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# Ancient Symbols

What is the longest sculpture in the world? It is an enormous work of art that is 25 feet high and more than 1500 miles long. One answer is the structure you see below and on the cover. The Great Wall of China was built to be functional, but it could also be considered one of the world's greatest sculptures.

The famous images on these two pages tell us a great deal about China. The Great Wall shows us that the Chinese placed a high value on keeping out invaders, a reminder that China has the world's longest continuous civilization in one area. The Han horse (right) shows that in Chinese art, the goal is to convey an object's essence, rather than to imitate "real life." Much of Chinese art is stylized, emphasizing some features, leaving out others.

These works come out of a nation whose earliest recorded history began in 1300 B.C. At that time, China was largely made up of peasants who were ruled by competing warlords. In those early years, the Greeks and Romans also were scattered peasant peoples, although the ancient Egyptians had been a united nation for two thousand years.

From 1300 B.C. to about 200 B.C., major changes occurred in the rest of the world. The Egyptians declined while the Greeks and then the Romans rose to world power. In 221 B.C., China also became a united nation, under the rule of the first emperor, Shih Huang Ti.

Shih was a cruel dictator. He ordered the Great Wall built to protect China from invaders, although many thousands of workers died in the process. However, Shih did unify

China under the Chin dynasty. (A dynasty is a family that passes leadership on through the generations.) After Shih's death, the Chinese people rebelled and founded the Han dynasty, which brought prosperity and cultural growth to China for 400 years (206 B.C.-A.D. 200).

In other parts of the world during the first two centuries A.D., the Roman Empire flourished and Christianity was established. Europeans knew of China's wonderful products—silk, porcelain, and other goods—which were far superior to anything made in Europe.

The next important dynasties were Tang (618-906) and Sung (960-1279), which corresponded to the Middle Ages in Europe. Under

the Tang, printing was developed; under the Sung, the Chinese invented gunpowder.

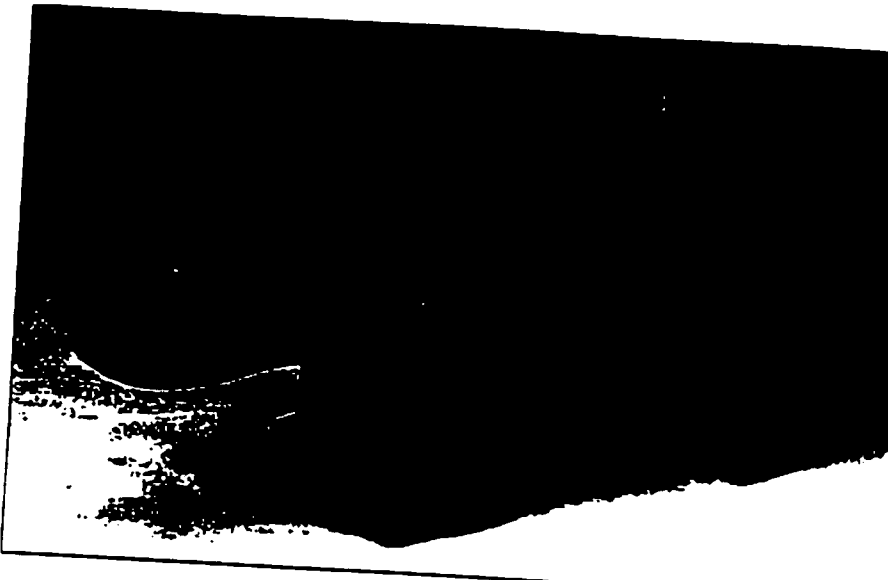
Over the next 700 years, three more dynasties ruled China. During this time, the Portuguese opened up trade with China. In 1620, the Pilgrims landed in what is now America. In 1911, the last emperor was overthrown and China established its first republic.

Unlike most other cultures, the Chinese have maintained their land and ways for centuries. Looking at Chinese art means learning to see changes within this long continuity.

# Modern Meanings

# Harmony with Nature

Animals have always been a favorite subject of Chinese sculptors. These two were created during the Shang Dynasty (15th-12th centuries B.C.) and the Chou Dynasty (12th-3rd centuries B.C.). Historians today believe that these bronze animal sculptures were used in religious rituals to reinforce humans' relationship with the natural world. Sculptures were placed in tombs to give the dead person some of the animal's qualities—the elephant's strength; the lion's courage; the bird's soaring ability. These stylized sculptures often took the form of real animals—birds, cats, tigers, owls—and were covered with an intricate pattern of raised marks and symbols.



Some of these surface designs were based on nature, like the shapes suggesting feathers on the owl or the stripe marks on the tiger. Other designs were symbolic, like the *lei-wan*, or "thunder spirals"—curving spiral patterns representing thunderclouds—featured on the body of the owl. As with most Chinese art, the figures have been stylized—some features have been exaggerated, some simplified, some left out completely, drawing our attention to the shape of the work rather than to its realistic content. In the same way, the intricate, layered patterns of designs emphasize the essence of each creature—the tiger's power, stealth, and strength; the owl's great curious eyes. In these works, the human, animal, and spirit worlds are all part of one another. The design and decoration have a religious significance, expressing the Chinese view of the universe.

After the Shang passed from power, they were succeeded by the Chou dynasty. This was known as the classical period in Chinese history. Confucius and Lao-Tzu (Lao-DZU), two major Chinese philosophers and religious leaders, were part of this time. Confucius (551-479 B.C.) believed that peo-

ple were naturally good, and that if they were given the right rules to follow, they would happily do so. Confucian philosophy is a system of rules to live by in order to fit harmoniously into a structure headed by a ruler, and made up of families. The Chou people lived by this system of clear, rigid guidelines, but their concern with displaying status eventually affected the quality of their artwork.

Lao-Tzu lived during the 5th century B.C. Like Confucius, he believed people were naturally good. But he believed that instead of giving people rules, everyone should find his or her own way by living close to nature and following its harmonies. This he called the Tao (dow), or the Way; his philosophy is called Taoism (dowism). As you can see from the tiger above, the Chou were inspired by natural shapes and continued to decorate them with the surface patterns developed by the Shang.

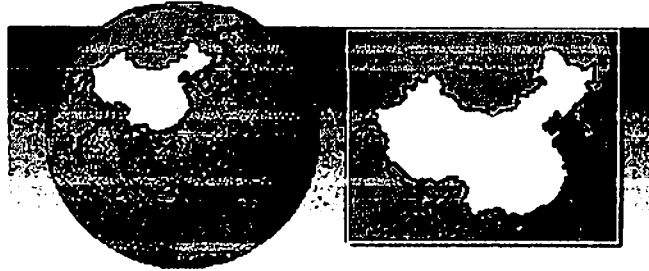
**These Shang and Chou bronze animals were also wine vessels designed to be used in religious rituals.**

*Above: Chinese tiger. Chou Dynasty (9th century B.C.), cast bronze. Courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.*

*Left: Owl-shaped wine vessel, Shang Dynasty. The Minneapolis Institute of Art.*

**Which animals do you think these two sculptures were based on?**

# History of the Chinese Foo Dog



## The Chinese Foo Dog By The American Foo Dog Association

**Highly stylized, interchangeable identified with the stone guardian lions and small cloisonne' statuary, the Chinese Foo Dog is believed to represent the missing link between the Chinese wolf and the Chow Chow.**

**Due to the numerous dialects, the breed is known by various names such as Choo Hunting Dog, Lung-Kou, Dragon Dog, and Tien-Kou or Celestial Dog. Sharing one of nature's mysteries with the polar bear and the Chow Chow, he is also referred to as hei she-t'ou kou or black-tongued dog. According to breeder and rare breed authority Brad Trom, the CFD probably derives its common name from foochow, "of the kind or style prevalent in Foochow, (now Minhow) in southeast China.**



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**indigenous form due to unchanged demand for a working-hunting-guarding animal. The farmer could afford nothing less than a survivalist, a resilient, earns-his-keep canine. While the Emperors favored tiny sleeve dogs and Temple Dogs that were protected by the priests, peasant families had no luxuries. By necessity, the Foo Dog not only lived to work, he worked if he was to live!**

**The wolf-spitz type with dry mouth and minimal head wrinkles is contradicted by the unexpected drape of loose skin on the throat, known as the mandra (monastery fold) or mantle. The abundance and elasticity of the throat covering are believed to protect the Foo Dog from a jugular hold during combat. The unusual width of jaw and anterior cranium affords great gripping power and ample brain capacity.**

**The coat may range from a plush coat also called Teddy coat (less than two inches) to the Ruff coat (over three inches) with full mane and breechings. Both are luxuriant, off-standing, parasite, water, and weather resistant.**

**Quiet in actions, serious in thought, the Foo Dog is alert, eager to learn, and a reliable worker. The trainability which typifies the CFD evolved through 3,000 years of unavoidably harsh selection techniques. Sensitive and perceptive, he actively seeks the favor of his master.**



**Today's Chinese Foo Dog blends genetic science and ancient tradition in a canine that bonds strongly with his family and thrives on physical**

**closeness. He is territorial, reserved, and distrustful of strangers. He rarely barks without reason, thus is an ideal family protector. Although gentle and quiet by nature, he can become awesomely upset if his family is threatened.**

**Quickly finding his place within the family pack, the CFD seldom requires discipline and rarely attempts to assert as the Alpha animal. Discord between family members makes him uneasy, and he may run from one to another, whining and indicating his distress.**

**As numbers of Chinese Foo Dogs increase in the western world, medical data indicates a remarkable freedom from health defects, although mild entropion has been reported. Immune systems are notably strong. No hereditary orthopedic or structural abnormalities are known. Matings and birthings require no intervention.**

**No special diet is required, although the addition of rice and fish and avoidance of excessive protein or fat is advised.**

**Regular grooming is required during seasonal shedding, outdoor exercise and sunshine is vital. The breed accepts kennel or hard during the day but prefers to claim its inborn right to sleep with the children at night.**

**The Foo Dog appeals to today's families for the same reasons ancient man so valued him. He's just the right size, he's notably healthy, gentle when stroked, fierce when provoked. He is a safe, reliable watch dog. Truly the ultimate family dog, he is the perfect teddy bear for the children and a distinctive, intelligent companion for adults.**