
Family Guide

Explore Asian Art

Journey to a Chinese Garden Court

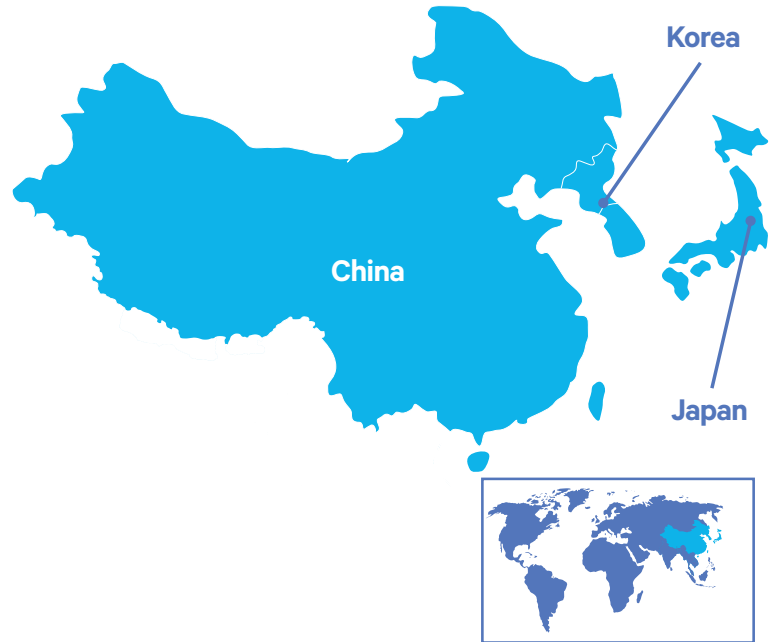


THE
MET

Discover the beauty of nature within the Museum's walls! Explore the Astor Chinese Garden Court and more in The Met's Asian art galleries.

Use the cards in this guide to find the works of art. Turn the cards over for fun facts and activities.

This map shows the countries represented by the works of art in this guide.



Words to Know

Asia: the world's largest and most populated continent

Basin: a round, open container, especially one used for holding liquids

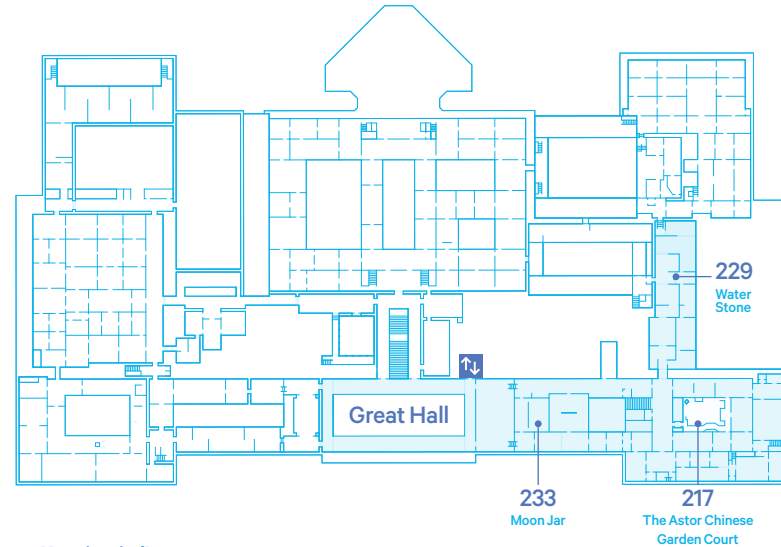
Character: in the Chinese written language, a symbol that is a word or part of a word

Scholar: a person with a deep knowledge of a particular subject. Chinese scholars were educated people who were respected for knowing their culture's traditions.

Yin-yang: an ancient Chinese idea that opposites in nature—like dark and light, rough and smooth—work together to create the changes and rhythms in our lives.

Opposites at Play
Following the Chinese idea of yin-yang, opposites play in this garden—outside and inside, wet and dry, natural and man-made. What other opposites do you notice?

Asian Art Galleries Floor 2



Keep in mind!

Sometimes we have to move works of art or even close galleries to renovate them or prepare for exhibitions. When in doubt, ask a guard for help!

Please help us keep the Astor Chinese Garden Court safe by keeping your feet on the ground and not on the rocks and plants.

Moon Gate **Enter Another World**



Gallery 217
The Astor Chinese Garden Court

Walkway **Wonder as You Wander**



Gallery 217
The Astor Chinese Garden Court

Imagine

Long ago, Chinese scholars studied, painted, played instruments, and wrote poems in gardens like this one. Being close to nature was important to them. Imagine you are a scholar. What inspires you?

Look

Look out from the covered walkway. What do you see? The tile floor becomes an ocean, while the rocks rise upwards like islands or mountain peaks. Which view from the walkway do you like best? What do you hear? The sound of trickling water might remind you of a babbling stream.

Write

Write your own poem about nature.

**Imagine**

Leave behind the hustle and bustle. Glimpse through the circle, past the rectangular doorway, to discover the magical garden beyond.

Look

Notice the Chinese characters above the entrance. They read: "In Search of Quietude." Talk to family and friends about what these words might mean.

Pause and take a deep breath before you step into the garden.

Did You Know?

This entrance to the garden is called a moon gate because it's round like the moon! In Chinese architecture, circles are often paired with squares. The circle symbolizes the universe. The square, with its four sides, represents the earth and its four directions—north, south, east, west. Look for circular and square shapes as you enter the garden.

Scholars' Rock Moving Mountains



Gallery 217
The Astor Chinese Garden Court

Drip Tiles Raining Fortunes



Gallery 217
The Astor Chinese Garden Court

Imagine

It starts to rain. Rainwater drips off the pointed ends of the roof tiles like a curtain of beads. What do you hear? Where will you take shelter?

Did You Know?

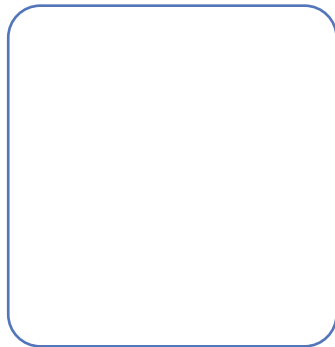
The design on the tiles shows the Chinese character for long life, or *shou* (pronounced *show*), with coins and squares that stand for wealth and good fortune. When rain falls on the tiles it drips these “three happinesses” down onto the garden and the people below.

Look

Look at the tiles along the edge of the slanted roof. Find the tiles that are shaped like triangles and have pointed ends. They're called drip tiles.

Write

Try your hand at writing the Chinese character for water (*shui*) 水.



Look

Find a rock that towers above the others. The more top-heavy and interestingly shaped the better! Look closely to discover the many holes. Rocks like these are highly prized because they reminded Chinese scholars of magical caves that might lead to hidden worlds.

Bonus: In the Chinese art galleries, look for pictures of scholars in gardens that look like this one.

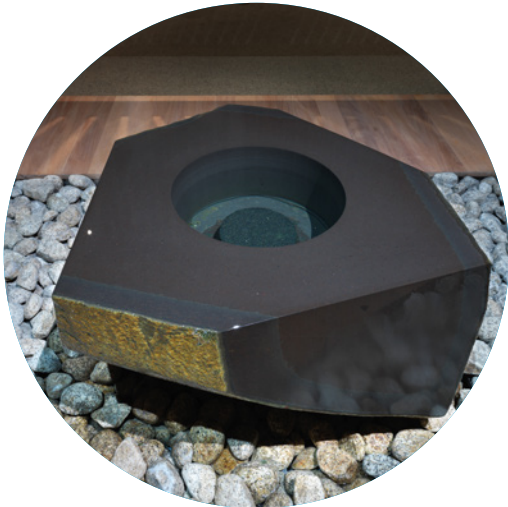
Did You Know?

The rocks in this garden are called scholars' rocks. They inspired scholars at their desks and in their gardens. Craftsmen arranged the rocks here to look like the Chinese character for mountain (*shan*) 山.

Pose

Owners of gardens like this one imagined the shapes of animals, dragons, and other creatures in the rocks. What creature do you see in the rocks? Pose like that creature. What sound might it make?

Water Stone
Hearing a Garden



Gallery 229
Arts of Japan, The Sackler Wing Galleries

Moon Jar
Store Your Dreams



Gallery 233
The Arts of Korea Gallery

Look

We looked at nature in the Astor Chinese Garden Court. Now let's explore nature in the Arts of Korea Gallery! Search for a container that is milky white and round like the moon. Walk all the way around it. Look carefully at the color and describe it.

Did You Know?

This is called a moon jar and it may have been used to store grain.

Draw

Think about a food that is important to your family or community. Draw a special container to store it in.

**Look**

Remember the water in the Astor Chinese Garden Court? Listen for the sound of water in the Arts of Japan Galleries. Find it flowing up into the round opening of *Water Stone*. Many Japanese gardens include stone basins that collect water from rain and surrounding mountain streams.

Imagine

You are wandering through a Japanese garden on a hot summer's day. You might refresh yourself with cool water from a stone basin. How does it feel?

Write

In nature, opposites like the ones you can find in the Chinese Garden Court continuously change and balance each other. List the opposites you notice in this sculpture.

Nature, Nature Everywhere

China, Korea, and Japan—known as East Asia—are neighbors. Travel through the East Asian art galleries and see the theme of nature in many works of art. Find and sketch mountains, flowers and plants, rocks, water, and the moon.



**The Metropolitan
Museum of Art**

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metmuseum.org

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Cover: Illustration of The Astor Chinese Garden Court
pavilion by Rebecca Clarke

Inside (left to right, top to bottom): **The Astor Chinese Garden Court:** moon gate, walkway, scholars' rock, drip tile. 17th-century Ming-dynasty style, built 1980. Taihu rocks, granite terrace, ceramic tile flooring, roof tiles, and door frames, various woods (nan wood columns, pine beams, ginkgo latticework), brass fittings. Purchase, The Vincent Astor Foundation Gift, 1981.

Water Stone. 1986. Isamu Noguchi (American, 1904–88). Basalt, H. 25 in. (63.6 cm), W. 42 3/4 in. (108.6 cm). Purchase, Anonymous Gift 1987 (1987.222). © The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. **Moon Jar.** Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910), second half of the 18th century. Korea. Porcelain, H. 15 1/4 in. (38.7 cm), Diam. 13 in. (33 cm). The Harry G. C. Packard Collection of Asian Art, Gift of Harry G. C. Packard, and Purchase, Fletcher, Rogers and Harris Brisbane Dick and Louis V. Bell Funds, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, and the Annenberg fund Inc. Gift, 1975 (1979.413.1)