



Scholar's Stone

Date

1050-221 BCE

Medium

Stone, wood and lacquer

Description

Throughout history Chinese scholars have been greatly respected for their dedication to the study of philosophy, classical literature, poetry, and the teachings of Confucius. A scholar's area was meant to be a quiet, private place where one could study such topics and where the fine arts of calligraphy, painting, writing, and music were practiced. The tools and furnishings that were placed in a scholar's study were as refined and sophisticated as the interests they pursued themselves. Paper, brush, ink, and inkstone were so essential to the

scholar they were known as the Four Treasures of the Scholar's Studio. To paint, ink cakes were ground and mixed with water in the inkstone which served as a receptacle where the scholar dipped his brush before applying it to paper. This object is a Scholar's Stone. Naturally occurring large stone formations were displayed outside in gardens, while smaller versions of these stones would be mounted on stands and displayed inside scholars' studies. These smaller desktop adornments provided a scholar with an object for contemplation and admiration while working, practicing calligraphy or painting. Great care was given when selecting stones. Scholars wanted to display stones that were representative of the natural world and displayed transformation through natural processes such as erosion. These changes embodied the possibility of the ideal of transformation through nature. The stones were sometimes chiseled to better embody these characteristics.

Dimensions

16 × 13 × 4 3/4 in. (40.6 × 33 × 12.1 cm)