

Arts of Asia Lecture Series Fall 2015  
Asia's Storied Traditions  
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The Moral of the Story: Narrative Art in Early China  
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**Key Terms**

Myth, ritual, story

Narrative syntax: exemplification (monoscenes), seriation (continuous narration), juxtaposition, parallelism, multivalence

**Key Works Shown**

*Yu* bucket in the form of a tiger embracing (or devouring) a human, late Shang dynasty, ca. 11<sup>th</sup> c. BCE. Sumitomo Collection.

*Hu* vessel with Hunting Scenes, Warring States Period, 5<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> c. BCE. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (B60 B1075).

*Hu* vessel with Scenes of Hunting, Fishing, and Music-making, Warring States Period, ca. 5<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> c. BCE. Palace Museum, Beijing.

T-Shaped Silk Painting, Tomb of Lady Dai, W. Han, ca. 180 BCE, Mawangdui, Changsha, Hunan. Hunan Provincial Museum): Transformation of Lady Dai.

Tomb with Painted Murals, W. Han, Jiaotong University, Xi'an: Feasts and the Heavens.

Tomb #61, Luoyang, Henan, Western Han, ca. 1<sup>st</sup> c. BCE: *Two Peaches Kill Three Warriors* and a *Sacrificial Feast*.

Shrine of Wu Liang, Eastern Han, ca. 151 CE, Jiaxiang County, Shandong

Culture heroes (Fu Xi and Nü Wa, the Yellow Emperor, etc.) and moral paragons (the Virtuous Woman of Liang, Jingke's Attempted Assassination of the First Emperor, etc.) vs. ritual performance.

Seated Buddha, gilt bronze, dated 338 CE. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (B60 B1034)

Pensive Maitreya, marble, Northern Qi, dated 551. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (B60 S279)

Two Pensive Maitreyas (?), marble, dated 565, N. Qi. Freer Gallery, Washington, DC.

Shakyamuni and Prabhutaratna, gilt bronze, Northern Wei, dated 518 CE. Musée Guimet, Paris.

Dunhuang, Cave 254 (Northern Wei, probably ca. 470s): Central image (stupa-pillar, west face): Maitreya Buddha

South (left) wall, Lower register: Siddhartha's Defeat of Mara (the Buddha's Enlightenment) → Tiger Jataka

North (right) wall, Lower register: King of the Shibus jataka → Sermon of the Buddha (Conversion of Nanda)

### **Further Reading**

Esther Jacobson, "The Structure of Narrative in Early Chinese Pictorial Vessels," *Representations* 8 (Fall 1984): 61-83.

Eugene Wang, "Afterlife Entertainment? The Cauldron and Bare-torso Figures at the First Emperor's Tomb," in *Beyond the First Emperor's Mausoleum: New Perspectives on Qin Culture*, ed. Liu Yang (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 2015), p. 51-87.

Patricia Berger, "Purity and Pollution in Han Art," *Archives of Asian Art* 36 (1983): 40-58.

Stanley K. Abe, "Art and Practice in a Fifth-Century Chinese Buddhist Cave Temple," *Ars Orientalis* 20 (1990): 1-32