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Public Info: Humanities West [www.humanitieswest.org](http://www.humanitieswest.org)  
Tickets: City Box Office 415/392-4400, [www.cityboxoffice.com](http://www.cityboxoffice.com)

**HUMANITIES WEST**  
**WELCOMES IN THE YEAR OF THE DRAGON WITH**  
***China: The Power & Glory of the Ming Dynasty***  
Friday & Saturday, February 10 & 11, 2012  
Herbst Theatre, San Francisco

Humanities West welcomes in the auspicious Year of the Dragon with its upcoming presentation ***China: The Power & Glory of the Ming Dynasty***, a two-day program of lectures, discussions, and music exploring the maritime power and flourishing trade of Ming China, along with the resulting profusion of cultural riches in arts, crafts, literature, and drama. The program takes place on Friday, February 10, from 7:30 pm to 10 pm and Saturday, February 11, from 10 am to 4 pm, at Herbst Theatre, 401 Van Ness Avenue in San Francisco.

Tickets for ***China: The Power & Glory of the Ming Dynasty*** are priced as follows: Single tickets for the Friday program are \$50 orchestra/dress circle and \$35 balcony; single tickets for the Saturday program are \$75 orchestra/dress circle and \$45 balcony, single tickets for both days are \$115 orchestra/dress circle and \$65 balcony. Special Student/Teacher tickets are available at \$20 balcony for single day admission. Order direct from City Box Office at 415/392-4400 or [www.cityboxoffice.com](http://www.cityboxoffice.com). A limited number of free tickets for students age 25 and under are available; contact [info@humanitieswest.org](mailto:info@humanitieswest.org). For more information on the 2011-2012 season call Humanities West at 415/391-9700 or visit [www.humanitieswest.org](http://www.humanitieswest.org) for complete program descriptions and related programs.

***China: The Power & Glory of the Ming Dynasty*** brings together a panel of noted scholars and performers to investigate and reveal the dynamic society and cultural treasures of the Ming Dynasty. Discover how a military genius born a peasant reunited China and drove the once-invincible Mongol cavalry back to the homeland of Genghis Khan, and how his half-Mongol son, the Yongle emperor, rebuilt the Mongol capital at Beijing and lavished resources on vast fleets led by the Muslim eunuch Zheng He. Decades before Columbus sailed, maritime power extended Ming military and diplomatic influence to Southeast Asia, India and East Africa. Trade flourished, spurred by Ming productivity, the unquenchable European thirst for porcelain, and the vast silver reserves of Mexico and Peru. Ming urban culture transmuted that silver into a blossoming of arts, crafts, literature, and drama that rivaled the cultural riches of the Renaissance. This two-day program celebrates the maritime power and flourishing trade of the Ming Dynasty, as well as the resulting profusion of artistic expression.

The Friday evening program opens with a musical presentation by **Yangqin Zhao** and **Gangqin Zhao**, of *Melody of China*, performing on the Yangqin and Guzheng. The Yangqin is a Chinese hammered dulcimer with a near-squared soundboard, played with two bamboo sticks. The Guzheng is a Chinese zither with movable bridges and 16 - 25 strings.

The performance is followed by a talk on *Ming China and the Larger World*, by **Timothy Brook**, author and scholar of Asian Studies. Brook's lecture focuses on how China, during the Ming period, was discovering profitable links with economies elsewhere. The flood of trade became unstoppable, fueling a prosperity that China had not known for centuries and drew Europeans from around the world in unprecedented numbers.

The evening concludes with a presentation on *Art and Visual Culture* by **Michael Knight**, Senior Curator of Chinese Art at the Asian Art Museum of SF. This lecture provides an overview of the function of art at the Ming court, exploring the production and use of a vast array of objects required to serve the needs of members of the imperial family; these range from the simplest bowl for serving rice to items used in the most elaborate court rituals.

On Saturday, **Sarah Schneewind** (History, UC San Diego) presents *The Yongle Emperor's Fight for Legitimacy*, a lecture on how the Yongle emperor's rise to power resulted in the alienation of the most respected literati of the time and how he strove in numerous and dramatic ways to assert his legitimacy to the broad public. The impressive pre-Columbian sea voyages led by the Muslim eunuch Zheng He were part of that effort.

**Sophie Volpp** (East Asian Languages & Cultures, UC Berkeley) follows with a presentation on *Late Ming Drama*. The late Ming (roughly 1570-1644) ushered in the golden age of the Chinese literary drama, when literati composed plays in unprecedented numbers and owned private acting troupes, often coaching the actors themselves. This lecture focuses on the particular quality of relations among literati and actors in the privileged and precarious world of the late Ming.

The Saturday program includes a lecture/dramatization of *Peony Pavilion*. **Sheila Melvin**, a writer and consultant who specializes in China, explores the resurgence of *Kunqu*--the style of opera--that has had a renaissance in China and Taiwan after the revival in 2004-05 of Tang Xianzu's *Peony Pavilion* by producer Pai Hsien-yung performed at China's top universities (and UC Berkeley's Zellerbach Hall).

The final speaker, **Lynn Struve** (Professor Emerita of History, Indiana University) provides a talk on *The Ming in Retrospect*. This presentation considers the rise and fall of the Ming Dynasty-- its geopolitical greatness and its inevitable demise.

A panel discussion with all the presenters will follow, addressing questions from the audience. \*Ancillary programs providing opportunities to learn more about the featured topic and related issues complement this two-day event. For a complete program schedule and additional information about the presenters please visit [www.humanitieswest.org](http://www.humanitieswest.org)

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**Humanities West**, a non-profit serving the Bay Area since 1983, is devoted to exploring history to celebrate the mind and the arts. The only independent non-profit offering humanities and arts programs of this scale, Humanities West presents a diverse series of lectures and performances encompassing fine and performing arts, social history, music, politics, and philosophy of the arts. These interdisciplinary programs are designed to entertain and educate audiences and to illuminate and elevate the human spirit through exploration of the many sources of modern culture.

This program is presented with support from Grants for the Arts/SF Hotel Tax fund; George and Judy Marcus Family Foundation; Bank of the West; Stanford Humanities Center; Institute for East Asian Studies, USF Center for the Pacific Rim; Marines Memorial Theatre; Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, and individual donors.

In cooperation with American Decorative Arts Forum Northern California; California Academy of Sciences; Cal Performances; Center for the Art of Translation; Commonwealth Club of SF; Docents Council, Fine Arts Museum of SF; Fromm Institute for Lifelong Learning; Humanities Department, SF State University; Mechanics' Institute; Melody of China; Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes (OLLI), at Santa Clara University and UC Berkeley; SF and Oakland Unified School Districts; Stanford Arts Initiative; Stanford University Libraries; Townsend Center for the Humanities, UC Berkeley.

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## **CALENDAR LISTING: EVENTS/LECTURES/ARTS & CULTURE**

### **WHAT: *China: The Power & Glory of the Ming Dynasty***

Humanities West welcomes in the Year of the Dragon with its presentation of ***China: The Power & Glory of the Ming Dynasty***, a two-day program of lectures, discussions, and music exploring the maritime power and flourishing trade of Ming China, along with the resulting profusion of cultural riches in arts, crafts, literature, and drama. Speakers include Timothy Brook, Michael Knight, Sarah Schneewind, Sophie Volpp, Sheila Melvin, and Lynn Struve; musical performance by Yangqin Zhao and Gangqin Zhao of *Melody of China*

**WHEN: 7:30pm to 10:00pm, Friday, February 10, 2012  
10am to 12noon and 1:30pm to 4pm, Saturday, February, 2012**

**WHERE: Herbst Theatre  
401 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco**

**TICKETS: \$20 - \$75**  
Tickets are available through City Box Office at 415-392-4400 or online at [www.cityboxoffice.com](http://www.cityboxoffice.com)  
Group tickets: [info@humanitieswest.org](mailto:info@humanitieswest.org)  
Free Tickets for students 25 years old and younger: [info@humanitieswest.org](mailto:info@humanitieswest.org)

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### **\*RELATED EVENTS for *China: The Power & Glory of the Ming Dynasty***

Ancillary programs providing opportunities to learn more about the featured topic and related issues complement this two-day event.

#### **Humanities West Book Discussion with Lynn Harris**

#### ***Ming China 1368-1649: A Concise History of a Resilient Empire, by John Dardess***

**When: 5:30pm, Wednesday, January 11, 2012**

**Where: Board Room, Commonwealth Club of San Francisco  
595 Market Street, SF, CA**

Cost: Free  
RSVP: [commonwealthclub.org](http://commonwealthclub.org)  
Co-Sponsored by the Humanities Member-Led Forum

**Fireside Chat with George Hammond – Ming Dynasty**

When: **6:30pm, Tuesday, February 7, 2012**  
Where: Orinda Library,  
26 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA  
Cost: Free

**Lecture: *The Dreaming Mind & the End of the Ming World* with Lynn Struve**

When: **4pm, Wednesday, February 8, 2012**  
Where: Institute of East Asian Studies Conference Room  
2223 Fulton Street, 6th Floor, Rm 603  
Berkeley, CA  
Cost: Free  
Info: (510) 643-6492  
Sponsored by the Institute of East Asian Studies, UC Berkeley

**Lynn Struve**, Professor Emerita of History, Indiana University, presents a lecture on ***The Dreaming Mind & the End of the Ming World***. The mid-sixteenth through the mid-seventeenth century saw a notable efflorescence in attention to dreams and dreaming among Chinese intellectuals and constituted a distinct phase in the long history of Chinese “dream culture.” The reasons for this are intimately related to virtually every trend—in philosophy, religion, the literary arts, examination competition, politics, and the fate of the country—that affected the subjective consciousness of literati during the late Ming. This efflorescence was carried into the very early Qing period by survivors of the Ming collapse but petered out when the “conquest generation” passed away. It lost salience with the decline of the cultural matrix that uniquely identifies the late Ming, but it sent certain significant influences onward into the middle Qing period.

**Lecture: *Art from the Ming Dynasty Reign of Eternal Happiness* with Michael Knight**

When: **6:30pm, Thursday, February 9, 2012**  
Where: Asian Art Museum, Education Studios  
200 Larkin Street, San Francisco, CA  
Cost: Free with Museum Admission (\$5 after 5pm)  
Info: [www.asianart.org](http://www.asianart.org).

**Michael Knight**, Senior Curator of Chinese Art at the Asian Art Museum of SF, presents a lecture concerning ***Art from the Ming Dynasty Reign of Eternal Happiness (Yongle Emperor, 1403-24)***. This lecture provides an overview of the role of art during the reign Zhu Di, who ruled during the Yongle reign of the Ming Dynasty. Among the most dynamic of the emperors of the Ming, Zhu Di was also among the most active in the arts. His great domestic accomplishments included the completion of many buildings in imperial capitals in Nanjing and Beijing, transfer of the primary capital to Beijing, and the rebuilding of the Grand Canal. Massive amounts of art were required for decorating the interiors of the great new buildings and for the ceremonies and rituals performed within them. A complex system was developed to commission these objects from their often distant points of manufacture and to deliver the works to the imperial capitals. Art also played a role in maintaining relations with the Ming Empire's allies and courting favor with its enemies.

**Humanities West Book Discussion with Lynn Harris**

***Mission to China: Matteo Ricci and the Jesuit Encounter with the East*, by Mary Laven**

When: **5:30pm, Wednesday, February 29, 2012**  
Where: Board Room, Commonwealth Club of San Francisco  
595 Market Street, SF, CA  
Cost: Free  
RSVP: [commonwealthclub.org](http://commonwealthclub.org)  
Co-Sponsored by the Humanities Member-Led Forum