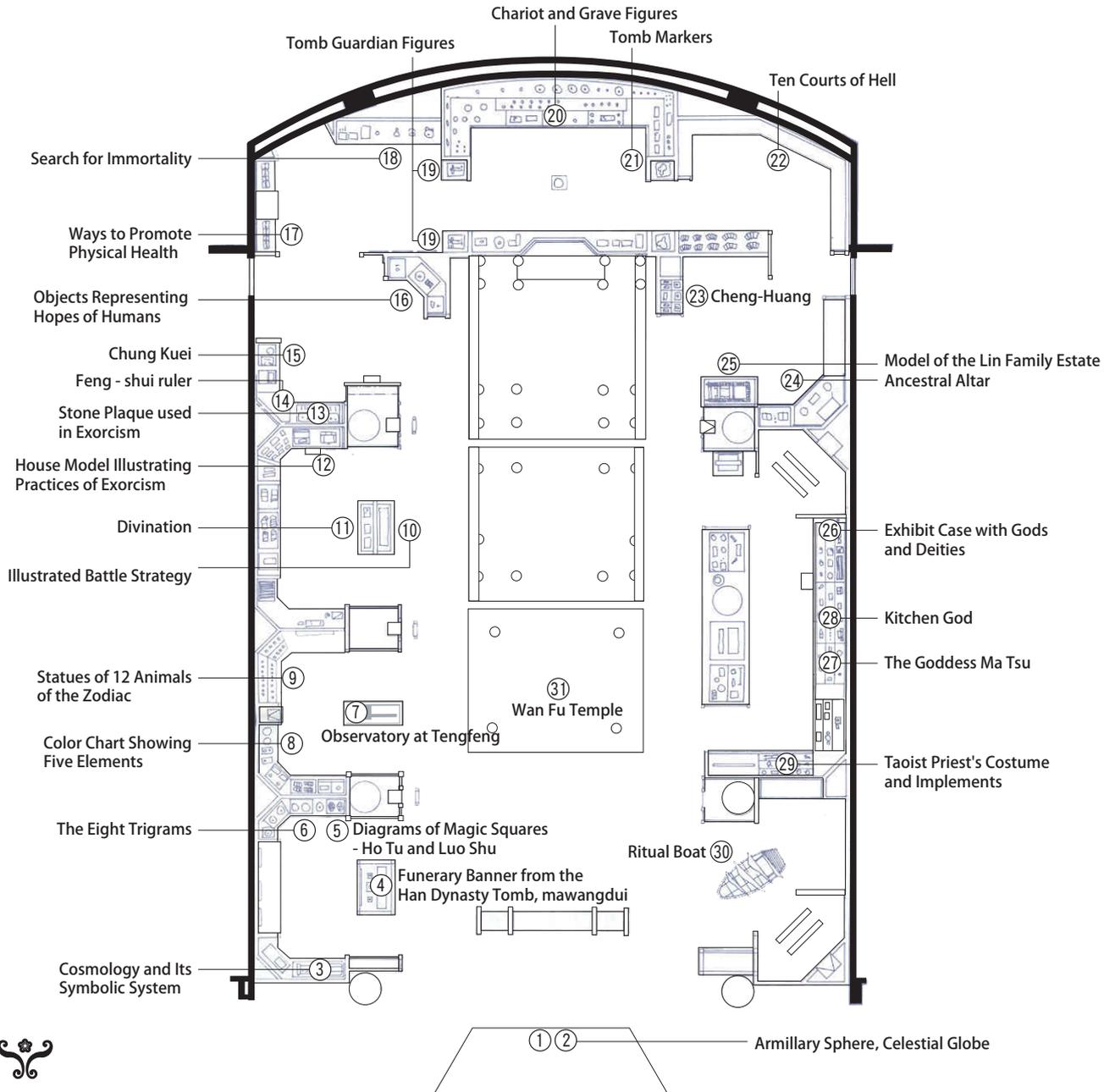
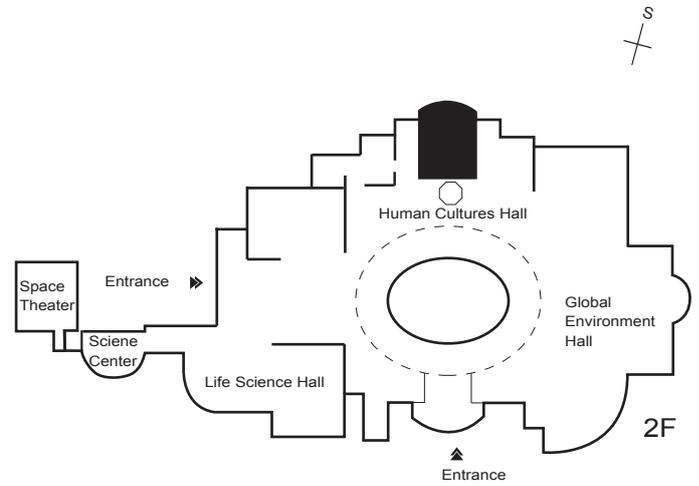


This gallery includes many exhibits which, together, demonstrate the extraordinary richness and diversity of Chinese spiritual life. As you move from one exhibit to another, you will undoubtedly confront concepts which seem contradictory to the Western mind. But remember that Chinese spiritual thought and practice have evolved over thousands of years, representing many different ethnic groups, and that these differences have been reconciled by the powerful impulse to find harmony and unity in all realms of experience.

This gallery is organized into three areas, roughly corresponding to the three spheres of the Chinese universe: the heavens or cosmos, the sphere of man, and, finally, the sphere of society and religious life.



### ① **Armillary Sphere**

This large complex of interlocking rings is known as an "armillary sphere," a term which literally means "sphere of rings". It is a reproduction of a scientific tool used in ancient China for astronomical observation and is the top part of the instrument that includes the water clock, which can be viewed directly below on the first floor, and the celestial globe on the middle tier of this tower. The original sphere was cast in bronze in 1090 A.D. by a team of engineers led by Su Sung, a court astronomer during the Northern Sung Dynasty.

The numerous rings of the instrument represent the equator and various meridians. They have markings used to locate celestial bodies, and to track their movements in the sky. The long square-shaped tube in the center is a sighting device. What makes this particular armillary sphere unique is that it was the first one of its kind to be powered by water. The same mechanism that regulated the operation of the clock on the first floor also controlled the movement of this sphere, enabling it to follow the path of stars or comets, which at this time was a great astronomical breakthrough.

As you can see, the wonder of this amazing scientific instrument was enhanced by the artistic flair of its creators. Grand figures of dragons support the sphere representing the universe and at its base is a large bronze tortoise.

The first armillary sphere is attributed to Chang Heng, the Han Dynasty scientist who also invented the seismograph.

### ② **Celestial Globe**

This bronze globe is part of the same instrument as the large water clock visible from the first floor and the armillary sphere on the second floor, at the gallery's entrance.

On this globe, stars are represented by dots, and connected to one another by white lines, forming the constellations of the celestial sphere. This method of recording the skies dates back at least 2000 years ago to star charts of the Han Dynasty and is still in use today throughout the world.

This particular globe presents the celestial constellations as viewed from Kaifeng, the capital city of the Northern Sung Dynasty. This perspective followed naturally from the belief

that the ancient capitol represented the center of the universe and that the stars moved above it in the heavens.

Like the clock and armillary sphere, the globe was powered by water, and it turned to show the path of the constellations as they were thought to move across the sky.

### ③ **Cosmology and Its Symbolic System**

Chinese spiritual beliefs are very different from those of Western religions in which there is a single creation myth and supreme god. Chinese thought emphasizes the authority of the Way of the cosmos, or the Tao, which is perpetually in motion and changing. The Tao is responsible for the order of the universe and the harmony of the world, and all things follow the Tao in an ideal world, including humans. Therefore, by closely observing the workings of the heavens and nature one can come closer to understanding the Tao and to living in accordance with the concept "heaven and human are one." Also, by observing the rituals and values of human relationships taught by the classical philosopher Confucius — especially those relationships within the family-society can achieve the natural order and harmony of the universe.

### ④ **Funerary Banner from the Han Dynasty**

#### **Tomb, Mawangdui**

This beautifully colored silk banner is a reproduction of a banner discovered in 1972 in the tomb of a noble lady who lived during the Western Han Dynasty. Amazingly, the original banner was intact, allowing the completely accurate replica that you see here.

Ornate burial robes were a way of honoring the dead, and also served as a means for the soul to escape the body and to move on to the afterlife. The decorations on this exquisite example are rich in meaning, revealing much about the deceased and about traditional attitudes towards death and the cosmos.

For example, at the bottom center, the noble occupant of the tomb is depicted standing, holding a staff and surrounded by her courtiers. Her wealth and special status are further suggested by the feast shown below.

Framing these scenes are two dragons, one of the most powerful and positive symbols of ancient China. They are twisting and reaching

skyward in a symbolic gesture of leading the spirit up into heaven.

Heaven itself is filled with mythological creatures that Chinese people of the time would have immediately recognized as auspicious, positive symbols. The disc on the right, with a crow in the center, represents the sun while the crescent on the left, with the toad and hare, is the moon. Between the sun and moon is a deity with a human head and a snake's body. And the cranes at the top, soaring above the heavenly scene, are the symbols of longevity.

#### ④-1 Animal Symbolism

Traditional Chinese culture is rich in symbolism, especially that using animals. Certainly the most powerful and positive animal symbol was the dragon. The dragon was believed to inhabit the mountains and to be capable of both ascending into the heavens and of living in the water. It symbolized benevolence, longevity, prosperity and the renewal of life, and it also served as the symbol of imperial majesty.

The phoenix, like the dragon, was seen as being extremely positive. It symbolized peace and joy, and was commonly used as the mark of the empress in imperial China.

The unicorn symbolized good luck and prosperity, and was believed to herald the birth of a hero or a sage. According to legend, one was seen when Confucius came into the world.

The tortoise was not a purely mythical beast in the sense of the dragon, the phoenix, and the unicorn, but nevertheless it was viewed as a supernatural animal. Its outstanding attributes were strength, endurance and longevity, and it was also connected with divination.

Among the more conventional creatures, the tiger was king. In general, it symbolized military prowess, and it was viewed as the protector of all that was sacred. Other animals that were popular guardian figures were horses and elephants, which both symbolized strength and wisdom.

#### ⑤ Diagrams of Magic Squares - Ho Tu and

##### Luo Shu

In the middle panel of this exhibit, on the upper section, are two examples from 5th century books of what we today call "magic squares". As you can see, they are geometric

configurations which were believed to hold universal secrets. And, in a sense, they are considered the predecessor of the Eight Trigrams and also the Book of Changes, or I Ching. Beneath the squares are pictures of a dragon horse on the left, and on the right, a tortoise. These two creatures, as the story goes, emerged from water, bearing the magical squares on their backs. They were presented as gifts to the legendary Emperor Yu, rewarding his ability to control floods and his rule as an upright, exemplary leader.

Chinese diviners consulted these, magical squares in predicting the future, or in reading an individual's fate. The diviners were thought to possess the skills for unlocking the mysteries within the numerical arrangements and for revealing the truths hidden within the diagrams.

#### ⑤-1 I Ching

The I Ching, or Book of Changes, is the most famous and most revered book of ancient China. Sixty-four hexagrams form the basic units of the I Ching and symbolically represent the structure of the universe and the on-going changes of the universe. The solid lines represent yang, and the broken lines, yin, and from their arrangement in the hexagram, the future is read or predicted. The interpretative possibilities of any of these hexagrams are nearly infinite, and over the years, major commentaries have been written on them.

One of the most important commentators on the I Ching was Confucius. He was said to have been fascinated by the work, and to have worn out the leather strapped binding of his copy three times. In fact he once lamented to his students that if he could add 50 years to his life, he would spend them studying the book and becoming "without error".

If you're interested in the concepts of yin/yang and the five elements you should take a look at the computer games around the corner, to the left.

#### ⑤-2 Concept of Yin and Yang

Much that is distinctive about Chinese culture can be explained by the concepts of yin and yang-a notion that appears either explicitly or implicitly in almost every area of life.

Basically yin and yang are seen as opposite but complementary forces that exist in all things.

They are mutually dependent, and harmony in the universe is based upon their interaction, as expressed in the well known symbol of a circle with the light and dark portions in perfect balance. For example, day is yang and night is yin; male is yang, female is yin; the sun is yang, the moon is yin; and hot is yang, while cold is yin. As one force gives way to another, change occurs and animates all the natural processes of life, and even of the subconscious world.

### ⑥ The Eight Trigrams

On the octagonal plaques in this case you can see the design known as the eight trigrams. This single design expresses the workings of the universe and of creation itself. Each whole octagon is divided into eight sections, each of which is composed of a combination of broken lines, which are yin, and unbroken lines, which are yang. For example, in the section at the top there are three continuous lines, symbolizing heaven and below; in the bottom section are three broken lines, or earth. Between heaven and earth, yin and yang interact in all variations, representing flux and changes that occur in nature with the alternation of these creative forces.

The eight trigrams were used in the early practice of divination and are the basis of the 64 hexagrams of the I Ching, the great classic book of divination and ancient philosophy.

### ⑦ Observatory at Tengteng

This model represents a huge astronomical instrument built in the 13th century, at Tengteng just south of Loyang. It was used for telling the months and days of the year, and later led to the development of the sundial.

On the platform at the top, near the structure with three rooms, was a tall forty-foot pole that cast its shadow on the long, stone ruler extending out horizontally along the ground. The length of the shadow naturally changed during the various seasons, reaching its fullest measurement in mid-winter when the sun was farthest from the earth. From these observations, the Chinese developed an early understanding of the four seasons which, in turn, led to a clear definition of the twelve hourly periods of the day. These were then combined with certain traditional customs to create the 24 seasonal periods of the year, marked by holidays such as

the New Year, Tomb Sweeping Day, the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival, and the last day of the Lunar New Year.

If you push the buttons on the side of this model, you will see the shadows cast by the pole at noon during the spring equinox, the summer solstice, the autumn equinox and the winter solstice.

### ⑧ Color Chart Showing Five Elements

This chart illustrates the Chinese view of the world as a self-operating whole, perpetually in flux and changing in an orderly, harmonious process. The basic elements in this process are represented here by five colors: black at the top symbolizing water; green associated with wood; red for fire; white representing metal, and finally at the center, yellow symbolizing the earth. According to Chinese thought, it was the ceaseless interaction of these five elements that created the process of change in the universe and that also, in various combinations, created the essence of all things, both animate and inanimate. Therefore, everything in the universe is associated with one of the five elements, including directions, animals, colors, and even parts of the body. For example, related to the element of water are black, the north, the tortoise, and the kidney. Fire is the element of the color red, the south, the phoenix, the heart and ear. Corresponding to wood is green, the east, the dragon, the liver and eyes. Metal is the color white, the west, the tiger, and the nose and lung. And finally the earth is associated with yellow, the mouth, and yet another kind of dragon.

### ⑨ Statues of 12 Animals of the Zodiac

The terracotta figures on the top row were excavated from a Tang Dynasty tomb, and represent some of the animals associated with the ancient Chinese lunar calendar. The calendar was based on a dating system of 12 years, and each year was presided over by a different animal believed to influence the events and personalities of people born during its year. Also, every animal was associated with a particular month as well as certain weeks and even days of the week.

According to one legend, the Chinese zodiac was first established by the Buddha when he was attempting to restore order in the world's

affairs. He called a summit conference, inviting all the animals of the world, but only 12 showed up. The order in which they arrived, from the Rat who came first to the Pig at the end, marks the order of the 12 years, and the special qualities of each guest are associated with its own year. For example, the rat, the first to appear, is seen as aggressive. The ox is a natural leader, the dragon is bossy and loud, and the pig, the most reliable and honest of all signs, has a great deal of difficulty making up its mind—which is probably why it arrived so late at the conference.

### ⑩ Illustrated Battle Strategy

This large diagram was reconstructed from the writings and drawings of an early 17th century text, illustrating the strategic formation of military troops. As you can see, the formation of the troops roughly mirrors the way the Chinese viewed the order of the universe. Each troop is associated with a special color indicated by the flags which, in turn, correspond to the Five Elements and the points of the compass. At the bottom, where the north appeared on ancient maps, black symbolizes water; the south at the top is red, the color of fire; green represents wood and the east which is also reversed on ancient maps; and the white flags associated with the west suggest metal. By imitating the cosmic harmony and order in designing their military formations, the Chinese believed that they enhanced the power of the army, aiding its battle against the enemy. As an added bit of good luck, symbols of the twelve animals of the zodiac are also included on the plan, calling on these auspicious signs to lend their support to the battle.

### ⑪ Divination

All the objects in this case are related to the practice of divination, or predicting one's fate and the future. On the right is a reproduction of the shoulder blade of a cow, and at the left, a tortoise shell. Both these objects, or oracle bones, were used in a technique of divination that has proved incredibly valuable to historians in revealing aspects of China's ancient culture that otherwise would have remained a mystery.

On the reverse side of the bones, a diviner scratched a question that he wished to put to the supernatural power. Then the bones were heated,

and by observing the way they cracked, the diviner could read the answer to the question. As a result, these oracle bones are some of China's earliest examples of writing and earliest records of history.

In the center of this case is a figure of the folk goddess of divination, Madame Sun Nai. Her image appears again on the scroll at the back. The domain over which she presided was far-reaching, including not only the reading of oracle bones, but also other methods of divinations including feng-shui, the casting of lots, and Taoist practices related to physiognomy and astrology.

### ⑫ House Model Illustrating Practices of

#### Exorcism

Exorcism was an important aspect of folk belief in traditional China, and this exhibit illustrates how various offerings, or charms, were used to drive away the evil spirits from a house. Just as all things consisted of yin and yang, the menacing forces of gwei and the benevolent spirits of shun were everywhere. Gwei was believed to be responsible for all kinds of misfortunes, from accidents and illnesses to crop failures and birth defects. So exorcism was used to defend against the gwei, or to appease it with offerings.

If you push the buttons on the front of this exhibit, the various charms, deities, and amulets used to exorcise the gwei will appear on the screen. At the same time, lights will come on in the model at the right in the area of the house where the charms were used. As you will see, these charms were placed all over, from the roof and four corners to the windows and doorways.

### ⑬ Stone Plaque Used in Exorcism

This large stone plaque was used in the practice of exorcism, and believed to drive away the evil spirits of gwei. The three characters carved on the front—stone, to dare, and to block—were believed to ward off disaster, not only because of the words they represent, but also because of the power of their written form. Plaques such as this one were erected at the seashore to keep the tides in check, in the mountains to deter landslides, and at crossroads or bridges, where evil spirits often gathered, to prevent accidents.

#### ⑭ Feng - shui Ruler

This wooden measuring stick, known as a feng-shui ruler, was used by architects or interior decorators to insure the auspicious design of a house and all its furnishings. For example, the proportions of rooms and doorways, and even the height of tables and chairs, were determined by the scale that appears on the ruler's front. Next to the markings, in addition to numbers, are characters, indicating either good or bad fortune, such as great wealth and personal success or perhaps loss of one's job or a death in the family. The architect's job was to make certain that all measurements corresponded to positive markings on the ruler, thereby bringing stability and harmony to the family who lived in the house he had designed.

#### ⑭-1 Feng-shui

Feng-shui, which literally means "wind and water," is the ancient Chinese science used to determine the most auspicious sites and orientations of houses, buildings, graves, and even cities. Like so many popular folk practices, it is based on the belief that earthly activities must be done in harmony with the invisible laws of nature. Therefore, in building houses or graves, it was important to determine the cosmic currents of a locale by using a special compass or sounding rod. If the currents of the land were found to be unfavorable, charms might be used to manipulate them and to produce favorable feng-shui for the benefit of the locality. Because the spirits of the dead were able to send down divine favors to their living descendants, it was particularly important to secure an auspicious site for the grave. A first-class position would consist of a wide river at the front for water, a high cliff behind to block the winds, and enclosing hills to the right and left, forming a kind of loop, because evil spirits could only move in straight lines and, therefore, wouldn't stay inside the loop! Ideally, all graves and houses faced the south because the warm winds and approach of summer come from that quarter; while the deadly influences of winter come from the north.

#### ⑮ Chung Kuei

The portrait and sculpture here depict a

rather homely but menacing figure known as Chung Kuei, the legendary deity associated with exorcism. He is responsible for defeating evil spirits known as gwei that were believed to cause illness and accidents, and here is shown stepping on the little devils and capturing them. Even today one can find portraits of this powerful god of exorcism displayed in households or on doorways of public buildings because he is still believed to be the most effective figure in exorcising a place of evil influences.

#### ⑯ Objects Representing Hopes of Humans

In this case is collection of objects which reflect popular hopes about life, the afterlife, and immortality. For example, beginning at the left is a painted terra-cotta jar from the Han Dynasty, with a lid modeled in the shape of mountains. The imaginary mountains of the East, it was believed, were the enchanted place where the immortals dwelled, high above the earth, and also the place to which mortals aspired after their life in this world.

On the scroll painting at the center are four symbols of the aspirations of most traditional Chinese people. The tall man wearing a large gold crown and richly decorated robe represents wealth. At the left, another man with a flowing white beard and dressed in black, refers to longevity. On his robe is the gold, highly stylized character for longevity - a character with such powerful implications that it appears written in over 100 different ways in classical literature. At the bottom are two young boys, or sons - the pride of traditional parents. And on the lower right is a deer. The deer was the symbol of prosperity because in classical Chinese the characters for "deer" and "prosperity" sound the same.

At the right side of the case is a Han Dynasty oil lamp known as a money tree. The money tree was also a symbol of prosperity, and was placed in the tomb to bring fortune and wealth to the deceased in the next life.

#### ⑰ Ways to Promote Physical Health

From the earliest time, the Chinese people developed exercises to promote the well-being of their minds and bodies. The drawings on the left-hand panel and the small figures at the front demonstrate the various breathing positions

associated with Taoism. On the right-hand panel are some of the movements or positions used in the practice of T'ai Chi Chuan. All of these exercises are based on the view of the human body as a miniature universe, created as a result of the interaction of yin and yang and dependent upon the balance of these elements for perfect harmony. In the steady, even movements of these exercises, an equilibrium of yin and yang is established, allowing the Ch'i or life force, to circulate freely and releasing blockages that cause pain and sickness.

The video in this area shows the practice of T'ai chi, explaining the movements and their underlying philosophy. I recommend it highly - that is both the video and the practice of T'ai Chi.

The drawings on the left-hand panel and the small figures at the front demonstrate the various breathing positions associated with folk Taoism. On the right-hand panel are pictures, taken from a Han Dynasty tomb, showing some of the movements or positions used in the practice of T'ai Chi Chuan. The breathing exercises and T'ai Chi are both based on the view of the human body as a miniature universe, created as a result of the interaction of yin and yang and dependent upon the balance of these elements for perfect harmony. Without this balance the body's Ch'i, or life force, cannot circulate freely, causing blockages which lead to pain and sickness. So the purpose of these exercises is to establish equilibrium of yin and yang within the body, releasing the ch'i to move without obstructions.

T'ai chi, it is said, was developed by a Taoist monk who lived in the 12th century. One morning he was awakened by the sound, outside his window, of a crane engaged in combat with a snake. From their thrusts and parries, he created the basic principles of t'ai chi. Then to modify these exercises, he observed the ways of wild animals, clouds, the wind and water, resulting in the very graceful movements that you can see on the video in this area. Often described as "swimming in air," they flow one into another, smoothly and gently in a way totally unlike the exercises of Western aerobic classes. The Western ideal of athleticism and strengthening the body is foreign to Chinese exercises in which the ultimate goal is oneness of body, spirit, and the universe.

### ⑰-1 Acupuncture

Acupuncture has been used as a therapeutic technique for well over two thousand years in China. It is based on the concept that the body is made up of yin and yang, and also a kind of vital force called Ch'i, that moves in channels throughout the body. If there is imbalance in the yin and yang, then the flow of the Ch'i along its meridians is interrupted, and the body becomes sick. In acupuncture therapy, special needles are inserted into various points on the body's surface, with the intention of altering the flow and the distribution of the Ch'i and setting it back on its proper course. Over 650 different acupuncture points have been recognized, although only about 140 of these are currently used.

### ⑱ Search for Immortality

The four panels of this exhibit explain the various means used by the Chinese in their never-ending search for immortality, including diet, elixirs, and breathing exercises. These practices were part of folk Taoism and seemingly are at odds with the classic Taoist texts written by Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu. However the following passages from Chuang Tzu, as you will hear, do lend themselves to the interpretations taken up by religious Taoists, and to the practices followed in their search for immortality.

There is a holy man named Chuang Tzu living on a faraway Kung Shi mountain with skin like ice or snow, and gentle and shy like a young girl.. He doesn't eat the five grains, but sucks the wind, drinks the dew, climbs up on the clouds and mist, rides a flying dragon, and wanders beyond the four seas. By concentrating his spirit, he can protect creatures from sickness and plague and make the harvest plentiful.

The perfect man can walk under water without choking, can tread on fire without being burned, and can travel above the ten thousand things without being frightened. May I ask how he manages this? The Barrier Keeper Yin replied, "This is because he guards the pure breath".

The four panels of this exhibit illustrate the various means used by traditional Chinese people to promote health and to realize the never-ending dream of immortality. To reach these ends, there were several practices; beginning with eating proper food illustrated on

the far left-hand panel. All foods were classified according to yin/yang theory and were associated with one of the five elements, a color, a point on the compass, and a season. In order to maintain equilibrium within the body, one's diet should be comprised of a balance of yin food and yang food, as these pictures suggest.

In the second panel, we find a depiction of various deities who have attained immortality and, therefore, serve as examples for the rest of the population. In this world some of them were great philosophers, others were ordinary men, and a few were even mythological figures.

The next panel shows an alchemist concocting an elixir of immortality. As a result of the search for this magical potion, some of China's greatest inventions, such as gunpowder, were discovered. Because of its durability, gold was seen as the perfect elixir and various ways of ingesting it were recommended. The most popular were eating from gold plates or drinking from gold goblets, and swallowing pills made from the softened metal.

On the last panel is an illustration of folk Taoist breathing techniques, designed to unite the vital force of the universe and the ch'i or vital spirit, of the body. By regulating one's breathing, air could be guided to all parts of the body, including those not normally reached, and also the vital ch'i could be preserved.

### ⑲ Tomb Guardian Figures

The two fearsome-looking figures on either side of the doorway come from a Tang Dynasty tomb and probably stood inside, beside the coffin, to scare off demons and evil spirits. As you can see, they are decorated with a lustrous glaze of green, cream and russet, perfected in the 7th century A.D. during the Tang.

These fantastic sculptures introduce the theme of the next gallery - the tomb and the world of the afterlife. The tomb was extremely important because the Chinese believed that if the soul were not properly placated by a suitable burial, it might become a vengeful spirit and harm the surviving family members. But if the deceased were given a fine burial, the soul would rest peacefully and send down blessings, much like a benevolent god.

### ⑲-1 San ts'ai Glazing

Three-colored or san ts'ai glazing was the

result of an improved glaze that did not crack in the cooling process and that produced a bright lustrous finish in a palette of rich browns, greens, and reds. It was made with a lead less toxic than that used before, combined with iron, copper, and cobalt to create the various colors.

San ts'ai tomb figures became the rage in the early 8th century with the death of Empress Wu. On her way to the throne, the Empress had destroyed all potential heirs and had their bodies buried in simple limestone pits. When she died, the martyrs were reburied in elaborate tombs in Sian, the capitol, and their burials were filled with san ts'ai figures, making the new glaze an instant hit. San ts'ai figures were carried by mourners to cemeteries in elaborate parades, placed on graves as sacrifice offerings, and buried in tombs to honor the dead.

### ⑳ Chariot and Grave Figures

The chariot in the center of the room comes from a burial of the Han Dynasty and was among the many objects placed in the tomb to accompany the dead to the afterlife. The tomb's occupant was, no doubt, a nobleman who wished to take to the next world the same pleasures and entertainments which he has enjoyed in this life, including his horses and chariots. It is made of pottery, decorated with a green lead glaze that, as you can see, has cracked and peeled off over the centuries.

Ceramic models, such as this chariot and the various figures in the surrounding cases, were in great demand during the Han. As you can see, they include models of dancers, musicians, servants, animals, and even sumo wrestlers, all placed in the grave to accompany the deceased to the next world. People simply chose whatever they needed for a well-stocked tomb from a vast array of grave goods, most of them mass-produced and originally decorated with green glaze or paint that over time has worn off.

### ㉑ Tomb Markers

This stone is a tomb marker from a grave of the Tang Dynasty. It was placed in front of the coffin, and the four characters identify the deceased.

Above is an ink rubbing taken from the back side of the stone. The inscription describes the virtues, good deeds, and accomplishments of the tomb's occupant.

Tomb markers such as these were the way in which individuals' lives were commemorated and recorded for posterity. There was no tradition in China of creating portraits or statues to memorialize a person, and, as a result, we have no visual images of any of the great personalities, not even Confucius. But we do have carved on these tombstones some of civilization's finest examples of calligraphy and also profiles in stone of many generations and their achievements.

### ②② Ten Courts of Hell

The paintings in this room depict, often in graphic detail, the tortures of the Ten Courts of Hell. According to folk belief, the soul became three separate souls after death: one that went to the grave with the body; another which remained on the family altar with the ancestor tablet; and a third that went to the Ten Courts of Hell, or Judgment, and was eventually reincarnated. These courts, as you can see, are believed to be located at the bottom of a vast ocean, which lies deep down in the depths of the earth. In each court, punishments are carried out for crimes committed by individuals during their time on earth.

For example, step over in front of the fifth scroll from the wall text. In the center of the picture is a man being "executed" for his sexual offenses by a large tiger-head cutter. Other criminals such as thieves, robbers and kidnappers are cut open, and their hearts and intestines are ripped out and fed to animals at the bottom. Then the criminal's flesh is allowed to heal before he is sent on to the next court of judgment.

Paintings such as these were often displayed during folk Taoist funerals to warn against evil, maintain social order, and to teach people about the concept of retribution – an idea which became part of popular belief with the introduction of Buddhism during the Tang Dynasty.

### ②②-1 Taoism

The philosophy known as Taoism takes its name from the Tao, or the Way, meaning the natural order of the world expressed in the precise movements of the heavenly bodies and in the reality of all life. Tao existed before the beginning of the world and was present in the

Great Ultimate Principle from which yin and yang were formed, resulting eventually in the creation of all things.

The earliest Taoist works were written by the great philosophers Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu who taught that it was important to follow the tao of nature. In the tao, all the contradictions of the universe were encompassed in a pattern not easily understood, but rather sensed through long contemplation -the principal occupation of the sage.

Folk Taoism is based on the philosophy of the classical period, but in practice bears very little resemblance to the teachings of the Taoist philosophers. It represents, rather, a repository of popular Chinese beliefs and practices throughout the ages, including such things as the practice of feng shui, exorcism, various breathing techniques, as well as the use of charms and magical traditions. Over the centuries, the Taoist temple has embraced an enormous pantheon of popular gods which includes thousands of mythological spirits and deities. To this day, sometimes contradictory superstitions, myths, rituals, and medical traditions are all a part of folk Taoism, combined into a fantastic, fluid tapestry that is the common property of the masses.

### ②③ Cheng-Huang

The figures in this case all represent gods associated in folk beliefs with the passage from this world to the next. In the top row, at the center, is Cheng-Huang, the deity responsible for filing a report on every individual who stood trial in the underworld in the ten courts of judgment. On either side of him are two messengers who actually gathered the details for these accountings and also arrested the spirits of the dead, ordering them to appear in court. The figures in the front row are officials of the underworld who assist in carrying out judgments in court.

### ②④ Ancestral Altar

Altars such as this, set up in the homes of families from the very modest to the very wealthy, played an important part in the practice of ancestor worship. While on special occasions families went to their ancestors' graves to present offerings of food and to burn incense, the altar was where these rituals were carried out

daily.

In the center of the altar, on the black platform, are three ancestor tablets. And behind, on the back wall, are two photographs showing similar tablets as they typically appeared on a family shrine. They are arranged in a strict hierarchical manner, according to the age of the ancestors represented. On either side of the altar are two large stands which would have held burning candles, or eternal flames—another symbol of the ancestors' abiding presence within the household.

At the left of the altar is a large picture of a well-to-do family of the Ch'ing Dynasty. It also reflects the emphasis upon seniority and hierarchy in traditional China. Pictured at the top of this family portrait are the oldest and most revered generation, followed in descending order by younger members of the obviously proud, dignified group.

And to the right of the altar are Genealogy Books, recording short bios, as well as images, of family members for all posterity to cherish.

#### ②4-1 Ancestor Worship

Since the earliest times, ancestor worship has been practiced in China, insuring respect for the family and proper concern about family relationships. It was a way of honoring and appeasing the souls of the dead so that they would bring blessings, and not work evil, upon the living. Just as it was believed that the departed could intervene on behalf of the living, the opposite was true as well. By conducting proper rituals, the living could assist the spirits of the deceased in their progress through various stages of the afterlife. So the system was one of mutual dependency, bonding together the living and dead members of a family over many generations.

There were many rites connected with ancestor worship, including the proper selection of a grave; the funeral; and regular offering of food, burning of incense, and kowtowing before the grave. In imperial times it was not even unusual for high officials of rank to retire from public life for as long as three years to mourn the death of their parents. In their houses, most families had ancestral tablets where the spirits of their forefathers were believed to dwell. Any misfortune such as sickness was interpreted as a sign of neglecting the ancestors, resulting in

more attention to the ancestral tablet or to the grave.

#### ②4-2 Confucianism

Through most of Chinese imperial history, Confucianism has been a predominate influence in the intellectual life and outlook of her people. It is a rationalistic philosophy, based on a belief in the moral perfect ability of all men. At the heart of the value system lay the concept that a strong, upright society depended upon the strength of five primary relationships: the bond between ruler and subject, between father and son, between husband and wife, between older brother and younger brother and finally between friend and friend. In each pair, a certain inequality and submission were expected to exist, and the most basic submission of all was the devotion of children to their parents, or filial piety. One of the famous Four Books of Confucian literature, the Great Learning, remarks, "if one is not obedient to his parents, he will not be true to his friends", and "if one is not trusted by his friends, he will not get the confidence of his sovereign".

Confucius lived from 551-479 B.C., and hundreds of legends and tales are attached to his life and death. One curious note is that the descendants of Confucius have traced a line to the present day, making them one of the longest unbroken lineages in the world - a fact that would please the Master who was so dedicated to reverence for ancestors.

#### ②5 Model of the Lin Family Estate

This model shows the large, Ch'ing Dynasty estate of the Lin Family, located at Wu Fong, in central Taiwan, about 20 kilometers from Taichung. As you might guess, the Lins were well-to-do, with a house large enough to accommodate the extended family, including the wives and children of each of their sons, as well as numerous concubines. The organization of their household reflects the Confucian values of social hierarchy, as we can see in the design of this estate.

It consists of a series of courtyards, beginning with the entrance that faces south towards the trees. At the opposite end, in the quietest, most desirable quarters, the master of the family lived with his first wife and concubines. Then, the section of the house next

to him was occupied by the family of the eldest son. And so the pattern continued, progressing from the master's quarters outward towards the entrance, according to age. Generally males lived on the left side of each courtyard, because the left is associated with yang, and females lived on the right, which is yin.

Though seniority in living arrangements was clearly based upon age and the Confucian principle of social hierarchy, there were still unsettled questions of precedent. For example, hurt feelings often occurred from decisions of whether the younger son or the unmarried daughters should rank above the concubines.

### ②6 Exhibit Case with Gods and Deities

In this large case we find some of the hundreds of gods that make up the pantheon of folk religion. They appear according to their proper place in the social hierarchy, with the most important deity at the far left, on the top row, continuing down to the bottom row, on the far right. Some of these gods were historic persons, while others were originally personifications of natural phenomena, such as wind, rain, rivers, and mountains. There are Taoist masters who attained immortality; there are Buddhist creations; and there are gods which were simply men or women who manifested strange, miraculous powers. Each god has specific responsibilities, such as power over education, agriculture, medicine, or childbirth, and each one has a distinct personality with even certain emotions and shortcomings. Many of these deities have endured for centuries, but others only gained local fame for a short time and then passed into oblivion.

These figures, of course, are only images, or representations of the gods themselves. But still they are believed to be very powerful because when they were created, special incense, gems and insects were placed inside, investing them with the qualities of the gods. Then, in a special ceremony, their eyes, noses, ears and mouths were pierced, opening them to the world.

Cults were built around these gods, and the interest of a community or a trade or even a household in one of them depended on the god's usefulness in providing specific services or in delivering blessings. The people, in fact, knew and cared very little about the systematic arrangement of these deities; it was the efficacy

of the gods that, in the end, counted for most.

### ②6-1 Identity of Gods

The place of honor in the pantheon of gods is at the top row of this case, on the far left-hand side. Here you find a figure of the God of the Universe, seated on a throne and flanked on the left by the Moon Goddess and on the right, by the God of the Sun. Just below on the next row is a large seated god, holding a sheaf of grain in one hand. He is the god of agriculture. Farther along on this row, five places to the right, is the God of Medicine. He's seated on what appears to be a large rock or tree stump and has long tufts of hair hanging down from his face. Back on the top row, still farther right, is a large figure of a woman seated on a throne, with female attendants on either side, carrying children. This is the goddess to whom women turn for blessings of fertility and healthy childbirth.

### ②7 The Goddess Ma Tsu

Here we see an image of the patron of sailors and fishermen—the beneficent goddess Ma Tsu. She is worshipped by men setting out to sea in hopes of safe voyages, and her image is found in many temples, especially those near waterways. Often sailors make models of their vessels and leave them in her temples as signs of gratitude or as offerings towards successful passages.

The origins of Ma Tsu are somewhat murky, but according to one story she was the unmarried daughter of a fisherman, and as a young woman, spent much time in chanting and prayer. One day when her parents were out fishing, a fierce storm arose. Ma Tsu was in a state of trance at the time, and sensed her parents' danger. She rushed to the shoreline, and by virtue of her magical powers of concentration, her parents were saved—the sole survivors of the fleet. In honor of her great filial piety, the faithful daughter was turned into a deity—the patron goddess of sailors and fisherman.

Flanking the goddess are her sidekicks two men who constantly attended her, serving as her eyes and ears.

### ②8 Kitchen God

Above the stove of almost every household

in traditional China, determining the well-being and length of life of each member of the family, was the kitchen god -the most universally worshipped of all household gods. He was the deity who silently noted everyone's virtues and vices, and during the last month of the Chinese lunar year, took leave of the house to report to the ruler of heaven. Before his departure, sacrificial meats, charms, and prayers were offered to the deity, and honey or molasses was smeared on his mouth so that all he reported would be sweet. Then his picture was burned and he disappeared until the 13th of the month. When he returned from his journey, another picture of him was installed above the stove, amidst a banquet of vegetables laid out to content the god for another year.

There are dozens of stories describing the origin of the kitchen god. The most popular is that he was a husband, blinded for his unfaithfulness. One day when eating a porridge, he bemoaned the fact that he had not eaten so well since his marriage. The woman who had made the porridge restored his sight, whereupon he realized that she was his good wife. Overcome with shame, he leaped into the stove. His loyal wife hung his tablet in the kitchen, and so began the worship of this patron of the household and especially of all cooks.

### ②9) Taoist Priest's Costume and Implements

Taoist priests have many functions, including performing rites to cure illness, exorcising demons and evil spirits, bestowing spells and charms, and communicating with the world of the celestials. They also function as sorcerers, magicians, and fortunetellers, and the objects in this case aid them in carrying out these various pursuits.

Swords, such as the ones at the bottom, are used in many folk Taoist ceremonies - most likely because of their association with Lu Tung-pin, one of the Eight Immortals, or eight historical figures who attained immortality. Lu Tung-pin was granted a magic sword as a reward for overcoming ten temptations, and upon this sword he was able to cross the seas and to hide in the heavens. So swords in folk Taoist ceremonies often symbolize the destruction, or "cutting away," of evil.

Music also plays an important part in Taoist ritual, and cymbals, clappers, bell rattles, and

flute in this case are all used in the ceremonies. Another of the Eight Immortals, Lan Ts' ai-ho, was a troubadour and wandered the countryside accompanying himself on the clappers, or castanets. Upon ascending to the heavenly realms, he threw his robes, sandals, and castanets back to the earth.

On the middle row are scriptures, chanted by the priests as they performed the traditional rites, and on either side are charms used in communicating with the gods and commanding the forces of nature.

The robes at the right are richly decorated with Taoist emblems, all intended to intensify the spiritual powers of the wearer. Each part of the Taoist priest's regalia is symbolic and aids him in becoming at once closer to the realm of the spirits and in harmony with the world of men.

### ③0) Ritual Boat

This brightly-colored model of a boat was part of a popular ritual for quelling plagues, practiced especially in Taiwan. As you can see, it was created with great attention to detail, with symbols of a safe voyage along the sides at the front, followed by small figures of sailors that are amazingly realistic. Then under the carved figures are painted images of the Eight Immortals and of the mighty dragon who, according to legend, dwelled in the deep dark waters of the universe. When the boat was completed, the anxious villagers either launched it into the sea or burned it in a ritualistic ceremony with the belief that it would carry away the plague.

The video in this area shows an elaborate ceremony which ends with a boat similar to this one being burned, hopefully destroying the plague along with it. I highly recommend that you spend a few minutes on watching this film which captures the spirit and color of this ritual of the Taiwanese people.

### ③1) Wan Fu Temple

Temples are the houses of the gods and, whether humble or grand, bring together physically, in a single building, many of the elements of Chinese beliefs and spiritual life! A hierarchical order, harmony of form, and rich symbolism are all part of temple architecture, and it is here that the three realms of the

universe — the cosmos, humans, and the gods meet.

This temple was once located in a fishing village called Wan Fu in southern Taiwan, and was dedicated to five gods of the local community. It was originally built in the early 20th century and, since then, has been rebuilt a number of times as the faithful worshippers have continued to give donations for improvements. This structure was created from fragments salvaged and restored by the Museum in 1987 when the temple underwent its most recent face-lift. It was designed with strict attention to Feng-shui. The main facade faced south, the most auspicious direction, as did the altars where incense was burned and offerings of food and paper money were made to the gods. The temple was divided into three sections, corresponding to the three realms of the universe, and on the floor are black markings, indicating the doorways leading from one section to the next. The red markings on the floor show where walls and pillars once stood.

The extraordinary carvings on the columns, ceilings and panels and the decorative paintings all serve as visual reminders of the richness of Chinese myth and legend. Many of the scenes illustrated come from the classic tales *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and *The Water Margin* and also from the famous *Twenty-Four Paragons of Filial Piety*.

To approach the altar, as you may now wish to do, one climbed slowly upward, towards Heaven, because each section of the temple was raised slightly higher than the one before it. At the end, above the altarpiece, is the celestial army of the universe, beautifully carved in wood. These figures are the guardians of the universe and are appropriately represented here at the innermost sanctum of the temple where the people meet and honor their gods.

