sculpture has survived the ravages of centuries remarkably intact. He wears a bright red hat with a black rim that matches his long black coat with little white buttons. His face has also been elegantly detailed with each whisker of his moustache delicately applied as well as his eyes and eyebrows. The details are remarkable. He almost appears to stare back at us. Having been to the afterlife and resurrected in our era, what secrets might he share with us? While once intended solely to be an eternal companion and attendant to the needs of his deceased lord and his stable of mighty steeds, now this sculpted figure functions on his own as a vibrant relic of history and as a spectacular work of art. - (H.960) - (H.961)

Ming Gilt Polychrome Terracotta Sculpture of a Horse



H.954
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 10.125" (25.7cm) high

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Painted Terracotta
Location: United States

Ming Gilt Polychrome Terracotta Sculpture of a Horse



H.956
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 10" (25.4cm) high

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Painted Terracotta
Location: United States

The importance of the horse in the history and culture of China can be viewed, in part, through the artistic legacy of this great civilization. In sculpture, painting, and literature, horses were glorified and revered. Furthermore, horses were believed to be relatives of the mythological dragon, reflecting their sacred status within society. The speed and endurance of horses enabled China to conquer new lands and govern far away provinces under a unified central government. Horses were an essential component of the Civic Letters Bureau, a modern postal service founded during the Ming Dynasty, which contributed to the dissolution of traditional smoke signal communications. This horse bears the broad, flattened face that is characteristic of horse sculptures during the transition from the Yuan to the Ming Dynasty. A burgundy numnah with tassels covers his back, resting under the bright orange saddle. Remnants of green pigment around the harness and bridle suggest that they may once have been painted, while the stirrups and bits still retain gilding. Overall, this sculpture is a testament to the revered status of the horse in Chinese culture, a love affair that was well over a fifteen hundred years old by the time this equestrian effigy was created. - (H.954) - (H.956)

Ming Terracotta Polychrome Sculpture of a Horse



H.955
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 10.25" (26.0cm) high

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Painted Terracotta
Location: United States

The importance of the horse in the history and culture of China can be viewed, in part, through the artistic legacy of this great civilization. In sculpture, painting, and literature, horses were glorified and revered. Furthermore, horses were believed to be relatives of the mythological dragon, reflecting their sacred status within society. The speed and endurance of horses enabled China to conquer new lands and govern far away provinces under a unified central government. Horses were an essential component of the Civic Letters Bureau, a modern postal service founded during the Ming Dynasty, which contributed to the dissolution of traditional smoke signal communications. This white horse bears the broad, flattened face that is characteristic of horse sculptures during the transition from the Yuan to the Ming Dynasty. A white numnah with tassels covers his back, resting under the saddle. Remnants of blue pigment around the saddle, harness, and bridle suggest that they were once painted. Overall, this sculpture is a testament to the revered status of the horse in Chinese culture, a love affair that was well over a fifteen hundred years old by the time this equestrian effigy was created. - (H.955)

Ming Polychrome Terracotta Sculpture of a Horse



H.957
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 10" (25.4cm) high

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Painted Terracotta
Location: United States

The importance of the horse in the history and culture of China can be viewed, in part, through the artistic legacy of this great civilization. In sculpture, painting, and literature, horses were glorified and revered. Furthermore, horses were believed to be relatives of the mythological dragon, reflecting their sacred status within society. The speed and endurance of horses enabled China to conquer new lands and govern far away provinces under a unified central government. Horses were an essential component of the Civic Letters Bureau, a modern postal service founded during the Ming Dynasty, which contributed to the dissolution of traditional smoke signal communications. This white horse bears the broad, flattened face that is characteristic of horse sculptures during the transition from the Yuan to the Ming Dynasty. A green numnah covers his back, resting under the bright red saddle. Remnants of brown pigment on the harness and bridle suggest that they were once painted as well. Overall, this sculpture is a testament to the revered status of the horse in Chinese culture, a love affair that was well over a fifteen hundred years old by the time this equestrian effigy was created. - (H.957)

Ming Polychrome Terracotta Sculpture of a Horse



H.958
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 10.25" (26.0cm) high

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Painted Terracotta
Location: United States

The importance of the horse in the history and culture of China can be viewed, in part, through the artistic legacy of this great civilization. In sculpture, painting, and literature, horses were glorified and revered. Furthermore, horses were believed to be relatives of the mythological dragon, reflecting their sacred status within society. The speed and endurance of horses enabled China to conquer new lands and govern far away provinces under a unified central government. Horses were an essential component of the Civic Letters Bureau, a modern postal service founded during the Ming Dynasty, which contributed to the dissolution of traditional smoke signal communications. This white horse bears the broad, flattened face that is characteristic of horse sculptures during the transition from the Yuan to the Ming Dynasty. A white numnah with tassels covers his back, resting under the bright orange saddle. Remnants of green pigment on the harness and bridle suggest that they were once painted as well. Overall, this sculpture is a testament to the revered status of the horse in Chinese culture, a love affair that was well over a fifteen hundred years old by the time this equestrian effigy was created. - (H.958)

Ming Polychrome Terracotta Sculpture of a Horse



H.959
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 10" (25.4cm) high

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Painted Terracotta
Location: United States

The importance of the horse in the history and culture of China can be viewed, in part, through the artistic legacy of this great civilization. In sculpture, painting, and literature, horses were glorified and revered. Furthermore, horses were believed to be relatives of the mythological dragon, reflecting their sacred status within society. The speed and endurance of horses enabled China to conquer new lands and govern far away provinces under a unified central government. Horses were an essential component of the Civic Letters Bureau, a modern postal service founded during the Ming Dynasty, which contributed to the dissolution of traditional smoke signal communications. This white horse bears the broad, flattened face that is characteristic of horse sculptures during the transition from the Yuan to the Ming Dynasty. A tasseled numnah with hints of yellow and pink hues covers his back, resting under the saddle. Overall, this sculpture is a testament to the revered status of the horse in Chinese culture, a love affair that was well over a fifteen hundred years old by the time this equestrian effigy was created. - (H.959)

Ming Polychrome Terracotta Sculpture of a Horse and Rider



H.953
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 13.25" (33.7cm) high

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Painted Terracotta
Location: United States

The importance of the horse in the history and culture of China can be viewed, in part, through the artistic legacy of this great civilization. In sculpture, painting, and literature, horses were glorified and revered. Furthermore, horses were believed to be relatives of the mythological dragon, reflecting their sacred status within society. The speed and endurance of horses enabled China to conquer new lands and govern far away provinces under a unified central government. Horses were an essential component of the Civic Letters Bureau, a modern postal service founded during the Ming Dynasty, which contributed to the dissolution of traditional smoke signal communications. This white horse bears the broad, flattened face that is characteristic of horse sculptures during the transition from the Yuan to the Ming Dynasty. Remnants of light green paint still remain on his harness while red pigment highlights his nostrils, mouth, and eyes. The rider, who rests solemnly with his hands held together in front of his chest and his eyes closed, as if in a trance, also bears a striking amount of his original paint, evident in his black coat and red lips. Overall, this sculpture is a testament to the revered status of the horse in Chinese culture, a love affair that was well over a fifteen hundred years old by the time this equestrian effigy was created. - (H.953)

Ming Gilt Polychrome Terracotta Sculpture of a Horse and Rider



H.952
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 13.5" (34.3cm) high

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Painted Terracotta
Location: United States

The importance of the horse in the history and culture of China can be viewed, in part, through the artistic legacy of this great civilization. In sculpture, painting, and literature, horses were glorified and revered. Furthermore, horses were believed to be relatives of the mythological dragon, reflecting their sacred status within society. The speed and endurance of horses enabled China to conquer new lands and govern far away provinces under a unified central government. Horses were an essential component of the Civic Letters Bureau, a modern postal service founded during the Ming Dynasty, which contributed to the dissolution of traditional smoke signal communications. This white horse bears the broad, flattened face that is characteristic of horse sculptures during the transition from the Yuan to the Ming Dynasty. Remnants of light green paint still remain on his harness while red pigment highlights his nostrils, mouth, and eyes. Some gilding is even visible on the bits, suggesting the luxurious nature of this work. The rider, who sits with his left arm curled up to his chest and his right arm held out to his side, as if motioning with invisible reins for the horse to turn, also bears a striking amount of his original paint, evident in his red coat and black vest. Overall, this sculpture is a testament to the revered status of the horse in Chinese culture, a love affair that was well over a fifteen hundred years old by the time this equestrian effigy was created. - (H.952)

Set of Nine Ming Glazed and Painted Terracotta
Attendants



H.927
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 9.25" (23.5cm) high

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: United States

Ming statuette art reflects the attempt to restore purely “Chinese” artistic genres with a healthy injection of Confucian aesthetic, political, and moral standards. Realistic depictions of daily life became popular themes among artists who were often patronized by the court. Under Xuande's reign (1426-35), the art industry flourished, producing many exquisite porcelain and ceramic pieces. This glazed set is a product of the artistic revival that occurred throughout the Ming Dynasty. This Ming set of glazed figurines depicts an aspect of Chinese political and social life. Tributary processions were common protocol at this time, the emperor requiring provincial lords to pay tribute and tax on a regular basis. Processions were also held for funerals, marriages, and rituals differing in grandeur depending on the status of the individuals involved and nature of the ceremony.

This miniature procession consists of nine attendants. The male attendants wear green-glazed robes with a frosted patina and long flowing sleeves. Their tall rounded caps and shoes have been painted black, accentuating their dignified appearance. The ladies in waiting wear similar green robes; however, they have on ochre-glazed dresses underneath. Their elegantly coiffed hairstyles enhances their beauty. As Chinese statuette art prescribes, the faces are created individually with uniquely painted features, owing to their distinctive expressions. Several of the attendants bear gifts and royal regalia, such as the emperor's headdress and a plate. Three others hold one of their arms in the air. A hole in their hands reveals that they were once carrying poles, suggesting that a palanquin once accompanied the procession, hauled on the shoulders of these men. Here, the emperor would have once sat. However, he is not depicted, since this processional set was intended to usher the soul of the deceased emperor into the afterlife. - (H.927)

Ming Glazed Terracotta Tile From a Temple



H.849
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 20.5" (52.1cm) high

Collection: Chinese
Style: Ming Dynasty
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: United States

This glazed terracotta tile would have been one of the centerpieces in the decorative scheme of a Ming Dynasty temple. Brilliantly colored in rich bluish green, light grayish yellow, and ochre hues, this tile depicts figure with a comical charm carrying a pole across his back while traversing across a river. The undulating waves of the stream roll underneath his feet, winding its way through rock while a plant rises from the surface of the water. Dressed in a green robe that hangs open, revealing his large belly and beaded necklace, he seemingly struggles to keep his balance against the pull of the current. Considering that this figure appears to walk on water, it is also likely that the waves really represent rolling hills. It is clear from the edges that this work would have been joined with others on either side that would have completed the image. The subject matter, although not apparent, is most likely Buddhist, considering the nature of the temple. When we imagine the entire temple structure covered in such tiles, from the walls to the roof, the glory of Ming Dynasty China becomes apparent. - (H.849)

Ming Glazed Terracotta Tile From a Temple Roof



H.1005
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 17.25" (43.8cm) high

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: United States

Chinese architecture is one of the more distinct styles of building throughout the world. Perhaps the most characteristic element is the pagoda roofs that end in dramatic curves. This sculptural tile would have been situated on a roof of a Ming Dynasty temple. Depicting bearded man in a dynamic posture, this work was placed on the roof in order to frighten away any evil spirits that might attempt to infiltrate the sacred space. He wears a rich blue robe with black boots and a green hat. His unusual posture, with one leg raised and his two arms both held outwards, suggests he may be dancing. Holes in his hands reveal that he would have once held objects likely made out of wood that have deteriorated over the centuries. Who does this figure represent? A Confucian sage? A spiritual leader? A deity? While we may never know his true identity, we can assume that he was an important individual to be memorialized in such a way. When one considers that this remarkable architectural sculpture is just the top of the temple, the beauty of the whole temple must be truly astounding. - (H.1005)

Ming Glazed Terracotta Sculpture of a Warrior
From a Temple



H.1022
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 21" (53.3cm) high

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: United States

Glazed tiles are today considered one of the hallmarks of classical Chinese architecture. However, despite their popularity in modern times, they were relatively scarce until after the end of the T'ang Dynasty. Even then, during the Song and Yuan Dynasties, they were still infrequently used. It was not until the rise of the Ming Dynasty that glazed tiles became a popular decorative device extensively employed in temples, altars, imperial palaces, and gardens. Beijing became the center of glazed architectural tile production during the Ming period, and colorfully decorated pagodas began to sprout up around this region.

This glazed terracotta architectural sculpture features an armored warrior posed in a dynamic stance. It is known that such glazed works were most frequently employed on the roofs and along the doorways of imperial or sacred structures. Judging from the shape of the base, it is likely that this work once stood in a corner, perhaps along a wall where a doorframe jutted out. Brilliantly colored in rich bluish green, light crème, and brownish ochre hues, the warrior stares at us with intense concentration. His black pupils project slightly from his eyes, so that it appears as if his eyes follow us as we move around the piece. A hole in his right hand suggests that he would have once held a sword or some other weapon made of wood that deteriorated over the centuries. His armor is richly ornamented, with a spectacular helmet and ribbons of fabric flare outward, undulating in the breeze like waves, imbuing the work with a sense of movement. When we imagine the entire temple structure covered in such tiles, from the walls to the roof, the glory of Ming Dynasty China becomes apparent. - (H.1022)

Pair of Ming Glazed Terracotta House Façades



H.1049
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 16" (40.6cm) high

Collection: Chinese
Style: Ming Dynasty
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: United States

Pair of Ming Glazed Terracotta House Façades



H.1049
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 16" (40.6cm) high

Collection: Chinese
Style: Ming Dynasty
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: United States

Like walking down some ancient avenue, here we are confronted by the façades of Ming Dynasty houses. With slanted tiled roofs and ochre- glazed doors, we can imagine hearing the joyous cries of children playing or the fragrant odors of a simmering wok emerging from inside. This natural depiction of the façades gives us a colorful picture into what life might have been like in ancient China during the Ming era. However, this pair of house models was not discovered as part of some larger miniature city; instead, it was uncovered from a tomb. Why would someone place façades of houses inside a tomb? In antiquity, the Chinese believed that the afterlife was an extension of our earthly existence. Thus, it was the custom to bury alongside the deceased ornate representations of daily life. Yet, by the time of the Ming, this ancient custom has lost most of its philosophical connotations and was continued merely out of tradition. Therefore, these houses would have served as a permanent abode for the deceased throughout the afterlife. - (H.1049) - (H.1050)

Ming Glazed Terracotta Offering Table



H.1051
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 8.375" (21.3cm) high

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: United States

This offering table, overflowing with the bounteous fruits of the land and sea, represents a sumptuous feast that would have nourished the deceased throughout eternity. A marvelous array of fresh fruits, pyramid-shaped pastries, and intricately carved vegetables that have been laid out on platters to appear like blossoming flowers. The ball-shaped fruits have been arranged on separate plates, in small stacks of four. While the burial customs of ancient China had lost most of their original meanings by the time of the Ming, such offerings were continually carried out, often just for the sake of tradition. In this case, it was believed that the deceased must be provided for in the afterlife of all that was necessary in this world. Thus food, and feasting, would have been one of the foremost concerns. This offering table would have appeased the deceased's appetite for all eternity. Today, it is a vivid reminder of the beauty and history of China, both culinary and artistic. - (H.1051)

Ming Glazed Terracotta Offering Table



H.1052
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 9.25" (23.5cm) high

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: United States

This offering table, overflowing with the bounteous fruits of the land and sea, represents a sumptuous feast that would have nourished the deceased throughout eternity. A tripod vessel stands in the center of the table. Such a container may have been used to heat or steam certain dishes. A pair of large teapots and candlestick holders flank this tripod vessel. Other delicacies are presented for our enjoyment: a pig's head, an assortment of cakes, a bird, and fish. While the burial customs of ancient China had lost most of their original meanings by the time of the Ming, such offerings were continually carried out, often just for the sake of tradition. In this case, it was believed that the deceased must be provided for in the afterlife of all that was necessary in this world. Thus food, and feasting, would have been one of the foremost concerns. This offering table would have appeased the deceased's appetite for all eternity. Today, it is a vivid reminder of the beauty and history of China, both culinary and artistic. - (H.1052)

Ming Glazed Terracotta Sculptural Tile of a
Dragon's Head



H.1045
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 24.25" (61.6cm) high x
18" (45.7cm) depth

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: United States

This glazed sculpture of a dragon's head dates from the Ming Dynasty. Such a work would have been used as a decorative element on the roof or entryway of a palace or temple structure. The Ming Dynasty especially is noted for its colorfully glazed architectural sculptures. With open mouth, sharp fangs, and beady eyes, this dragon's head was clearly meant to frighten away any potential evildoers, be they human or otherworldly, which might try to infiltrate the building it once adorned. Considering that both the concave back of the work and inside of the dragon's mouth have been left unglazed, we can presume that these are the areas where the work was attached to the structure. The general shape of the work, as well as the fact that the top is glazed, implies that it once stood at an intersection of support beams. The work would rest easily between vertical beams while a horizontal beam may have been inserted into the hole in the mouth. A gateway or doorframe comes to mind. When we imagine the entire temple structure covered in such tiles, from the walls to the roof, the glory of Ming Dynasty China becomes apparent. - (H.1045)

Ming Glazed Terracotta Sculptural Tile of a
Dragon's Head



H.1046
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 24.25" (61.6cm) high x
20.5" (52.1cm) depth

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: United States

This glazed sculpture of a dragon's head dates from the Ming Dynasty. Such a work would have been used as a decorative element on the roof or entryway of a palace or temple structure. The Ming Dynasty especially is noted for its colorfully glazed architectural sculptures. With open mouth, sharp fangs, and beady eyes, this dragon's head was clearly meant to frighten away any potential evildoers, be they human or otherworldly, which might try to infiltrate the building it once adorned. Considering that both the concave back of the work and inside of the dragon's mouth have been left unglazed, we can presume that these are the areas where the work was attached to the structure. The general shape of the work, as well as the fact that the top is glazed, implies that it once stood at an intersection of support beams. The work would rest easily between vertical beams while a horizontal beam may have been inserted into the hole in the mouth. A gateway or doorframe comes to mind. Along the dragon's forehead, in between the eyes, a dedicatory text has been inscribed, detailing the date, location, and patron who commissioned the work. When we imagine the entire temple structure covered in such tiles, from the walls to the roof, the glory of Ming Dynasty China becomes apparent. - (H.1046)

Pair of Ming Glazed Terracotta Temple Wall
Tiles Depicting a Dragon



X.0264

Origin: China

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 15.5" (39.4cm) high x
48" (121.9cm) wide

Collection: Chinese

Medium: Glazed Terracotta

Location: United States

Glazed sculptural tiles are today considered one of the hallmarks of classical Chinese architecture. However, despite their popularity in modern times, they were relatively scarce until after the then end of the T'ang Dynasty. Even then, during the Song and Yuan Dynasties, they were still infrequently used. It was not until the rise of the Ming Dynasty that glazed sculptural tiles became a popular decorative device extensively employed in temples, altars, imperial palaces, and gardens. Beijing became the center of glazed architectural tile production during the Ming period, and colorfully decorated pagodas began to sprout up around this region. Eaves and entryways were decorated with vibrant sculptures that served both decorative and sometimes religious purposes. On temples and palaces, representations of mounted warriors and snarling dragons were meant to ward off evildoers, of both the physical and spiritual kind.

This pair of glazed terracotta tiles would have been one of the centerpieces in the decorative scheme of a Ming Dynasty temple. Brilliantly colored in rich dark blue, bright turquoise and yellow ochre hues, these tiles depict a ferocious undulating dragon. During the height of the Ming Dynasty, large sculptures of dragons, called guardian dragons, were placed outside the main entrance of the imperial palace and the mansions of wealthy magistrates. Later, during the Qing Dynasty, dragons would be replaced by stone lions and Fu dogs as the main choice of guardian creatures. However, dragons continue to be revered, as they were during the Ming era, for their infinite protective qualities. With its open mouth, sharp fangs, and beady eyes, this dragon was clearly meant to frighten away any potential evildoers, be they human or otherworldly, which might try to infiltrate the building it once adorned. This pair of tiles is but one part of a larger frieze of glazed tiles that would have once decorated the interior or exterior of the temple structure. When we imagine the entire temple structure covered in such tiles, from the walls to the roof, the glory of Ming Dynasty China becomes apparent. - (X.0264)

Ming Glazed Terracotta Temple Wall Tiles Depicting a Dragon



X.0265

Origin: China

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 18" (45.7cm) high x

71" (180.3cm) wide

Collection: Chinese

Medium: Glazed Terracotta

Location: United States

Glazed sculptural tiles are today considered one of the hallmarks of classical Chinese architecture. However, despite their popularity in modern times, they were relatively scarce until after the then end of the T'ang Dynasty. Even then, during the Song and Yuan Dynasties, they were still infrequently used. It was not until the rise of the Ming Dynasty that glazed sculptural tiles became a popular decorative device extensively employed in temples, altars, imperial palaces, and gardens. Beijing became the center of glazed architectural tile production during the Ming period, and colorfully decorated pagodas began to sprout up around this region. Eaves and entryways were decorated with vibrant sculptures that served both decorative and sometimes religious purposes. On temples and palaces, representations of mounted warriors and snarling dragons were meant to ward off evildoers, of both the physical and spiritual kind.

This trio of glazed terracotta tiles would have been one of the centerpieces in the decorative scheme of a Ming Dynasty temple. Brilliantly colored in rich green and yellow ochre hues, these tiles depict a ferocious dragon undulating across a background of verdant foliage including a human head and a small figure. During the height of the Ming Dynasty, large sculptures of dragons, called guardian dragons, were placed outside the main entrance of the imperial palace and the mansions of wealthy magistrates. Later, during the Qing Dynasty, dragons would be replaced by stone lions and Fu dogs as the main choice of guardian creatures. However, dragons continue to be revered, as they were during the Ming era, for their infinite protective qualities. With its open mouth, sharp fangs, and beady eyes, this dragon was clearly meant to frighten away any potential evildoers, be they human or otherworldly, which might try to infiltrate the building it once adorned. This trio of tiles is but one part of a larger frieze of glazed tiles that would have once decorated the interior or exterior of the temple structure. When we imagine the entire temple structure covered in such tiles, from the walls to the roof, the glory of Ming Dynasty China becomes apparent. - (X.0265)

Ming Glazed Terracotta Temple Tile in the Form
of a Dragon's Head



X.0266

Origin: China

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 22.5" (57.2cm) high x
8" (20.3cm) wide x 17" (43.2cm) depth

Collection: Chinese

Medium: Glazed Terracotta

Location: United States

Glazed sculptural tiles are today considered one of the hallmarks of classical Chinese architecture. However, despite their popularity in modern times, they were relatively scarce until after the then end of the T'ang Dynasty. Even then, during the Song and Yuan Dynasties, they were still infrequently used. It was not until the rise of the Ming Dynasty that glazed sculptural tiles became a popular decorative device extensively employed in temples, altars, imperial palaces, and gardens. Beijing became the center of glazed architectural tile production during the Ming period, and colorfully decorated pagodas began to sprout up around this region. Eaves and entryways were decorated with vibrant sculptures that served both decorative and sometimes religious purposes. On temples and palaces, representations of mounted warriors and snarling dragons were meant to ward off evildoers, of both the physical and spiritual kind.

This glazed sculpture of a dragon's head dates from the Ming Dynasty. Such a work would have been used as a decorative element on the roof or entryway of a palace or temple structure. The Ming Dynasty especially is noted for its colorfully glazed architectural sculptures. With open mouth, sharp fangs, and beady eyes, this dragon's head was clearly meant to frighten away any potential evildoers, be they human or otherworldly, which might try to infiltrate the building it once adorned. Dragons, along with phoenixes, were their principle motifs of architectural decorations. In the Chinese language, the words for almost everything associated with the emperor was preceded by the character for dragon or phoenix. Thus, the "dragon seat" was the equivalent of the emperor's throne and "dragon robe" stood for the emperor's ceremonial dress.

Considering the significance of the dragon in Chinese mythology and this creature's intimate relationship with the ruling elite, it is likely that this architectural ornament would have adorned a palace of a close associate of the emperor. During the height of the Ming Dynasty, large sculptures of dragons, called guardian dragons, were placed outside the main entrance of the imperial palace and the mansions of wealthy magistrates. Later, during the Qing Dynasty, dragons would be replaced by stone lions and Fu dogs as the main choice of guardian creatures. However, dragons continue to be revered, as they were during the Ming era, for their infinite protective qualities. When we imagine the entire temple structure covered in such tiles, from the walls to the roof, the glory of Ming Dynasty China becomes apparent. - (X.0266)

Pair of Ming Glazed Terracotta Temple Wall
Tiles Depicting a Dragon



X.0267
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 14.25" (36.2cm) high x
48" (121.9cm) wide

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: United States

Glazed sculptural tiles are today considered one of the hallmarks of classical Chinese architecture. However, despite their popularity in modern times, they were relatively scarce until after the then end of the T'ang Dynasty. Even then, during the Song and Yuan Dynasties, they were still infrequently used. It was not until the rise of the Ming Dynasty that glazed sculptural tiles became a popular decorative device extensively employed in temples, altars, imperial palaces, and gardens. Beijing became the center of glazed architectural tile production during the Ming period, and colorfully decorated pagodas began to sprout up around this region. Eaves and entryways were decorated with vibrant sculptures that served both decorative and sometimes religious purposes. On temples and palaces, representations of mounted warriors and snarling dragons were meant to ward off evildoers, of both the physical and spiritual kind.

This pair of glazed terracotta tiles would have been one of the centerpieces in the decorative scheme of a Ming Dynasty temple. Brilliantly colored in dark blue, rich green and yellow ochre hues, these tiles depict a ferocious undulating dragon. During the height of the Ming Dynasty, large sculptures of dragons, called guardian dragons, were placed outside the main entrance of the imperial palace and the mansions of wealthy magistrates. Later, during the Qing Dynasty, dragons would be replaced by stone lions and Fu dogs as the main choice of guardian creatures. However, dragons continue to be revered, as they were during the Ming era, for their infinite protective qualities. With its open mouth, sharp fangs, and beady eyes, this dragon was clearly meant to frighten away any potential evildoers, be they human or otherworldly, which might try to infiltrate the building it once adorned. This pair of tiles is but one part of a larger frieze of glazed tiles that would have once decorated the interior or exterior of the temple structure. When we imagine the entire temple structure covered in such tiles, from the walls to the roof, the glory of Ming Dynasty China becomes apparent. - (X.0267)

Pair of Glazed Terracotta Architectural
Sculptures of Dragons



X.0268
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 18" (45.7cm) high x
23" (58.4cm) wide

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: United States

Glazed sculptural tiles are today considered one of the hallmarks of classical Chinese architecture. However, despite their popularity in modern times, they were relatively scarce until after the end of the T'ang Dynasty. Even then, during the Song and Yuan Dynasties, they were still infrequently used. It was not until the rise of the Ming Dynasty that glazed sculptural tiles became a popular decorative device extensively employed in temples, altars, imperial palaces, and gardens. Beijing became the center of glazed architectural tile production during the Ming period, and colorfully decorated pagodas began to sprout up around this region. Eaves and entryways were decorated with vibrant sculptures that served both decorative and sometimes religious purposes. On temples and palaces, representations of mounted warriors and snarling dragons were meant to ward off evildoers, of both the physical and spiritual kind. Later, during the Qing Dynasty, dragons would be replaced by stone lions and Fu dogs as the main choice of guardian creatures. However, dragons continue to be revered, as they were during the Ming era, for their infinite protective qualities. As architectural ornaments, this pair of dragon sculptures is a masterpiece. Surely the building that these works once adorned must have been quite spectacular. When we imagine the entire temple structure covered in such ornaments, from the walls to the roof, the glory of Ming Dynasty China becomes apparent. - (X.0268)

Pair of Ming Glazed Terracotta Temple Wall
Tiles Depicting a Dragon



X.0269
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 15.25" (38.7cm) high x
48" (121.9cm) wide

Collection: Chinese
Style: Ming Dynasty
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: Great Britain

Pair of Ming Glazed Terracotta Temple Wall
Tiles Depicting a Dragon



X.0270
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: United States

Glazed sculptural tiles are today considered one of the hallmarks of classical Chinese architecture. However, despite their popularity in modern times, they were relatively scarce until after the end of the T'ang Dynasty. Even then, during the Song and Yuan Dynasties, they were still infrequently used. It was not until the rise of the Ming Dynasty that glazed sculptural tiles became a popular decorative device extensively employed in temples, altars, imperial palaces, and gardens. Beijing became the center of glazed architectural tile production during the Ming period, and colorfully decorated pagodas began to sprout up around this region. Eaves and entryways were decorated with vibrant sculptures that served both decorative and sometimes religious purposes. On temples and palaces, representations of mounted warriors and snarling dragons were meant to ward off evildoers, of both the physical and spiritual kind. Later, during the Qing Dynasty, dragons would be replaced by stone lions and Fu dogs as the main choice of guardian creatures. However, dragons continue to be revered, as they were during the Ming era, for their infinite protective qualities.

This pair of glazed terracotta tiles would have been one of the centerpieces in the decorative scheme of a Ming Dynasty temple. Brilliantly colored in rich green, dark brown and yellow ochre hues, these tiles depict a ferocious undulating dragon. With its open mouth, sharp fangs, and beady eyes, this dragon was clearly meant to frighten away any potential evildoers, be they human or otherworldly, which might try to infiltrate the building it once adorned. This pair of tiles is but one part of a larger frieze of glazed tiles that would have once decorated the interior or exterior of the temple structure. When we imagine the entire temple structure covered in such tiles, from the walls to the roof, the glory of Ming Dynasty China becomes apparent. - (X.0269) - (X.0270)

Pair of Ming Glazed Terracotta Architectural Tiles Depicting Dragons and Riders



X.0271

Origin: China

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 23.5" (59.7cm) high x
20" (50.8cm) wide

Collection: Chinese

Medium: Glazed Terracotta

Location: United States

Glazed sculptural tiles are today considered one of the hallmarks of classical Chinese architecture. However, despite their popularity in modern times, they were relatively scarce until after the end of the T'ang Dynasty. Even then, during the Song and Yuan Dynasties, they were still infrequently used. It was not until the rise of the Ming Dynasty that glazed sculptural tiles became a popular decorative device extensively employed in temples, altars, imperial palaces, and gardens. Beijing became the center of glazed architectural tile production during the Ming period, and colorfully decorated pagodas began to sprout up around this region. Eaves and entryways were decorated with vibrant sculptures that served both decorative and sometimes religious purposes. On temples and palaces, representations of mounted warriors and snarling dragons were meant to ward off evildoers, of both the physical and spiritual kind. Later, during the Qing Dynasty, dragons would be replaced by stone lions and Fu dogs as the main choice of guardian creatures. However, dragons continue to be revered, as they were during the Ming era, for their infinite protective qualities.

This pair of glazed terracotta sculptures would have been one of the centerpieces in the decorative scheme of a Ming Dynasty temple. Brilliantly colored in rich green and yellow ochre hues, these architectural sculptures depict a pair of riders atop of dragons. With their open mouths, sharp fangs, and beady eyes, these dragons were clearly meant to frighten away any potential evildoers, be they human or otherworldly, which might try to infiltrate the building it once adorned. The fact that there are riders controlling these beasts suggests that the emperor, or his close associate, who would have resided in the palace these sculptures decorated, was so powerful as to hold these mighty mythological creatures under his sway. When we imagine the entire temple structure covered in such works, from the walls to the roof, the glory of Ming Dynasty China becomes apparent. - (X.0271)

Ming Glazed Terracotta Temple Tile in the Form
of a Dragon's Head



X.0272
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 11" (27.9cm) high x
20.5" (52.1cm) wide

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: United States

Glazed sculptural tiles are today considered one of the hallmarks of classical Chinese architecture. However, despite their popularity in modern times, they were relatively scarce until after the end of the T'ang Dynasty. Even then, during the Song and Yuan Dynasties, they were still infrequently used. It was not until the rise of the Ming Dynasty that glazed sculptural tiles became a popular decorative device extensively employed in temples, altars, imperial palaces, and gardens. Beijing became the center of glazed architectural tile production during the Ming period, and colorfully decorated pagodas began to sprout up around this region. Eaves and entryways were decorated with vibrant sculptures that served both decorative and sometimes religious purposes. On temples and palaces, representations of mounted warriors and snarling dragons were meant to ward off evildoers, of both the physical and spiritual kind. Later, during the Qing Dynasty, dragons would be replaced by stone lions and Fu dogs as the main choice of guardian creatures. However, dragons continue to be revered, as they were during the Ming era, for their infinite protective qualities.

Brilliantly colored in rich dark blue and bright turquoise hues, this glazed terracotta sculpture of a dragon's head would have featured prominently in the decorative scheme of a Ming Dynasty temple. With its open mouth, sharp fangs, and beady eyes, these dragons were clearly meant to frighten away any potential evildoers, be they human or otherworldly, which might try to infiltrate the building it once adorned. The shape of this piece suggests that it was originally placed atop the eaves of the roof. When we imagine the entire temple structure covered in such works, from the walls to the roof, the glory of Ming Dynasty China becomes apparent. - (X.0272)

Pair of Ming Glazed Terracotta Temple Wall
Tiles Depicting Two Dragons



X.0275
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: United States

Glazed sculptural tiles are today considered one of the hallmarks of classical Chinese architecture. However, despite their popularity in modern times, they were relatively scarce until after the end of the T'ang Dynasty. Even then, during the Song and Yuan Dynasties, they were still infrequently used. It was not until the rise of the Ming Dynasty that glazed sculptural tiles became a popular decorative device extensively employed in temples, altars, imperial palaces, and gardens. Beijing became the center of glazed architectural tile production during the Ming period, and colorfully decorated pagodas began to sprout up around this region. Eaves and entryways were decorated with vibrant sculptures that served both decorative and sometimes religious purposes. On temples and palaces, representations of mounted warriors and snarling dragons were meant to ward off evildoers, of both the physical and spiritual kind. Later, during the Qing Dynasty, dragons would be replaced by stone lions and Fu dogs as the main choice of guardian creatures. However, dragons continue to be revered, as they were during the Ming era, for their infinite protective qualities.

This pair of glazed terracotta tiles would have been one of the centerpieces in the decorative scheme of a Ming Dynasty temple. Brilliantly colored in rich green, dark brown and yellow ochre hues, these tiles depict a ferocious undulating dragon. With its open mouth, sharp fangs, and beady eyes, this dragon was clearly meant to frighten away any potential evildoers, be they human or otherworldly, which might try to infiltrate the building it once adorned. This pair of tiles is but one part of a larger frieze of glazed tiles that would have once decorated the interior or exterior of the temple structure. When we imagine the entire temple structure covered in such tiles, from the walls to the roof, the glory of Ming Dynasty China becomes apparent. - (X.0275)

Pair of Ming Glazed Terracotta Temple Wall
Tiles Depicting Phoenixes



X.0278
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 9.5" (24.1cm) high x
43.5" (110.5cm) wide

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: United States

Glazed sculptural tiles are today considered one of the hallmarks of classical Chinese architecture. However, despite their popularity in modern times, they were relatively scarce until after the end of the Tang Dynasty. Even then, during the Song and Yuan Dynasties, they were still infrequently used. It was not until the rise of the Ming Dynasty that glazed sculptural tiles became a popular decorative device extensively employed in temples, altars, imperial palaces, and gardens. Beijing became the center of glazed architectural tile production during the Ming period, and colorfully decorated pagodas began to sprout up around this region. Eaves and entryways were decorated with vibrant sculptures that served both decorative and sometimes religious purposes. On temples and palaces, representations of mounted warriors and snarling dragons were meant to ward off evildoers, of both the physical and spiritual kind.

This group of glazed terracotta tiles would have been one of the centerpieces in the decorative scheme of a Ming Dynasty temple. Brilliantly colored in rich green, bright turquoise, and yellow ochre hues, these tiles depict a pair of winged phoenixes flying against a background of swirling foliage. One of the earliest known examples of the phoenix occurring in Chinese art dates back to the Warring States Period (475- 221 B.C.). Like the dragon, the phoenix is one of the most important motifs in Chinese imperial art and architecture. A composite creature that features the head of the golden pheasant, the beak of the parrot, the body of the mandarin duck, the wings of the roc, the feathers of the peacock and the legs of the crane, the phoenix was the sovereign of all birds and the ruler of the skies. This pair of tiles is but one part of a larger frieze of glazed tiles that would have once decorated the interior or exterior of the temple structure. When we imagine the entire temple structure covered in such tiles, from the walls to the roof, the glory of Ming Dynasty China becomes apparent. - (X.0278)

Ming Glazed Terracotta Temple Sculpture of a Dragon



X.0279
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: United States

During the height of the Ming Dynasty, large sculptures of dragons, called guardian dragons, were placed outside the main entrance of the imperial palace and the mansions of wealthy magistrates. Later, during the Qing Dynasty, dragons would be replaced by stone lions and Fu dogs as the main choice of guardian creatures. However, dragons continue to be revered, as they were during the Ming era, for their infinite protective qualities. This large glazed terracotta sculpture depicts a caparisoned dragon. Glazed colors cover the whole of the work. Rich dark blue, bright turquoise, and yellow ochre all decorate the sculpture and bring a sense of life and vibrancy to the piece. There is a cylindrical boss that rises out of the creature's back, suggesting that another piece may have been attached to the work. Similar sculptures served as incense burners, and it is possible that this may have been this sculpture's purpose. This gorgeous work is a stunning testament to the wealth and luxury of the Ming Dynasty. - (X.0279)

Pair of Ming Glazed Terracotta Temple Wall
Tiles Depicting a Dragon



X.0280
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 15" (38.1cm) high x
48" (121.9cm) wide

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: United States

Glazed sculptural tiles are today considered one of the hallmarks of classical Chinese architecture. However, despite their popularity in modern times, they were relatively scarce until after the end of the Tang Dynasty. Even then, during the Song and Yuan Dynasties, they were still infrequently used. It was not until the rise of the Ming Dynasty that glazed sculptural tiles became a popular decorative device extensively employed in temples, altars, imperial palaces, and gardens. Beijing became the center of glazed architectural tile production during the Ming period, and colorfully decorated pagodas began to sprout up around this region. Eaves and entryways were decorated with vibrant sculptures that served both decorative and sometimes religious purposes. On temples and palaces, representations of mounted warriors and snarling dragons were meant to ward off evildoers, of both the physical and spiritual kind. Later, during the Qing Dynasty, dragons would be replaced by stone lions and Fu dogs as the main choice of guardian creatures. However, dragons continue to be revered, as they were during the Ming era, for their infinite protective qualities.

This pair of glazed terracotta tiles would have been one of the centerpieces in the decorative scheme of a Ming Dynasty temple. Brilliantly colored in rich green, dark brown and yellow ochre hues, these tiles depict a ferocious undulating dragon against a background of foliage and flowers. With its open mouth, sharp fangs, and beady eyes, this dragon was clearly meant to frighten away any potential evildoers, be they human or otherworldly, which might try to infiltrate the building it once adorned. This pair of tiles is but one part of a larger frieze of glazed tiles that would have once decorated the interior or exterior of the temple structure. When we imagine the entire temple structure covered in such tiles, from the walls to the roof, the glory of Ming Dynasty China becomes apparent. - (X.0280)

Ming Glazed Terracotta Temple Wall Tile
Depicting a Phoenix



X.0281
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 16" (40.6cm) high x
23" (58.4cm) wide

Collection: Chinese
Style: Ming Dynasty
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: United States

Glazed sculptural tiles are today considered one of the hallmarks of classical Chinese architecture. However, despite their popularity in modern times, they were relatively scarce until after the end of the T'ang Dynasty. Even then, during the Song and Yuan Dynasties, they were still infrequently used. It was not until the rise of the Ming Dynasty that glazed sculptural tiles became a popular decorative device extensively employed in temples, altars, imperial palaces, and gardens. Beijing became the center of glazed architectural tile production during the Ming period, and colorfully decorated pagodas began to sprout up around this region. Eaves and entryways were decorated with vibrant sculptures that served both decorative and sometimes religious purposes. On temples and palaces, representations of mounted warriors and snarling dragons were meant to ward off evildoers, of both the physical and spiritual kind.

This glazed terracotta tile would have been one of the centerpieces in the decorative scheme of a Ming Dynasty temple or palace. Brilliantly colored in rich green, off white, and yellow ochre hues, this tile depicts a winged phoenix flying against a background of swirling foliage. One of the earliest known examples of the phoenix occurring in Chinese art dates back to the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.). Like the dragon, the phoenix is one of the most important motifs in Chinese imperial art and architecture. A composite creature that features the head of the golden pheasant, the beak of the parrot, the body of the mandarin duck, the wings of the roc, the feathers of the peacock and the legs of the crane, the phoenix was the sovereign of all birds and the ruler of the skies. This tile is but one part of a larger frieze of glazed tiles that would have once decorated the interior or exterior of the temple structure. When we imagine the entire temple structure covered in such tiles, from the walls to the roof, the glory of Ming Dynasty China becomes apparent. - (X.0281)

Pair of Ming Glazed Temple Wall Tiles
Depicting a Dragon



X.0282
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: Great Britain

Glazed sculptural tiles are today considered one of the hallmarks of classical Chinese architecture. However, despite their popularity in modern times, they were relatively scarce until after the then end of the T'ang Dynasty. Even then, during the Song and Yuan Dynasties, they were still infrequently used. It was not until the rise of the Ming Dynasty that glazed sculptural tiles became a popular decorative device extensively employed in temples, altars, imperial palaces, and gardens. Beijing became the center of glazed architectural tile production during the Ming period, and colorfully decorated pagodas began to sprout up around this region. Eaves and entryways were decorated with vibrant sculptures that served both decorative and sometimes religious purposes. On temples and palaces, representations of mounted warriors and snarling dragons were meant to ward off evildoers, of both the physical and spiritual kind.

This pair of glazed terracotta tiles would have been one of the centerpieces in the decorative scheme of a Ming Dynasty temple. Brilliantly colored in rich green and yellow ochre hues, these tiles depict a ferocious dragon undulating across a background of verdant foliage. During the height of the Ming Dynasty, large sculptures of dragons, called guardian dragons, were placed outside the main entrance of the imperial palace and the mansions of wealthy magistrates. Later, during the Qing Dynasty, dragons would be replaced by stone lions and Fu dogs as the main choice of guardian creatures. However, dragons continue to be revered, as they were during the Ming era, for their infinite protective qualities. With its open mouth, sharp fangs, and beady eyes, this dragon was clearly meant to frighten away any potential evildoers, be they human or otherworldly, which might try to infiltrate the building it once adorned. This pair of tiles is but one part of a larger frieze of glazed tiles that would have once decorated the interior or exterior of the temple structure. When we imagine the entire temple structure covered in such tiles, from the walls to the roof, the glory of Ming Dynasty China becomes apparent. - (X.0282)

Ming Glazed Terracotta Temple Wall Tile
Depicting a Phoenix



X.0283
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 16" (40.6cm) high x
23" (58.4cm) wide

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: United States

Glazed sculptural tiles are today considered one of the hallmarks of classical Chinese architecture. However, despite their popularity in modern times, they were relatively scarce until after the end of the T'ang Dynasty. Even then, during the Song and Yuan Dynasties, they were still infrequently used. It was not until the rise of the Ming Dynasty that glazed sculptural tiles became a popular decorative device extensively employed in temples, altars, imperial palaces, and gardens. Beijing became the center of glazed architectural tile production during the Ming period, and colorfully decorated pagodas began to sprout up around this region. Eaves and entryways were decorated with vibrant sculptures that served both decorative and sometimes religious purposes. On temples and palaces, representations of mounted warriors and snarling dragons were meant to ward off evildoers, of both the physical and spiritual kind.

This glazed terracotta tile would have been one of the centerpieces in the decorative scheme of a Ming Dynasty temple or palace. Brilliantly colored in rich green, off white, and yellow ochre hues, this tile depicts a winged phoenix flying against a background of swirling foliage. One of the earliest known examples of the phoenix occurring in Chinese art dates back to the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.). Like the dragon, the phoenix is one of the most important motifs in Chinese imperial art and architecture. A composite creature that features the head of the golden pheasant, the beak of the parrot, the body of the mandarin duck, the wings of the roc, the feathers of the peacock and the legs of the crane, the phoenix was the sovereign of all birds and the ruler of the skies. This tile is but one part of a larger frieze of glazed tiles that would have once decorated the interior or exterior of the temple structure. When we imagine the entire temple structure covered in such tiles, from the walls to the roof, the glory of Ming Dynasty China becomes apparent. - (X.0283)

Pair of Ming Red Sandstone Fu Dogs



X.0412

Origin: China

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 13" (33.0cm) high x

15" (38.1cm) wide x 21.625" (54.9cm) depth

Collection: Chinese

Medium: Sandstone

Location: Great Britain

The Fu Dog, or Fu Lion as it is also known, is a ubiquitous symbol that has been employed repeatedly throughout the history of China. Sometimes referred to as the “Dog of Happiness” or the “Celestial Dog,” the earliest traces of the Fu Dog in China date to the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.). Then it disappeared from Chinese art until it was resurrected during the cultural revival experienced during the T’ang Dynasty (618-906 A.D.). While lions are not native to China, works of art with lion imagery from other civilizations were imported into China as gifts for the Emperor. The Fu Lion was brought into China with the arrival of Buddhism, where it became associated with the more familiar dog during assimilation. The lion is a sacred creature in the Buddhist pantheon, and the Fu Lion was believed to be a companion of the Buddha.

While sculptures of Fu Dogs originally stood guard outside of Buddhist temples, by the time of the Ming Dynasty, when this work was created, the dogs had lost most of their religious significance and were placed outside the entrances to homes and palaces out of custom. Even today, many monumental public buildings are decorated with lion figures standing guard at the base of the stairway. Here, in this pair of red sandstone Fu Dogs dating from the Ming Dynasty, one of the dogs has his front paw resting atop a ball while the other appears to be trampling a demon. A traditional depiction of these creatures, these gestures symbolize the Dog’s authority and power over the evil spirits that might have tried to infiltrate the temple or palace. Today, Fu Dogs continue to be a popular symbol of luck and happiness. - (X.0412)

Ming Glazed Terracotta Ceremonial
Processional Set Consisting of Ten Figures and
a Throne



X.0415
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 19.5" (49.5cm) high

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: Great Britain

Ming statuette art reflects the attempt to restore purely “Chinese” artistic genres with a healthy injection of Confucian aesthetic, political, and moral standards. Realistic depictions of daily life became popular themes among artists who were often patronized by the court. Under Xuande's reign (1426-35), the art industry flourished, producing many exquisite porcelain and ceramic pieces. This glazed set is a product of the artistic revival that occurred throughout the Ming. This Ming set of glazed figurines depicts an aspect of Chinese political and social life. Tributary processions were common protocol at this time, the emperor requiring provincial lords to pay tribute and tax on a regular basis. Processions were also held for funerals, marriages, and rituals differing in grandeur depending on the status of the individuals involved and nature of the ceremony. The palanquin served as the primary form of transportation for the elite who often traveled with several attendants.

This miniature procession consists of ten attendants and a palanquin that features a representation of the emperor seated inside. The attendants wear green-glazed robes with long flowing sleeves. Their tall rounded red caps accentuate their dignified appearance. Two figures in particular are distinguished by their dress, for each wears a unique robe and hat, and by the objects they carry in their arms (one holds a box, the other a bowl). As Chinese statuette art prescribes, the faces are created individually with uniquely painted features, owing to their distinctive expressions. Glazed in the same rich forest green as the figures, the palanquin is elegantly constructed with a black curved hip roof crowned with a red diamond ornament. - (X.0415)

Ming Painted Terracotta Set Consisting of Five Figures and Four Horse and Riders



X.0418
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 14.125" (35.9cm) high

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Painted Terracotta
Location: Great Britain

Ming statuette art reflects the attempt to restore purely “Chinese” artistic genres with a healthy injection of Confucian aesthetic, political, and moral standards. Realistic depictions of daily life became popular themes among artists who were often patronized by the court. Under Xuande's reign (1426-35), the art industry flourished, producing many exquisite porcelain and ceramic pieces. This set is a product of the artistic revival that occurred throughout the Ming. This Ming set of figurines and horse and rider figures depicts an aspect of Chinese political and social life. Tributary processions were common protocol at this time, the emperor requiring provincial lords to pay tribute and tax on a regular basis. Processions were also held for funerals, marriages, and rituals differing in grandeur depending on the status of the individuals involved and nature of the ceremony.

This extraordinary tomb find consists of four horse and rider sculptures and five smaller terracotta figures. The horses march forward, followed by the attendants, arranged in a variety of stances and postures, some of which indicate that the figures once held spears or staffs made from less durable materials such as wood that deteriorated over the centuries. As Chinese statuette art prescribes, the faces are created individually with uniquely painted features, owing to their distinctive expressions. The pieces still retain much of their original polychrome paint, remarkable considering the stresses of excavation and the delicate nature of the pigment. This astounding set is a masterpiece of Ming art for its remarkable preservation of the original details and the beauty of each piece as an individual work of art and united together as masterpiece. - (X.0418)

Ming Painted Terracotta Zodiac Set



X.0419
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 7.5" (19.1cm) high

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Painted Terracotta
Location: Great Britain

Ming statuette art reflects the attempt to restore purely “Chinese” artistic genres with a healthy injection of Confucian aesthetic, political, and moral standards. Realistic depictions of daily life became popular themes among artists who were often patronized by the court. Under Xuande's reign (1426-35), the art industry flourished, producing many exquisite porcelain and ceramic pieces. This painted terracotta set is a product of the artistic revival that occurred throughout the Ming. This Ming set of glazed figurines depicts an aspect of Chinese astrology.

This miniature procession consists of twelve standing attendants, each carrying an effigy of the twelve Chinese animal zodiac signs, flanking a central seated figure who is distinguished by his black headdress as opposed to the white caps the others wear. According to the legend, the twelve animals were assigned to the twelve years of the astrological calendar when Buddha prepared to depart the earth, he called on all the animals to come and bid him fare well. However, only twelve showed up. To show his appreciation, he named a year after each in the order that they arrive. First came the rat, then the ox, then the tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog, and finally, the boar. Here, each attendant holds a miniature representation of the animals: a smiling monkey, a coiled snake, a feathered rooster, etc. The attendants themselves are gorgeously decorated in white robes with black and red highlights. The pillows upon which they lovingly carry the animals are colored red or green. Their faces have also been painted with individualized features, including red lips and black eyes and eyebrows. This charming procession was discovered buried inside a tomb, alongside the remains of an elite member of the Ming hierarchy. Perhaps the deceased was hoping in death to influence the same forces that control our fates in life, as dictated through our zodiac readings. - (X.0419)

Ming Red Sandstone Tile



X.0427

Origin: China

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 21.5" (54.6cm) high x
16.375" (41.6cm) wide

Collection: Chinese

Medium: Sandstone

Additional Information: possibly uae

Location: Great Britain

Ming Jade Sculpture of a Shrimp



X.0640

Origin: China

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 1.75" (4.4cm) high x

2.625" (6.7cm) wide

Collection: Chinese

Medium: Jade

Location: United States

Pair of Ming Glazed Terracotta Attendants



X.0647

Origin: China

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 19.25" (48.9cm) high x
5.5" (14.0cm) wide

Collection: Chinese

Medium: Glazed Terracotta

Location: United States

Pair of Ming Limestone Panels



H.1089

Origin: China

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 47" (119.4cm) high x
17.75" (45.1cm) wide

Collection: Chinese art

Medium: Limestone

Location: Great Britain

Wooden Sculpture of Bodhidharma



X.0703

Origin: China

Circa: 15th Century AD to 17th Century AD

Dimensions: 30.75" (78.1cm) high x

19" (48.3cm) wide x 18" (45.7cm) depth

Collection: Chinese

Style: Mid Ming- Early Qing

Medium: Wood

Location: Great Britain

The figure of the first patriarch of Zen Buddhism stands on a raised footed platform decorated with geometric design against a red background, the body in a highly controlled meditative padmasana posture, hands in dhyana mudra, the beard and long moustaches pointing at the Indian origin of Bodhidharma, his bare chest betraying the signs of ascetic fasting.

Bodhidharma in Sanskrit means virtuous and sagacious. It is also the name of a rare tree in India, the bodhi tree which has become famous and known as the tree of wisdom as Sakyamuni became enlightened under its shade. This luohan was born under such a tree and was given the name of Bodhidharma. Legend has it that Bodhidharma was responsible for spreading Buddhism to the East Indies and has since been venerated as the first patriarch of Chan (Zen) Buddhism.

One of the most fascinating figures in the history of Buddhism, Bodhidharma is credited with bringing Buddhism to China and founding Chan Buddhism (in China), which later became known as Zen Buddhism in Japan. He was born in Southern India, a son of a wealthy Brahmin. He later became a monk and, alongside the development of his prodigious spiritual powers, he came to consider that the true value of the religious experience lay in experience rather than scripture. With this conviction in his mind perhaps he set out for China, arriving there in around 520 C.E.

The stories that have been passed down paint a rather larger than life figure. One such story has it that to stop himself falling asleep in meditation he cut off his eyelids. Another tells that his legs fell off after nine years of unceasing meditation. Though these accounts are no doubt apocryphal, they are important in that they show the significance of meditation to his religious practice. Indeed the word 'Zen' ultimately derives from the Sanskrit word dhyana which means 'meditation'. Bodhidharma emphasized direct methods rather than over-reliance on scriptures. Consequently, he emphasized the importance of a teacher to help one realize the Buddha nature.

In addition to this renewed commitment to meditation as a way of gaining insight into the true nature of reality, Bodhidharma taught that within all beings is the Buddha nature. Unfortunately, the Buddha nature is obscured by the poisons of greed, hatred and delusion. To see the Buddha nature, we must let go of desire. Paradoxically, it's not something we can grasp. Once we try to grasp it we are caught up in the web of desire. It's not something 'out there'. It's something here and now, to be uncovered through the practice of meditation. The teachings of Bodhidharma are encapsulated in the following verses, written after his death but attributed to him:

A special transmission outside the scriptures; Depending not on words and letters;
Pointing directly to the human mind Seeing into one's nature, one becomes a Buddha. -
(X.0703)

Pair of Sancai Roof Tiles in the Form of
Standing Warriors



X.0718

Origin: China

Circa: 1366 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 22.24" (56.5cm) high x
14.96" (38.0cm) wide

Collection: Chinese Art

Medium: Glazed Terracotta

Location: Great Britain

The figure of the first patriarch of Zen Buddhism stands on a raised footed platform decorated with geometric design against a red background, the body in a highly controlled meditative padmasana posture, hands in dhyana mudra, the beard and long moustaches pointing at the Indian origin of Bodhidharma, his bare chest betraying the signs of ascetic fasting.

Bodhidharma in Sanskrit means virtuous and sagacious. It is also the name of a rare tree in India, the bodhi tree which has become famous and known as the tree of wisdom as Sakyamuni became enlightened under its shade. This luohan was born under such a tree and was given the name of Bodhidharma. Legend has it that Bodhidharma was responsible for spreading Buddhism to the East Indies and has since been venerated as the first patriarch of Chan (Zen) Buddhism.

One of the most fascinating figures in the history of Buddhism, Bodhidharma is credited with bringing Buddhism to China and founding Chan Buddhism (in China), which later became known as Zen Buddhism in Japan. He was born in Southern India, a son of a wealthy Brahmin. He later became a monk and, alongside the development of his prodigious spiritual powers, he came to consider that the true value of the religious experience lay in experience rather than scripture. With this conviction in his mind perhaps he set out for China, arriving there in around 520 C.E.

The stories that have been passed down paint a rather larger than life figure. One such story has it that to stop himself falling asleep in meditation he cut off his eyelids. Another tells that his legs fell off after nine years of unceasing meditation. Though these accounts are no doubt apocryphal, they are important in that they show the significance of meditation to his religious practice. Indeed the word 'Zen' ultimately derives from the Sanskrit word dhyana which means 'meditation'. Bodhidharma emphasized direct methods rather than over-reliance on scriptures. Consequently, he emphasized the importance of a teacher to help one realize the Buddha nature.

In addition to this renewed commitment to meditation as a way of gaining insight into the true nature of reality, Bodhidharma taught that within all beings is the Buddha nature. Unfortunately, the Buddha nature is obscured by the poisons of greed, hatred and delusion. To see the Buddha nature, we must let go of desire. Paradoxically, it's not something we can grasp. Once we try to grasp it we are caught up in the web of desire. It's not something 'out there'. It's something here and now, to be uncovered through the practice of meditation. The teachings of Bodhidharma are encapsulated in the following verses, written after his death but attributed to him:

A special transmission outside the scriptures; Depending not on words and letters;
Pointing directly to the human mind Seeing into one's nature, one becomes a Buddha. -
(X.0703)

Gilded Wooden Head of Buddha



LA.514
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 13.25" (33.7cm) high

Collection: Chinese Art
Medium: Wood
Location: Great Britain

Here, the Buddha is portrayed as a youthful prince with a round, full face, suggestive of his spiritual fullness and inner self-satisfaction. An inner calm and complacency is visible on his face and in his sweet smile. The hair is twisted into tight curls incised with spirals forming an usnisa, a swelling on the top of the head signifying the Buddha's enlightenment. The swelling is usually covered with hair, as it is here, but there is another smaller bump at the base of the larger protrusion that is bare, as if the artist opted to utilize both types of ushnishas. His elongated earlobes droop down, the sagging caused by wearing heavy earrings as an infant, reflecting his royal origins. The urna, or "third eye," is represented by a small bump in between his eyebrows, is also symbolic of his nobility and enlightenment. This fragment of a head was most likely originally part of a full-figured sculpture that once revered inside a temple or shrine. The mystical energy and divine wisdom of the Buddha radiates from within this sculpture. The contemplative wisdom of the Buddha shines through the stucco and warms our spirits. - (LA.514)

Glazed Pottery Figurine of a Daoist Immortal on a Phoenix



LA.520
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 7.5" (19.1cm) high

Collection: Chinese Art
Medium: Terracotta
Location: UAE

Iridescent green lead glazed roof tile finial depicting a Daoist immortal riding a phoenix, with hands gathered as to hold a tablet, his hair tied up under a four-petals cap, his facial traits clearly delineated with long slanted eyes and pointed beard. The phoenix with head turned to one side, wings spread and high tail.

In Chinese classical art and literature, phoenix often served as metaphor for people of high virtue and rare talent, while in combination with the dragon often alluded to blissful marriage and even to Imperial couple.

Furthermore in Daoist iconography, phoenix and immortals often are depicted together. In this case the connubial composition might indeed allude to one of the four heavenly ministers, specifically the South Pole Emperor of the South (chin.: Nanji Changsheng Dadi) who would supervise all things and creatures of the southern cardinal pole.

According to traditional cosmogony, the south was associated with the phoenix and her appearance in conjunction with the South Pole Emperor would seem to confirm this metaphor. Images of the heavenly ministers are known from traditional folk paintings and prints and they all feature a bearded high official portrayed frontally and holding the tablets with both hands, in exactly the same posture of our figurine.

The shape of the tile would further suggest that it was possibly placed on the southern corner of the temple roof. - (LA.520)

Pair of Glazed Ceramic Panels Featuring a
Horse Rider Amidst Mountain Peaks



LA.527
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 14.25" (36.2cm) high x
25.59" (65.0cm) wide

Collection: Chinese Art
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Additional Information: Dimensions
refer to a single panel.
Location: Great Britain

These remarkable ceramic polychrome panels date from the Ming Dynasty, which ruled China between the mid 14th and mid 17th centuries AD and is widely believed to be one of the most definitive and important in China's long history. They are ultra high-relief pieces, depicting a pair of galloping horsemen against a predominantly green background. They are dressed in warrior's clothing, and were presumably once part of a larger narrative panel. The pieces are notable for their high colouring and glazed finish.

The Ming Dynasty is remarkable for the peasant uprisings that ushered it in. A peasant named Hong Wu founded the dynasty on the destruction of the Yuan Mongol Empire. His background and the manner in which he seized power made him almost pathologically cautious and even paranoid. His intention, influenced by Confucianism, was to create a bureaucracy-free set of agriculturally-based communities that eschewed commercial trade – which was abhorred by Confucius. Confucian perspectives on the avoidance of military development went unheeded, however. He increased the standing army to over one million, imposed what approximated to martial law on his people and spent a fortune building defences, notably the Great Wall of China. He also founded the Forbidden City, from which he governed China's burgeoning population of around 200 million.

Arts and sciences flourished in the Ming Dynasty, though this was more to do with the flow of unexpected wealth from agricultural surpluses than any particular enlightenment on the part of Hong Wu or his descendents. Painters proliferated, and were very well-paid for their works; Qiu Ying was once paid 2.8 kg (100 oz) of silver to paint a long scroll. Advances were also made in wood/ivory carving, jade-working, lacquerwork, and duotone (blue-white) ceramic design and decoration. Very strident pieces such as this were made for temples and other public spaces, and illustrated mythological and martial scenes from Chinese history.

These are powerful and impressive pieces of Chinese art. - (LA.527)

Ming Dynasty Glazed Horse



SP.443
Origin: China
Circa: 1369 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 11" (27.9cm) high x
11.75" (29.8cm) wide

Collection: Chinese Art
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: United States

Ming Glazed Terracotta Sculptures of a Fu Dog



PF.1536A
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 BC to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 18" (45.7cm) high

Collection: Chinese Art
Medium: Glazed Earthen ware
Condition: Fine
Location: United States

The Fu Dog, or Fu Lion as it is also known, is a ubiquitous symbol that has been employed repeatedly throughout the history of China. Sometimes referred to as the “Dog of Happiness” or the “Celestial Dog,” the earliest traces of the Fu Dog in China date to the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.). Then it disappeared from Chinese art until it was resurrected during the cultural revival experienced during the T’ang Dynasty (618-906 A.D.). While lions are not native to China, works of art with lion imagery from other civilizations were imported into China as gifts for the Emperor. The Fu Lion was brought into China with the arrival of Buddhism, where it became associated with the more familiar dog during assimilation. The lion is a sacred creature in the Buddhist pantheon, and the Fu Lion was believed to be a companion of the Buddha. While sculptures of Fu Dogs such as these outstanding blue and green-glazed example originally stood guard outside of Buddhist temples, by the time of the Ming Dynasty, when this work was created, the Dogs had lost most of their religious significance and were placed outside the entrances to homes and palaces out of custom. Even today, many monumental public buildings are decorated with lion figures standing guard at the base of the stairway. Fu Dogs continue to be a popular symbol of luck and happiness. - (PF.1536A)

Ming Dynasty Painted Male Lion



DL.1002

Origin: China

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 12.4" (31.5cm) high x
11.4" (29.0cm) wide

Collection: Chinese

Medium: Terracotta

Condition: Extra Fine

Location: UAE

The Fu Lion, or Fu Dog as it is also known, is a ubiquitous symbol that has been employed repeatedly throughout the history of China. Sometimes referred to as the “Dog of Happiness” or the “Celestial Dog,” the earliest traces of the Fu Dog in China date to the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.). Then it disappeared from Chinese art until it was resurrected during the cultural revival experienced during the Tang Dynasty (618-906 A.D.). While lions are not native to China, works of art with lion imagery from other civilizations were imported into China as gifts for the Emperor. The Fu Lion was brought into China with the arrival of Buddhism, where it became associated with the more familiar dog during assimilation. The lion is a sacred creature in the Buddhist pantheon and the Fu Lion was believed to be a companion of the Buddha.

While sculptures of Fu Dogs originally stood guard outside of Buddhist temples, by the time of the Ming Dynasty, when this work was created, the dogs had lost most of their religious significance and were placed outside the entrances to homes and palaces out of custom. Even today, many monumental public buildings are decorated with lion figures standing guard at the base of the stairway. This male lion has his front paw resting on a ball. This traditional gesture symbolizes the lion’s authority over evil spirits that might have tried to infiltrate the temple or palace. The delicate colouring, in tones of red, blue and yellow is particularly fine. The lion’s wide open mouth and protruding tongue have been expertly sculpted. The care lavished on this magnificent creation is also apparent in the swirling motifs, achieved through the use of incised lines, that decorate the plinth. (AM) - (DL.1002)

Ming Dynasty Sandstone Standing Bodhisattva



DL.2100

Origin: Sichuan Province

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 33.26" (84.5cm) high x 11.81"
(30.0cm) wide x 11.41" (29.0cm) depth

Collection: Chinese

Medium: Sandstone

Condition: Extra Fine

Location: UAE

Buddhism travelled to China from India along the Silk Road during the 1st Century AD. By the period of the Tang Dynasty (618-906 AD) it had become central to Chinese religious culture. This sculpture, dating to the Ming Dynasty, represents a bodhisattva standing on a rectangular plinth. The figure is positioned with its weight resting on the left leg, while the right is delicately extended to the front of the base. The left arm is raised and a cloth has been expertly carved to fall between the figure's fingers. The right arm is extended across the body at waist level, with the drapery falling over the front.

The elaborate headdress is typical of a bodhisattva. Buddhas, by contrast, were typically depicted modestly clothed. A bodhisattva is an enlightened being who has chosen to delay entry into Nirvana and remain in the world to help other sentient beings achieve enlightenment. This mission is reflected in the figure's sympathetic visual expression; the rounded face, small mouth and well-defined chin suggest a child-like appearance. This is also implied by the playful sense of movement. In contrast to more static, meditative bodhisattvas, this figure is lively and enchanting. - (DL.2100)

Ming Dynasty Green and Yellow Glazed Pottery Sedan Chair Set



DL.2104
Origin: Shaanxi Province, Xi'an
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 18.5" (47.0cm) high

Collection: Chinese
Medium: Terracotta
Condition: Very Fine
Additional Information: Height listed
refers to the tallest figure.
Location: UAE

This miniature procession consists of 8 attendants, a horse and palanquin and a couple carrying offerings. The figures are dressed in emerald green robes, tied at the waist and lined with amber cloth. Conical red caps add to the dignity of the procession. The set reflects contemporary social practice; such processions were demanded by the emperor when tribute was delivered. The screens of the elegant sedan chair are adorned with diagonal hatching; this was the most common form of transport for the elite during this period. According to the conventions of Ming statuette art, each figure has an individual expression and it is likely that the attendants once carried banners or similar ceremonial objects. The glazed bases add to the detail of this charming set. - (DL.2104)

Ming Chinese Figure Of A Celestial Guardian



DK.009

Origin: China

Circa: 15th Century AD to 16th Century AD

Dimensions: 12.5" (31.8cm) high

Collection: Chinese Art

Condition: Very Fine

Location: UAE

Ming Wooden Seated Buddha



OF.264

Origin: China

Circa: 15th Century AD to 16th Century AD

Dimensions: 13.1" (33.3cm) high x

9.0" (22.9cm) wide

Collection: Asian Art

Style: Ming

Medium: Wood

Location: Great Britain

Ming Dynasty Stone Seated Buddha



FF.001

Origin: China

Circa: 1500 AD to 1600 AD

Dimensions: 20" (50.8cm) high x

12.5" (31.8cm) wide

Collection: Chinese Art

Medium: Stone

Location: Great Britain

The current sculpture dates from this highly changeable and dynamic time. This stone sculpture depicts the universal (Vairocana) Buddha seated in padmasanam (lotus position) and the hands folded together, palms up, in a meditative position known as dhyana mudra. The Buddha wears a pantaloon-like garment overlain with a loose, flowing tunic. His face shows no signs of emotion, and has the appearance of one lost in deep meditation. His hair is represented by a series of spiraled curls painted blue with the supra-cranial eminence – believed to denote Buddha’s wisdom and learning – protruding from the center of his head and highlighted with red paint. The earlobes are long and pendulous, the result of wearing heavy earrings during his princely youth. Unlike some early Chinese Buddha images, such as the Sakyamuni Buddha, the Vairocana Buddha is shown in the standard meditating pose. This reflects the effort made by the Chinese to reinterpret the Buddhist religion, which by the time of the Tang Dynasty had become a central and important part of the Chinese culture. As Buddhism continued to thrive in China, the tenets of the faith and its iconography were continually reinterpreted by generations of religious philosophers and artisans. Soon, the traditional appearance of the Buddha as promulgated by Indian artisans had been changed almost beyond recognition, as this extremely fine figure testifies. - (FF.001)

Ming Dynasty Stone Sculpture of Guan Yu



FF.058

Origin: China

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 23.4" (59.4cm) high x
18.5" (47.0cm) wide

Collection: Chinese Art

Medium: Stone

Location: Great Britain

Guan Yu was a historical figure who lived during the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty and the Three Kingdoms Era (late second-early third century AD). Serving as a general under the warlord Liu Bei, he became famous for his military skills and personal integrity. Over the centuries fact and fiction merged and he became a legendary figure in Chinese folklore. The greatest celebration of his virtues appeared in the fourteenth-century historical novel, the 'Romance of the Three Kingdoms,' and by the end of the Sui Dynasty he had been deified. Guan Yu has been honoured by many different religious groups in China ; in Buddhism he is revered as a bodhisattva, in Taoism he is regarded as a guardian deity and even today he is still worshipped as an indigenous Chinese deity. Successive Ming emperors claimed that the spirit of Guan Yu helped them achieve success in battle and it was during this period that he acquired several honorific titles, including that of 'Emperor.'

This remarkable stone sculpture is a testament to the popularity of Guan Yu during the Ming era. Resting on a rocky mound, the general sits with his legs wide apart in a gesture of invincibility. His right hand is tightly clenched and his left rests on his thigh, pointing inwards at a sharp angle. The drapery has been finely carved, especially the wide collar and the folds beneath his rotund belly. The fabric has been hitched up to knee level so that the details of the armour beneath and the intricately modeled shoes are evident. A long flowing beard and moustache, Guan Yu's most defining characteristics, hang down over the chest. The facial expression, especially the furrowed brow, is the highlight of this sculpture, capturing the determination that led to his military success. The folded cap, knotted at the reverse, is also customary. Although the stone surface is now exposed, it is possible that the sculpture was once polychromed. Guan Yu was famous for his red face and green robe, worn over his body armour. (AM) - (FF.058)

Large Ming Decorative Dish



FF.112

Origin: China

Circa: 15th Century AD to 16th Century AD

Dimensions: 3.5" (8.9cm) high x

15" (38.1cm) wide

Collection: Chinese Art

Medium: Glazed Earthenware

Location: Great Britain

Bronze Zoomorphic figure



LK.104

Origin: China

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 3.75" (9.5cm) high x
3.75" (9.5cm) wide

Collection: Chinese Art

Medium: Bronze

Location: Great Britain

Pair of Bronze Snow Lions



SF.090
Origin: China
Circa: 15 th Century AD to 16 AD
Dimensions: 4.5" (11.4cm) high x
4.5" (11.4cm) wide

Collection: Chinese Art
Medium: Bronze
Location: Great Britain

Ming Bronze Lion



SF.101

Origin: China

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 4.15" (10.5cm) high x

3.50" (8.9cm) wide

Collection: Chinese Art

Medium: Bronze

Location: Great Britain

Ming Wooden Figure



SF.104

Origin: China

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 12.75" (32.4cm) high x
4" (10.2cm) wide

Collection: Chinese Art

Medium: Wood

Location: Great Britain

Ming Bronze Seated Buddha



SF.105

Origin: China

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 3.50" (8.9cm) high x

2.25" (5.7cm) wide

Collection: Chinese Art

Medium: Bronze

Location: Great Britain

Ming Wooden Sculpture of the Laughing Buddha



AM.0322 (LSO)

Origin: China

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 15.5" (39.4cm) high x

14.5" (36.8cm) wide

Collection: Chinese Art

Medium: Wood

Location: Great Britain

The Laughing Buddha has been connected with a historical figure, a Zen monk known as Pu-Tai (Chinese) or Hotei (Japanese) who lived in the tenth century A.D. Pu-Tai literally means cloth or hemp sack, a common attribute of this Buddha and a symbol of wealth and prosperity. The sack is visible here clutched in the Buddha's left hand. According to tradition it was filled with rice plants (an indication of wealth), sweets for children and – more notably – the woes of the world. He is the patron of children, the poor and those unable to defend themselves against the rigours of life. In Chinese art the Laughing Buddha is often depicted surrounded by children, attesting both to his benevolence and Chinese family ideals. In Japanese versions he is depicted sitting in a cart, often carries a fan (ogi), which is associated with the granting of wishes. He is always depicted as a jolly, fat man; the stomach is considered to be the seat of the soul in Chinese mythology, so a large displacement of this sort implies a generous and giving personality. He is often accompanied by children, and also by a begging bowl; charity is associated with his form of existence, although he is also said to take away the cares of the worried. His appearance is also calculated to ease concern; it has become customary to rub the belly of these figures to attract good fortune, although this is a secular – not a religious – tradition. Pu-Tai is also believed to be a manifestation of the Future Buddha, Maitreya, in the form of a bodhisattva. Bodhisattvas, despite their ability to achieve enlightenment, deliberately delayed their own entry to Nirvana to help others end the cycle of birth and rebirth.

The large, rotund belly, cheerful smile and general sense of bonhomie that characterises these figures is very much at odds with representations of the historical Buddha Shakyamuni, who was characterised by asceticism and the denial of worldly pleasures. This particular specimen is a classical example of the genre, with a chaotically-tied robe slipping from round shoulders, a protuberant belly and chest and elongated ear lobes, surmounted by a rounded, bald head split by a carefree smile and eyes half-closed in merriment. A set of prayer beads are held in the right hand which rests on the figure's knee. The size indicates that this was probably a domestically-owned piece, which was presumably displayed in a wealthy household. Carved from wood which was once polychromed, the sculptor has expertly captured Pu-Tai's relaxed posture and sense of contentment. This is a striking and confidently-carved masterpiece from a dynamic and important time in Chinese history. - (AM.0322 (LSO))

This rotund Buddha has considerable religious and historical significance to Buddhists and historians alike, as it is based upon a series of genuine and mythical personages from Chinese and Buddhist history. It dates to the M'ing Dynasty, which ruled China between the mid 14th and mid 17th centuries AD and is widely believed to be one of the most definitive and important in China's long history. This is partially due to the fact that it was the last indigenous (Han) dynasty before the country fell into the hands of the Qing Dynasty, and partly because it was led by one of only three peasants ever to rise to Chinese imperial pre-eminence.

Hong Wu, the leader of the peasant revolt, founded the dynasty on the destruction of the Y'uan Mongol Empire. His policies resulted in economic spin-offs that led to untold wealth and a new elite of merchant families who went on to constitute China's first Middle Class. The arts and sciences also benefited from this largesse. In many respects it was the strongest period in Chinese history, and it only collapsed because of a series of natural and economic disasters – namely undermining of the economy by Japanese trade withdrawal, a series of crop failures, and the appearance of the “Little Ice Age” and the epidemics and other calamities it brought with it. The eventual collapse of the M'ing Dynasty was brought about by ultra-conservative Manchurian nomads (Manchu) who founded the Q'ing dynasty in 1644. Arts and sciences flourished in the Ming Dynasty. Painters proliferated, and were very well-paid for their works. Several written dramatic works, poems and musical works have come down to us, in addition to notable wood/ivory carving, jade-working, lacquerwork, and duotone (blue- white) ceramic design and decoration. It was also a high-point in the development of Buddhist art, as can be seen from the current piece.

Ming Lacquered Wood Guanyin



TF.014
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 33" (83.8cm) high x
19.50" (49.5cm) wide

Collection: Chinese Art
Medium: Wood
Location: Great Britain

Pair of Polychromed Stone Fu Dogs



TF.024

Origin: China

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 15.25" (38.7cm) high x

8.60" (21.8cm) wide

Collection: Chinese Art

Medium: Stone

Location: UAE

Pair of Stone Fu Dogs



TF.025
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 23" (58.4cm) high x
23.25" (59.1cm) wide

Collection: Chinese Art
Medium: Stone
Location: UAE

Ming Dynasty Bodhisattva Head



BF.001 (LSO)
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 19.75" (50.2cm) high x
11.50" (29.2cm) wide

Collection: Chinese Art
Medium: Wood
Location: Great Britain

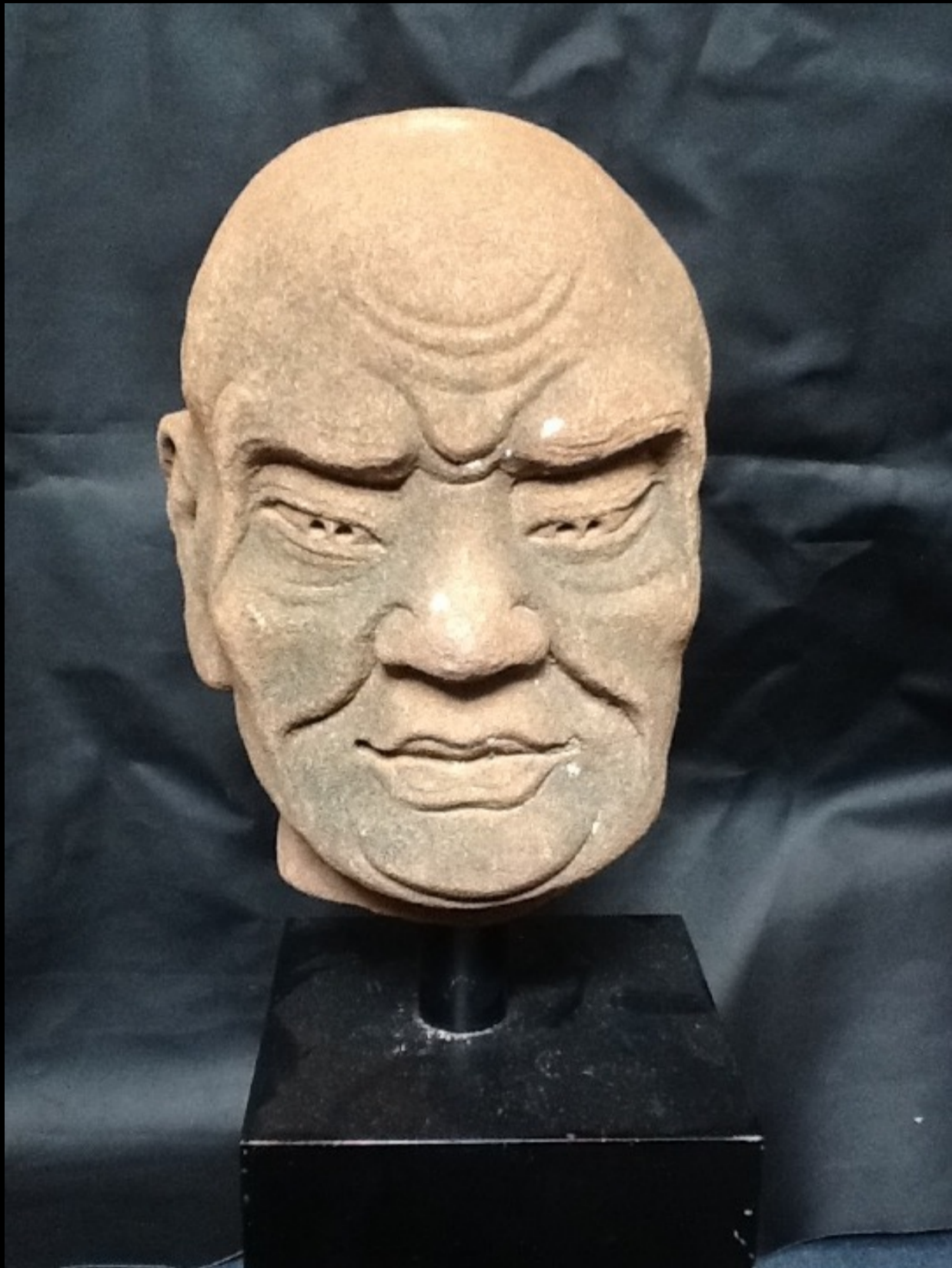
This striking polychrome head of a Bodhisattva dates to the M'ing Dynasty, one of China's most socially significant periods. It depicts a well-carved face with closed eyes and a reflective expression, surmounted by hair piled up into a mound, and an astonishingly ornate crown made up of foliate scrollwork and an assortment of diadems. The face is very well rendered, with eyes that slant upwards towards the edges under high, arched brows that join the nose in a T-bar format. The cheeks are fleshy and rounded, with a pouchy arrangement that frames the base of the nose and the small pouted lips. The bindi (or kum kum, or baihao) mark on the forehead is rendered as a depression that was originally designed to hold an inlay, since lost. The ears are pendulous, long and pierced. The crown is exceptional. It is attached to a cone-shaped dome of hair, which is bound horizontally with ties. The crown elements are attached to a band that circles the head at its apex, supporting a large foliate scrollwork diadem that equals the height of the face, decorated with a small Buddha figure seated on a plinth, and a lotus flower deflected inferiorly. The central element is balanced by lateral sconces in the same general form.

The current piece represents a Bodhisattva – an enlightened being who chooses not to enter Nirvana, preferring to help others attain the necessary enlightenment to do so. Indeed, she is known to the West as the Goddess of Compassion. They are usually very ornate, and in this sense all the Bodhisattvas differ from representations of Buddhas, who eschew such worldly displays in favour of ascetic simplicity. Large sculptures such as the one of which this is a part were usually displayed in centralised temples, or in the homes of wealthy and presumably pious members of the M'ing social elites.

Established in 1368, the M'ing dynasty was founded by Hong Wu, one of only three peasants ever to rise to imperial pre-eminence. His attitudes towards rule reflected his own past, with considerable emphasis on agricultural production, an aversion to trade, a massive expansion of military power and spending a fortune on defences (notably the Great Wall). This philosophy, while partly reflexive, was based loosely upon Confucianism, with which China had had a love-hate relationship for much of the preceding millennium. Despite his prejudices, the inevitable effect of Hong Wu's policies was stability, and with it the rise and rise of the middle classes. While in many respects a martially vigorous and ascetic time, the enormous wealth generated by agricultural surpluses led to an unexpected flowering of arts under the patronage of what was essentially the nouveau riche, who liked to surround themselves with artworks including lacquer work, paintings, prestige ceramics and sculptures both for this life and for the hereafter (mingqi). It is into the former category that the current piece falls.

This is a beautiful and ornate piece of M'ing Dynasty art. - (BF.001 (LSO))

Ming Dynasty Lohan Stone Head



AM.0336

Origin: China

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 8.50" (21.6cm) high x
6" (15.2cm) wide

Collection: Chinese Art

Medium: Wood

Location: Great Britain

The Ming Dynasty was the ruling dynasty of China from 1368 to 1644, following the collapse of the Mongol-led Yuan Dynasty. The Ming was the last dynasty in China ruled by ethnic Hans, before falling to the rebellion led in part by Li Zicheng and soon after replaced by the Manchu- led Qing Dynasty. The last of the outstanding dynasties, the Ming was vibrant during its first half but racked with internal discord during its second. Scores of workers constructed the renowned Forbidden City, an imperial palace of staggering proportions and opulence. Ming leaders revived a sense of cultural identity and respect for traditional artifacts and craftsmanship.

Even today, when entering the main hall of a Buddhist temple in China, one will discover two rows of sculpted figures, traditionally numbering eighteen in total. These figures are known as the Eighteen Lohan. Lohan is the Chinese term, derived from the Sanskrit word Arhan, for a disciple or follower of Buddha who has reached a state of enlightenment. The Lohan had been a popular subject in Chinese art at least since the cultural flourishing of the Tang Dynasty. Traditionally, they are always produced in sets of sixteen or eighteen. The numerical difference is a result of discrepancies in Buddhist texts. By the Song Dynasty, artists began to depict each Lohan with individualized facial features. Having achieved enlightenment, Lohans were free from all earthly desires and no longer subject to the cycle of rebirth. In this example serenity and wisdom are conveyed through the creased forehead, absent gaze and smiling mouth. The area around the eyes and brow is particularly well-modeled and overall the head is in excellent condition. - (AM.0336)

Ming Dynasty Lohan Stone Head



AM.0337

Origin: China

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 9.15" (23.2cm) high x
5.50" (14.0cm) wide

Collection: Chinese Art

Style: Ming Dynasty

Medium: Stone

Location: Great Britain

The Ming Dynasty was the ruling dynasty of China from 1368 to 1644, following the collapse of the Mongol-led Yuan Dynasty. The Ming was the last dynasty in China ruled by ethnic Hans, before falling to the rebellion led in part by Li Zicheng and soon after replaced by the Manchu- led Qing Dynasty. The last of the outstanding dynasties, the Ming was vibrant during its first half but racked with internal discord during its second. Scores of workers constructed the renowned Forbidden City, an imperial palace of staggering proportions and opulence. Ming leaders revived a sense of cultural identity and respect for traditional artifacts and craftsmanship.

Even today, when entering the main hall of a Buddhist temple in China, one will discover two rows of sculpted figures, traditionally numbering eighteen in total. These figures are known as the Eighteen Lohan. Lohan is the Chinese term, derived from the Sanskrit word Arhan, for a disciple or follower of Buddha who has reached a state of enlightenment. The Lohan had been a popular subject in Chinese art at least since the cultural flourishing of the Tang Dynasty. Traditionally, they are always produced in sets of sixteen or eighteen. The numerical difference is a result of discrepancies in Buddhist texts. By the Song Dynasty, artists began to depict each Lohan with individualized facial features. Having achieved enlightenment, Lohans were free from all earthly desires and no longer subject to the cycle of rebirth. This example is particularly expressive with the lips parted to reveal the upper row of teeth and the nostrils slightly flared. The eyeballs are rendered in detail and the creased forehead and wrinkled brow contribute to the slightly ferocious demeanor. The head is in excellent condition. - (AM.0337)

Ming Dynasty Lohan Stone Head



AM.0338

Origin: China

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 8.40" (21.3cm) high x
6" (15.2cm) wide

Collection: Chinese Art

Style: Ming Dynasty

Medium: Stone

Location: Great Britain

The Ming Dynasty was the ruling dynasty of China from 1368 to 1644, following the collapse of the Mongol-led Yuan Dynasty. The Ming was the last dynasty in China ruled by ethnic Hans, before falling to the rebellion led in part by Li Zicheng and soon after replaced by the Manchu- led Qing Dynasty. The last of the outstanding dynasties, the Ming was vibrant during its first half but racked with internal discord during its second. Scores of workers constructed the renowned Forbidden City, an imperial palace of staggering proportions and opulence. Ming leaders revived a sense of cultural identity and respect for traditional artifacts and craftsmanship.

Even today, when entering the main hall of a Buddhist temple in China, one will discover two rows of sculpted figures, traditionally numbering eighteen in total. These figures are known as the Eighteen Lohan. Lohan is the Chinese term, derived from the Sanskrit word Arhan, for a disciple or follower of Buddha who has reached a state of enlightenment. The Lohan had been a popular subject in Chinese art at least since the cultural flourishing of the Tang Dynasty. Traditionally, they are always produced in sets of sixteen or eighteen. The numerical difference is a result of discrepancies in Buddhist texts. By the Song Dynasty, artists began to depict each Lohan with individualized facial features. Having achieved enlightenment, Lohans were free from all earthly desires and no longer subject to the cycle of rebirth. Serenity and wisdom are implied by the smiling expression and well-defined facial creases. The head is in excellent condition. - (AM.0338)

Ming Dynasty Lohan Stone Head



AM.0339

Origin: China

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 7.75" (19.7cm) high x
7" (17.8cm) wide

Collection: Chinese Art

Medium: Stone

Location: Great Britain

The Ming Dynasty was the ruling dynasty of China from 1368 to 1644, following the collapse of the Mongol-led Yuan Dynasty. The Ming was the last dynasty in China ruled by ethnic Hans, before falling to the rebellion led in part by Li Zicheng and soon after replaced by the Manchu- led Qing Dynasty. The last of the outstanding dynasties, the Ming was vibrant during its first half but racked with internal discord during its second. Scores of workers constructed the renowned Forbidden City, an imperial palace of staggering proportions and opulence. Ming leaders revived a sense of cultural identity and respect for traditional artifacts and craftsmanship.

Even today, when entering the main hall of a Buddhist temple in China, one will discover two rows of sculpted figures, traditionally numbering eighteen in total. These figures are known as the Eighteen Lohan. Lohan is the Chinese term, derived from the Sanskrit word Arhan, for a disciple or follower of Buddha who has reached a state of enlightenment. The Lohan had been a popular subject in Chinese art at least since the cultural flourishing of the Tang Dynasty. Traditionally, they are always produced in sets of sixteen or eighteen. The numerical difference is a result of discrepancies in Buddhist texts. By the Song Dynasty, artists began to depict each Lohan with individualized facial features. Having achieved enlightenment, Lohans were free from all earthly desires and no longer subject to the cycle of rebirth. In this superb example special attention can be drawn to the Lohan's thick eyebrows, which dominate the entire piece. Serenity and wisdom are implied by the well- defined facial creases and stoical expression. The head is in excellent condition. - (AM.0339)

Wood Head of a Lohan



LF.009

Origin: China

Circa: 15th Century AD to 16th Century AD

Dimensions: 13.50" (34.3cm) high x

9.50" (24.1cm) wide

Collection: Chinese Art

Medium: Wood

Location: Great Britain

The Ming Dynasty was the ruling dynasty of China from 1368 to 1644, following the collapse of the Mongol-led Yuan Dynasty. The Ming was the last dynasty in China ruled by ethnic Hans, before falling to the rebellion led in part by Li Zicheng and soon after replaced by the Manchu- led Qing Dynasty. The last of the outstanding dynasties, the Ming was vibrant during its first half but racked with internal discord during its second. Scores of workers constructed the renowned Forbidden City, an imperial palace of staggering proportions and opulence. Ming leaders revived a sense of cultural identity and respect for traditional artifacts and craftsmanship.

Even today, when entering the main hall of a Buddhist temple in China, one will discover two rows of sculpted figures, traditionally numbering eighteen in total. These figures are known as the Eighteen Lohan. Lohan is the Chinese term, derived from the Sanskrit word Arhan, for a disciple or follower of Buddha who has reached a state of enlightenment. The Lohan had been a popular subject in Chinese art at least since the cultural flourishing of the Tang Dynasty. Traditionally, they are always produced in sets of sixteen or eighteen. The numerical difference is a result of discrepancies in Buddhist texts. By the Song Dynasty, artists began to depict each Lohan with individualized facial features. Having achieved enlightenment, Lohans were free from all earthly desires and no longer subject to the cycle of rebirth. Serenity and wisdom are implied by the smiling expression and well-defined facial creases. - (LF.009)

Ming Stone Head of Guanyin



CK.0100

Origin: China

Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Dimensions: 5" (12.7cm) high x

2.75" (7.0cm) wide

Collection: Chinese

Medium: Stone

Location: United States

Noted for her kindness, Guanyin is an ancient Bodhisattva. In Buddhism, Bodhisattvas are beings who have attained enlightenment, but renounce the goal of Nirvana, a state characterized by freedom from pain, suffering and the external world. Instead, these benevolent Bodhisattvas minister eternally to relieve the sufferings of all creatures, like Archangels, passing from the remote heaven to the world of men. As such, the Guanyin makes helping others toward enlightenment her mission. Originally depicted as a male in early Chinese Buddhist forms, the Guanyin eventually became associated with a local Chinese Mother Goddess, "bringer of children," and also because the gentleness and compassion of the deity suggest feminine qualities. - (CK. 0100)

Ming Dynasty Standing Buddha



AM.0430
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 54.5" (138.4cm) high

Collection: Chinese
Style: Ming Dynasty
Medium: Wood
Location: Great Britain

This superb monumental wooden statue of a standing Buddha dates from the Ming era. The carving of the drapery is a tour-de-force, with layer upon layer of rippling fabric. The hair is formed from tight snail-shell curls which also cover the prominent ushnisha, symbolic of the Buddha's spiritual wisdom. The facial expression is one of deep meditation, with closed eyelids and small pursed lips. The left hand is held just below the chest in a gesture of meditation. The right arm is held adjacent to the body, pointing towards the earth with the palm side visible. This symbolises the Buddha's power to bestow supreme accomplishments on his disciples. This magnificent sculpture is a testament to the high level of artistry prevalent among Ming craftsmen. - (AM. 0430)

Pair of Glazed Ming Figures



LK.190
Origin: China
Circa: 14th Century AD to 17th Century AD
Dimensions: 5.8" (14.7cm) high

Medium: Terracotta
Location: Great Britain

Ming Glazed Terracotta Ceremonial Processional Set Consisting of Ten Figures



RP.158
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 20.45" (51.9cm) high

Collection: Chinese Art
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: UAE

Ming Glazed Figure



RP.192

Origin: China

Circa: 15th Century AD to 16th Century AD

Dimensions: 23.2" (58.9cm) high x

11.25" (28.6cm) wide x 8.25" (21.0cm) depth

Collection: Chinese Art

Medium: Terracotta

Location: UAE

Set of Three Ming Glazed Terracotta Attendants



NP.022
Origin: China
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD

Collection: Chinese
Style: Ming Dynasty
Medium: Glazed Terracotta
Location: Great Britain

Ming Dynasty Glazed Terracotta



NP.012
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 17" (43.2cm) high x
9" (22.9cm) wide

Collection: Chinese Art
Medium: Terracotta

Pillows in Ancient China were originally made of stone. Over time, other materials began to be employed, including wood, bronze, and terracotta, which eventually became the most popular. Porcelain pillows first appeared in the Sui Dynasty and began to be mass-produced in the Tang Dynasty, reaching their height of popularity in the following centuries that coincided with the Song, Jin, and Yuan Dynasties. Both the form and the decorative elements varied greatly depending on the time period and regional styles. Thus, we find a wide range from simple functional geometric shapes to elaborately modeled forms imitating animals, architecture, and other natural forms. Decorative motifs included patterns based on plants and animal hides, water and mountains, and calligraphic characters. Generally, the sophistication of porcelain pillows evolved in tow with the overall technical development of the porcelain industry in China. While glazed terracotta pillows would have been used by the living, they were also buried in tombs alongside other everyday items that belonged to the deceased. - (NP.012)

Ming Dynasty Glazed Terracotta



NP.013
Circa: 1368 AD to 1644 AD
Dimensions: 17" (43.2cm) high x
9" (22.9cm) wide

Collection: Chinese Art
Medium: Terracotta

Pillows in Ancient China were originally made of stone. Over time, other materials began to be employed, including wood, bronze, and terracotta, which eventually became the most popular. Porcelain pillows first appeared in the Sui Dynasty and began to be mass-produced in the Tang Dynasty, reaching their height of popularity in the following centuries that coincided with the Song, Jin, and Yuan Dynasties. Both the form and the decorative elements varied greatly depending on the time period and regional styles. Thus, we find a wide range from simple functional geometric shapes to elaborately modeled forms imitating animals, architecture, and other natural forms. Decorative motifs included patterns based on plants and animal hides, water and mountains, and calligraphic characters. Generally, the sophistication of porcelain pillows evolved in tow with the overall technical development of the porcelain industry in China. While glazed terracotta pillows would have been used by the living, they were also buried in tombs alongside other everyday items that belonged to the deceased. - (NP.013)

THE BAKARAT GALLERY

Emirates Palace, Abu Dhabi, UAE | Tel: 971-269-08950

Alserkal Avenue, Street 8, Al Quoz 1 Dubai, UAE, B9 | Tel: 971-501-306248

58 Brook Street, Mayfair, London, UK | Tel: 44-20-7493-7778

421 North Rodeo Drive, Beverly Hills, California | Tel: 1-310-859-8408

8645 Sunset Boulevard, West Hollywood, California | Tel: 1-310-360-0712

31 Nagdawi Street, Rabieh, Amman, Jordan | Tel: 962-06-5545960