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ABSTRACT

This teaching package describes the education and lifestyle of the Chinese literati, popular from the Ming to the Qing dynasties (1368-1911). It consists of four lesson plans and a teacher's guide to a slide set. The latter illustrates painting formats popular during the late Ming period (1573-1644), hanging scrolls, handscrolls, the album leaf, and the fan. The tools used to create these works are also on slides and their functions are described. The lesson plan section provides background information on Chinese literati education including: who was educated; the importance of education; the curriculum and teaching methods; and the lifestyles of the students when preparing for the civil service examinations. The curriculum consisted of five Chinese classics, four books that provided the moral rationale for an educated elite, and a set of personal values that at the same time justified the political system. One lesson describes the lifestyles of the literati after they passed the examination. Questions follow each lesson to help students discuss what they have read and to compare the Chinese literati education and lifestyle with their own. A 7-item bibliography, a resource list, and a glossary also are included. (KM)

LESSON PLAN

THE EDUCATION AND LIFESTYLE OF THE CHINESE LITERATI

This lesson plan was made possible by a grant from The Washington Post.

INTRODUCTION

In China anyone who wished to serve in the government had to pass a series of examinations. While such examinations took place before 1368, the structure was set during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) and continued until 1905, almost to the end of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911). These examinations were based on a prescribed collection of writings founded on Confucian thought and known collectively as the Confucian classics. Being learned in these classics also made one a member of an elite group of like-minded men who shared a body of knowledge that placed them at the top of Chinese society. This group was known as the literati. The literati were first and foremost Confucian scholars.

Confucius (551-479 B.C.) looked to China's past for models of human conduct. He believed that if all people, guided by mutual respect, followed proper human conduct as outlined in Confucius' five relationships (ruler and subject, father and son, teacher and student, husband and wife, friend and friend), then society would run smoothly. "Confucius believed profoundly that men of all social levels could learn, through knowledge of past examples and practice of ritual, to become humane and virtuous participants in a harmonious social hierarchy." (1) The person who studied the past had a

responsibility, through service to the ruler and by personal example, to teach and guide others. After Confucius' death his writings were collected into the Analects. These and other writings based on Confucian thought were compiled and became the basis for Chinese philosophical and political thought throughout Chinese history.

The ideal of the literati was a society of moral perfection, based on Confucian tenets, in which people would enjoy peace and prosperity without having to work very hard. In such a society, the literati, ever the elite, would devote all their time and energy to the pursuit of arts, including poetry, calligraphy, and painting, and to the enjoyment of great works of art from the past.

The preparation for attaining literati status was rigorous and highly structured. Once, however, success was achieved by passing one or more of a series of examinations, the door was opened to a life of possible government service, high social status, and the pursuit of aesthetic pleasure.

In this short unit we will look at the process by which young men were trained to become literati and thus prepared to join the elite. We will also examine the lifestyle these men enjoyed once they became literati. While much is not covered in this unit--Confucianism,

government in traditional China, how the literati fit into different historical periods in China--we will concentrate on the ideal literati life of the quiet pursuit of the arts and how one prepared to reach this goal.

1. Huntington, Madge. A Traveler's Guide to Chinese History (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1986), p. 25.

LESSON 1a

EDUCATION

In China education was given special emphasis, since it was through education that one could hope to achieve social status for oneself and for one's family. China was not ruled by an aristocracy but rather by officials who achieved their positions by passing civil service examinations. Because the eldest son did not automatically inherit his father's estate, the family inheritance was divided among all the sons in a family. It might not take many years before a family could, as a result of the division of property, fall on hard times. It was, therefore, necessary that sons study for and pass the examinations as a way to ensure the wealth and status of the family.

Education reinforced a veneration for learning in China. The course of curriculum was the Five Classics and the Four Books. (The Five Classics were: The Book of Changes, Book of History, Book of Poetry, Book of Rites, and the Spring and Autumn Annals; the Four Books were: The Great Learning, The Doctrine of the Mean, The Confucian Analects, and the Book of Mencius.) These supplied the moral rationale for an educated elite and provided a set of personal values that at the same time justified the political system. Scholarly commentaries

on the Confucian classics gave politically and philosophically accepted interpretations of the classics and helped define aspects of Confucianism as the state orthodoxy. Study of all these texts was essential to perpetuating the philosophy of Confucianism, which stressed traditional ethical and moral standards for people and society.

Only men were allowed to take the examinations, and women were rarely educated in the classics. Occasionally, however, an especially bright young woman favored by her father might be taught at home. Some women were also introduced to the classics as a means of preparing for a good marriage.

Learning was done by memorization. In affluent families all the sons might be taught, and often tutors were hired to teach them. Small schools were also set up to educate groups of young men. Private tutors and classroom teachers were often men who had studied for, but failed, the examinations. In some families one son might be chosen to study for the examination on the basis of his intellectual ability. A wealthy relative might pay for the education of a particularly bright young man or might even adopt him into his immediate family.

Below are two selections on the content and structure of the education process in China. The

first is a brief overview of what was studied, and the second is a father's exhortation to his grown sons who had not yet passed the examinations.

Selection 1

> Competition for a chance to take the civil service examinations began, if we may be allowed to exaggerate only a little, even before birth. On the back of many a woman's copper mirror the five-character formula "Five Sons Pass the Examinations" expressed her heart's desire to bear five successful sons. Girls, since they could not take the examinations and become officials but merely ran up dowry expenses, were no asset to a family; a man who had no sons was considered to be childless. People said that thieves warned each other not to enter a household with five or more girls because there would be nothing to steal in it. The luckless parents of girls hoped to make up for such misfortune in the generation of their grandchildren by sending their daughters into marriage equipped with those auspicious mirrors.
>
> Prenatal care began as soon as a woman was known to be pregnant. She had to be very careful then, because her conduct was thought to have an influence on the unborn child, and everything she did had to be right. She had to sit erect, with her seat and pillows arranged in exactly the proper way, to sleep without carelessly pillowing her head in her arm, to abstain from strange foods, and so on. She had to be careful to avoid unpleasant colors, and she spent her leisure listening to poetry and the classics being read aloud. These preparations were thought to lead to the birth of an unusually gifted boy. . . .
>
> It was thought best for a boy to start upon his studies as early as possible. From the very beginning he was instructed almost entirely in the classics, since mathematics could be left to merchants, while science and technology were relegated to the working class. A potential grand official must study the Four Books, the Five Classics, and other Confucian works, and,

further, he must know how to compose poems and write essays. For the most part, questions in civil service examinations did not go beyond these areas of competence.

When he was just a little more than three years old, a boy's education began at home, under the supervision of his mother or some other suitable person. Even at this early stage the child's home environment exerted a great effect upon his development. In cultivated families, where books were stacked high against the walls, the baby-sitter taught the boy his first characters while playing. As far as possible these were characters written with only a few strokes.

These twenty-five characters were taught first:

可 告 八 尔 七 化 孔 上
知 作 九 小 十 三 乙 大
礼 仁 子 生 士 千 己 人
也

Read vertically from right to left, these beginner's characters spelled out an encouraging verse:

Let us present our work to father.
Confucius himself
taught three thousand.
Seventy were capable gentlemen.
You young scholars,
eight or nine!
Work well to attain virtue,
and you will understand propriety.

First a character was written in outline with red ink on a single sheet of paper. Then the boy was made to fill it in with black ink. Finally he himself had to write each character. At this stage there was no special need for him to know the meanings of the characters.

After he had learned in this way to hold the brush and to write a number of characters, he usually started on the Primer of One Thousand Characters. . . . It consists of a total of two hundred and fifty lines, and since no character is repeated, it provided the student with a foundation of a thousand basic ideograms.

Upon completing the Primer, a very bright boy, who could memorize one thing after another without difficulty, would go on to a history text called . . . [The Beginner's Search] and then proceed to the Four Books and the Five Classics normally studied in school. . . .

Formal education began at about seven years of age. . . . Boys from families that could afford the expense were sent to a temple, village, communal, or private school staffed by former officials who had lost their positions, or by old scholars who had repeatedly failed the examinations as the years slipped by. Sons of rich men and powerful officials often were taught at home by a family tutor in an elegant small room located in a detached building, which stood in a courtyard planted with trees and shrubs, in order to create an atmosphere conducive to study.

A class usually consisted of eight or nine students. Instruction centered on the Four Books, beginning with the Analects, and the process of learning was almost entirely a matter of sheer memorization. With their books open before them, the students would parrot the teacher, phrase by phrase, as he read out of the text. Inattentive students, or those who amused themselves by playing with toys hidden in their sleeves, would be scolded by the teacher or hit on the palms and thighs with his fan-shaped "warning ruler." The high regard for discipline was reflected in the saying, "If education is not strict, it shows that the teacher is lazy."

Students who had learned how to read a passage would return to their seats and review what they had just been taught. After reciting it a hundred times, fifty times while looking at the book and fifty with the book face down, even the least gifted would have memorized it. At first the boys were given twenty to thirty characters a day, but as they became more experienced they memorized one, two, or several hundred each day. . . .

Along with the literary curriculum, the boys were taught proper conduct, such as when to use honorific terms, how to bow to superiors and to equals, and so forth. . . .

The heart of the curriculum was the classics. If we count the number of characters in the classics

that the boys were required to learn by heart, we get the following figures:

Analects	11,705
Mencius	34,685
Book of Changes	24,107
Book of History	25,700
Book of Poetry	39,234
Book of Rites	99,010
Spring and Autumn Annals	196,845

The total number of characters a student had to learn, then, was 431,286.

The Great Learning and the Doctrine of the Mean, which together with the Analects and the Mencius constitute the Four Books, are not counted separately, since they are included in the Book of Rites. And, of course, those were not 431,286 different characters: most of the ideographs would have been used many times in the several texts. Even so, the task of having to memorize textual material amounting to more than 400,000 characters is enough to make one reel. They required exactly six years of memorizing, at the rate of two hundred characters a day.

After the students had memorized a book, they read commentaries, which often were several times the length of the original text, and practiced answering questions involving passages selected as examination topics. On top of all this, other classical, historical, and literary works had to be scanned, and some literary works had to be examined carefully, since the students were required to write poems and essays modeled upon them. Anyone not very vigorous mentally might well become sick of it all halfway through the course.

Excerpted from Chapter 1, "Preparing for the Examinations" in Ichisada Miyazaki, China's Examination Hell. See bibliography for full citation.

Selection 2

Feng Mengzhen's instructions to his sons:

> Never believe in the saying that if you don't study today, there will be tomorrow. . . .
>
> Your father [Feng Mengzhen] is forty-eight years old this year, and in no time he will be fifty. My ambition for an official career may have declined, yet my longing to escape to "the mist and the cloud" . . . has been stronger than ever. Even if I should live to old age, I cannot possibly stay forever to teach you and to work for you like horse and buffalo. You will be sorry if you don't resolve to establish yourselves by your own efforts. Now make these pledges to me:
>
> You will get up early every day, never later than the hour of sunrise. Except for lectures, discussions, and the three meals, you will not go to see your teacher or friends and disturb each other. While I don't think the marital love of young people should be discontinued, it can be regulated by a departure in the morning and a return between 9 and 10 p.m. Periodically you shall sleep in the library; nor should you pay too many visits and waste time.
>
> Shangu used to say that a scholar would wither away if for more than three days he was not "watered" by ancient writings. Granted your most urgent need is . . . [a period style, eight-legged essay required for civil examinations], you should be able to memorize two hundred words each day from such books as [famous literary works].
>
> Now a chart of daily assignments will be on hand. You will fill out the chart each day with the amount of work accomplished--number of essays composed, paragraphs of the classics comprehended, pages of [literary classics] read and studied. A reason must be given for any incomplete assignment, which is to be made up the next day.

Daily Assignments:

1. Reading: the Four Books (10 lines), the Classics (10 lines), . . . annotations on the Classics (10 lines), examination paper by successful candidates (half an essay), [eight-legged essays] . . . (20 essays).

2. Assignments from the Four Books and the Classics shall be copied word by word in regular script and recited from memory the next day.

3. Additional assignment for memorizing the examination paper.

4. Composition: one [eight-legged essay] is due every third, sixth, and ninth day in a ten-day week.

5. Any failure in memorizing or unacceptable work in composition is punishable by whipping (five rods).

6. Every five days a family visit is allowed to inquire about the health of your mother. You may stay in your own bedrooms that night. On other nights, any place outside the library quarter is off limits.

Excerpted from Chapter 3, "Late Ming Literati: Their Social and Cultural Ambience" by Wai-Kam Ho in The Chinese Scholar's Studio: Artistic Life in the Late Ming Period, eds., Chu-tsing Li, et. al. See bibliography for full citation.

Lesson 1b: To the Teacher

Below is a lesson based on the material handed out to your students on the education of the literati. It may be used as it appears, or you may build upon and change it to match your own teaching methods and interests.

Preparation:

Give the students the handout on "Education" and ask them to read it for the next class period.

In preparation for a discussion on education in traditional China, you might want to explore your own students' concepts of what it means to be educated. Below are possible questions to help the discussion:

1. What is your definition of education?

2. Is being literate the same as being educated?

3. What is your definition of literate?

4. If you accept that one form of education occurs through schooling, is there a certain body of knowledge that should be taught to everyone? If so, what do you think it is?

5. Should this body of knowledge be taught from a standard curriculum?

6. If not, how could someone be tested for this knowledge? Would it be possible to give standardized tests (i.e. SAT's)?

7. What are some of the objectives of standardized tests?

Education of the Literati

1. Who were educated in traditional China?

2. What resources or types of books were studied?

3. What methods were used to learn this material?

4. What do you think was being learned?

5. To whom did the students feel responsible for their studies?

6. What were the goals of the student? Of his family?

7. What was the relationship between sons and parents?

8. Status was gained by passing the civil examinations and therefore being able to serve as a government official; official positions could not be inherited. What effect did this have on families wishing to maintain their status? What effect would this have on families wishing to attain wealth and status?

9. How would you define the "elite" of China?

10. Why would someone trained in literature, philosophy, and proper conduct be considered the best person to serve in the government? Do you think there should be special training for a government official?

11. What kind of life outside government service do you think those who had been educated in the Confucian classics might have? What, beyond government service, were they trained for?

LESSON 2a

LIFESTYLE OF THE LITERATI

A young man was held to a strict schedule during his schooling; once he passed a series of examinations, he was eligible to serve in the government. He might, however, choose not to serve or to retire early to pursue the arts and a life as a man of letters. Such a person became a member of the literati, a class of learned scholars who had the ability and qualifications to serve the court but chose to live a quiet life that was filled with poetry, painting, and calligraphy, and with gatherings with like-minded friends. The literati also celebrated antiquity. In their poetry, painting, and calligraphy, they made subtle references to past literary and artistic styles. Only literati of equal social status and education could understand these references and fully appreciate their cleverness and ingenuity.

Artistic companionships were extremely important to this group. They met at either impromptu, informal affairs that included only a few close friends or at much larger events, usually staged in rural, scenic settings where they might celebrate a festival, birthday, or holiday. They listened to and played

music, composed poetry, and painted. Their paintings, frequently accompanied by complementary inscriptions, were often exchanged as tokens of friendship or as mementoes of the occasion.

The Confucian scholar's desire to escape to nature and the companionship of friends balanced his moral responsibility to serve his nation.

Feng Mengzhen, who described the daily assignments for his sons that you read earlier, also wrote out assignments for himself, as listed below:

A list of Feng Mengzhen's assignments:

1. Domestic routines, five items: educating the sons and playing with the grandchildren; leisurely conversing with the old ladies; entertaining the young concubines; meeting with visitors; taking food and drink as they are desired, well prepared but not extravagant.

2. Studio routines, thirteen items: spreading out the books for browsing for my own pleasure; burning incense; making tea and sampling the spring water; playing the qin [zither]; meditating; copying or imitating model calligraphy; contemplating a painting; "playing with the brush and ink" [writing]; observing the fish swimming in the pond; listening to the birds; studying the flowers and trees; deciphering odd scripts; enjoying wrinkled rocks.

3. Once every few days, four items: visiting scenic spots for [the pleasures from] mountains and waters; visiting monks and old friends; searching for flowers when in bloom; seeing mother-in-law, inquiring about her health.

4. At least once a month, one item: inspecting the ancestral tombs in Fancun and Hupao.

5. At least once every half year, four items:

make sacrifice at my wife's grave; fulfill any social obligations in hometown; visit the tombs in Jiaxing; purchase rare books, old works of calligraphy, and paintings.

6. The three items to be completed before reaching the age of fifty: visit Tiantai, Yantang, and other famous mountains; buy a villa by the lake; locate a site in the mountains as a final retreat.

Excerpted from Chapter 4, "The Literati Life" by Chu-tsing Li, in The Chinese Scholar's Studio: Artistic Life in the Late Ming Period, eds. Chu-tsing Li et al. See bibliography for full citation.

Lesson 2b: To the Teacher

Preparation:

The material and the questicns in this lesson have been designed to follow the materials given in Lesson 1a, b. Give the students the handout on the "Lifestyle of the Literati" to read for the next class period.

Questions:

1. Who were the Chinese literati?

2. After reading Feng Mengzhen's assignments for himself, what would you say were the subjects in which he was most interested?

3. What subjects did Feng Mengzhen think were most important for his sons?

4. How had Feng Mengzhen been trained for his lifestyle when he wrote out the assignments for himself?

5. While the assignments he gave himself are enjoyable, Feng Mengzhen still called them assignments. Does this imply that an educated person had responsibilities? If so, what did they include?

6. The education of the literati was quite rigorous, but after successful completion of the examinations their lives could be quite enjoyable. How does this compare to your ideas about your education and what it is preparing you for?

TEACHER'S GUIDE TO THE SLIDES

This teacher's guide was made possible by a grant from The Washington Post.

TEACHER'S GUIDE TO THE SLIDES

The enclosed slides were selected to illustrate a number of the painting formats used in the late Ming period (1573-1644): the hanging scroll, the handscroll, the album leaf, and the fan. The tools used to create these works have also been illustrated.

This guide is arranged to aid the teacher in presenting the slides in the classroom and to facilitate student participation in class discussion.

The information for each slide is organized in the following manner:

1. IDENTIFICATION
   Title of painting, artist, type of object, dynasty and date.

2. DESCRIPTION
   Information about the subject matter of the painting.

3. FUNCTION
   Information about the object on which the painting is found.

4. DISCUSSION
   Suggested questions. (Marked with an asterisk are those questions for which a possible answer is provided on a separate page at the end of this guide)

What comes to mind when you think of a scholar?

We are going to explore the world of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Chinese scholar through examples of his artistic production.

1.

Scholar Taking His Ease
Anonymous, handscroll,
Ming (15th-16th c.)
Freer Gallery of Art, 11.232

The lifestyle of the literati was often one of quiet luxury, as is seen in this depiction of a man in the midst of nature (his garden) with all the comforts of home. His couch has been moved outdoors, and a large screen depicting a landscape has been set up behind it. The actual landscape appears behind the servant who fans his master. The scholar is surrounded by many things that add to his enjoyment: a musical instrument, wine cups and an antique wine jar, a pile of handscrolls, and a miniature mountain landscape.

FUNCTION:

A handscroll is a horizontal painting of varying length. Not meant to be seen all at once, it is unrolled gradually and viewed from right to left in about eighteen-inch segments. The viewer's right hand rolls up the part already seen while the left hand unrolls the next section. Handscrolls are viewed at arm's length, or more typically, are placed on a table. Since handscrolls are rolled up most of the time, and thus protected from the ravages of light and atmosphere, a great many have survived for hundreds of years.

DISCUSSION:

- What does the scene tell us about the economic status of this scholar?

- Why do you think the scholar went out-of-doors?
  How might he define "out-of-doors"?
  How do you define "out-of-doors"?

- If the scholar wished to enjoy the out-of-doors, why did he bring along the comforts of home? In our culture, what might someone do who wished to enjoy the out-of-doors without giving up indoor amenities? *

- The Chinese scholar considered nature, in the form of his garden, to be an integral part of his home. In what ways do you bring nature into your home? *

2.

Man in a Boat with a Vase of Flowers
Chen Hongshou, album leaf,
Late Ming - early Qing, (17th c.)
Freer Gallery of Art, 61.106

In their attempt to be close to the creative forces of nature, the literati enjoyed getting out into the countryside. The scholar sometimes played the role of the fisherman without actually fishing, as is evident here. Fishing was considered a noble occupation because fishermen were self-sufficient and therefore could not be corrupted. Here, a man in a boat does not fish, but rather contemplates a plum blossom branch in a vase. The act of being within nature while looking at a flower plucked out of its environment points to a scholar's ability to consider nature in an artificial context as well as in a natural setting. Flowers in Chinese paintings often have underlying meanings. Here, the plum blossom symbolizes purity and the ability to weather adversity.

FUNCTION:

Album leaves are similar to pages in a book. Often an album comprises a set of leaves--perhaps twelve or eighteen--which are kept in a special box made for the album. The leaves, brought out for display a few at a time, may be viewed by an individual or by a group of friends.

DISCUSSION:

- What do you think the man in the boat is doing?
- Why might he be looking at the vase that holds a plum blossom branch?
- What do specific flowers and plants symbolize for you? Do they symbolize events? feelings? characteristics?
- In America, what did the sign "Gone Fishing" on a closed shop door mean?

3.

<u>Pine-shaded Pavilion</u> (detail)
Anonymous, hanging scroll,
Ming, (16th c.)
Freer Gallery of Art, 18.5

A pavilion of this sort, in addition to the studio, provided scholars with a quiet retreat in the midst of nature. These surroundings were thought to inspire the creation of works of artistic and/or literary merit. A scholar might bring his friends to such a place to chant poetry, to play musical instruments, or to discuss philosophy.

FUNCTION: See following entry.

DISCUSSION:

- What is happening in this painting?
- Do you think this is the depiction of a single moment, or of a longer period of time? Why?
- What sort of atmosphere has the artist evoked?
- What is nature's role in this painting?

4.

<u>Pine-shaded Pavilion</u>
Anonymous, hanging scroll,
Ming, (16th c.)
Freer Gallery of Art, 18.5

Here is the entire composition of which the previous slide is merely a small part. The importance of nature is underscored by the relative size of the human beings in the landscape. Chinese literati considered humanity an integral part of the creative forces of nature. The scholar's idea of nature, as seen in his painting, was idealized. A hanging scroll takes the viewer into the "landscape," reading the painting from bottom to top.

FUNCTION:

Hanging scrolls such as this provided the viewer with the opportunity to take an imaginary walk in the mountains. An old scholar, too weak to venture outside his studio, might take many such "walks" via the landscape paintings with which he surrounded himself. Hanging scrolls were often hung according to the season or for a special festival. For example, snow scenes might be hung in winter, or highly prized scrolls might be hung in anticipation of a special guest.

DISCUSSION:

- What do you think is the main subject of this hanging scroll?
- What is the first thing you see when you look at the painting? Where do your eyes travel? Where i. the pavilion?
- Why is the pavilion so small, even though it is in the foreground?
- What do you think is the relationship between man and nature in this work?
- Do you think the scholar who painted this scroll was depicting an actual view? Do you think that this is a real scene? Why? Why not?

5.

Maiden in Bamboo Grove
Anonymous, fan,
Qing, (17th c.)
Freer Gallery of Art, 75.16

Chinese scholars intermingled poetry and painting in single works. It is especially evident in this fan, which shows in a single composition both forms of artistic expression. Often scholars collaborated on a work--one created the painting, another the poem. The central subject of this painting is a woman. Women who had studied the classics and the scholarly arts of calligraphy and painting were accepted within the literary circle, where they might write and paint as well as recite poetry or play music.

FUNCTION:

In addition to creating a breeze in hot weather, fans were used to emphasize points in conversation, and even, by the painted subject matter, to convey messages. The shape of the fan lent itself to lyrical landscape compositions as well as to flower and bird paintings. This fan, with its charming scene and its lyrical poem, tells a sad tale.

The poem reads:

In a bamboo grove a maiden finds her solitary heart,
Memories of a fragrant face once smiling.
Now she is dishevelled with the grief of sleeping alone.
Before their hearts could reach fullness,
Unexpected joy had lost its companion.
She stands alone, beautiful but cast down,
From ancient time, the face of beauty has had a harsh fate.

DISCUSSION:

- What in our culture combines the written word with drawing? *
- Can you think of any art works in the West that are routinely the work of more than one person? *
- If you cannot think of examples of collaborative art in European or American circles, why do you think this is the case?
- How would you feel if a friend wrote on a picture which you had painted for him?

6.

Painting Equipment and Supplies:
water dropper, box for seal ink, ink stick, seal, paper, brushes, inkstone.

The creation of poetry and paintings was of primary importance to the Chinese scholar, seen by the value he placed on the materials necessary for these endeavors. Items central to these activities were called the Four Treasures or "the four gems of the study." The Four Treasures are the brush, the ink, the inkstone, and the paper. In this slide are additional objects useful in the production of painting and calligraphy, yet the Four Treasures were especially venerated by generations of Chinese scholars. The workmanship and material were often of the highest quality, making the tools themselves precious works of art. The scholars collected and used antique painting equipment as well as fine contemporary pieces.

FUNCTION:

A small amount of water is placed on the inkstone, which must be extremely smooth and have a small "well" at one end. The ink stick, made of pine soot mixed with glue made from carp skins, deer horns, or horse, ox, or donkey hide, is then ground on the inkstone until the desired consistency of ink is achieved. The brush, which is the chief tool of calligraphy and painting, is

made of rabbit fur, mongoose or wolf hair, or many other natural animal fibers, even at times mouse whiskers. Made of layers of hair of different lengths, the brush tip comes to a point, making it a versatile instrument. The brush is dipped in the ink and then applied to the specially selected paper. Paper was usually made of hemp fiber, mulberry bark, or bamboo pulp.

DISCUSSION:

- What does the word "treasure" mean to you?
- Why were the tools of calligraphy called the Four Treasures?
- Can you think of any present-day American professional tools that are similarly regarded? *
- What tools do modern painters use?
- It is obvious that using the "treasures" required skill and much patience. What might be the result of the painter's long preparation time? *

FURTHER DISCUSSION:

- As we have learned, fishing was considered a noble occupation because a fisherman was thought to be impervious to corruption. What occupations in the West are (or have been!) considered beyond corruption?

- The Chinese painter produced his own impression of a scene, based on memory. How does this "impressionism" differ from the nineteenth-century French Impressionism?

ANSWER GUIDES

Slide #1:
* If the scholar wished to enjoy the out-of-doors, why did he bring along the comforts of home? In our culture, what would a similarly inclined person do?

ANS: Go camping in a fully equipped RV.

* In what ways do you bring nature into your home?

ANS: Potted plants; a terrarium; flower arrangements; enclosed porches.

Slide #5:

* What in our culture combines the written word with drawing?

ANS: Editorial cartoons or comic strips.

* Can you think of what art works in the West are routinely the work of more than one person?

ANS: A painting in an elaborate frame; a book; movies; architecture; a tapestry; a quilt.

Slide #6:

* Can you think of any present-day American professional tools that are similarly regarded?

ANS: A musician's instrument, such as a violin.

* It is obvious that using the "treasures" required skill and much patience. Can you think of a positive effect of this long preparation time?

ANS: Time to focus; to get into the appropriate mind-set.

GLOSSARY

This glossary was made possible by a grant from The Washington Post.

GLOSSARY

ALBUM:
Collection of paintings, calligraphy, poems, or letters, with a wood or brocade cover, usually consisting of twelve pages (generally no more than eighteen inches in height or width).

BAMBOO:
The bamboo is frequently used as a decorative motif in Chinese art. It is the symbol of the true gentleman, flexible yet strong. Grown in many parts of China, the bamboo plant has multiple uses: medicinal, culinary (bamboo shoots), functional (housing, fencing), and decorative (bamboo carvings).

BRONZE:
A metal alloy made chiefly of copper and tin.

BRUSH:
The handle of a Chinese brush might be made of a variety of materials (bamboo, ivory, jade, cloisonné enamel), but the tip of the brush was composed of graded hairs and bristles ranging widely from the animal kingdom (rabbit, hare, badger, weasel, wolf, deer, horse, goat, pig, even mouse whiskers).

CALLIGRAPHY:
Chinese calligraphy is fine writing done with a brush.

CHARACTER:
Each Chinese character represents a thing or an idea. Sometimes, one character can be a word; sometimes, two characters make up a word. All together, there may be as many as 49,000 characters, and many more words. No person can possibly know all the characters. Even a well-educated Chinese scholar might know only as many as 6,000 characters.

CLASSICS:
The Classics refer to a clearly specified set of books associated with the dominant Confucian tradition. The earliest classics are The Five Classics, dating from the second century B.C.

Book of Songs (also known as the Book of Poetry) - a collection of over 300 poems.

Classic of Documents (also known as the Book of History)

- containing semi-historical documents and speeches.

Spring and Autumn Annals - a history of the major events at the court of the state of Lu, Confucius' birthplace, between 722-481 B.C.

Book of Rites (also known as the Record of Rites) - a description of rites and rituals.

Book of Changes - a manual of divination using the eight trigrams and sixty-four hexagrams.

COLOPHON:
On a Chinese scroll this refers to writing, either in prose or verse form, often including the artist's name, date, and his seals.

CONFUCIANISM:
A political and ethical system based on the teachings of Confucius.

CRANE:
The bird is a common symbol of longevity. It is believed to be the patriarch of the bird kingdom and the favored mode of transport for immortal beings.

DRAGON:
A benevolent and auspicious creature associated with rain and clouds. In the decorative arts, the dragon became an emblem of the emperor.

FILIAL PIETY:
A Confucian virtue; to show respect towards one's parents and ancestors.

FOUR TREASURES:
Ink, paper, brush, and inkstone.

INK STICK/CAKE:
Pine soot was combined with glue and molded into sticks or cakes. When an ink stick or cake was ground on an inkstone and water added, the result was a liquid ink.

INKSTONE:
A flat, smooth stone with a well for water at one end; used for grinding the ink stick or cake.

JADE:
The Chinese word for jade is used to indicate any precious or beautiful stone. The western definition refers to two minerals, nephrite and jadeite.

LACQUER:
An extremely hard, waterproof varnish made from the sap of the lacquer tree (Rhus vernicifera). The sap is extracted from cuttings in the bark of the tree, then strained and heated to reduce the volume of liquid. Since lacquer can be applied to the surfaces of many materials and coats of lacquer can be built up, the resulting lacquer object was highly resistant to dampness and heat. Therefore, lacquer objects were prized by the wealthy elite for their durability and beauty.

LITERATUS (plural, literati):
A highly educated man who was especially knowledgeable in literature.

PEACH:
A symbol of longevity.

PEONY:
An emblem of love and affection, and a symbol of feminine beauty. One of the flowers representing the four seasons, the peony is a sign of spring.

PHOENIX:
A supernatural bird symbolizing beauty. The phoenix was used as a decorative motif in the ceremonial costumes of the Chinese empresses.

PINE TREE:
A symbol of age and constancy between friends.

PLUM:
A symbol of longevity since its flowers will bloom on withered branches. One of the flowers representing the four seasons, the plum is associated with the winter, since the plum blossoms will bloom even when there is still snow.

QIN: (Pronounced "chin")
Chinese zither.

SEAL:
A chop or "stamp" with either a scholar's name or a short poetic reference carved or engraved in it. When the bottom of a seal is covered with red paste, and the seal is placed firmly on a scroll and then lifted, an impression of the name is produced on the scroll.

RESOURCE LIST

This resource list was made possible by a grant from The Washington Post.

RESOURCE LIST

The following organizations in the Washington area offer a variety of programs on China. Many programs are free; others require a fee. Some of the organizations will even place your name on their mailing list free of charge. For more information, please call the number listed for each entry.

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 1050 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20560 357-4886

The newest museum of Asian Art at the Smithsonian, the Sackler Gallery offers a variety of programs ranging from school and public tours to lectures, films, and specialized seminars and workshops. (No Charge)

Smithsonian Resident Associate Program, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 357-3030

The Smithsonian Resident Associate Program offers many lectures and courses on Asia throughout the year. (Fee)

Washington Center of the Asia Society, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 387-6500

The Washington Center of the Asia Society presents programs on the economics, politics, and arts of Asia. For the art enthusiast, there is the very popular "Arts at the Embassies" lecture series held at the different Asian embassies, often with a wine reception. (Fee)

SAIS China Forum, School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, (1740 Massachusetts Avenue), Washington, D.C. 663-5812

SAIS China Forum offers a series of lectures on China, focusing primarily on Chinese domestic and foreign policies, often given by distinguished scholars, officials, or experts. (No Charge)

Asia Programs, The Woodrow Wilson International Scholar Center, 1000 Jefferson Drive, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20560 357-1937

The Wilson Center sponsors lectures on the society, culture, politics, and economics of various Asian nations, often by

distinguished scholars, officials, or experts. (No Charge)

The Asian American Forum, Guy Mason Center, 3600 Calvert Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 244-8230 or 363-9325

The Asian American Forum sponsors lectures and panel discussions on Asia at the Guy Mason Center. (No Charge)

National Geographic Society, 1600 M Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20036 857-7700 or 857-7133

The National Geographic Society often presents a film or lecture series on various Asian countries. (Fee)
Tuesday noon programming often focuses on Asia. (No Charge)

The American Film Institute, Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C. 785-4601

AFI often presents films from Asian countries, often focusing on a series from a particular country (such as their latest Taiwan Stories: More Films From the Newest Wave). (Fee)

U.S.-China People's Friendship Association, 463-6199

The U.S.-China People's Friendship Association sponsors a variety of lectures on China. (No Charge)

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ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY
TEACHER'S PACKET
EVALUATION

So that we can improve the standard of workshops we offer, we ask that you fill in this evaluation form and mail it back to us. Your comments will be used in our planning for future teacher's packets. Please circle the answer that best reflects your response to the following questions. If you have any additional comments, please write them below.

Did you find the packet

too long too short just right

How useful did you find the information provided on the education and lifestyle of the literati?

very useful useful not useful

How useful did you find the information provided in the teacher's guide to the slides?

very useful useful not useful

How useful was the script for a guided tour through the exhibition?

very useful useful not useful

How useful was the bibliography?

very useful useful not useful

How useful was the resource list?

very useful useful not useful

Overall, how would you rate the teacher's packet?

excellent good fair poor

What other topics would you have included in this teacher's packet?