

# China

## *In the Ch'ing Dynasty.*



LAO-TZU BLESSING  
A WATER BUFFALO  
(BRONZE)

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CROSS STITCH EMBROIDERY



SHADOW PUPPET



COURT  
FAN

THE China known best to that small group of Westerners who proudly called themselves "old China hands" is recreated in a new exhibition hall opening at Chicago Natural History Museum on January 30.

From an unsurpassed collection of 17th to 20th century Chinese materials, Dr. Kenneth Starr, Curator of Asiatic Archaeology and Ethnology, has selected the finest for display in the new hall. Through these objects, the visitor will gain a rare glimpse of life as it was in the Peking area under the last Emperors of Old China.

About half of the more than thirty individual exhibit screens within the hall evoke the everyday life of the well-to-do. Here are handsome household furnishings; luxurious clothing, jewelry, and personal accessories; money and other appurtenances of commerce and finance; altar vessels, paintings, and statues representative of religious ceremony and worship; and the games and musical instruments that enliven leisure.

Folk arts are represented by embroidered bed curtains and children's clothing, cross-stitch "samplers," and intricate paper crafts. These are in contrast to the splendor of imperial court costumes and temple robes. Fine arts include exquisite tapestries, paintings, and figures of ivory, jade, bronze, stone, or cloisonne.

An exhibit tracing the development of the art of calligraphy displays an example older than the first millenium before Christ. The subjects that Chinese scholars thought worthy of study are represented in an assemblage of books produced both by the traditional wood-block technique and by such modern methods as lithography and movable type.

Still another refinement of Chinese intellectual life—the religious and pop-



644—1911



PEWTER  
ALTAR  
VESSELS

ular theater—is recreated through grotesquely masked and costumed figures and puppets. A scene from a religious drama depicting the torments of hell dominates the theatrical section of the hall.

**M**OST of the remains of life as it was in Old China—the objects of its material culture—have been destroyed or lost during the past half-century of Chinese history. Collections of the size and quality represented in the Museum's new hall probably can never—even in China—be reassembled again.

These materials represent the end of a historical succession of imperial dynasties that began in the third century before Christ, when all of China was consolidated under one head, and ended forever with the dethronement of the last Manchu emperor in 1911. During the long centuries between, China provided the major cultural focus for all of eastern Asia, including Japan and Korea, the northern and central Asiatic continent, Tibet, and much of Indochina.

It is the period of the last dynasty (the Ch'ing, or Manchu) which has been nostalgically remembered by the sea captains, soldiers, generals, missionaries, traders, and commercial entrepreneurs of the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries who became known as "old China hands."

Their China—a country of pigtails, fans, and trousered women; of scholarship, quiet courtyards, and elaborate ceremony; of street circuses, bridal processions, and Buddhist festivals—is evoked once again in the objects that visitors will see in the new exhibition.



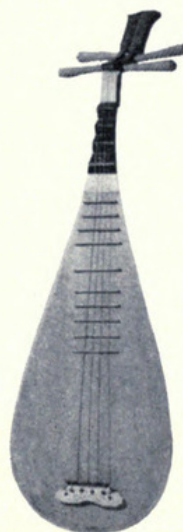
HAND PUPPETS



COINS

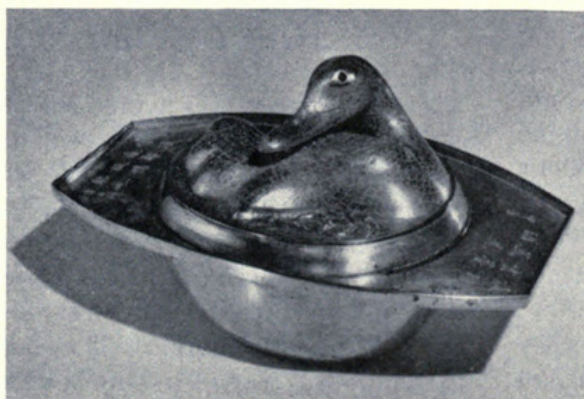


FLAGEOLET



GUITAR

DRAGON KING, LUNG WANG  
(BRONZE)



PEWTER DISH

(P.R.N.)





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