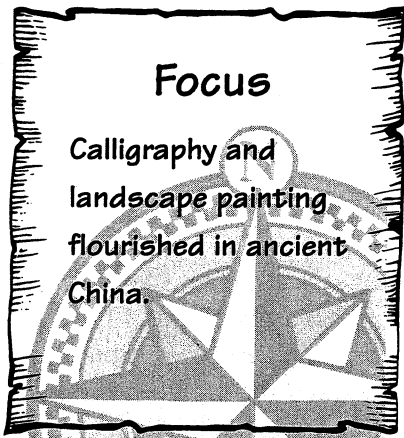


Ancient Chinese Art

Brief #3



Calligraphy

Chinese calligraphy is the art of drawing Chinese characters or pictograms. It is a very ancient practice that goes back thousands of years. The earliest forms of calligraphy were found carved on oracle bones. **Oracle bones are the bones of turtles and other animals that the ancient Chinese used to predict the future.** As Chinese civilization advanced, writings were etched onto stone and metal. The ancient art of Chinese calligraphy is still practiced today.

A person who was very skilled at the art of calligraphy was called a master. The merit of calligraphy was judged by the brushwork, meaning how the brush was used to make the characters. One of the great masters of Chinese calligraphy was called Wang Xizhi. He lived in about 220 A.D.



Painting

The ancient Chinese were also very skilled at landscape painting. **A landscape is a painting of a natural scene.** Landscape paintings do not have people in them. Two famous ancient Chinese landscape painters were Li Sixum and Li Zhaotao. They were father and son. Their paintings were highly detailed. They used a lot of blue, green, white, and gold in their work.



Bronze Work and Jade

During the Bronze Age, the ancient Chinese made many beautiful objects from the metal. They made masks, animal figures, mirrors, and a variety of different types of containers. Often these items were inlaid with gold and silver. A lot of the bronze work that the ancient Chinese made was used in religious ceremonies.

The ancient Chinese also made many things out of jade. **Jade is a hard, green-colored stone.** It is not easy to carve things from jade. At first the things that were made were very simple because the tools that the ancient Chinese had were not that sharp or precise. But as their tools improved, the carvings that they made from the stone became more intricate.

Vocabulary

1. calligraphy
2. oracle bones
3. landscape
4. jade
5. Terracotta Army

Ancient Chinese Art

Brief #3 (cont.)



Terracotta Army

One of the most famous and intriguing pieces of ancient Chinese art is the Terracotta Army. **The Terracotta Army is a collection of about seven thousand life-sized sculptures made from pottery.** The stone army was made for the first emperor of China, Shi Huangdi. They were buried with the emperor in order to protect him in the afterlife. The Terracotta Army dates from 200 B.C.

The Terracotta Army was found in 1974. Some men were digging a well when they uncovered some of the figures. This is considered one of the greatest archeological finds of all time. The soldiers in the Terracotta Army are arranged in rows, in a kind of military formation. The average size of a Terracotta soldier is five feet eleven inches. Even though there are thousands and thousands of sculptures, no two are alike! Buried with the army are also life-sized horses, chariots and weapons.

