

「博雅——閱讀古人生活美學」古籍文獻展

Erudition : An Exhibition on Reading the Ancient Aesthetics of Living

In the summer of 2012, NCL staged its first exhibition at Taiwan Academy's New York, Houston, and Los Angeles Resource Points, entitled *Erudition: An Exhibition on Reading the Ancient Aesthetics of Living*. The exhibition focused on reprints of books related to the exhibition theme from the Library's collection, alongside related modern Taiwanese publications and some of the fruits of the NCL rare book digitization project. It was divided into four main themes: Leisure Life of the Literati; Dramatic Literature; Conceptions of Health; and Observing Nature. To accompany the opening of the exhibition, Liu Chun-tsu gave a lecture ([Taiwan Lectures on Chinese Studies](#)) entitled *Boundless in Movement in Accord with Time: Chinese Cultural Transmission in the 21st Century from the Perspective of the I Ching*. There was also a tea party to celebrate the opening, at which Chinese-style tea and refreshments were served, so that guests could enjoy Chinese tea-drinking culture while admiring the ancient books.

The aim of the exhibition was to emphasize that reading ancient books is not just a way of getting into the classics of Chinese literature, but also a shortcut linking the aesthetics of living of ancient and modern people; in re-examining how this small group of literati blended their personal tastes with their everyday lives, this exhibition also demonstrates how ancients' emphasized culture, venerated nature, and valued life.

Leisure Life of the Literati 人文雅趣

In modern times, Chinese literati have strongly emphasized the appreciation of life. This attitude to life was not just in pursuit of some kind of inner liberation, but also a way to increase knowledge. For this reason, it is considered worthwhile exploring all leisure activities in life that bring clarity to the mind.

FACEBOOK An ancient 'Facebook'

New Tales of the World, written by Liu Yiqing (Northern and Southern Dynasties). Yuan dynasty (1287) critical edition. Originally published by Liu Yingdeng. (cat. no. 08235)

Written and compiled by Liu Yiqing in the 5th century, it records the customs and practices of literary figures and personalities in vogue between the late Han and Eastern Jin, and reveals the community life of the times. Please [click](#) to browse the electronic version of this book.



The scribbling of historical figures

Zhuang tao ge tie. Ink rubbing. (Cat. no. Gold 1344)

This large format copy book of inscription rubbings made by modern collector Pei Jingfu is an historical collection of model calligraphy produced by emperors, famous officials and calligraphers, such as Wang Xizhi and Wang Xianzhi. Please [click](#) to browse the electronic version of this book.



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A picture book preserving musical scores for the zither.

Tai gu yi yin. Ming dynasty. Fine quality color manuscript copy.

Ming literati liked to combine refined interests such as the zither, chess, and reading and painting in their lives. This book not only contains beautiful calligraphy, but is also illustrated in color. The original is preserved only in the National Central Library.



The pinnacle of modern printing techniques.

Ten Bamboo Studio Collection of Calligraphy and Painting by Hu Zhengyan. Ming dynasty. Kangxi-era color print edition, published by Jieziyuan (cat. no. 06719).

This set of books running to a total of around 320 pages of pictures and writings features an elegant use of colour, but even more noteworthy is the printing technique employed: it uses scores of engravings merged together for rubbing. Please [click](#) to browse the electronic version of this book.



First experience of art.

The Mustard Seed Garden Painting Manual by Wang Gai. Kangxi-era color edition published by Jieziyuan in Jinling (Nanjing). (cat. no. 25546)

This set of books on the art of painting is divided into three collections: the first part begins with the basics, use of colour, types of stroke, figures, and scenes; the second is on painting orchids, plums, bamboo, and chrysanthemums; the third is on the themes of grass and insects, flowers and plants, and birds and animals. The use of color is magnificent.



An Ikea catalogue for the literati.

Xinshang bian by Shen Jin. Ming dynasty Wanli-era enlarged multicolor edition. Original published in 1511 in Changzhou. (cat. no. 15228)

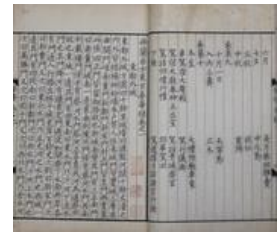
This is a catalogue of elegant playthings, reflecting the tastes and particularities in the lives of the literati of modern times. Provides explanations for everything, including antiques, stamps, tea sets and utensils, and writing materials.



The story of Chinese city

Youlanjushi Dongjing meng hua lu by Meng Yuanlao. Ming dynasty copy of the Song dynasty original. (cat. no 04047)

This book relates the sights and stories of Kaifeng, the capital of the Song imperial court, between 1102 and 1125. The reader can readily compare these with the Ming and Qing river pictures. Please click to browse the electronic version of this book. Please [click](#) to browse the electronic version of this book.



A singing, weeping, confessional love poem.

Zhi jin hui wen xuan ji tu shi ji zhu dou fa ge ke by Su Hui. Former Qin dynasty. Manuscript copy. (Cat. no. 14681)

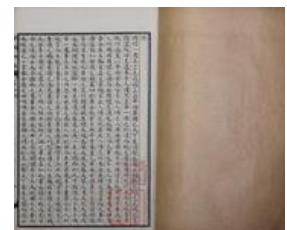
A work by Su Ruolan expressing her longing for her husband in the form of a poem that can be read in both directions, which she then embroidered on her brocade. Shares similarities with Western concrete poetry.



The time traveler's essential guide to living.

Li Weng ou ji by Li Yu. Qing dynasty. 1928 lithographic edition published by Puyi Shuju. (Cat. No. 19815-0002)

Also known as Occasional Notes at Leisure, this book is the crystallization of the author's literary, aesthetic and artistic creativity. It is also regarded as a guide to understanding the ancients' art of living. Please [click](#) to browse the electronic version of this book.



The broad voice of the masses

Jingshi tongyan by Feng Menglong. Ming dynasty. 1620s woodblock edition. (Cat. No. 08631)

This book is a script produced by the Ming dynasty master of popular literature Feng Menglong by gathering, rearranging, polishing, and revising literary materials from the Song, Yuan and Ming dynasties.



Please [click](#) to browse the electronic version of this book.

Real criticism of society.

Lao can you ji by Liu E. Qing dynasty. Collected in *Xiu xiang xiaoshuo* (1903).

This book is a typical work of Chinese social literature. From the viewpoint of a travelling doctor, the author expresses his intense dissatisfaction with the politics of the time and his humanistic concerns. Please [click](#) to browse the electronic version of this book.



Dramatic Literature 戲曲文學

To Chinese literati, art and literature are not only an expression of creative talent; they are also a reflection on local identity, emotion and human relationships. Of the Ming dynasty dramatic literature in block print in the Library's collection, many editions feature a combination of both exquisite text and beautiful images. Besides being highly entertaining, they also served to disseminate literature and knowledge, and without exception clearly illustrate the refined taste of the literati.

The earliest shoots of modern feminist literature.

Mudanting huanhun ji by Tang Xianzu. Ming dynasty. 1617 woodblock edition. (cat. no. 15096)

A play representative of the work of renowned dramatist Tang Xianzu. In particular describes Du Liniang's rebellious character constricted by the Confucian code of ethics. Clearly shows her pursuit of and attachment to love.

Please [click](#) to browse the electronic version of this book.



False heroes.

Li Zhuowu Critiques the History of the Three Kingdoms by Luo Guanzhong. Late Yuan/early Ming dynasty. Ming dynasty woodblock edition. (cat. no. 08608)

The time of the Three Kingdoms forged many heroes; their stories were written down and became the Romance of the Three Kingdoms. This edition is a forged commentary on that work.



Songs of love and passion.

Wusao ji. Ming dynasty woodblock edition. (cat. no 15019)

This book mainly questions the literary forms in vogue at the time. The author believes that literature should faithfully reflect human emotions and local flavor. Please [click](#) to browse the electronic version of this book.



A book of medical treatments that make use of drama and music.

Baixue zhai zhuanding yuefu wusao he bian by Zhang Chushu. Ming dynasty (1637) woodblock edition. (cat no. 15039)

This book chiefly contains pieces from the traditional opera of the Zhejiang area, and also features delicate illustrations printed from blocks carved by master craftsmen. The compiler believed that singing can cure disease. Please [click](#) to browse the electronic version of this book.



A master discusses drama.

Romance of the West Chamber, Ancient Edition Newly Collated and Annotated by Wang Shifu. Yuan dynasty. Early Qing dynasty print. (cat. no. 15060)

Originating with the Tang dynasty writer Yuan Zhen's literary tale *The Story of Yingying*, *The Romance of the West Chamber* was later adapted by Wang Shifu into a poetic drama in the Yuan dynasty, and in modern times has become famed as an important dramatic work. Ming dynasty thinker Li Zhuowu believed that the writing of this drama, its language and emotion, betrays no visible scars of its creation, and was already almost fully mature. The edition in the library's collection is a Ming dynasty edition collated by Wang Jide. The reader might like to compare the interpretation in this edition with that of *Li Zhuowu Critiques the Romance of the West Chamber*, held in the Library of Congress collection. Please [click](#) to browse the complete book.



Popular songs of the south.

Ci lin yi xiang, compiled by Xu Yu. Ming dynasty. Reassembled copy of 1623 edition. (cat. no. 15035)

The author of this book believed that the masters of music and drama historically were all from the south. However, the pieces published at the time were of variable standard, and not worthy of publication.



The gods battle on Earth.

Feng shen zhen xing tu. Ink drawn edition. (Cat no. 08649)

Another technique besides block printing used in ancient books was hand-painting. This book features illustrations of the ancient legend The Investiture of the Gods. Please [click](#) to browse the electronic version of this book.



Heroic legends.

Xin juan quan xiang wu mu jing zhong zhuan. Qing dynasty. Kangxi-era woodblock edition. (Cat. no. 08644)

This book is an adaptation of Xiong Damu's work The Romance of the Rejuvenation of the Song Dynasty. It recounts the legend of the Song dynasty general Yue Fei.



Legendary stories? Stories of legends?

Tang ren shuo hui, edited by Liantang jushi. Qing dynasty. Republican-era lithographed edition published in Shanghai (cat. no. 19281)

Traditional Chinese tales can be divided thematically into cautionary tales, tales of love, and historical tales. People in ancient times were no less captivated by them as people today are by Harry Potter. Please [click](#) to browse the electronic version of this book.



The fantastic journey of an ancient scholar.

Tu xiang jing hua yuan by Li Ruzhen. Qing dynasty. 1890 lithographed edition published in Shanghai. (Cat. no. 25542)

The author of this book is an eminent and learned scholar. Though it is packed with fantastic episodes with demons and monsters, ultimately it is a critique of honor and rank. Please [click](#) to browse the electronic version of this book.

Conceptions of Health 養生意境

People in ancient times were fond of exploring ways to maintain their health and vitality; in the main, this was considered to be connected to the qualities of one's environment. During time spent in seclusion living in the mountains, besides reading, scholars and literati paid particularly close attention to everything relating to their surrounding environment and personal health. Because of this, researching different foods and drinks and ways of improving and maintaining one's health became a shared interest of many literati. In this respect they resembled the catholic monks of

medieval Europe.

An encyclopedia of tea leaves.

The Classic of Tea by Lu Yu. Tang dynasty. Ming dynasty woodblock edition. (cat no. 06876)

Completed in 780, this book is the earliest and most systematic specialist volume on tea in existence, taking 27 years to complete. Please [click](#) to browse the electronic version of this book.



The Imperial family's tea recommendations.

The Record of Tea by Cai Xiang. Song dynasty. Qing dynasty (1910) manuscript copy. (Cat. no. 06878)

The Record of Tea is in fact a book of tea leaf recommendations to the Emperor. It reflects the artistry of producing and tasting tea in vogue during the Song. Like the Classic of Tea before it, it has had substantial influence on later

generations.



A world-saving cookbook.

Yi ya yi yi, edited by Han Yi. Ming dynasty. Wanli-era (1573-1620) woodblock edition printed in Jinling (Nanjing). (cat. no. 15274-0039)

This book's author, Han Yi, was not only a reclusive doctor, but also an expert on treatment with foods. This book includes information on fermentation, cakes and biscuits, vegetarianism, fruits, soups and decoctions, and food treatments. Altogether there are a total of 150 recipes. Please [click](#) to browse the electronic version of this book.



The dietary knowledge of a master.

Sui yuan shi dan by Yuan Mei. Qing dynasty. 1824 woodblock edition. (Cat. no 19345)

Qing dynasty poet Yuan Meihe, the author of this book, was deeply interested in food and beverages, and so recorded many dishes, famous wines, teas, and his thoughts on the factors that influence state of mind and sense of taste when tasting food.



Quotations on the aesthetics of living.

You meng ying by Zhang Chao. Qing dynasty. Daoguang-era woodblock edition. (cat. no. 17018-0471)

Descriptions of the leisurely lives of the literati in quotation form. There are 219 quotes altogether. The author proposes that the aesthetics of living can be found all around us. Please [click](#) to browse the electronic version of this book.



Dancing with Heaven and Earth.

Ya shang zhai zun sheng ba jian by Gao Lian. Ming dynasty. Wanli-era (1573-1620) woodblock edition. (Cat. no. 07649)

The Ming dynasty dramatist Gao Lian's treatise on maintaining good health. This book reveals the great value of life; taking rest and nourishing oneself daily in accordance with the seasons. Please [click](#) to browse the electronic version of this book.



Delicacy or medical treatment?

Shiwu ben cao by Li Guo. Jin dynasty. Ming dynasty (1621) woodblock edition. (cat. no. 06230)

This edition was collated by the famous Ming dynasty doctor Li Shizhen, who had a lifelong fondness for medical research. The book discusses everyday eating and drinking and simple ways to maintain health.



Advice from a centenarian.

Yinshi xuzhi by Gu Ming. Ming dynasty. Qing dynasty (1831) movable type edition. (Cat. no. 15343-0367)

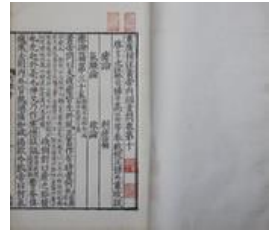
Jia Ming, the author of this book, was born in the Yuan dynasty and lived to see the Ming Dynasty, dying at over 100 years old. He believed that any substance or food had both positive and negative properties, of which one should be cautiously aware.



When myth becomes medicine.

Zhong guang bu zhu huang di nei jing su wen, annotated by Wang Bing. Tang dynasty. Ming dynasty (1550) edition of a Song dynasty woodblock. (Cat. no. 05863)

Originally this book was just an account of a conversation between mythical figures, but after generations of interpretation and verification, by the Song dynasty it had developed into a rigorous work on medicine.



Observing Nature 自然觀察

The lifestyle of Ming dynasty literati combined studying in relatively secluded dwellings while living off small plots of land. They also combined the pleasures of reading, book collecting, writing, and travelling, extending them to the imagination and interpretation of natural phenomena; indeed in living lives of knowledge and spirituality, they left behind many works that resemble modern western encyclopedias.

An ancient picture encyclopedia.

San cai tu hui by Wang Qi. Ming dynasty. Original 1609 woodblock edition. (Cat. no 08059)

This book can be said to be a compilation of all kinds of pictures produced up to the Ming dynasty, with explanatory text. For example, many of the renderings of people's likenesses are faithful, but some are pure fabrication.



Jiangnan's first talented female painter in 300 years.

Jin shi kunchong caomu zhuang by Wen Chu. Ming dynasty. Color manuscript (1617-1620). (Cat. no. 06921)

This book's compiler, Wen Chu, was the great-great-granddaughter of Ming dynasty Wu school painter Wen Zhengming. It contains an album with a total of 1070 sketches which one not only can appreciate, but which also provide rare information for those researching medicinal ingredients. Please [click](#) to browse the electronic version of this book.



A sixth sense about the world.

Tian yuan yu li xiang yi fu. Ming dynasty high quality color manuscript. (Cat. no 06472)

Working from a basis of how ancient people observed the world, this book records changes in natural phenomena, and then based on these phenomena deduces the meaning of real events in human life.



A journey through ecological literature.

Xihu zhi lei chao by Yu Sichong. Ming dynasty. Woodblock edition.

(Cat. no. 04015)

Since ancient times Xihu (the West Lake) has produced many masters of literature, who have left behind a considerable number of works. This book gathers together works by these great writers extolling the virtues of Xihu's natural and human environment.



Songs of wild herbs.

Yecai pu by Wang Pan. Ming dynasty. Wanli-era (1573-1620) woodblock edition.

(Cat. no. 06922)

This book records 60 kinds of wild herb with annotations, arranging poetry alongside many types of paintings. The poems are simple and convenient for passing on to other people. Please [click](#) to browse the electronic version of this book.



Gazing up at the stars and constellations.

Tianwen tushuo. Author unknown. Ming dynasty old manuscript.

(Cat. no. 06255)

This book is one of the few existing ancient Chinese works to depict the milky way, which is variously known in Chinese as tianhe, yinhe, tianhan, and xinghan.



The story of Taiwan's great adventurer.

Bi hai ji you by Yu Yonghe. Qing dynasty. 1833 woodblock edition. (Cat. no. 17018-0170)

This book is the diary of the author's 9 month trip to Taiwan collecting sulphur. Its descriptions of indigenous Taiwanese make it valuable for research into Taiwan's history. Please [click](#) to browse the electronic version of this book.



Digital rare books 數位風華

To allow the reader to appreciate the crystallization of the wisdom of ancient times, the National Library is successively making available images of rare books in its collection, and producing a succession of e-books. It is hoped that these small e-books, packed with knowledge, will bring to the public the delights of refined culture and provide a new reading experience. Please click to download: <http://goo.gl/8wpw3>.

一、人文雅趣

《世說新語》 *New Tales of the World* [e-book](#)

《幽蘭居士東京夢華錄》 *Youlanjushi Dongjing meng hua lu* [e-book](#)

《警世通言》 *Jingshi tongyan* [e-book](#)

《笠翁偶集》 *Li Weng ou ji* [e-book](#)

《老殘遊記》 *Lao can you ji* [e-book](#)

《十竹齋書畫譜》 *Ten Bamboo Studio Collection of Calligraphy and Painting* [e-book](#)

《壯陶閣帖》 *Zhuang tao ge tie* [e-book](#)

二、戲曲文學

《圖像鏡花緣》 *Tu xiang jing hua yuan* [e-book](#)

《唐人說薈》 *Tang ren shuo hui* [e-book](#)

《新校注古本西廂記》 *Romance of the West Chamber, Ancient Edition Newly Collated and Annotated* [e-book](#)

《白雪齋選訂樂府吳騷合編》 *Baixue zhai zhuanding yuefu wusao he bian* [e-book](#)

《吳騷集》 *Wusao ji* [e-book](#)

《封神真形圖》 *Feng shen zhen xing tu* [e-book](#)

《牡丹亭還魂記》 *Mudanting huanhun ji* [e-book](#)

三、養生意境

《茶經》 *The Classic of Tea* [e-book](#)

《幽夢影》 *You meng ying* [e-book](#)

《雅尚齋遵生八牋》 *Ya shang zhai zun sheng ba jian* [e-book](#)

《易牙遺意》 *Yi ya yi yi* [e-book](#)

四、自然觀察

《野菜譜》 *Yecai pu* [e-book](#)

《金石昆蟲草木狀》 *Jin shi kunchong caomu zhuang* [e-book](#)

《裨海紀遊》 *Bi hai ji you* [e-book](#)

Erudition: An Exhibition on Reading the Ancient Aesthetics of Living

Resource Point in Taiwan Academy in Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in New York

2012/06/19~2012/07/18



Exhibition at the New York Resource Point



Reprints of ancient editions displayed on the wall



Visitors admire reprints of ancient editions in a glass display cabinet



NCL director-general Tseng Shu-hsien

Tea party : 2012/06/19



Souvenirs



A member of staff makes tea for visitors

Erudition: An Exhibition on Reading the Ancient Aesthetics of Living

Resource Point in Taiwan Academy in Culture Center of Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Houston

2012/06/21 ~ 2012/07/22



Entrance to the exhibition held at the Houston Resource Point



Modern book exhibit and five-color prints for stamping



Reprints of ancient editions on display in glass cabinets



Staff guide visitors around the exhibits

Tea party : 2012/06/21



The reception area provides visitors with souvenirs



A delicious range of refreshments available at the exhibition

Erudition: An Exhibition on Reading the Ancient Aesthetics of Living

Resource Point in Taiwan Academy in Culture Center of Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Los Angeles

2012/06/24~2012/07/22



Reading area and cabinet displaying reprints of ancient editions



Modern book exhibit



Images and descriptions of plants from two of the books displayed on the wall



Five-color prints are provided to exhibition visitors for stamping as souvenirs

Tea party : 2012/06/24



A variety of teas were available at the tea party



The Chinese-style refreshments provided at the tea party were very well received