



Close up photo of the “River of Wisdom” picture in the Restaurant



This is the center and main focus of the “River of Wisdom” painting from the 18th century. The original is from the 12th century and it is a 25.5 cm x 525 cm scroll painting.



“River of Wisdom” picture in the Restaurant

The “*River of Wisdom*” is also called “*Along the River During the Qingming Festival*” (simplified Chinese: 清明上河图). It is a panoramic painting by Song Dynasty artist Zhang Zeduan (1085–1145). It captures the daily life of people and the landscape of the capital, Bianjing, today's Kaifeng, from the Song period. The theme celebrates the festive spirit and worldly commotion at the Qingming Festival. The entire piece was painted in hand scroll format and the content reveals the lifestyle of all levels of the society from rich to poor as well as different economic activities in rural areas and the city. It offers glimpses of period clothing and architecture. As an artistic creation, the piece has been revered and court artists of subsequent dynasties have made several re-interpretive replicas. The painting is also known for its geometrically accurate images of variety natural elements and architectures, boats and bridges, market place and stores, people and scenery. It is often considered to be the most renowned work among all Chinese paintings, and it has been called "China's Mona Lisa".

In the 5.25-meter long picture, there are 814 humans, 28 boats, 60 animals, 30 buildings, 20 vehicles, nine sedan chairs, and 170 trees. The countryside and the densely populated city are the two main sections in the picture, with the river meandering through the entire length.

The main part of the picture is where the great bridge crosses the river (as shown in all these 3 pictures). It depicts a great commotion from the people on the bridge. A boat approaches at an awkward angle with its mast not completely lowered, threatening to crash into the bridge. The crowds on the bridge and along the riverside are shouting and gesturing towards the boat. Someone near the apex of the bridge lowers a rope to the outstretched arms of the crew below. There are shops and diners, hotels, temples, private residences, and official buildings varying in grandeur and style, from huts to mansions with grand front and backyards. People and commodities are transported by various modes: wheeled wagons, beasts of labor (in particular, a large number of donkeys and mules), sedan chairs, and chariots. The river is packed with fishing boats and passenger-carrying ferries, with men at the river bank, pulling the larger ships.