



Ink Tales

Family Guide





Hi. I am your guide to Chinese painting. Start below to learn about what makes a Chinese painting. Later, try to find me in the exhibition!

1. Material

Chinese paintings are sometimes done on paper or on a fine, thin fabric called silk.

2. Mounting

Once complete, Chinese paintings are placed on a fabric mounting. Look around the exhibit; there are many different types of mountings on display.

3. Inscription

Chinese paintings often have a written message. The message may be a poem, a note from the artist, or a comment by one of the painting's owners.

4. Seals

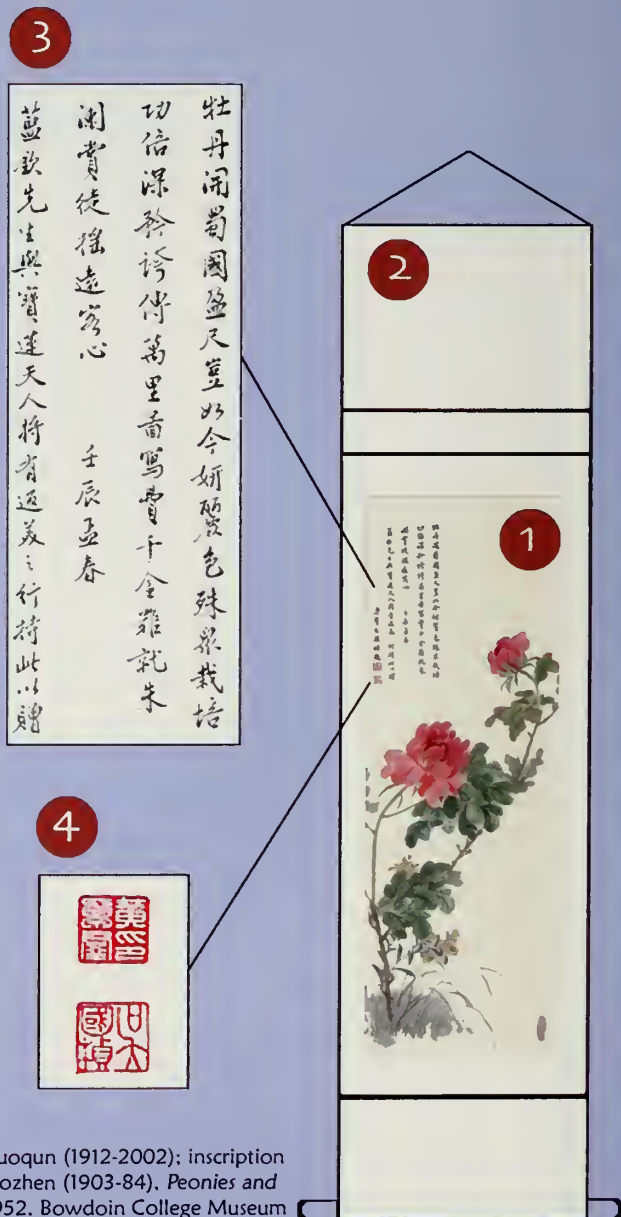
The red marks are like signatures made into stamps. Chinese paintings may have many seals, as each new owner adds his seal.

See how many different seals you can find on the paintings in the exhibit, then design your own seal to represent you.

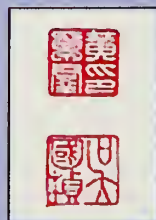


Ink Tales is a

collaborative, student curated exhibition of Chinese paintings drawn from the collections of Bowdoin and Colby Colleges. The exhibition explores the variety of stories associated with the images, formats, and functions of Chinese paintings.

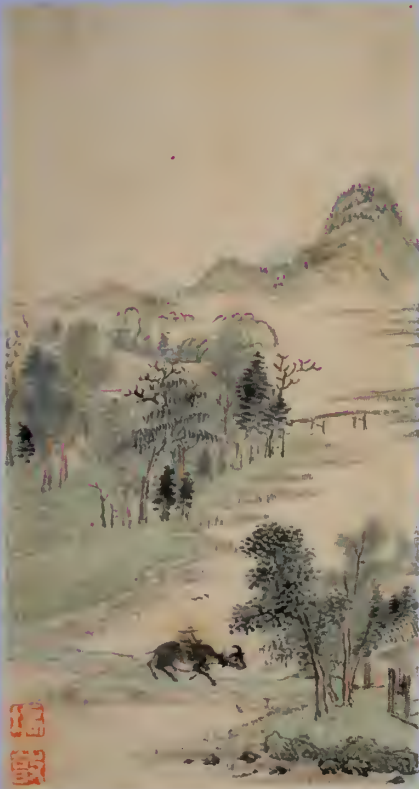


牡丹開蜀國盈尺豈如今妍麗色殊眾栽培
功倍深於珍傳萬里音寫費千金難託朱
淵費徒搖遠客心 壬辰孟春
藍欽先生與寶蓮天人將省返羨之行持此以贈



Huang Zhuoqun (1912-2002); inscription by Wu Guozhen (1903-84), *Peonies and Grasses*. 1952. Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Gift of the Honorable Karl Lott Rankin, Honorary Degree, 1960, and Pauline Jordan Rankin

LET'S GO ON A JOURNEY...



Look closely. Do you see someone familiar? Trace his path from the woods, back across the bridge, and into the mountains. Did you know that in China, scholars and monks often go to the mountains to think quietly about big questions? How about you? Name one thing you like to do in the mountains and why.

In the mountains, I like to _____

because _____

Above: Zhang Peidun (1772-1847), *Album of Landscapes*. Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Gift of William Bingham II from the Peterson Collection
Below: Jiao Bingzhen (1689-1726), attrib., *General Zhu Zhixi in His Garden*, 19th-early 20th c. Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Gift of William Bingham II from the Peterson Collection



The painting above is mounted as a handscroll. A handscroll can be very long and include several scenes that together tell a story. Did you know that handscrolls are always viewed from right to left? Tricky, huh! Here, the General Zhu is sending a servant girl on an errand. Find this painting in the exhibit. Begin at the right, look at the figures and describe what you see. Imagine what the General might want.

On the right, _____

In the middle, _____

On the left, _____

LOOK FOR SYMBOLS IN CHINESE PAINTINGS...



PEACHES are symbols of long-life and make good birthday gifts. Find this painting in the exhibit to see what is next to the peach tree.



PAIRED MANDARIN DUCKS stand for faithfulness so we see them at weddings. Is the colorful duck male or female? Why?

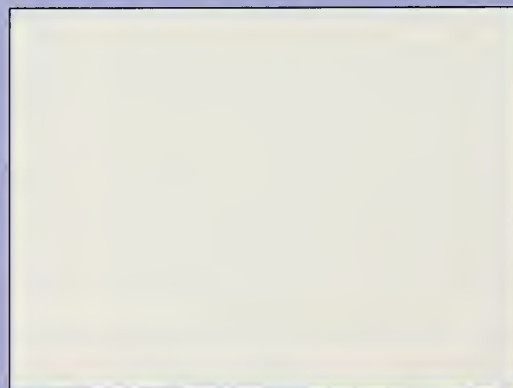


DRAGONS stand for strength and power. Is the dragon surrounded by water or clouds? Why?



LOTUS flowers represent purity. Although they grow in the mud, their blossoms remain unstained. Who sits on a lotus?

Create your own symbol here! What does it mean?

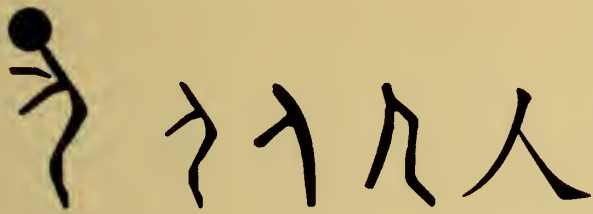


CHINESE WORDS ARE SYMBOLS, TOO

Chinese characters began as pictures. They looked like the meanings of the words. Slowly, they changed into how we see them today. Practice writing these Chinese characters! Can you find any of them in the exhibition?

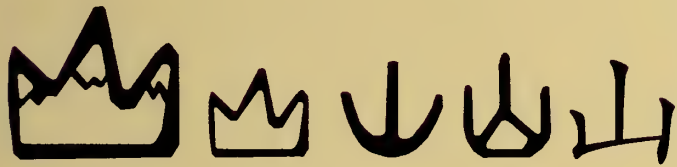
Person

Chinese: ren



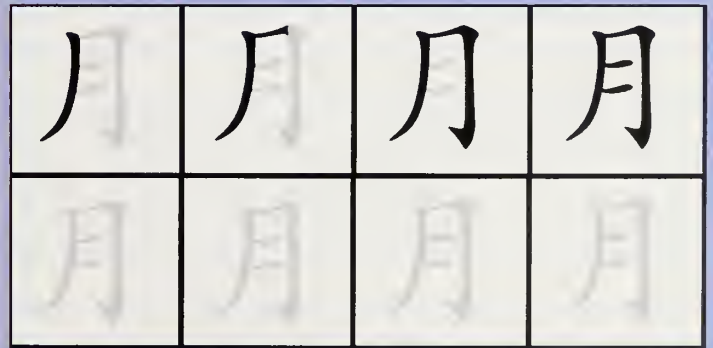
Mountain

Chinese: shan



Moon

Chinese: yue





Color these pictures when you get home.

Guanyin

Guanyin is a Buddhist goddess. Buddhism is a religion that aims for each person to reach enlightenment, or a sense of peace. Guanyin has many lucky symbols, such as fish and lotus flowers. Can you find them in this painting?

What are some of your lucky symbols?

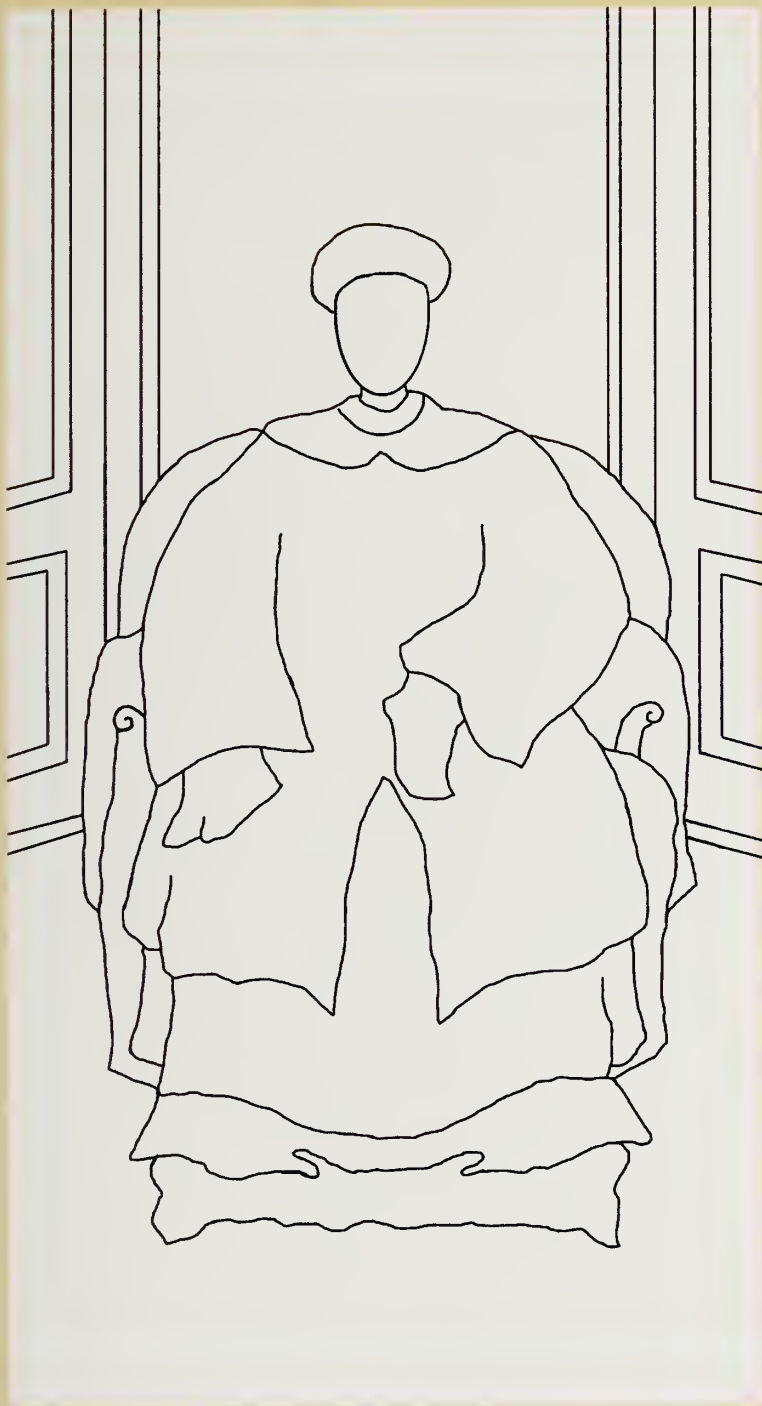


Ding Yunpeng (1547-ca. 1628), attrib., *Guanyin*, 19th-early 20th c. Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Gift of William Bingham II from the Peterson Collection

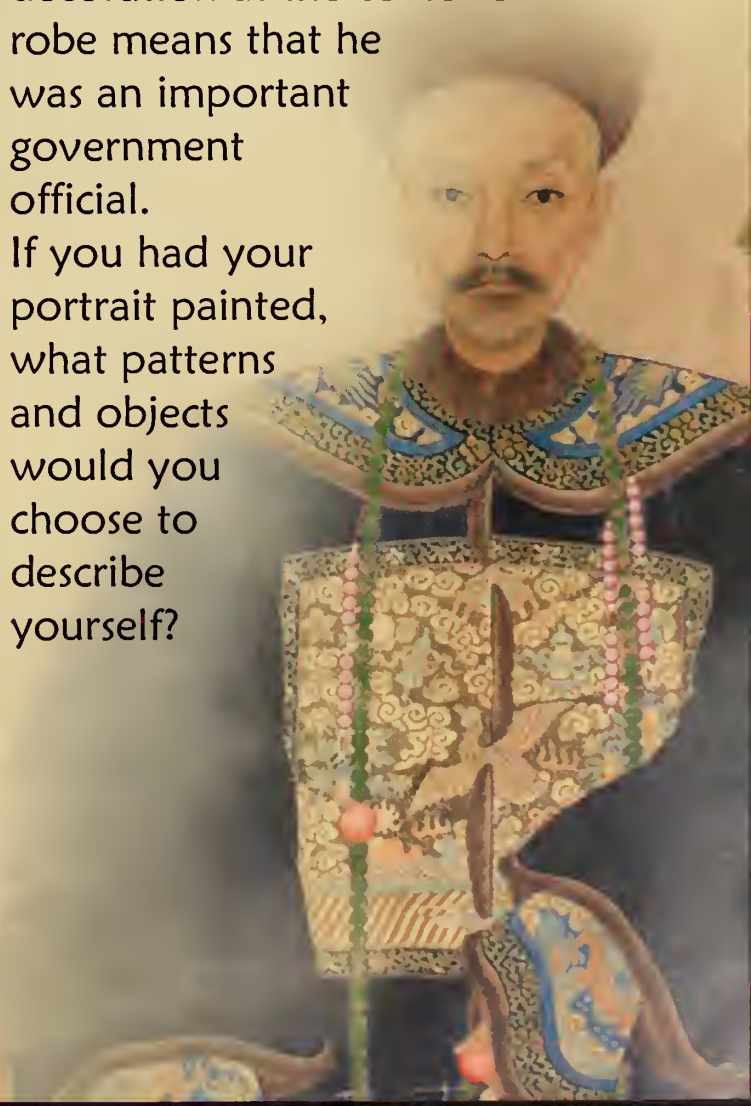
Portrait of a Manchu Official

This painting is called an ancestor portrait. The man's family would have cared for this painting because the man was a loved relative. His clothes and the objects in the room show what kind of person he was. For example, the decoration at the center of his robe means that he was an important government official.

If you had your portrait painted, what patterns and objects would you choose to describe yourself?



Anonymous, *Portrait of a Manchu Official*, 19th-early 20th c.
Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Bequest of Charles Potter Kling



Crossword

Across

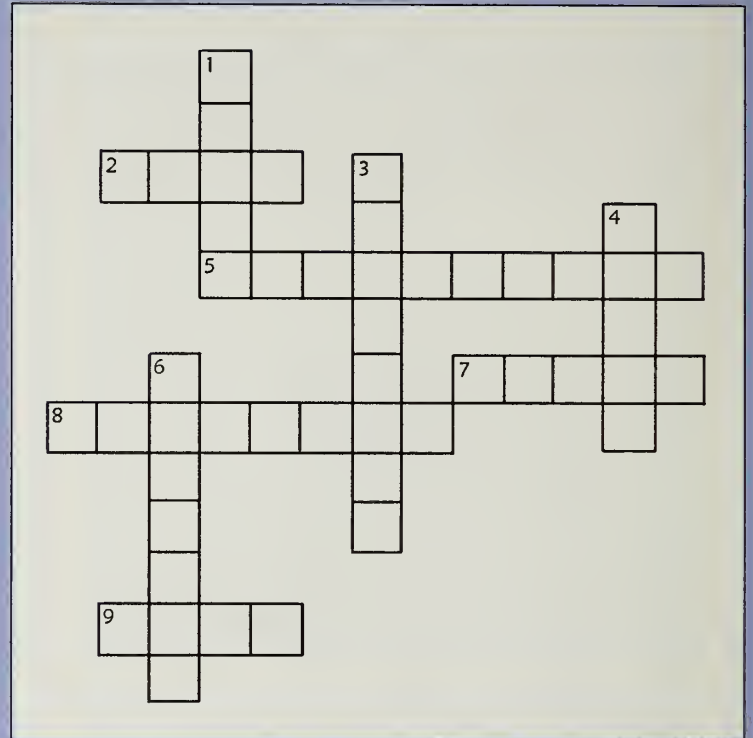
2. A symbol often stamped onto a painting in red; it represents the artist or owner

5. A long format painting that is rolled up and viewed from right to left

7. A water plant that grows in muddy waters and represents purity

8. Once a painting is finished it is placed in a _____

9. The type of fabric on which many Chinese paintings are done



Down

1. A fruit that represents long life

3. Mandarin ducks are often seen at these events

4. A series of paintings bound into a book form

6. A Buddhist goddess seen in this exhibition

Crossword answers: 1) peach 2) seal 3) weddings 4) album 5) handscroll 6) Guanyin 7) lotus 8) mounting 9) silk

When You Get Home:

Finish the activities in this guide and tell your family about your favorite painting.

Next Week:

Had fun? Visit the other half of Ink Tales at the Colby College Museum of Art, on view from January 22 - March 8, 2009.

Next Month: Read an interesting story about China. Here are a few to get you started:

Liang and the Magic Paintbrush by Hitz Demi

Beyond the Great Mountains: A Visual Poem about China by Ed Young

Voices of the Heart by Ed Young

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On the Cover: Jin Xiaqi (18th c), *Album of Miniature Sketches*. Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Gift of William Bingham II from the Peterson Collection



Bowdoin

Bowdoin College Museum of Art
www.bowdoin.edu/art-museum