

CHILDREN'S TRAIL

ART GALLERY OF NEW SOUTH WALES
CHINESE
COLLECTION



HAVE FUN exploring
and **MAKE SOME ART** of your own

ART
GALLERY
NSW

Collect
a pencil



Go on a journey
through the
Asian galleries

STARTING ON
LOWER LEVEL 1



Discover
the Chinese
artworks

★ **Look, draw and have fun!**

cover: MING DYNASTY (1368–1644) Guardian figure, bronze coated with gold, 140 x 60 x 50 cm
Gift of Captain Francis Hixson 1905; below: Children in the Asian galleries. Photo: AGNSW photography studio



CHINESE COLLECTION

The Gallery's Chinese collection is housed in the beautiful Asian galleries. Marvel at the ancient bronzes, meet some tomb figures and fearsome guardians, examine exquisite porcelains and ceramics and meditate with Buddha sculptures.

ASIAN GALLERIES, GROUND LEVEL & LOWER LEVEL 1

★ **Meet** the mighty guardian Wei To.

Wei To is a guardian; a spiritual being who protects others and the Buddhist religion. He is dressed as a Chinese warrior in armour and robes and would have stood guard in a Buddhist temple.

Look closely at Wei To's face. Does he look fierce or friendly?

Notice his headdress. What animal do you think it could be? Why would that animal be a good choice?

Observe Wei To's hands. Something is missing from this figure – what could it be? What do you think a warrior would hold to protect a temple from evil spirits?

Imagine you are a guardian warrior.

Strike a pose and see if you can scare any of your family or friends.

Bow deeply to Wei To and enter the Asian galleries.



MING DYNASTY (1368–1644) Guardian figure, bronze coated with gold, 140 x 60 x 50 cm. Gift of Captain Francis Hixson 1905

At home make a mask of a guardian figure and combine the features of an animal into your design.



★ **Walk** around this impressive watchtower.

This watchtower is nearly 2,000 years old and is made of clay. It is a copy of the type of towers built of wood in China a long time ago. Watchtowers were used to protect the emperor's home and were very tall so the guards could see a long way away.

Look closely at the design of the tower and **count** the following things:

- number of storeys
- archers with crossbows
- windows
- doorways
- guards
- flowers
- dragon heads



HAN DYNASTY (206 BCE – 220 CE) Watch tower 1st – 2nd centuries CE, earthenware with a low fired green lead glaze, 144.8 x 38.5 x 38.5 cm. Edward and Goldie Sternberg Chinese Art Purchase Fund 1992

At home build your own watchtower out of cardboard boxes, tubes and paper and decorate it.



★ **Here** is a display of objects that were found in tombs.

All of these little figures, animals and buildings are copies of real people and things and would have been placed in tombs to be of service to the dead person in their afterlife.

We can learn a great deal from these figures about how people lived in China a long time ago; how they dressed, what sports they played and what animals they kept.

Look at the different figures and **list** what types of people and animals you can see.



Draw a picture of your favourite thing that you would want to have in the afterlife with you.

At home find out about the famous terracotta warriors of Xi'an, buried with the first emperor of China as guardians and protectors in his tomb.



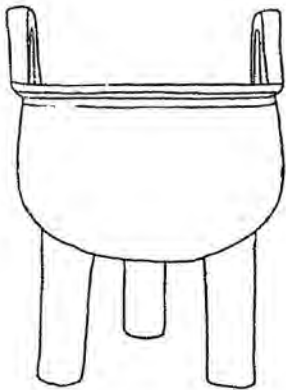
★ **Find** this special cauldron called a ding.

A *ding* was used to heat food for ceremonies. Due to the practice of burying objects with people when they died, many beautiful, old objects such as this one are still in good condition because they have been protected in the earth.

This *ding* is made of bronze and is decorated with a pattern of cicadas. The cicada insect is a symbol of rebirth in China.



SHANG DYNASTY (c1700–1927 BCE) Circular cauldron *ding*, 11th century BCE, bronze, 21.5 x 18 cm. Bequest of Kenneth Myer 1993



Spot the cicadas and their big eyes. Can you see any other animal faces?

Decorate this *ding* shape with your own pattern of insects or animals.

At home make your own bowl out of paper mâché by pasting ripped newspaper and glue over half of a balloon. When it is dry, burst the balloon so you are left with the bowl shape and decorate it.



★ **Look** at this pouring vessel.

Ancient China is well known for its beautiful bronzes and the skills required to make them. Bronze is a mixture of the metals copper and tin and can be cast into many shapes and designs.

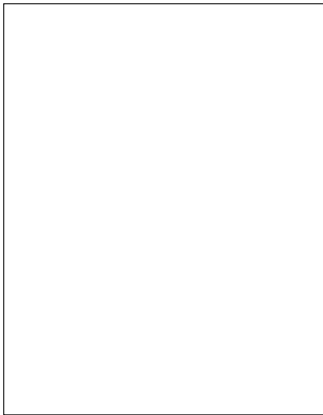
Observe the gold and silver patterns that have been inlayed into the bronze of this vessel.



MING DYNASTY (1386–1644) Pouring vessel *he* in archaistic style, bronze with silver and gold inlays, 22 x 24.8 x 18.5 cm. Purchased 1990

Spot the different animal or bird shapes that have been used to make this vessel. What animal has been used for the handle? What does the liquid pour through?

Design your own pouring vessel made up of animal shapes and parts in this box.



At home find out more about how bronze is made and a time long, long ago known as The Bronze Age.



★ **Walk** around this display case of ceramics.

China is famous for its high quality ceramics, in particular fine porcelains in blue and white such as the bowls and plates in this cabinet.

Focus on this dish with a dragon design. The dragon or *long* is a symbol of luck, power, heaven and the lord of the water.

Notice the clouds that surround these two dragons. The ancient Chinese believed that dragons lived in every river, lake and sea and high up in the rain clouds.

Imagine what noise these dragons would make. What if they came to life? **Write** a story about what the dragons did when they escaped from the dish.



QING DYNASTY, Guangxi period (1875–1908) Jingdezhen ware, Dish (two dragon design) porcelain with underglaze blue decoration, 6.4 x 44.5 cm. Purchased 1979

At home read stories about dragons from different parts of the world and draw your favourite one.



★ **Find** the scholar's desk and writing tools.

China has a long history of writing or *calligraphy* and scholarship and learning.

A scholar would study the *Three Perfections* – poetry, calligraphy and painting – and would use the *Four Treasures* – a brush, an inkstick, an inkstone and paper.

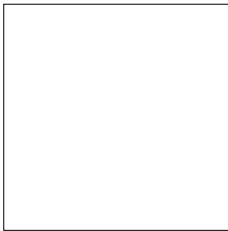


Find examples of the *Four Treasures* on this desk.
Which one is your favourite? Why?

Look at the hanging scrolls nearby that have examples of calligraphy and painting on them. The calligraphy is used to write the poems, which were often about nature.

Notice the red stamps or seals on the scrolls.
Every scholar would have his own special seal, like a signature.

Design your own seal in this box.



At home create your own scroll. Paint a picture and write a poem about nature to decorate your scroll. Add your own red stamp or seal.



★ **Go** up the stairs or escalator to the top of the Asian galleries.

Find the display case of export ceramics at the top of the stairs. Chinese ceramics were highly desired and were sold all over the world.

This dish shows the mythical bird, the phoenix. The phoenix is a symbol for the empress, the female opposite to the male dragon who symbolises the emperor.



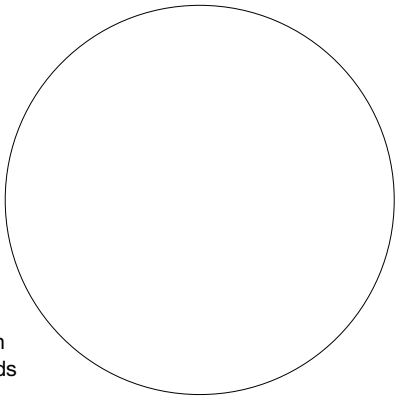
MING DYNASTY, c1600, Swatow ware, dish with design of phoenix, porcelain with underglaze blue decoration, 7.4 x 35.5 cm. Purchased 1983

Notice the long legs and tail of the phoenix.

Observe the flowers and plants that create a border for the dish. Are they repeated or are they all different?

Compare this dish with others in the case. Which one would you most like to own?

Create your own dish design using flowers, plants and birds in this circle.



At home look at the different plates and dishes you eat off. Are any of them Chinese? Find out how ceramics are made.



★ **Meet** this calm, serene Buddha.

The Buddha was an Indian prince who gave up his riches to search for peace and enlightenment. He achieved this through meditation, sitting in deep thought, and this sculpture shows the Buddha meditating.

Notice the Buddha's ears. What is unusual about them?

See the bump on his head. This is called the *ushnisha* and is a symbol of his wisdom. What does his hair look like?

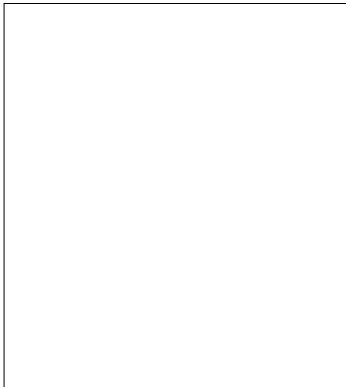
Role-play how the Buddha is sitting. **Copy** his hand gestures or *mudra*. How do you feel?

Find more Buddha sculptures as you travel through the Asian galleries and copy their *mudra*.

Draw your favourite Buddha sculpture in this box.



QING DYNASTY, Qianlong period (1736–95) Seated Buddha, gilt bronze, 30.2 x 21.5 x 16.5 cm. Purchased 1996



At home make your own Buddha sculpture out of plasticine or modelling clay and remember to add the *ushnisha* on his head, the tight curls of his hair and his long ear lobes.



★ **Find** this Buddhist sculpture.

This is a stele (say steel-e) and is made of stone and carved with figures of the Buddha in the centre and two bodhisattvas on each side. A stele is a monument which may be constructed to show devotion. A bodhisattva is a being who has achieved enlightenment but chooses to stay on earth to help others.

Examine the fine detail of the carving. **Imagine** the *mudra*, or hand gestures, that have worn away over time. **Role-play** what they may have been like.

Look at the musicians that surround the figures. What instruments can you see?

Identify the symbols that show you that the centre figure is the Buddha. **Notice** the crowns on the bodhisattvas. What shapes and decorations can you see?

Draw a new crown for this bodhisattva.



At home make your own crown out of shiny cardboard and decorate with ribbons and strips of paper.

